

Rhona Parry,
PSB Review,
Ofcom,
Riverside House,
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London,
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PSBReview@ofcom.org.uk

Date

Dear Rhona Parry,

**Re: Belfast Community Circus School response to the consultation:
Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase One: The Digital
Opportunity consultation**

The Belfast Community Circus was established in 1985 during a time when there was a desperate need for positive shared experiences for young people from different communities. The lure of the circus has proved irresistible and the momentum gained has been so unstoppable that, today, 23 years later, Belfast Community Circus School finds itself in the position of being the most prolific youth and community arts organisation in Northern Ireland.

During this time, we have worked closely with Northern Visions on a number of city centre regeneration, youth training and community arts initiatives. These activities reach people in some of the most needy communities in Northern Ireland.

In relation to your main objective of furthering the interests of citizen-consumers; in particular, developing *"a new broadcasting licensing regime to foster self-regulation and broaden citizen/consumer choice"* we would recommend that Ofcom considers acceptance of local community television as public service broadcasters.

We know at first hand of the social benefits that community arts and media can deliver. Empowering citizens to become content providers and creating media which reflects and raises awareness of local issues and interests constitutes a valuable public service. It enhances skills, encourages a sense of place and ownership of the city and has the potential to foster greater citizenship.

Central funding provisions have been made in the Communications Act for community radio and local digital television. Ofcom should consider a fund, which could potentially be drawn from the licence fee and from top-slicing commercial broadcasting licences or other central government sources.

Regarding aspects of work required to bring about a UK map of local and community television following analogue TV switch-off post 2010, we would request your assurance that no planning, at this stage, precludes a network of local digital multiplexes.

In relation to the development of local television in Belfast, we should be grateful if Ofcom would support NvTv being carried on Freeview as a local public service broadcaster. Such a development would ensure that everyone in the city has access to a

valuable local service and would support the efforts of the community arts and media sector to nurture the city's cultural and creative assets and talent.

Yours sincerely

Will Chamberlain
Director