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26th April 2019

Dear Sharon,

Channel 5 plan for children's programming

I am writing in response to your letter of 24th July 2018 which asked Channel 5 to prepare a plan for improving its offering to children with a particular focus on UK-originated content delivered across the full range of services and platforms. I am pleased to say that we have now completed our review and welcome this opportunity to share our conclusions.

VIMN is a very strong supporter of PSB in the UK, having transformed Channel 5 since its acquisition in 2014. Last year the channel was named *Edinburgh Channel of the Year 2018*, reflecting the benefits of a radical overhaul of its schedule and 40% increase in spend on original UK productions in peak-time since 2014.

This additional investment has enabled Channel 5 to broaden its range of genres to include more natural history (*Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild*), history (*Henry VIII and His Six Wives*), and serious factual documentaries (*The Accused*, *Slum Britain: 50 Years On* and *Michael Palin in North Korea*). It has also reached new, older audiences with shows such as *Cruising with Jane McDonald* that received a 2018 BAFTA for Best Feature. At the recent 2019 RTS Programme Awards *Raped: My Story*, produced by Lambert Productions for Channel 5, won the award for best single documentary.

As Ofcom has recognised, all commercial broadcasters, including PSBs, are facing unprecedented competition for children's time and attention across a diverse range of well-funded digital content platforms and services. Children and young people have a wider choice of content available to them than at any time before. In addition, the UK advertising market faces strong headwinds, and the Government is currently consulting on a pre-9pm ban on all HFSS food and drink advertising to children which, if implemented in full, would lead to considerable revenue losses for Channel 5.

Milkshake!

Milkshake! is a multiplatform pre-school brand on Channel 5, airing every day from 6-9am weekdays and 6-10am weekends on its linear channel, reaching more than half of all UK children. Its core demographic is 2-5 years. 2018 marks its best performance on record with a sixth consecutive year of audience growth.

Milkshake! has been celebrating and entertaining pre-schoolers and their families for 21 years with the best in British animation, live action, short form, nature documentary, music and dance-based programming. It offers stories each day with characters and content that celebrate British children, their families and their cultures. The plan is to continue to do this on the Channel 5 linear channel as well as on other digital platforms, when appropriate and where viewers can find us easily along with their parents or carers.

Channel 5 has already committed to airing 600 hours of UK originations, both new and repeat, each calendar year for the lifetime of the Channel 5 licence (2014 – 2024). The *Milkshake!* line-up therefore includes some of the best and most loved pre-school characters in the UK with a diverse programming slate including *Peppa Pig*, *Thomas and Friends*, *Bob the Builder*, *Noddy Toyland Detective*, *Fireman Sam*, *Floogals*, *Digby Dragon*, *Wissper*, *Little Princess*, *Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom*, *Shane the Chef*, *Luo Bao Bei*, *Pirata & Capitano*.

In-house production includes *Secret Life of Puppies*, *Kittens*, *Meet The Hedgehogs* and *Milkshake! Monkey*. *Milkshake!* also airs world-class content from Nick Jr., ensuring that all British children have free access to highly popular global hits including *PAW Patrol*, *Top Wing*, *Shimmer & Shine* and *Nella The Princess Knight*.

Milkshake! currently airs content produced in the UK, EU and ROW. The majority of programmes are made in the UK, including from regional companies in Wales (Cloth Cat), the North West (Brown Bag) and the ROI (Wigglywoo). There are a number of new projects in development from Wales, the North West, Scotland and the ROI, which we are hopeful to commission very soon.

Milkshake!'s content line-up is curated carefully to cover a range of themes that mirror the broad framework of the Early Years Foundation for 2-5 year olds:

- communication and language through learning words, daily songs and sounds, looking to expand this to language learning;
- physical development through dancing, keeping fit, getting outdoors and keeping healthy;
- personal, social and emotional development through learning about relationships, families, friendship, communities, emotions, looking after yourself and reflecting the lives of real pre-schoolers;
- literacy through a focus on reading, storytelling and love of books;
- mathematics through numbers and counting within programme content;
- understanding the world through featured cultural days, themes of discovery, exploring, science, technology and animals;
- expressive arts and design through craft, drawing, cooking, singing and dancing.

Audience accessibility and representation is a key feature of *Milkshake!*, reflected in the nine-strong presenting team drawn from all areas of the UK. They are selected for their varied interests and talents including singing, dancing, acting, musicals, writing music, DJ'ing, reading, love of animals, cooking and keeping fit. *Milkshake!* aims to connect with its viewers every day by celebrating birthdays with cards and messages, good deeds and achievements with '*Milkshake! Thumbs Up*', first time triumphs with '*Milkshake! First Award*', new siblings with '*Mini Milkshaker*', and '*Pet of the Day*'.

It also features cultural days with short-form content for the studio including Diwali, Chinese New Year and Holi, and will be celebrating Vaisakhi, Wesak, Ramadan and Hanukkah in the *Milkshake!* studio over the coming year. There are themed visits to UK attractions including science and space at museums, animals in zoos and farms, and history at castles, and content to bring viewers closer to animals in *Secret Life of Puppies* and *Meet The Hedgehogs*. It also celebrates special events such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Christmas, Saints Days, Mothers', Fathers' and Grandparents' Days, sport events, International Women's Day, World Book Day and Harvest Festival.

Recently *Milkshake!* teamed up with BookTrust and Pop Up to encourage reading and to bring families together for story time, with a diverse range of books read by *Milkshake!* presenters and special guests. It also features content promoting healthy eating with in-house produced show *Milkshake! Monkey Bananas about Food*, where *Milkshake! Monkey* discovers the journey of food from field to fork. *Shane the Chef*, set in a seaside community and featuring a single dad who runs a restaurant with help from his daughter, contains recipes to encourage cooking with fresh ingredients and is endorsed by the British Dieticians Association and Children's Food Trust.

Interactive music and dance is also core to *Milkshake!* including content such as *Milkshake! Bopping About* on You Tube and the daily song and dance routine for viewers to try at home. It also reaches viewers with its long running *Milkshake! Live* nationwide theatre show that tours UK regions to transfer the fun from screen to a live immersive experience.

Investment in original UK production

In 2018 Channel 5 invested in 29 hours of new originated content for *Milkshake!*, equating to approximately 160 individual episodes. The channel aims to increase this figure to 50 new UK originated hours per year from 2021, which will double production to over 300 individual episodes. As a result of this additional investment *Milkshake!* will be able to deliver a wider and more diverse range of UK-originated programming, as well as invest in new series of existing shows. This will cement Channel 5's reputation as a provider of quality UK produced content for the number one pre-school children's breakfast block on a terrestrial channel.

It has already identified a proposed new slate of UK commissions that are at various stages of discussion and development, many of which are with regional production companies. It is also hopeful that a number of these shows will qualify for the BFI Young Audiences Content Fund.

Milkshake online and on-demand

Milkshake! is committed to engaging its viewers on FTA digital platforms including My5, YouTube and the *Milkshake!* website, and their parents and carers through Facebook and Instagram. It is

in the process of transforming its approach to ensure that content, communication and activities are relevant and appropriate to the specific type of platform being used. It will continue to create bespoke, short-form content to link back to long form linear and VOD viewing, and encourage co-viewing with parents and carers.

Long-form content is offered as AVOD catch-up on the My5 player accessible to all online, on YouView and Samsung Smart TV's. Episodes are available across all of *Milkshake!*'s most popular shows including *Peppa Pig*, *Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom*, *Noddy Toyland Detective*, *Thomas & Friends*, *Shane The Chef*, *Wissper*, *Fireman Sam*, and *Floogals*. This allows flexible viewing outside of the linear breakfast block with approximately 1 million views per week, largely driven by the YouView app.

The *Milkshake!* website is the 'find out' information platform for children and their parents and carers, with details of competitions, the live tour and picture galleries, as well as content linked to the My5 player.

Milkshake!'s YouTube presence is evolving towards a more kids-focused 'watch and take part' approach. This will include *Milkshake!*-branded short-form content using key shows and characters alongside the *Milkshake!* presenters. It will also continue to offers links to content from brand-owned YouTube channels such as the official *Paw Patrol* Channel, and a catch-up service for the daily studio links and shorts on keeping fit, cooking, animals, book reading, culture, songs and dances. Overall viewers are encouraged to go to YouTube when *Milkshake!* is off-air, not as an alternative to it.

Instagram is *Milkshake!*'s 'make, create, see and do' platform with pictures, printables, activities and mini makes with the presenters aimed at parents and carers. Facebook is its 'find out' platform for parents and carers with news and information on studio features, book readings, the live tour, competitions, links to Instagram for activities and You Tube for content.

I look forward to discussing these plans in more detail with you and your team. Meanwhile, please let me know if you require any further information.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Currell', written in a cursive style.

James Currell
President, UK, Northern & Eastern Europe