

Rhona Parry,
PSB Review,
Ofcom,
Riverside House,
2A Southwark Bridge Road,
London,
SE1 9HA.
PSBReview@ofcom.org.uk

Date

Dear Rhona Parry,

Re: Stadium Youth & Community Projects, Belfast response to the consultation: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase One: The Digital Opportunity consultation

Stadium Youth & Community Projects is an organisation dedicated to working with disadvantaged and socially excluded young people from both sides of the sectarian divide. Our primary aim is to break down the barriers between our communities so that our young people can learn to work together in an atmosphere of hope and reconciliation, leading to improved education and employment opportunities.

We initiate and provide a range of educational courses, including ones, which seek to bridge the digital divide, which are geared to reducing inequalities and poverty through skills training - promoting physical, spiritual, and emotional well being.

In response to your consultation and 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. It is our experience, particularly with reference to local broadcaster NvTv, that these local programmes have contributed immeasurably to a sense of common identity among local communities in north & west Belfast where previously there was an insular, and somewhat 'tribal' interpretation on issues associated with housing, employment, education and indeed... a shared future!

As an organisation which provides educational opportunities on a cross community basis, we know from our own experience of the importance of breaking down the barriers between individuals, getting an insight into other people and their community, building relationships and taking responsibility for our own actions. We have worked with Northern Visions/NvTv on local television programming and have been very impressed with both the professionalism and the community value of this service. NvTv have gained community wide praise and recognition for the standard of their programming, and the informed and sensitive professionalism of the journalists and staff employed. We believe NvTv programming raises awareness of local issues and interests and constitutes a valuable public service encouraging a sense of place and ownership of the city, encouraging good citizenship.

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. At present, broadcast quality is restricted to analogue transmissions which does this invaluable service no justice, and restricts valuable information from a broader local audience. Such a development would ensure that everyone in the city has access to a valuable local service and would unquestionably support the efforts of those of us who are working to eliminate social exclusion. Such a development would also support our community arts and media sector to nurture the city's cultural and creative assets and talent.

Yours sincerely
Bill Andrews
(Stadium Programme Coordinator)