

## **Written evidence submitted by the Creative Industries Federation**

### **Response to DCMS Select Committee consultation on the future of Public Service Broadcasting**

#### **Creative Industries Federation**

The Creative Industries Federation is the independent body which represents, champions and supports the UK's creators and creative industries. In September 2019, it announced its intention to formally unite with Creative England. The Federation's membership includes small and large businesses, charitable organisations, education providers, freelancers, trade and sector support bodies from across the creative industries and throughout the UK. We are keen to support both our members in the broadcasting industry, both public and privately owned, as well as the wider creative community which relies on their work.

This submission to the DCMS Select Committee's Call for Evidence highlights the benefits of Public Service Broadcasting for both investment into the UK's creative industries and for enhancing the quality and diversity of content available to the public. We appreciate that the scope of this Call for Evidence also considers future funding models for PSBs and many of our members, with a range of different views on this issue, will be feeding into the Committee also. This paper highlights where there is a clear consensus across the creative industries on the inherent value of Public Service Broadcasting and its continued importance as a cornerstone in the sector's ecosystem.

#### **Public Service Broadcasting**

Public Service Broadcasting has a vital role to play in ensuring there is a trusted and reliable source of information for the British public and that investment is made into original and diverse content that engages, reflects and represents the whole nation. The PSBs also provide the UK's creative industries ecosystem with crucial investment and support a host of independent companies, freelancers and ancillary services that feed other parts of the creative sector, including by investing in training and skills that support the pipeline of new and diverse talent into the creative industries. These benefits are enhanced by the increasingly important role played by non-PSBs in providing and commissioning a wide range of UK content, including news and independent content, and will be key in supporting the UK's recovery from COVID-19.

As information accessed by the public becomes ever more fractured, there remains a clear rationale to ensure the public is served distinctive and original programming determined by public benefit. Through its position, PSB programming is able to take consideration of the needs and interests of all parts of the population. PSBs are a key component of the broadcasting sector's work in supporting both the UK's creative economy and its social and cultural identity.

## **Investment**

PSBs are a crucial part of an increasingly mixed broadcasting ecosystem through the creative risks they take supported by public funding, in the case of the BBC, or statutory remit, for the commercially funded, not-for-profit PSBs. They currently account for 80% of linear commissioning from independent producers, averaging more than £1.2bn. They are supported in this by non-PSBs which have doubled their commissioning in this area during the last decade from 10 to 20%. This has been enhanced by non linear commissioning from SVoDs (subscription video on demand services) and other forms of production financing such as producer equity. Third party funding in PSBs' shows is at record levels (£445m a year according to Ofcom), highlighting the key role of other broadcasters in partnering with PSBs as a catalyst for creative investment and clusters.

The contribution of PSBs towards this investment is enhanced by having public service objectives and statutory remits to promote diversity, balanced or alternative viewpoints, and the development of new talent. These values are at the heart of the broadcasting sector and it is highly beneficial for them to be placed in statute as part of the work of the PSBs. These objectives are safeguarded by quotas (all day and at peak time) for original productions for the different PSBs which are all above 45% (reaching 90% for BBC News and BBC Parliament) and a quota of 25% for hours commissioned from independent producers. Moreover, the aim of the PSBs to ensure that they produce content from the regions of the UK, with dedicated quotas ranging up to 50% of hours of total content, is key for ensuring that the industry is not dominated by London-based work.

Each of the PSBs has exceeded all of these latest quotas every year since 2013 and have developed plans to increase their investment outside of London to help rebalance the creative industries. The move of BBC Children's and BBC Sport from London to MediaCityUK in Salford 10 years ago helped make significant progress towards this and MediaCityUK is now the largest out of London cluster. The work of PSBs in this area is continuing with Channel 4 opening new offices in Leeds, Bristol and Glasgow as part of their 4 All the UK plan. By locating many more commissioners outside London and basing entire productions and departments in the regions, lasting change can be achieved by all broadcasters to help small independent producers across the UK. This must be protected through the UK's existing robust IP laws being maintained in FTAs for fair remuneration for UK creators.

## **Content**

In a crowded marketplace with an ever increasing amount of content, the UK's broadcasting industry, supported by the mandate of PSBs, has a key role to play in maintaining trust and high standards. It is vital that the public can access high-quality content and enhance their understanding of the world through programming that reflects the diversity of the UK's cultural identity and represents alternative viewpoints. Access to information and educational resources is more important than ever during the current COVID-19 outbreak and BBC Education has made a significant contribution to this through delivering 'Bitesize Daily' for children while they have not been at school.

As media increasingly enables consumers to be self-selecting, and thereby often self-limiting in the voices and views they are exposed to, quality content that challenges those echo chambers in a way that

is trusted by the public and is easily accessible is critical. It is vital that choice and creative competition is supported in the UK, enhancing the broadcasting industry's ability to achieve these goals with PSBs.

It is key that content is produced and made accessible to audiences in a way that is not dominated by profitability or fighting for exposure against more profitable types of content. PSB remits should be harnessed in a targeted way to address gaps in market provision and content with a strong regional identity is one of these gaps. Creating content that has global appeal and can be resold across many territories is vitally important to the continued role of the UK as a global hub for the audiovisual industry. Public Service Broadcasting alongside the commercial sector furthers the UK's soft-power through its support of innovation while ensuring that UK audiences have access to wide-ranging and informative programming.

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