



## **UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity**

### **Submission to the Culture, Media, Sport Select Committee BBC Royal Charter Review**

March 2026

*The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity is a not-for-profit, civil society organisation supporting the implementation of UNESCO's 2005 Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions. We are the national representative of The International Federation IFCCD) which represents the interests of over 700 cultural and creator organisations. We monitor national cultural policy and advise the UK National Commission, government, civil society and creator organisations.*

#### **1. STRENGTHENING THE BBC CONSTITUTIONALLY AS THE GUARANTOR OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CITIZEN'S CULTURAL RIGHTS**

The BBC conforms with and fulfils UK's international obligations on sustaining diversity of cultural expressions and our cultural rights according to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The UN Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2002 and UNESCO's Convention, 2005.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005 underpins nation states' rights to take measures aimed at enhancing the diversity of the media, including through public service broadcasting.

The UKCCD responds to this submission as the lead civil society organisation contributing to the implementation of the UNESCO Convention in the UK.

There is explicit mention of public service broadcasting in the Convention as a measure for enhancing diversity of media and as an enabler of promoting and protecting the diversity of cultural expression.

In this regard, the BBC, the oldest public service organisation, has taken pioneering initiatives to promote diversity in the corporation's employment, programming, audiences, strategy and business planning, with the goal of becoming a true reflection of the nations and regions it serves. In this it

promotes equal citizenship, democracy and serves the different nations and communities that make up the UK.

The BBC is a unique public broadcaster, the most respected in the UK and across the world and paid for and owned by every citizen in the UK.

At a time of the enormous fragmentation of media and domination of online media by non-British players, (in some cases 20 times the size of the BBC), it facilitates a common conversation between all citizens and the UK's diverse communities thus strengthening social cohesion and mutual understanding.

The BBC's investment in original programming, with no necessary commercial considerations, remains the bedrock of investment in the whole of our UK audio-visual industry.

## **2. CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNING WITH A PERMANENT CHARTER**

To continue to fulfil our obligations under the international conventions mentioned above it is crucial that the BBC is underpinned by :

A Permanent Royal Charter establishing the BBC in perpetuity and enshrining its independence. This would prevent unnecessary political interference in its future. This would increase public trust in the BBC as citizens would know that the BBC was not subject to ongoing political pressure.

## **3. FUNDING SHOULD BE PROGRESSIVE**

Any future system of funding should be progressive and ensure a consistent level of funding necessary for the BBC to provide the wide diverse range of local programming and services it currently provides.

It should remedy the effect of previous cuts to the licence fee. In line with the experience of other countries like Germany and Norway, consideration must be given to replacing the existing licence fee with a progressive universal Household Licence Fee or levy.

The funding system for the BBC should also be independent from any political interference from the government of the day. This can be done by transferring the oversight of the BBC remit and the financial resources needed to deliver this to an independent organisation established with a specific mission. This would not only set out the financial needs of the BBC, but also act to regulate, on an annual basis, to ensure that public money is being invested in the right areas.

#### **4. DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

The BBC belongs to UK citizens. Citizen's Assemblies should be invited to play a part in deliberations on the future of the BBC to increase accountability and engagement with the public.

#### **5. COUNTERING DISINFORMATION**

Reliable impartial information is essential for democracy. False information is being weaponised to destabilise democracies. The BBC must continue to be charged with countering disinformation as a core public purpose in its permanent charter.

#### **6. BBC AS A PAN EUROPEAN ACTOR**

The BBC also has a potential role to play in providing cross-border provision of public service audio-visual programmes and services in the European context at a time when non-European SVOD services are fast becoming available across the continent. The BBC should consider developing a Pan-European SVOD platform to carry BBC material and that of other channels and creators whilst simultaneously gathering commercial revenue for further investment in original programming.

#### **7. BBC'S LEAD ROLE IN SKILLS/TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

BBC output - factual and drama - continues to offer opportunity to develop skills and for directors, screenwriters and producers to keep their hand in when commissions are limited, and significantly for women. The BBC has traditionally evolved innovative material through providing strands that draw on local stories from marginalised and diverse communities encouraging experiment in low budget production from new voices. This role should be acknowledged and safeguarded in an environment where the suggestion to commercial streamers that 1% of net profits should be invested in training as a voluntary contribution has been largely ignored.

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