



Siobhan Walsh
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

7 April 2022

Dear Siobhan,

We refer to Ofcom's consultation on the BBC's request to change the Operating Licence with respect to Original Productions on CBBC, published on 10 March 2022, in which you propose to accept the BBC's request to reduce the original productions quota on CBBC from 72% of all hours to 66% for calendar years 2022 and 2023, and 68% for calendar year 2024 and onwards.

We are pleased Ofcom is supportive of the BBC's proposals, which will enable us to implement a key part of BBC Children's Strategy, i.e. to acquire more animated content for CBBC to meet audience demand while our new commissions are in the pipeline. The change is also necessary to reflect the impact of the reduction of CBBC's hours as a result of the launch of BBC Three as a broadcast TV channel.

The BBC's Annual Plan for 2022/23, published on 30 March 2022, reiterates that a key part of our strategy for children's content is to create more British animation to create higher impact programming.¹

Reaching under-16s remains a significant audience challenge for the BBC, and following on from our targets for 2021/22, this age group is a key audience target for 2022/23, centred on reaching this audience across the BBC overall, and by BBC Children's & Education services.

Animation is important for the BBC to remain relevant to children across the UK. Over half (53%) of children aged between 3-17 watch cartoons and animations, being the second most watched type of video content after 'funny videos' (65%).² Cartoons also appeal more specifically to 6-12 C2DE audiences amongst CBBC and competitors, being

¹ [BBC Annual Plan 2022/23](#), p.25, 43 and 66.

² [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022](#), Ofcom

the top choice for 6-12 C2DEs compared with 6-12 ABC1s who tend to prefer Factual and Education programming.³

In 2022/23 CBBC will commission the first 3 pilots from the Ignite initiative, which will support the creative economy by developing new animation talent from across the UK. BBC Children's & Education is committed to increasing the volumes of homegrown animated content and to that end, has invested £800k into this new initiative, inviting original animation ideas from sole creators, collectives, animation studios and production companies across the UK, with the aim of co-developing new content that can be considered for commission, for our channels.

While our new commission pipeline is developed, we will acquire more animated content as a temporary measure for CBBC to meet audience demand, noting our earlier points about the importance of animation for our audience. To ensure children continue to use the BBC, we need to provide more of the content they want to watch. Original animation has a long lead time, hence we will fill the gap with animation acquisitions on a temporary basis.

The Annual Plan also sets out our ongoing commitment to production across the UK, reflecting the diversity of UK children to ensure everyone sees themselves and their lives represented on screen (such as *The Dumping Ground* in NE England), as well as our commitment to developing the right mix of content in iPlayer for each age group, so it best suits the needs of younger people (such as releasing the whole series of all new 7-12 dramas on transmission of the first CBBC channel episode).

The channel will broadcast at least 1,000 hours of Drama programming (OL condition 2.23.1), including 14 first-run drama titles (such as new drama *A Kind of Spark*). In addition, CBBC will help children explore new subjects and participate in new activities by broadcasting at least 675 hours of Factual programming in 2022/23 (OL condition 2.23.2). We will weave, throughout our schedules, numerous titles depicting different aspects of Britain and the world, often led by child contributors (such as new original factual titles like *Deadly Predators*, giving children an understanding of the natural environment).

CBBC will continue to broadcast the *Bitesize Learning Zone* during term-time mornings, broadcasting at least 50 hours of formal Education content, supplemented with additional factual programmes, all of which will also be available on iPlayer.

A staple of CBBC's offering, *Newsround* will continue to provide children with daily news through its website and at least 35 hours of TV bulletins each year (OL condition 2.6). *Newsround* will also be looking at ways to make its TV bulletin more accessible, as well

³ Source: BARB Data to January to September 2021. Genres based on CCID Sub Genre.

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as devising enhanced plans for coverage of the Platinum Jubilee, and how to tell the story of the Queen's reign through the eyes of children.

As ever we are happy to discuss if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Rowsell

Controller, Regulation