

DCMS Green paper on the renewal of the BBC Charter



Arts Council England

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Summary of key points

1. **We strongly support the role and public value represented by the BBC and believe that as long as it remains focused on distinctiveness, it will continue to produce content that educates, informs and entertains.** We believe there is potential for wider range and diversity of content through the BBC commissioning, enabling and broadcasting content from other providers from the arts and cultural sector.
2. **The BBC's role in commissioning new work and supporting talent development should continue and develop with increasing partnerships with the wider sector.** The BBC is critical in developing a skilled creative media workforce that makes the UK a world leader in content creation and distribution. By presenting UK content internationally, its cultural diplomacy role is of considerable value.
3. **We are encouraged to see the BBC opening up to partners and better partnership working and we believe this can develop further.** We welcome the Ideas Service proposition put forward by the BBC to increase its partnerships for greater audience and industry benefit.
4. **Reflecting the diversity of the UK's population and culture remains a challenge for all public institutions. The BBC, like the publicly funded arts and cultural sector, must continue to make this a top priority.** The universality of the BBC should allow for targeted development and programming to reach new audiences and broaden the cultural offer available to them.
5. **We recommend that the BBC commissions, promotes and broadcasts a greater range of excellent arts and cultural content by working creatively with artists and arts and cultural organisations.** We are concerned by reducing spend on original arts content across broadcasting, and partnership with the publicly funded arts would contribute to the quality and diversity of the BBC's programming and increase the arts offer for audiences.

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.

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 are updated to reflect the needs of a changing society and evolving arts and culture and creative industries sectors.

We fully support the continuing and enduring role and public purposes of the BBC. The BBC is the cornerstone of public service broadcasting and an internationally recognised example of what the UK's creativity and commitment can achieve. This is in no small part as a result of its unique funding model, which provides a critical mass of sustained investment that allows for creativity and risk taking. Like the organisations and individuals that the Arts Council funds, the BBC can take risks that the commercial market might sometimes find difficult.

We value the reforms that the BBC has introduced in recent years. We recommend that the BBC continues to consider how it can reflect the diversity of the population by commissioning content from other providers and by actively hosting and promoting other content. The BBC is at its most effective when it uses its unique market position to work with partners across the arts and culture and the creative industries, training talent, driving up quality and spreading the benefits of the licence fee.

We strongly support the role and public value represented by the BBC and believe that as long as it remains focused on distinctiveness, it will continue to produce content that educates, informs and entertains.

The BBC is at the heart of a socially and economically valuable national and international cultural ecology.

As recent statistics have shown, this is not a crowded sector but a growing sector¹. The BBC, like any organisation operating in this creative and fast-moving field, must adapt. This Charter Review is an opportunity for the BBC to connect and to support a far wider network of content providers, distributors and audiences and continue to develop new income streams and sustainable business practice. With public expenditure rightly under more scrutiny than ever before, it is vital that the BBC works in partnership with a wider variety of organisations and individuals.

However, considering that the BBC exists interdependently with commercial and non-commercial actors in a sector that has such a strong record on growth, employment and export, we would suggest that **any changes made to adjust the BBC's market position are made with extreme caution and on the basis of evidence**. The BBC enriches the market by creating and investing in content that the market does not. There is no better example of this than the irreplaceable role the BBC plays in the UK's cultural and creative ecology. The significance of this role can be measured economically –investment into original cultural content and employment - and its wider social, educational, intrinsic and value can be captured using a framework such as our 'holistic case'² that attempts to capture value across sectors and society. In this response we outline some of these: commissioning and talent development, training, research and development, investment in all art forms and education.

Furthermore, as DCMS prepares the White Paper on their vision and strategy for the cultural sectors, it is vital to consider the role that the BBC and other broadcasters could play in delivering this. Charter renewal is an 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.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-2015-focus-on>

² <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/value-arts-and-culture/advocacy-toolkit/holistic-case-our-story-and-key-messages/>

'Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK' is one of the BBC's six public purposes. Recent statistics have shown that music and the performing and visual arts have the greatest percentage increase in exports of any creative industries sector between 2012 and 2013, increasing by 22.7 per cent (£0.6bn in 2012 to £0.7bn in 2013)³.

This could be attributed in no small measure to the role of the BBC and its music offer. Similarly, the BBC's investment in radio and television drama develops audiences and artists for theatre and film in the UK and internationally. The BBC is both an invaluable cultural asset to the UK and a vital cultural diplomacy tool. BBC has an important role in taking the work of UK artists to new audiences abroad through the use of its international television and radio channels and websites, all of which are now funded through the licence fee. It is vital, then, that prior to any changes to the remit and operation of the BBC in response to Charter Renewal, there should be a thorough interrogation of the degree to which the role and impact the BBC has on the arts and creative industries in the UK - as well as our standing in the global creative industries - will be affected.

Research and digital innovation

We strongly believe that the BBC's capacity to undertake innovative research and development of digital products should not be reduced. Development spend at the BBC accounted for just over 2% of the 2014/2015 budget⁴. The BBC has a history and commitment in terms of driving innovative digital presentation and creation of cultural content and distribution. This is even more important as viewing and consumption patterns continue to change.

Similarly, in order to deliver its sixth public purpose, the BBC should be able to share and support new and existing technologies and collaborate with other public organisations in order to stimulate innovation and broader engagement with cultural content.

The BBC's research and development capacity to develop and back open platforms, facilitating the greater reach of other content providers, should not be put at risk.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-2015-focus-on>

⁴ <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/2014-15/bbc-annualreport-201415.pdf> pg 139 - total budget £3621.2m

We welcome the BBC's positioning of itself alongside other arts and cultural organisations and its conceptualising of public space in the digital era. We believe that the BBC can support the greater discoverability of arts content using its unique reach, marketing and cross-promotional power, not only to link to other public service content but to publish and promote content that reflects high quality and distinctive public service characteristics. This could lead to new joint editorial partnerships with other independent and editorially-led arts organisations, to create shared spaces within existing BBC online platforms and channels and help to bring the arts to wider public attention. Even the largest arts organisations cannot hope to achieve this level of discoverability on their own.

The BBC's proposed Ideas Service - in which the BBC becomes a platform for wider public service content - is a strong idea and commitment in helping the public to access, navigate and better understand arts and cultural content, stimulating the knowledge economy and providing journeys of discovery for everyone. The BBC's commitment to improving its partnership working will help deliver this exciting proposal. The BBC and Arts Council are collaborating on the Space project which is evolving in 2015 to become a commissioner of great art digitally, with commissions accessible on BBC platforms such as BBC Arts and iPlayer. The BBC's commitment to opening up iPlayer usage for arts organisations to stimulate greater consumption of cultural content from across the UK is also welcomed.

The BBC's role in commissioning new work and supporting talent development should continue and develop with increasing partnerships with the wider sector.

Commissioning and talent development

The BBC is a leading commissioner and promoter of new music, providing a range and diversity of music genres, and introducing new talent and music through initiatives such as BBC Introducing to bring new unsigned music acts to radio, television and online audiences. Similarly, partnerships with independent producers have had a beneficial effect on the BBC's programming, the economic health of the arts, cultural and creative sectors and the diversity and strength of Britain's programme and format exports.

As the largest investor in new UK programmes, the BBC invests substantially and develops new UK writing, directing, producing and acting talent alongside other arts organisations, broadcasters and independent production companies. The BBC

is a primary commissioner of new writers for television and radio with sustained investment in BBC Radio 3 and 4's original radio drama, readings and poetry. Radio 1xtra's spoken word talent development programme - in partnership with Arts Council England and the Roundhouse - is one example of how the BBC working in partnership can reach a wide cohort of diverse young writers and audiences across the country. Furthermore, it is an example of initiatives that can be a catalyst for longer term developments long after the broadcast/s. We have been working with the BBC on talent development for some time including a collaboration over seven years on our Diversity Talent programme Roots. We believe that closer working in partnership with arts development bodies, and organisations will significantly increase the impact of this work across art forms.

We also believe that 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. There is a need for greater internal coordination across the BBC to deliver the ambition of securing further regional arts and cultural representation on local and network platforms. In our view it is vital that entry points to culture can be located within regional arts coverage and reflect the diversity of the population on both regional and national platforms, to engage and stimulate the widest audience possible. Increasing cultural provision on local radio could bring artistic and cultural content to an even wider diversity of audiences. The strengths of the BBC's regional infrastructure in delivery of its wider creative and cultural purpose could be significant and provide a cost effective way of both supporting new talent and encouraging local cultural participation to drive quality and engagement.

Contribution to a sustainable and profitable music industry

The BBC's contribution to music in particular has been and continues to be extraordinary and of vital importance to UK music industry and wider sectors. The BBC has a leading role as a developer of exceptional talent across genres and we are delighted that the BBC is a partner on programmes initiated and supported by Arts Council England, such as Momentum Music Fund⁵. BBC Music Radio has consistently supported new ways for listeners to engage with a diversity of genres, as shown through initiatives like BBC 1xtra's Urban Prom 2013. The BBC is a major investor in the arts with six professional performing groups totalling over £28 million every year and employing around 450 full time musicians in its five orchestras. There is further opportunity to improve the quality and range of orchestral provision in this country if the BBC works more closely with the publicly funded orchestral sector.

⁵ <http://www.prsformusicfoundation.com/Funding/Momentum-Music-Fund>

In evolving its attitude to partnership working by broadening its partnerships with independent radio and television producers who generate content, the BBC should consider how to do so with non-BBC ensembles and orchestras. The BBC should not use its broadcaster status to restrict access to the schedules by non-BBC providers, particularly other publicly subsidised orchestras and ensembles.

Developing a skilled creative and creative media workforce

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 sectors⁶ 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 apprentices⁷. 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. The Arts Council and the BBC Academy also collaborated successfully on a three year Building Digital Capacity in the Arts Programme which helped over 300 arts professionals learn and develop digital content production skills. The BBC and Arts Council Space project has also seen BBC producers and mentors enabling arts organisations realise major arts media projects for broadcast and online publication. By the end of the current programme in 2018, it is hoped over 700 professionals and organisations will have benefitted, allowing them to become part of a new 'independent' sector of digital media and broadcast producers, co-commissioners and suppliers for the BBC, contributing to a sustainable, diverse and skilled creative and digital media workforce.

Education

The BBC, with its unique remit to inform, educate and entertain, provides significant public value in delivering the second element of its mission - to educate. The digital revolution means that children and young people are routinely directed to digital sources for information. The BBC has the opportunity to capitalise on its unique status as the 'go to' resource for school-aged children, investing in and developing its education programmes across the arts, so that every user, whatever their starting point, has the opportunity to pursue their interests.

⁶ http://blueprintfiles.s3.amazonaws.com/1370851494-A_Survey_Of_Theatre_Careers.pdf

⁷ <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/annualreport/pdf/2014-15/bbc-annualreport-201415.pdf>

The BBC is unique in being able to deliver high public value education programmes. This can be exemplified by the recently launched 'Ten Pieces' programme⁸, a nation-wide programme aiming to inspire primary school children through classical music. There are no comparable institutions nationally that could bring together such a range of stakeholders, delivery organisations, experts, composers and performers who will shape the content to be delivered through BBC platforms, including BBC Radio 3. We call on the BBC to consider how it will deliver more innovative educational initiatives such as Ten Pieces and embed more education throughout its programming.

The mission to educate, inform and entertain is shared between the BBC and public libraries. Since taking on the development role for libraries in 2012, the Arts Council has been able to improve partnership working with the BBC, which results in coordinated programming of activity that has local benefits across the country. An increase in the commissioning and broadcasting of arts and culture content would be a key component of fulfilling the BBC's mission to educate.

We are encouraged to see the BBC opening up to partners and better partnership working and we believe this can develop further.

Making partnerships work

The BBC has acknowledged challenges in its ability to work in partnership. It should review its progress continually in trying to become a more open and collaborative organisation.

The BBC's editorial policies have in the past sometimes impeded partnership working and encouraged less equal relationships. The issue of BBC editorial control and indeed funding credits when working with arts partners remain live concerns. Greater compromise and collaboration has to happen in this space, reflecting the changes of cultural production. The Arts Council has had experience of organisations receiving public funding and yet being unable to credit the source of that funding on a BBC programme. In the same way that the BBC expects the public to know that its brand represents content that it has funded, then it will be important for new public service content funders such as the Arts Council and arts organisations to be properly credited.

⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4KCVB2XVgPQ0JwnqLGJl8y0/about-bbc-ten-pieces>

It will be equally important for the contribution of tax-payer funding to be made transparent, without falling foul of sponsorship rules that are more appropriate for commercial players. We are looking forward to working with the BBC as more arts and cultural organisations become digital cultural producers, and commit to working together with the BBC to resolve issues around shared funding, editorial control, choice of platforms and accountability to realise its ambitions towards increased partnership working.

A potential partnership model

We noted a potential partnership model in our response to the select committee in 2013⁹ 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)¹⁰. 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.

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 could be considered for public service arts content/organisations.

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<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/ResponsetotheCultureMediaandSportInquiryintotheFutureoftheBBC-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/charter_agreement/bbcagreement_july06.pdf

The BBC's principles and public purposes

The BBC's current principles and purposes are robust and we do not believe that they need to fundamentally change. However, as noted in the guidance document, there is a need to clarify the expectations of the BBC's commitment to universality. We believe that public funding generates good value for money from the BBC's breadth of coverage. **We recommend a clarification of universality to enable the BBC to fully deliver its public purposes.**

To move forward, we need a wider definition of "public service" that moves beyond narrow arguments about whether certain shows are suitable investments for the licence fee. The BBC should continue to commission across all genres, ensuring at all times that a high quality, distinctive and risk-taking approach allows it to lead the market and drive innovation in arts and culture. Just as our mission is to deliver great art and culture for everyone, one of the BBC's core strengths is its universal quality and breadth of diverse cultural output for all audiences. Questioning this aspect of universality will have repercussions for how the BBC fully delivers the expectations of the licence fee.

The public principles set out what values the government thinks are important, and it is important to reconsider these as society changes. However, we support the breadth of these public purposes and the editorial independence this gives to the BBC to shape and deliver its provision. The work of the BBC is driven by the PSB characteristics set by Ofcom based on the Communications Act. Furthermore, we are confident that the proposed values outlined in the consultation guidance are embraced by the BBC in their approach to delivery and so do not need formalised. For example, we welcome and look forward to seeing the progress resulting from the BBC's commitment to diversity.

Reflecting the diversity of the UK's population and culture remains a challenge for all public institutions. The BBC, like the publicly funded arts and cultural sector, must continue to make this a top priority.

Diversity

Diversity is vital in 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 Diversity¹¹ and look forward to working with partners to support the talent and diversity in our sector and beyond.

We recommend that - in addition to the commendable measures Ofcom is currently undertaking to improve the diversity of representation in PSB¹² - a measure of diversity and representativeness is added to Ofcom's PSB characteristics to embed and measure diversity in PSB delivery across all operators. One of the four principles of public service broadcasting¹³, it is a shared challenge for all public service broadcasters to be accessible and to fully represent the diversity and alternative viewpoints of the whole of the UK.

We recommend that the BBC commissions, promotes and broadcasts a greater range of excellent arts and cultural content by working creatively with artists and arts and cultural organisations.

Content, coverage, genre mix and audiences

We and those across the creative industries and beyond respect the breadth of content that the BBC produces, commissions and broadcasts. Examples of this breadth are outlined in the consultation guidance. The BBC's universal offer delivers and broadens the cultural offer available to audiences across the UK. Recently, we have welcomed a new focus at the BBC on artistic and cultural content, with features like Artsnight and campaigns like Get Creative. As outlined in **British, Bold, Creative**, we welcome the proposal to create, for BBC 2, an "audience big and broad enough to attract and be a showcase for world-class creative talent, but never a place so big that audience share comes before innovation as the measure of success"¹⁴.

In the context of decreasing PSB spend on arts and cultural programming¹⁵, we call on the BBC to consolidate and build on the public's access to arts and culture by enshrining in service agreements for all channels access to

¹¹ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/diversity-and-creative-case/creative-case-diversity/>

¹² <http://media.ofcom.org.uk/news/2015/psb-review-statement/>

¹³ http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/reviews-investigations/psb-review/psb2015/PSB_Annual_Report_summary.pdf

¹⁴ <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/pdf/futureofthebbc2015.pdf>

¹⁵ http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/psb-review-3/statement/PSB_Review_3_Statement.pdf

high quality and distinctive cultural content. It is vital that arts and culture becomes part of the mainstream high quality offer that the BBC provides on its platforms, encouraging increased and sustained access beyond 'already engaged' audiences and specialist platforms. The BBC, with its national reach and public trust, can increase the arts and cultural offer for all audiences.

Moving forward, there will be greater possibilities for the BBC to promote, co-commission and broadcast a wider range of the excellent arts and cultural content being produced by and with the wider arts and cultural sector. It remains true that currently **only a fraction of the publicly funded arts in England have featured or feature on BBC platforms.** The BBC has the opportunity to take arts and cultural programming to audiences of all ages and backgrounds by utilising the full spectrum of its platforms, As well as increasing opportunities for the broadcast of the arts, there is significant creative potential to commission and co-develop new work and new ways of working across BBC platforms. This will have mutual benefits for the BBC and the wider arts and cultural sector, strengthening the quality, variety and diversity of the BBC's programming, benefitting audiences and supporting talent development and innovation.

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