

None of the answers below are taken to be confidential

Question 1: Do you agree with our assessment of the potential impact on specific groups of persons?

It is difficult to provide an answer given that your analysis is tentative and insufficiently specific. Using the term "may have" does not inspire confidence in your proposals although it is reasonable to suggest that it is too early to fully understand the implications of some of the changes to C5C emanating from provisions in the Media Act (2024)

Question 2: Do you agree with our Welsh language impact assessment?

No comment

Question 3: Do you agree with our proposals that:

a) until 31 December 2029, in each calendar year at least 9% of the hours of programmes made in the UK for viewing on the Channel 4 service must be produced outside England, and at least 9% of the expenditure on programmes made in the UK for viewing on the service must be allocated to the production of programmes outside England and referable to programme production at production centres in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

b) with effect from 1 January 2030, in each calendar year at least 12% of the hours of programmes made in the UK for viewing on the Channel 4 service must be produced outside England, and at least 12% of the expenditure on programmes made in the UK for viewing on the service must be allocated to the production of programmes outside England and referable to programme production at production centres in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

(1)

It is a truism to observe that the political and legal systems, frameworks and processes move at a glacial pace as compared with changes in the technological and media environment. This being said, it is difficult to understand why Ofcom are not here proposing and implementing changes in policy and regulation until 2030 which is an age away and one can only hazard a guess at how the changes here might or might not be appropriate at that time.

If Ofcom are serious about these proposals, they and HMG should find a way to introduce them in or near the beginning of 2025.

(2)

8. *There is no case whatsoever for Ofcom to set an overall target for the three nations outside England. The targets should be specific for each nation and define and apply a floor not a ceiling for the expenditure and quotas, taking into account both the populations sizes but equally, if not more importantly, the importance of cultural*

representation and investment in the creative economies of each nation. It is only by so doing that Ofcom will adequately meet the need to secure " its statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth"

Specific sub-quotas are the way to do this. Moreover, it a matter of regret that Ofcom is not giving due weight to the judgement(s) of it's own Advisory Committee (Scotland)

While there is no guarantee that quotas ensure better cultural representation, Ofcom should surely remember that the UK policy for film in the 192's and 1930s, with what were termed 'quota quickies' did in fact lay the foundation for training and experience which led, in the 1940's and 1950's to a golden age in British Cinema.

The same should apply here. Invest in the nations.

(3)

It is of paramount importance that C4C should play a greater part in delivering diversity of voice. In the context of Scotland and in particular, Scots Gaelic, we can see that Scots Gaelic is not given anything like the same footing, support and investment as compared with the Welsh Language.

There is an unanswerable case for increasing the support for broadcasting in Scots Gaelic. This language is more at risk than Welsh as it has a smaller number of speakers and this fact alone should be a stimulus to more economic and cultural investment on the grounds of national and regional broadcasting and cultural policy.

The founding principles of C\$ would suggest such a policy and accordingly, Ofcom should apply a specific sub quota of an appropriate level to ensure investment broadcasting and production in Scots Gaelic.

Question 4: Do you agree with our proposed guidance for C4C on how it should report on its MoE production in its SMCP?

No comment

*Professor Robert Beveridge FRSA
August 1st 2024*