

1. Do you agree that securing plural sources of impartial news for the Nations, locally and in the regions should be a key priority?

Yes	
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

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2. Do you agree that sustainable, impartial news in the Nations, locally and in the regions is likely to require some top-up public funding?

Yes	
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

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3. Do you agree that the Television Licence Fee should be used to support impartial news in the Nations, locally and in the regions in addition to BBC services?

Yes	
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

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4. Do you agree that any funding within a contained contestable element of the television licence fee not required for impartial news should potentially be available to fund other forms of essential public service content, or should such funding be limited to news?

Yes	Yes
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

Save Kids' TV has long campaigned for funding for an alternative public service content provider beyond the BBC, which now has a near-monopoly on children's content commissioning in the UK.

UK-based content for our kids is vital for their appropriate development and their

engagement with British society and cultural values. Children have the right to hear their own voices, see their own lives and experience their own stories. With the collapse of commercial public service commissioning, this right is being severely curtailed. Plurality of supply, to ensure that content is varied, vibrant and creatively competitive is as essential in the children's sector as in any other. While there are a large number of channels providing content for children in the UK, almost none of it is commissioned here.

Hence the Save Kids' TV proposition that an alternative service provider for children aged primarily 6-10 be set up to deliver commissioned programmes, user-generated content, educational games, and a community for UK kids to celebrate, criticise, rate, share and enjoy their media. A full description of the proposed service is attached to this submission. Our proposition envisages an organisation which seeks funding from a variety of sources, but which also requires core funding from the government and we believe that a proportion of contained contestable funding not used for regional news should be directed to this project in this range:

Year 1: £34m

Year 2: £22m

Year 3: £21m

Year 4: £19m

Year 5: £18m

Such funding would provide the backbone for a service which can realistically compete with the BBC in the delivery of professionally-produced long-form content via video-on-demand, plus a range of interactive and participatory services which would future-proof the service against the rapid changes which are taking place in children's media consumption. The service would ally with a broadcaster or several to provide the cross-promotion on television still required to ensure wide audience reach and uptake.

With that in mind, Save Kids' TV also endorses Channel 4's plans to provide a service for 10 - 16's and would support any proposal for Channel 4 to access contained contestable funding to pay for that service. Channel 4 are well placed to serve this older children's audience given their experience in the youth market, and provided that they appoint a dedicated commissioning head with responsibility for older children /younger teens they have all the ability to make such a service a success.

The Save Kids' TV proposition has broad support in the media sector and amongst cultural campaigners for children in the UK. Some supporters are listed in our proposition document.

Save Kids' TV now feels it is time this proposal be taken to the next logical stage in its development. If consideration is being given to pilots for regional news services delivered by consortia, then the same consideration should be given to a pilot children's service, to be launched as soon as possible.

We would suggest that a priority for the DCMS plan to stimulate employment in the creative industries should be the highly successful TV and interactive sectors providing content for kids. The children's media sector has an enviable record in export, and while the service we propose will primarily be aimed at the UK market, the stimulus these commissions will bring will allow companies the breathing space to also focus on the international market and seek co-production funding for other projects.

We appreciate that pilot projects for regional news consortia are simpler to set up than the children's proposition. Whereas the regional pilots are of necessity limited by location and can therefore be targeted initially at specific areas, the children's proposal is national, with major set-up costs loaded at launch. However we do not feel this should disqualify the children's service. The children's pilot could be limited to 3 years initially, which would allow enough time for the service to commission programming of quality and range, gain an audience and display its public service purposes.

Our proposal to the DCMS is that a pilot children's VOD service be set out for tender as a matter of some urgency. It should be as high a priority as regional news. We would respectfully suggest that the Save Kids' TV proposition as outlined in some detail in our attached document could form the basis of the brief for this tender - thus a significant portion of the development work has already been completed. We would propose that a model such as that used for the Teachers TV tendering and re-tendering process be used, with a professional media consultancy brought in to create and operate the tender process and set up evaluation and governance. Save Kids' TV would be willing to continue to advise on this process and to recommend supporters with a range of experience in children's media and welfare to sit on an advisory steering group. Consortia of interactive and television-based companies, allied to cultural and educational organisations would be invited to pitch to run the service over the three-year pilot life.

We believe passionately that the time has come for action rather than further words of support. Ofcom have made perfectly clear the crisis in provision of children's PSB content which was said to have been the "canary in the coalmine" for the rest of commercial PSB. The Digital Britain Report has supported the now general understanding that something needs to be done.

"Kids' TV has been in the vanguard of the collapse of public service broadcasting in the UK. Now it needs to be in the vanguard of the solution..."
Anna Home (Chair, Save Kids' TV)

5. Are there alternative funding mechanisms that you believe would deliver the above objectives more effectively?

Yes	
No	No

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

Alternative funding methods which complement government funding are explored in the Save Kids' TV proposal document attached. They include development funding from foundations, Lottery funding, ethical advertising and sponsorship. However on investigation in depth it is clear that these cannot be expected to provide anything like the necessary funding required to commission programmes

and provide a comprehensive service across the age-ranges. The collapse in advertising revenue is after all the cause of the current crisis in the first place.

Contained contestable funding will clearly be required if the children's service is to be anything other than an ineffective token.

6. Do you agree with the proposal to set a maximum percentage of Television Licence Fee revenue which could be set aside as a contained contestable element?

Yes	Yes
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

Save Kids' TV is concerned that the contained contestable funding model is the only method the DCMS think viable to produce the additional funding needed to maintain public service content in the digital age.

We have up to now been reluctant to support apportioning any part of the licence fee to non-BBC purposes because we have felt that cuts in the BBC's income would inevitably impact on programme budgets - particular the budgets which are almost always cut first - children's programmes. (Especially in a scenario where a competitor organisation is set up using the licence fee funds).

Our fear was that in the final analysis the same amount of money would be devoted to children's content as previously - but it would simply be split between the BBC, Channel 4 and a new service operator. This would clearly be a disaster as it does not restore the level of commissioning which prevailed when advertising revenues were still strong.

However if a proportion of the licence fee previously dedicated to digital switchover is the only viable means of obtaining government funding for a new children's service, we reluctantly accept the proposal because the new service, and the plurality it ensures, are so vitally needed.

We therefore agree with the proposal that to maintain the BBC's independence the maximum percentage of the licence fee predicated for the contained contestable fund be set and adhered to for the lifetime of each BBC agreement

7. Do you agree that amending the BBC Agreement could provide the necessary protection to the BBC's future funding and independence?

Yes	
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

8. Do you agree that the use of any contained contestable element within the Television Licence Fee should be restricted to the public purposes set out in the BBC Charter?

Yes	Yes
No	

Comment (max. 4000 characters)

Save Kids' TV supports this element of the proposal, not least because the BBC's Public Purposes are completely in tune with the aims Save Kids' TV have outlined for their digital children's service proposal.

The service was conceived precisely because we are concerned about children's disenfranchisement(sustaining citizenship and civil society)

- about the lack of quality educational and inspirational programming currently available (promoting education and learning)

- about the need to offer children a place for their own content and their own creativity, and the very best their culture has to offer (stimulating creativity and cultural excellence)

- it is a UK-centric proposition (representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities)

- we feel it is vital for children to be confident about themselves and their place in their home community to allow them to appreciate the wider world. The service would offer this in a range of ways(bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK)

Finally it is clear that the interactive, on-demand and community aspects of the proposal are designed to draw children to new ways of viewing and relating to content in the digital sphere (...helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services...)