

Cristina Nicolotti Squires
Group Director for Broadcasting and Media
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

27 February 2025

Dear Ms Nicolotti Squires,

Objections to Proposals in Ofcom's Consultation on Revised PSB Commissioning Codes of Practice

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposals set out in Ofcom's current consultation on the Revised Guidance for Public Service Broadcasters on Commissioning Codes of Practice. I believe that the proposed removal of prohibitions on 'matching rights' and linking conditional offers to the bundling of primary and secondary rights will pose a significant threat to the financial health and sustainability of the UK's independent production sector, and ultimately, to the diversity and quality of UK public service broadcasting.

The proposals will drastically shift the balance of negotiating power in favour of the PSBs, squeezing independent producers and hindering their ability to retain and exploit their intellectual property. The result will be a decline in diverse supply and reduced working capital for SMEs, stifling innovation in the UK content market and ultimately restricting the range of content available to PSB commissioners and viewers.

In our business we focus on scripted programming and over the last 5 years we have found it harder to raise the finance to make programmes. The ability to exploit our secondary rights is vital and if broadcasters have the ability to last matching rights we would not get the required funding for our drama projects as distributors would not bother to enter into negotiation over rights if the broadcaster can step in and acquire the rights for what they offer. I would worry about the sustainability of our company as we would see a marked reduction in the amount of programming we could make.

On bundling the vast majority of producers will be under immense pressure to acquiesce to this “request” as they will be concerned that if they don’t agree they may not get the commission and that someone else will. This will weaken the sector immensely.

Overall these changes could lead to a 'warehousing' of rights by broadcasters, limiting the availability of content to audiences and stifling innovation within the sector.

I strongly urge Ofcom to maintain the existing safeguards that protect independent producers that also ensure a fair and competitive market. I believe that a strong and vibrant independent production sector is essential for the continued success of public service broadcasting in the UK. Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TS' with a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Sealey
Chief Operating Officer