

Dear Rhona,

RE: Diversity , inclusion and the future of ITV in the region

I am writing to express my concern that the BBC might be the only option in terms of regional news for the masses as we move into the longer term future for broadcasting.

It is critical if the provision of news services is to be truly inclusive within the region, that regional news reaches a mass audience. To have only the outlet of the BBC to engage with would be a real loss for the Region. We feel it is vital that real choice and competition with the BBC is still available to people living and working in Yorkshire. It is that choice and competition which ensures that diverse communities are not taken for granted and are effectively reached. It is that choice and competition for the hearts, minds (and the pounds) of consumers which will keep both the BBC and ITV on their toes. This is the essence of the business case for diversity, both for commercial and not for profit organisations. This realisation is driving diversity today in modern 2008 Britain.

ITV Yorkshire and Calendar have given excellent support to the 2007 UK Year of Diversity campaign which yielded close to 15 Million page views. This campaign was launched here in Leeds and was promoted very successfully by Calendar. The 2007 campaign is now going to transform into the 2012 International Year of Diversity' campaign over the next 4 years.

The success of the 2007, UK Year of Diversity was in great part attributable to the support of Calendar and ITV Yorkshire who have provided office facilities for the campaign. ITV knew that to offer this support would help to fulfil their moral obligations as well as to meet a business need – a perfect combination which ensures inclusion. The 2007 campaign will transform into the 2012 International Year of Diversity' campaign and no doubt ITV will support that campaign too.

The National Centre for Diversity has worked closely with ITV and commends its work on the Foundation Placement Scheme, which over the last few years has given 57 year long paid placements to people from the ethnic minority communities across West Yorkshire. Many of these have gone onto careers in the industry.

Finally, ITV's plan to restructure its' regional programmes is one that seems determined to preserve the production values and editorial standards that make it so appealing not just to bodies like the National Centre for Diversity, but also to the huge audiences who watch from home on a daily basis. The proposed model would still reach these audiences and be capable of impressive journalism, but in a hugely more competitive world would critically be much more viable for the long term. That's what we want – Calendar to be around for the long term future !

I do hope that you will give serious thought to these considerations.

Kind regards  
Solat Chaudhry  
Executive Director  
National Centre for Diversity