

Question 1: Do you have any comments on the general analysis and conclusions of the report?:

I believe the report overemphasises the role of the BBC in providing quality children's television. It should be an obligation on every applicant for a broadcast licence that a stated part of their remit is to produce quality children's TV.

Question 2: Of the policy approaches suggested by stakeholders, which, if any, do you consider the most appropriate to address the conclusions made in this report?:

I understand the financial constraints on commercial terrestrial channels, especially since the prohibition of certain kinds of advertising. This policy should be revisited to decide what types of advertising are acceptable in children's TV, and how this can best be regulated and advertisers encouraged to invest in the medium. It appears that creative use of co-productions has also been neglected. Commercial TV has been allowed to shirk its responsibilities to younger members of its audience far too easily.

Question 3: If they are appropriate, should any of the policy approaches be tailored to different age groups (for example to pre-school, younger children, older children and young teenagers), or to different types of children's programming (like drama, factual, entertainment and animation)?:

Clearly, blanket advertising of inappropriate products to younger viewers is unacceptable: but it is not feasible to protect all children from all such advertising, especially as they will be exposed to it anyway while watching adult TV. Graded allowances of advertising according to expected age groups of viewers should be considered.

Question 4: What is the role and importance of UK-originated programming for children?:

Question 5: What is the role and importance of plurality in the provision of children's programming?:

In all media, the move towards profit-driven mass programming is worrying in that it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify investment in material for minority audiences of any type. (On the global stage, this is equally true of nationalities.) Raising the prestige of such programming may help to offset this (even financial directors like prizes).

Question 6: Should further consideration be given to provision of public service content for children over platforms other than linear television?:

Yes. I have been involved in writing projects for prospective BBC websites that, as far as I am aware, have never seen the light of day. Public service content should extend to wherever there is an audience.

Question 7: Does the policy approach for children's programming need to be different to the policy approach taken to public service broadcasting overall?:

The policy for children's programming should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of the whole approach to broadcast regulation, in both the public service and commercial arenas.

Additional comments:

Commercial broadcasters cannot simply be allowed to throw up their hands and plead poverty as an excuse for not producing quality children's programmes. A financial framework can and must be found that will enable such providers to meet their responsibilities. Children's broadcast media has had a long history of indifference and underfunding. It is time for this to end. An intelligent and aware audience of young people is an intelligent and aware adult audience of the future.