

Written evidence submitted by Channel 4

Steven Lynch, Channel 4 Public Affairs Manager, and secretariat for Channel 4 All Party Parliamentary Group

Dear Mr Bryant,

Your committee kindly invited us to give evidence to your inquiry into All Party Parliamentary Groups. The work the committee is doing on APPGs and its wider work on standards is vitally important and we are keen to assist however we can. Unfortunately, we were unable to accept your invitation to give oral evidence to the committee but thank you for the opportunity to set out in writing our views on the benefits of external secretariats to the House, how to mitigate risks of undue influence and non-MP led APPGs, and transparency of funding below.

As a publicly owned Public Service Broadcaster with a statutory remit, Channel 4 is accountable to Parliament. Each year we publish an annual report setting out how we have delivered against the remit that Parliament has set us, and our Chair and CEO appear in front of the DCMS select committee to answer MPs' questions on the report. The Channel 4 All Party Parliamentary Group is a valuable means of engaging with and updating members of Parliament from both Houses outside of that formal process. It provides members with an opportunity to ask questions about Channel 4's performance, our strategy and plans for the future, our wider contribution to the UK's creative economy or simply get an inside track on what programmes we have coming up. In the recent past we have also held sessions giving members the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of our teams behind All 4, Film 4 and Channel 4 Fact Check.

Channel 4 run the secretariat of the APPG, and it is funded in-kind by the time spent by staff. We do this because the alternative would be to shift that burden on to Parliamentarians and ultimately on to the taxpayer.

Channel 4 work in close collaboration with the office of the Chair of our APPG, currently Helen Grant MP. What we use APPG meetings for is also decided through a collaborative process with our Chair, Vice Chairs, wider membership and Channel 4. So, whilst Channel 4 facilitate the secretariat for the APPG it is "led" by Parliamentarians.

Channel 4 supports the principle of transparency both in terms of funding and to help mitigate the risk of undue influence. We believe that the model of the Channel 4 APPG achieves these goals – with Channel 4 providing the secretariat for a group whose agenda is set by its Parliamentary members and that is listed on the register of APPGs, to ensure transparency.

We hope this letter has been useful in setting out Channel 4's view, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

All best wishes

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