

BCR 09

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
Ymchwiliad i'r Adolygiad o Siarter y BBC
Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review
Ymateb gan: Creative Skillset Cymru
Response from: Creative Skillset Cymru

Response to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committees' Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review



Please find below Creative Skillset Cymru's response to the Welsh Assembly Communities, Equality and Local Government Committees' Inquiry into the BBC Charter Review (October 2015)

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Creative Skillset Cymru empowers the Creative Industries to develop skills and talent; it does this by influencing and shaping policy, ensuring quality and by securing the vital investment for individuals to become the best in their field and for businesses to grow. As the industry skills body for the creative industries, it works across film, television, radio, fashion and textiles, animation, games, visual effects, publishing, advertising, marketing communications and performing arts. www.creativeskillset.org .

The Creative Skillset Cymru Industry National Advisory Board, is responsible for strategically overseeing all of Creative Skillset Cymru's work and brings all parts of the industry together – from the three major broadcasters, the independent production sector, the trade union BECTU, trade associations such as TAC and PACT, sector support agencies such as Ffilm Cymru Wales, and the Welsh Government – to support Creative Skillset Cymru's mission to lead the Welsh Creative Industries' skills and talent drive and vision for the Welsh Creative Industries to be world-beating.

Context of our response

Our response is focused on aspects of BBC's Charter Review that relate to its commitment to training and how that relates to the BBC's future plans and ambitions.

Responding to the Welsh Assembly review questions

The future provision of the BBC's services in Wales, in both the English and Welsh languages:

The BBC continues to provide high quality services. Going forward we would like the BBC to take an active role in providing more innovative bi-lingual content too. As with quality original content, the making of innovative programmes will also depend on the people who develop the idea, commission and deliver. This implies a more diverse workforce operating both within the BBC and the independent production sector, who could provide new ideas and be encouraged to take risks.

Fostering a culture of innovation is interlinked with fostering the people that can deliver. Quality programming pre-supposes people with honed skills and talent – therefore training and skilling and taking risks is at the heart of encouraging and enabling innovation.

By its own admission¹, the BBC feels that more could be done to increase diversity in its output and satisfy the needs of its national audiences². In particular, for the UK nations and English regions, the BBC has identified areas of improvement; we also note that the BBC has asked for additional investment on this beyond its current settlement. We would like to add that investment should also be provided for training to ensure that people and talent from Wales are supported. We want to ensure that the BBC is truly representative of all parts of the UK, with more commissioning and production from all the nations and regions.

Over the years, the BBC has been a key training ground for the industry – many of our most successful programme makers and media executives began their careers at the corporation. The UK has a proud track record of producing people with skills and talent envied across the world and the BBC has played a big part in that. It has also given emerging talent a platform, as a commissioner and producer. Not to be underestimated within this context is also the work of the BBC Films (both short films and features).

The BBC has historically invested substantially in training its own staff and, in doing so, has been an incubator of talent for the wider creative industries. The importance of this role has been recognised by the BBC Trust, which has recently published a report acknowledging the BBC's "critical role in developing and supplying new talent to the media sector in the UK", and claiming, for example that "45 per cent of ITV's current talent for factual, lifestyle, entertainment, and comedy had their first TV appearance on the BBC."³

Training is an area where the BBC continues to have a wider impact. For example, over the last few years BBC Wales has enthusiastically embraced the Apprenticeship agenda. In its Roath Lock centre in Wales, the BBC's biggest TV drama production facility in the UK, BBC Cymru Wales in partnership with Creative Skillset Cymru introduced the first Apprenticeships available to the creative industries here back in 2011. The broadcasters' involvement has set a high standard of good practice for the rest of the production community; approximately 85% of Apprentices secure employment after completion of the qualification, while the remainder continue with their education.

The BBC's potential for positive impact includes collaboratively working with Creative Skillset and others to build the right training programmes, adding its brand to schemes that benefit the whole of the creative sector.

For example, with Creative Skillset securing public co-investment, the BBC led the creation of the higher-level Apprenticeship in Broadcast Technology, a new degree-level Apprenticeship, the first of its kind, developed with the University of Salford and Birmingham City University. The BBC worked closely with the wider industry to understand

¹ British Bold Creative: The BBC's programmes and services in the next Charter, September 2015.

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-31895836>

³ A Review of the BBC's Arrangements for Managing On-Screen and On-Air Talent, BBC Trust/O&O 2015

the knowledge, skills and experience new Broadcast Technology Engineer Apprentices should gain. This first intake started in 2013 and will be finishing in 2016 across the UK, including Wales. The skills required by broadcast engineers are changing as new technologies emerge and it is important that the BBC, together with the broadcasting industry, are responsive.

We believe a new public purpose to support training and skills development across the creative media industries is of relevance and importance to ensure the continuation of such initiatives. We are concerned as we have seen worrying trends in recent years with the BBC's investment in training for its own staff markedly declining, partly as a consequence of the 2010 licence fee settlement. This reduced investment in training will have a negative impact in the future with increased skills shortages and gaps in the wider creative media industry.

We also think that the BBC Film budget, especially for short films, should be maintained as it provides a key training ground and also can support emerging filmmakers from Wales.

The BBC's current and future funding, governance and accountability arrangements as they relate to Wales:

Creative Skillset has expressed its views on aspects of the BBC Charter renewal in the past, including providing evidence to the Select Culture Media and Sport Committee's inquiry on the Future of the BBC. The Committee's subsequent report made reference to our evidence, which was also published in the report's appendix. We were pleased to see that the Committee had reviewed this evidence carefully and made the following recommendation:

[[The Future of the BBC paragraph 49:](#)]

"Given the BBC's vital contribution to training and development of talent and skills in the UK's creative media industries and in journalism, we believe this function should be reflected in the BBC's core public purposes. Similarly, we believe that the success of a future public BBC will depend on its ability and willingness to collaborate and work in partnership with others at all levels to maximise its public value and that of others. The necessity for collaborative engagement should be enshrined in the BBC's public purposes."

We support this recommendation in the context of Charter review and propose that the BBC has a **new public purpose to support training and skills development across creative media**, which working in partnership with industry:

- includes recruitment of new entrants and the ongoing skills development of the workforce;
- is focused on training and developing the skills base of both BBC staff and the wider industry across the UK;
- is measured on both proportionality of investment and outcomes achieved.

The BBC is a driving force for the UK's creative economy. As a major public intervention in the creative economy, the BBC has a key role in supporting the growth of the UK's creative industries. This is particularly important given the sector's significant reliance on freelancers who would not otherwise have access to the training they need to develop their careers. It is strongly in the BBC's own interest to ensure that we have production sector capable of delivering the range of quality network content which the BBC requires.

In this time of cutbacks, and given the current pressures on the budgets of all UK broadcasters, we ask for training not to be disproportionately cut as it was before. We strongly believe that the imperative of growing skills and talent outside of London requires a greater, additional commitment of funding than before and that the BBC should reassess the scale of the challenge which lies in ensuring that the skills base and size of the production sectors in the Nations, and especially here in Wales, are 'fit for purpose'.

In this respect, we believe that the BBC should have a new public purpose to support training and skills development across creative media in its role as a public service broadcaster, as a significant driver of creativity, the creator/commissioner of content, and as a global brand upholding quality. Training is key to enabling and achieving greater diversity within the creative media industries.

Making this one of the Corporation's core public purposes will only help ensure that the BBC treats training as a priority during a period when it will be making tough decisions about how to invest licence fee income. It will also support the BBC's expressed commitment to its identified three priorities as a Public Service Broadcaster: "Modernising services; Content investment; Devolution and Diversity".

BBC's investment in films – particularly short films – also provides vital development and production support for the Welsh independent film sector, and we think it should be maintained. With the remit of the other key public film funder, Film4, shifting towards more commercially-orientated investments, the BBC's ability to invest in risk-taking, including support for new and emerging filmmakers, is ever more crucial.

Creative Skillset values the partnership we have developed with the BBC here in Wales and across the UK. We want to continue that partnership in the next Charter period with clarity about the BBC's commitment towards training for the wider creative media industries. We want the BBC to work closely with Creative Skillset on a strategy that enables the industry here and across the UK to strengthen its skills and talent base and so enhance productivity and remain competitive.

The BBC Trust is currently considering a new public purpose on the BBC's contribution to the creative economy – a wider scope than envisaged in the recommendation from the Select Committee's report, but one that includes working collaboratively on training and talent development. Whilst we welcome that, a specific public purpose to support training and skills development will provide a clear remit for the BBC which could be effectively monitored and assessed.

S4C's future, including its funding, operating and governance arrangements, and the services it provides:

S4C has a particularly constructive relationship with Creative Skillset Cymru to support the skills and training needs of companies and freelancers operating within the creative industries in Wales. It has always been committed to developing skills and talent in the industry, and makes a significant contribution to training provision within the sector.

Moreover, S4C has shown consistent leadership in this area, realising that investment in our skills and talent base is the only way we can build that future of increased competitiveness and growth we want for the Creative Industries in here.

Creative Skillset Cymru's track record of leveraging money from Europe and other sources has had a significant impact on the investment in skills. For example, S4C and TACs investment of £785,000 over the lifetime of the Skills for the Digital Economy Programme

(2010-2015) secured match funding of £3,600,000, which represented a five-fold premium on S4C's investment. This led to the training of over 1,000 people within the creative industries in Wales. With reduced budgets, this partnership and co-investment model has obviously paid great dividends. Working in partnership is crucial in securing value for money.

Under the terms of the licence fee settlement of October 2010, responsibility for the majority of S4C funding transferred from the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to the BBC Trust through the licence fee, with a reduction in funding equivalent to 36%. This led to a reduction in S4C's investment in Creative Skillset Cymru's Skills for the Digital Economy Programme (2010-2015) – a programme which brought large scale skills and training initiatives to the sector in Wales. With further budgetary cuts looming, we hope that this will not impact on S4C's commitment to skills and training in the future.

We would like the S4C Authority, to consider in its scrutiny role S4C's contribution to the development of talent and skills for the creative media industries in Wales. This role should mirror the scrutiny role of the BBC Trust against the public service commitments of the BBC towards supporting training and talent development for the whole of the creative media workforce. While being independent entities, both these bodies (S4C Authority and BBC Trust) have a parallel role and could jointly examine whether there is enough commitment and investment towards building a highly skilled and competitive creative media workforce in Wales.

How Wales's interests are being represented during the renewal process:

The UK Government has committed to the three devolved administrations having clear, agreed and equal roles in developing the new BBC Charter and we welcome this move. These powers will ensure that the BBC has governance, management and funding structures which reflect the needs of Wales and better support the development, production and delivery of content from the nations and regions. A key aspect of this partnership is to:

“push the BBC to take a more representative approach to commissioning, talent development and production from and for all the nations and region”.

We fully support this proposition and look forward to collaborating with both government, the BBC and S4C to take this forward.