

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
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Dear Sirs

Your BBC Say

I picked up a copy of the above leaflet in my local library and was most interested in its contents.

What do you value most about the BBC?

I value the BBC mainly for the services provided by Radios 2, 3 and 4 which, for the most part, are of the same high standard as they have been during my lifetime. (I am 52). I value Radio 2 for the vast range of lighter music which it broadcasts, I value Radio 3 for the many live orchestral broadcasts and the annual season of relays from the Metropolitan Opera New York on Saturday afternoons, magnificently presented by Peter Allen and I value Radio 4 for news, dramas and comedies. I tend to listen to the news on Radio 4 rather than Radio Scotland as I prefer to hear the national viewpoint.

How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology and culture?

I do not feel qualified to comment on this.

What do you think of the television, radio and online services the BBC provides?

I look at the BBC's Website Regularly and it is superb. I have already commented favourably on your radio programmes. I am less happy with the quality of television programmes where there still seems to be too much reliance on "reality" programmes. Sports coverage remains excellent and drama is improving.

I am particularly unhappy with the service provided by BBC 2 which, at times, is virtually indistinguishable from BBC 1. BBC2 programmes are often repeated on BBC1 and vice versa. I would single out Friday nights as an example of this. BBC 2 used/

used to provide a succession of excellent comedies on Friday nights including the panel game "Have I Got News for You". These programmes are now shown at approximately the same time on BBC1. BBC 1 has recently taken to showing Arts programmes, e.g. a documentary on the Brontes, a programme more suited to BBC2. sometimes shows Arts Programmes which belong more appropriately on BBC2. Worst of all, BBC 2 sometimes appears to act as an "overflow" to BBC1 with reality TV programmes, cookery, gardening, all of which type of programmes are also shown on BBC1.

I would like to see the restoration of BBC2 as a "quality" channel the way it was in the early seventies when, I think, David Attenborough was in charge. The BBC should, as far as possible, cater for the tastes of **all** license payers not just the majority. BBC2 should be used to cater for minorities covering the Arts – Opera, Theatre, Dance, classical serials, etc.

I feel that too many television programmes appear to be targeted mainly at the under 35's and pretty unintelligent under 35's at that!

Finally on the subject of television please may we have films of better quality and more imaginatively chosen e.g in the afternoon films featuring particular actors or particular themes (I remember many years ago a film series called "The Angry Screen" which included social dramas as "The Grapes of Wrath", "The Snake Pit" – a study of mental illness - and "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang").

Should the BBC run commercial services?

I fully support the commercial services provided: the Radio Times is a quite outstanding publication and I already possess many BBC videos both of classic drama and comedy series.

How should we pay for the BBC?

The license fee is very unfair: I know there are concessions but poverty in this country is not limited to the elderly. Also as I explained above TV caters for too narrow an age group. Why give a free TV license to the over 75's when there is practically nothing for them to watch?

Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way?

I regret that I do not have sufficient knowledge of the structure of the BBC to answer the question re this.

How should the BBC be run? How should it be regulated?

The BBC must be politically neutral. It should neither support ^{nor} ~~or~~ oppose the government or any other party. The position of a BBC journalist is different from that of/

of a newspaper journalist. The duty of a newspaper journalist is to his editor. The duty of a BBC journalist is to the public – all of them. I am concerned about the BBC's habit of giving jobs to politicians both current and ex, mostly Conservative MP's and known Conservative supporters (I don't care whether they are just presenting record programmes or not). David Frost, Andrew Neil, Michael Portillo, Kenneth Clarke, Edwina Currie and now Amanda Platell.

With regard to your final question I am grateful for this opportunity to put forward my views as all the public has is "Points of View" and the Radio Times letters page.

Yours sincerely

Ronald J Byrne
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