**British Bold Creative**

**Introduction**

Arts Council England’s mission is 'great art and culture for everyone' and we work to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives, enabling new artistic developments, realising talent, and championing culture in public policy. As the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries, we support a range of activities from theatre to music, reading to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts. We support and invest in high quality arts practice and the best emerging practitioners that represent the backbone of our cultural infrastructure and contribute to the future of the UK’s dynamic creative economy.

The BBC is an internationally recognised example of what the UK’s creativity and commitment can achieve. As two of the largest promoters and funders of cultural activity in the country, the creation and distribution of excellent publicly funded arts and cultural content is a shared aim for the BBC and Arts Council England. Our 2014-2017 Partnership Agreement commits us to close partnership working to ensure maximum public engagement in high quality arts and culture, developing and supporting the best creative talent and contributing to the successful performance of the UK’s creative economy. As two key pillars in the cultural landscape, it is hoped that the Arts Council and the BBC will work together even more closely as the roles and purposes of each organisation develop to reflect the needs of a changing society and evolving arts and culture and creative industries sectors.

**Question responses**

Is the BBC striking the right balance between continuing to do the things it does today, and focusing on new ideas. Is there anything in particular you think the BBC needs to consider in striking this balance?

1. We are confident that the proposals presented in British Bold Creative will help deliver the three aims outlined in the BBC and Arts Council England 2014-2017 partnership agreement. These are to:
	1. Extend the accessibility and reach of arts and culture.
	2. Support new artistic talent and the creation of new work.
	3. Support skills development and growth of the creative economy.
2. These are ambitious proposals in a context of declining licence fee income and government investment. As the BBC suggests, and as outlined in our response to the DCMS’s Green Paper on the BBC’s Charter renewal[[1]](#footnote-1), partnership working will be vital to fulfil these proposals.
3. We value the reforms that the BBC has introduced in recent years. In our response to DCMS’s Green Paper on Charter renewal, we go into further detail about the type of working that will be needed to deliver these proposals and also note the increased positive benefits and impact of our own partnership with the BBC over the past ten years.
4. We are supportive of the BBC’s desire to introduce a step change from a ‘one-way’ broadcaster role to becoming an enabling organisation - open to new content, providers and ways of working and the explicit commitment to working with the widest range of partners.
5. Considering Ofcom’s review of investment into original content, we welcome that the BBC is prioritising significant investment in arts and cultural content for the next Charter period.
6. Ranging from investment to technological innovation to export, the BBC is a leading developer and enabler of exceptional talent across art forms and genres. We outline the value of our partnership working in this area in our response to the DCMS’s Green Paper on Charter Renewal.[[2]](#footnote-2)
7. Positioning the BBC as ‘Britain’s creative partner’ and a partner for the arts and cultural institutions of the UK is a positive step. The BBC’s services, platforms and technology infrastructure provide the essential underpinning for Britain’s cultural and creative industry ecology and success. Considering the BBC’s role in content creation, export and talent development in the cultural and creative industries – including the BBC’s investment of £1.2bn into the wider creative sector in 2013/2014 – the BBC should work collaboratively with other funders and national agencies in setting a strategic, coherent and shared direction for the sector. Its governance and programme commissioning structures should reflect this more open, democratic and accessible culture.
8. We believe it is vital to consider the role that the BBC and other broadcasters could play in delivering the government’s forthcoming White Paper[[3]](#footnote-3). As stated in our response to DCMS’s consultation, Charter Renewal provides a welcome opportunity for the BBC to play an even more integrated role in the arts and culture and a much-needed industrial strategy for the creative industries. The BBC should clearly outline how it will work towards greater integration as part of the wider creative industries. This may then encourage wider partnership working and collaboration.
9. Throughout Bold British Creative, the BBC outlines its work to date and commitment to on- and off-screen diversity and diverse talent development. Diversity is vital in the arts, culture and the creative industries because it sustains refreshes, replenishes and releases the true potential of the UK’s artistic talent, regardless of background. At the Arts Council we have made a public commitment though the Creative Case for Diversity[[4]](#footnote-4) and look forward to working with partners, including the BBC, to support the talent and diversity in our sector and beyond.
10. The proposals for an open BBC are positive, opening opportunities to the arts and cultural sector to create and broadcast content. Opening up iPlayer and other platforms to other non-BBC content will help deliver this, aid the discoverability of publicly funded culture and increase audience engagement with the arts.
11. We recommend that the BBC should endeavour to balance ‘open’ and personalised access to content, with its own role as a curator. Technological and responsive methods of recommending and tailoring content demonstrate that the BBC is still leading technological advances in this field. The public trust and respect the BBC’s judgement which requires expert editorial skills.
12. Technological change and changing consumer behaviour are providing opportunities and challenges for the arts and cultural sector. For example, if trends shift predominately towards personalised viewing/listening, what is the role for commissioned content and for expert curation? In particular, we are interested in the future for original arts and music documentaries and a wider cultural education offer, a hallmark of BBC’s cultural programming. We hope that a high level of expertise will remain within the BBC and that it will continue to be applied in the curation and presentation of music, arts and cultural content. At the same time, greater collaboration and diversity can be achieved through external partnerships.

**INFORM**

1. There is potential for BBC English Regions to play a far greater role in the delivery of the BBC’s content priorities in relation to culture and the arts, and we are committed in our current partnership framework to working with the BBC to ensure a greater reflection of local cultural life and to engage and stimulate the widest audience possible through regional TV, local radio and UK-wide online. The commitment to opening up further to inform audiences of their local arts and cultural offer is very positive. Increasing cultural provision on local radio could bring locally produced artistic and cultural content to an even wider diversity of audiences and stimulate more local audiences to attend live performances and increase their own participation in arts and culture.
2. The potential offered by local radio in this area is demonstrated by the 'Up for Arts'[[5]](#footnote-5) projects currently being run by Voluntary Arts in partnership with BBC Radio Merseyside, BBC Radio Lancashire and BBC Radio Cumbria. These projects involve local arts and cultural organisations working directly with the radio stations to present demonstration and taster events linked to on-air campaigns to promote participation in cultural activities. The proposed development of local radio partnerships should consider the success of this model.
3. We welcome the proposal to ensure that the local arts and cultural offer is promoted on local radio in a consistent way by allocating a producer responsibility. As suggested in our response to the Green Paper, we recommend that such an offer is not framed as ‘alternative’ to mainstream content but is included as part of the mainstream offer. We also believe local radio stations can support talent development progression routes, such as those we see in the BBC Introducing strand which can connect new local talent to key national platforms for greater exposure and opportunities.

**EDUCATE**

1. We welcome the BBC’s positioning alongside other arts and cultural organisations and its conceptualising of public space in the digital era. We welcome the rationale and proposal for the Ideas Service and have been working with the BBC to ensure that arts and culture is a strong strand within this broader service. We believe this is exactly the bold visionary initiative which can help to catalyse a step change in the way that a range of BBC and non-BBC cultural content can be accessed and enjoyed for the benefit of all. Benefitting from BBC investment, branding and joint BBC and partnership curation, we anticipate that the platform will drive strong audience engagement and participation.
2. We also know that there is a strong appetite to create digital work amongst arts and cultural organisations. 90% of arts organisations have produced some form of live-to-digital production and 86% would like to create more live-to-digital production in the future.[[6]](#footnote-6)
3. We have been working with the BBC on a number of initiatives that aim to support the arts sector’s ability to connect with broadcast and online audiences. Recently, and in recognition of the increasingly important role of BBC Arts Online, we have been working on the re-development of the Space as a commissioner that will feed content into BBC arts online and beyond, promoting arts and cultural content with the benefit of BBC branding. Other initiatives include Arts Council investment matched with BBC production expertise such as Words First – a Radio 1Xtra partnership to promote more spoken word on radio, and Live From TV Centre – providing rare TV opportunities for regional theatre companies to reach BBC 4 and iPlayer audiences.
4. However, only a fraction of the publicly funded arts in England have featured on BBC platforms. We believe that the proposals in British Bold Creative begin to outline how the BBC might increase its work with the arts and cultural sector to broaden and diversify the range and nature of the arts and cultural offer for audiences.
5. Greater visibility for the publicly funded arts sector in particular has immense public value and will further help Arts Council England deliver our mission of Great art and culture for everyone, and in particular our ambition to increase audiences.[[7]](#footnote-7) According to research, a fifth of event cinema-goers and one third of online viewers had not attended a live arts event in the last year. The same report suggests that over a third of consumers have not experienced live-to-digital but seem interested, with 7% of those surveyed engaging with live-to-digital arts but not traditional live arts events in the last year.[[8]](#footnote-8) The BBC’s commitment to widening content could provide a step change in the type of content that audiences are exposed to across the UK.
6. Arts organisations are keen to do more to distribute content digitally, but see funding and skills as significant barriers.[[9]](#footnote-9) Therefore, our partnership with the BBC can help organisations and individuals develop the skills, and access the appropriate funding, to reach new audiences. We are delighted that through The Space, we will work in partnership with the BBC Academy, enabling arts and cultural organisations to access expertise and resources.
7. In October 2015, we launched our Cultural Education Challenge[[10]](#footnote-10) calling for the provision of a strong local arts and cultural education offer for children and young people across England. The BBC could work effectively on its offer for children and young people at a local level by engaging with the national Bridge organisations[[11]](#footnote-11) who lead a set of local Cultural Education Partnerships[[12]](#footnote-12).
8. The iPlayer for children should consider how to engage with the publicly funded arts and cultural offer for children and young people developed by specialist and non-specialist arts organisations nationally. We urge that Cultural Education Partnerships are considered as ‘trusted partners’ in order to develop and deliver this content. Our network of Bridge organisations can help facilitate this partnership working.
9. Co-created with arts and cultural organisations and young people, our Quality Principles have been designed to inform work for, with and by children and young people and these can help to design a high quality educational and cultural offer for children of all ages.[[13]](#footnote-13) We believe that these principles could help inform the development of the BBC’s offer for children.

**ENTERTAIN**

1. We welcome the BBC’s commitment to risk taking and embedding a quality driven approach to commissioning new drama, developing new talent and promoting original and diverse modern stories.
2. The BBC proposes to develop a video service that will feature other UK content commissioners and producers. We welcome the BBC’s commitment to making more deliberate the ‘ripple effects’[[14]](#footnote-14) of sharing technological developments.
3. In its commitment to representing the whole of the UK, we recommend that the BBC includes local content creation as part of the mix of services provided. This could expand the types of programmes commissioned, and widen the range of providers including locally responsive arts and cultural organisations. Arts Council England can help broker relationships between the arts and cultural sector and the BBC across England. This should also be seen in parallel with the plans for local radio arts producers.

**Future ideas for the next Charter:**

These are the BBC’s initial ideas which will require further work. Please let us know what you think about any or all of these, for example whether you support or oppose them and why.

Is there anything we should think about as we continue to develop these ideas? For example do you have any views about how to make them as effective as possible? Are there any particular obstacles or problems that you think the BBC needs to take account of?

1. It is suggested that the way the BBC commissions will change: “most of our innovation has been in the way we distribute content, not the content itself. That will change. Rather than commissioning for television, or radio, we will make our content work across all of our platforms”. We are keen to ensure that arts and cultural organisations are in the position to develop a widening artistic and cultural offer for the BBC. As such, any developments in commissioning and programming should be clearly stated and updated as time frames, opportunities and formats change. Opportunities to pitch or tender for work should be widely advertised. The BBC has a key role to play in building the arts and cultural sector’s skills in this area. We are keen to work with the BBC support the skills needed for an arts and cultural organisation to work and deliver effectively with the BBC. We suggest that governance and commissioning structures should be amended to reflect the ambition to commission content from the broadest range of partners.
2. We noted a potential partnership model in our response to the select committee in 2013 which was welcomed and restate it here. The Open University (OU), although it benefits from special privileges unique to the OU and ratified by the BBC Charter and Licence, could provide a useful model for future-proofing new cultural partnerships. It is exempted from the charge of sponsorship by being specifically named in the agreement which accompanies the Charter and Licence paragraph 75 (5) (b). It funds around 30 programmes, often in peak hours, and benefits from an extended promotion at the end of the programme; it has the opportunity to create follow-up print or web based material at its own expense which is also promoted at the end of the programme, and it can use its co-funding to acquire rights (such as commercial distribution). It is the only organisation that is allowed to promote its own broadcast linked content site (www.open2.net) alongside www.bbc.co.uk.
3. This model could potentially be extended to other public bodies and cultural organisations, with clear public accountability structures and content that fits editorially within BBC guidelines. This could enable a far more ‘networked’ public service content arts ecology in which the BBC and arts/cultural organisations work together more closely on planning for public engagement after programmes have been broadcast and ensuring a range of public service content around BBC content on both a national and a regional level. We believe that the BBC should review the opportunities for arts organisations to work with the BBC in a similar same way as the Open University. The Arts Council may be able to play a facilitation role on behalf of the sector if a similar model or template would be considered for public service arts content/organisations.

Do you think any of these ideas outlined in this document are more or less important than others?

Do you think there is anything the BBC should be doing less of compared to what it currently does, in order to fund the new ideas?

Do you have a view on all these ideas taken together as a package across the next Charter period?

1. When asked to evaluate existing work against proposed new work or developing work areas, it is challenging when some core areas of the BBC’s work and role in the cultural ecology are not referenced. For example, plans on the BBC performing arts groups are not mentioned in this response. We feel that this is an integral part of the BBC’s arts and cultural offer. The BBC plays a key role in the national cultural ecology and both in terms of commissioning and presenting content, but also through sustaining a range of performing arts groups.
2. The BBC Get Creative campaign[[15]](#footnote-15), launched in February 2015, is an example of a wide scale existing and highly successful collaboration between the BBC and arts and cultural organisations. The BBC and more than 1,000 arts and cultural organisations from across the UK (including many of our National Portfolio Organisations) have been working together to encourage more people to do something creative as Get Creative champions. [[16]](#footnote-16) BBC Get Creative has included a range of BBC TV and radio arts programmes and a website highlighting opportunities to get involved. We have supported the development of the campaign as an active Get Creative Champion. Such initiatives should be built on to capitalise on local existing partnership working and to build local audiences for arts and cultural experiences, from taking part physically through to broadcast and digital engagement.
3. The BBC plays an important role in training and in helping to build digital, media and artistic talent. They are the heart of industries where the workforce moves fluidly between the public and commercial sectors[[17]](#footnote-17) and where public/private distinctions are increasingly hard to make. We welcome the BBC’s achievement in November 2014 of their target of 1% of the workforce consisting of apprentices.[[18]](#footnote-18) The role of the BBC in developing the next generation of creative and digital media professionals cannot be underestimated and we are working closely with the BBC to share skills, training and expertise in a more formal and structured way.
4. Considering the BBC’s role in the creative ecology, it is important that the BBC commits to supporting training and skills development in the creative industries over the next Charter Period.
5. We will respond in detail to the second BBC Trust consultation about the BBC Studios. In our response, we will comment on the BBC’s workforce and talent development commitments. We will also draw attention to the implications that reform to BBC production may have on the wider talent development pool, on diversity and on specialist roles (e.g. commissioning).
6. In summary, we look forward to working with the BBC over the next Charter period. As a package, there are strong opportunities for the arts and cultural sector to commission, broadcast and attract new audiences to excellent arts and culture nationally. We are excited about the BBC’s commitment to increased investment in original cultural content and to better local partnership working. As we state in our response to the DCMS’s Green Paper on Charter Renewal, the BBC is at its most effective when it uses its unique role to work with partners across the arts, culture and the creative industries, training talent, driving up quality, reaching audiences and spreading the benefits of the licence fee.

1. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/BBC_Charter_Review_public_consultation_response.docx.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://dcmsblog.uk/2015/09/share-your-ideas-for-a-new-cultural-programme/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/diversity-and-creative-case/creative-case-diversity/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.voluntaryarts.org/take-part/up-for-arts-project/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.riversidestudios.co.uk/Exploring%20the%20market%20for%20Live%20to%20Digital%20Arts%20-%20full%20report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Great_art_and_culture_for_everyone.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.riversidestudios.co.uk/Exploring%20the%20market%20for%20Live%20to%20Digital%20Arts%20-%20full%20report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.riversidestudios.co.uk/Exploring%20the%20market%20for%20Live%20to%20Digital%20Arts%20-%20full%20report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/cyp/cultural-education-challenge-find-out-more/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/cyp/bridge-organisations/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Cultural_Education_Partnerships_Pilot_Study_FINAL.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/cyp/resources/quality-principles/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/pdf/futureofthebbc2015.pdf> pg 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/sections/get-creative> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2hsmDRPs89gvXFxm5Cq011H/get-creative-champions> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <http://blueprintfiles.s3.amazonaws.com/1370851494-A_Survey_Of_Theatre_Careers.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/2014-15/bbc-annualreport-201415.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)