

## **MEDIA BILL BRIEFING NOTE**

This briefing provides an overview of concerns about the Media Bill voiced by VLV and its associate organisations in the Citizens Public Media Forum. (for organisations see below)

### **1. The PSB Remit**

While we welcome the inclusion of a new clause in the Bill to require a ‘range of appropriate genres’ from the Public Service Broadcasters, we still believe their status and the continued provision of PSM would benefit from a more specific definition.

We recommend that:

- I. In addition to the provisions already in the Bill the PSB remit should include objectives for providing education, entertainment, arts and UK cultural content, science, matters of international significance, religion and specialist interests as recommended by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee. These services should maintain high general standards with respect to the quality of programming- making and the professional skill and editorial integrity applied in the making of the programmes.
- II. New PSB objectives for media literacy and workforce diversity should be introduced.
- III. Ofcom’s powers to hold PSBs to account for making insufficient contributions to the public service remit should be strengthened, as recommended by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee.

### **2. Discoverability of PSB content.**

We hold that all PSB content should remain universally available and easily discoverable.

We recommend that greater clarification is required on the face of the Bill regarding audiovisual content being ‘made available’ and ‘easily discoverable’ so that PSB content cannot be ‘buried’ on online VOD platforms. We also recommend that the PSBs and platforms should be required to disclose the algorithms they employ to promote PSB content to Ofcom. This would increase transparency around prominence to ensure better PSB accountability.

### **3. Strengthen impartiality regulation**

We are concerned that Ofcom, rather than Parliament, has the power to decide which content should be duly impartial. Ofcom’s existing Broadcasting Code is confusing and has led to current controversies over impartiality regulation.

We recommend that it should be defined in legislation which output, both on live TV and on-demand platforms, should be regulated for due impartiality and accuracy, rather than leaving these judgements to Ofcom’s discretion.

### **4. Channel 4’s founding mission as an innovative, risk-taking publisher-broadcaster**

We welcome the increase in Channel 4's independent production quota to 35% but we believe that Channel 4's founding mission to support new and emerging independent producers should be reiterated and reinforced in the Media Bill.

We recommend the introduction of a new 'SME Guarantee' in Channel 4's commissioning quotas, requiring that a significant proportion of its commissioning spend goes to producers with annual turnovers under £25m.

## **5. Radio provision**

While digital platforms are growing in popularity, we want to see continuing regulatory support for audiences who continue to listen to content on FM and AM platforms. We also want to see better protections for community radio and small-independent providers, serving minority audiences, in Part 6 of the Bill, to ensure that audiences will continue to be able to access these in future.

We recommend that the changes in the Bill meaning Ofcom will no longer be required to ensure a diversity of national analogue stations or a range and diversity of local analogue services should be reconsidered.

## **Signatories**

Better Media  
Decentered Media  
The British Broadcasting Challenge  
The Campaign for the Arts  
The Children's Media Foundation  
The International Broadcasting Trust  
The Media Reform Coalition  
The Sandford St Martin Trust  
The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity  
The Voice of the Listener & Viewer  
The National Council of Women of Great Britain

<https://bettermedia.uk/>

<https://decentered.co.uk/>

<https://britishbroadcastingchallenge.com/>

<https://www.campaignforthearts.org/>

<https://www.thechildrensmediafoundation.org/>

<https://www.ibt.org.uk/>

<https://www.mediareform.org.uk/>

<https://sandfordawards.org.uk/>

<https://ukccd.org/>

<https://www.ncwgb.org>

<https://www.vlv.org.uk/>

**Public Service Media is ours - the public's**

**We should be able to voice our concerns about its development & provide input to government.**

**They should be transparent in the way it is funded & regulated.**

**We have set up the Citizens' Public Service Media Forum to ensure that citizens' interests are met when media policy is developed.**

**This is especially important NOW with the Media Bill, currently being considered in Parliament.**

**Our members believe that citizens interests should be properly represented in the debate over PSM. We want regulation to ensure that media provision provides public value, meeting the needs of citizens, now & in the future.**

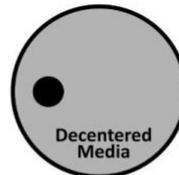
**This is critical if we are to have access to accurate & impartial information, a range of content which reflects UK culture, issues of interest, both local & national, & meets our democratic needs.**



CAMPAIGN  
FOR THE ARTS



international  
broadcasting  
trust



The Children's Media  
FOUNDATION



The Sandford  
St Martin Trust



National  
Council of  
Women GB  
For a fair and  
inclusive society



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity



**Voice of the  
Listener & Viewer**

**Citizens' Forum for Public Service Media**