

Ofcom Review of Broadcasting regulation, January 2026

About us

The TUC Yorkshire and Humber Creative and Leisure Industries Committee (TUC YH CLIC) advocates for investment in, and decent pay and conditions for those working in the region's creative sector. While open to all trades unions, the unions most involved include the Bectu sector of Prospect, Equity, the Musicians' Union (MU) and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Overview

TUC YH CLIC is aware that changes in broadcasting regulation have been requested recently as a result of the BBC cutting its budget. We believe that the BBC needs to be properly funded and oppose changes in regulation that lead to reductions in the amount or quality of the Corporation's Public Service Broadcasting. We are concerned that any proposals to relax Broadcasting regulation will make it easier for broadcasters to make such reductions without adequate public scrutiny.

Trade union members represented by the TUC YH CLIC face threats to their livelihoods whenever broadcasting organisations seek to reduce their operations and output. When such jobs are lost, the vital contribution of these workers to the democratic, cultural and political life of local communities as well as the UK as a whole is also lost.

Public Service Media (PSM) has been under political attack. One of the protections PSM benefits from is a strong regulatory framework. Tight(er) rather than more relaxed regulation is probably the greatest strength of UK PSM, enhancing its credibility. This becomes daily more important in the face of AI and "fake" content. Regulation helps "media consumers" identify which sources and output they can believe.

Ofcom should not therefore make any changes that reduce broadcasting regulation.

Ofcom's role as regulator

We understand that, when the BBC Trust was responsible for regulating the Corporation until 2017, a tighter regulatory regime for the BBC existed than does now.

We are concerned that Ofcom's method of consultation seems to be for Ofcom to take a view of a request for a regulatory change and then to consult over its view. We assert that consultation would be more impartial and more meaningful if Ofcom

consulted on the request itself and excluded taking any view of the issue until all consultation responses had been evaluated.

We are concerned that there have been instances when regulatory changes have been made and Ofcom has approved these retrospectively. This must not be allowed to recur.

We believe that Ofcom consultations need to be better promoted. Compared with consultations by the previous BBC Trust and the Channel 4 privatisation consultation, publicity for Ofcom consultations seems to be totally inadequate.

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