



House of Commons
Culture, Media and Sport
Committee

**Public service content:
Response from Ofcom
to the Committee's
First Report of Session
2007–08**

**First Special Report of Session
2007–08**

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The Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

Mr John Whittingdale MP (*Conservative, Maldon and East Chelmsford*)
[Chairman]

Janet Anderson MP (*Labour, Rossendale and Darwen*)

Mr Philip Davies MP (*Conservative, Shipley*)

Mr Nigel Evans MP (*Conservative, Ribble Valley*)

Paul Farrelly MP (*Labour, Newcastle-under-Lyme*)

Mr Mike Hall MP (*Labour, Weaver Vale*)

Alan Keen MP (*Labour, Feltham and Heston*)

Rosemary McKenna MP (*Labour, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East*)

Adam Price MP (*Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr*)

Mr Adrian Sanders MP (*Liberal Democrat, Torbay*)

Helen Southworth MP (*Labour, Warrington South*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/culture__media_and_sport.cfm

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Kenneth Fox (Clerk), Martin Gaunt (Second Clerk), Daniel Dyball (Committee Specialist), Lisa Wrobel/Anna Watkins (Committee Assistant), Rowena Macdonald (Secretary), Jim Hudson (Senior Office Clerk) and Laura Humble (Media Officer).

Contacts

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First Special Report

Public service content

1. On 15 November 2007, the Committee published its First Report of Session 2007–08, on Public Service Content.¹ The Committee has now received a response from Ofcom, which we publish below as an appendix. The Government response is being published separately as a Command Paper.

¹ HC 36-I, Session 2007–08.

Appendix 1: Letter from the Chief Executive of Ofcom to the Chairman of the Committee

It is, I know, customary to provide a response within two months to reports from Select Committees. I hope you will appreciate why, in this instance, I am sending this brief interim note in response to your Committee's thought-provoking report on Public Service Content. The report expressed the hope that it "will help inform both Ofcom and the Government's policy processes". We are grateful to the Committee and can assure you that the report will help inform the next phase of our work.

We have, as you know, brought forward our second statutory review of Public Service Broadcasting, reflecting in no small part the pace of change referred to in the report. We propose to publish the first phase of the Review, seeking views on our analysis of prospects for the future, in the spring.

The Committee makes a number of specific recommendations that Ofcom is examining closely as part of this review process, and for which we have commissioned, or will be commissioning, specific research. Specifically, we have a programme underway to assess the necessary levels of plurality (paragraph 42), as well as an assessment of future provision of children's content (paragraph 86), regional material (paragraph 107) and other public service genres (paragraph 141), and whether there will be a need for further public service intervention in those areas.

When the findings of this research become available we would be happy to offer the Committee a briefing on the conclusions if you would find that useful.

Radio will not specifically form part of the PSB Review (since the Communications Act requirements focus on public service television broadcasting). But since the publication of your Committee's report, Ofcom has published a policy statement and further consultation setting out our plans for relaxing the regulation of analogue commercial radio, to enable stations better to deliver the range and diversity of services that listeners demand. We also made recommendations to Government for relaxing the radio ownership rules to allow for further consolidation while protecting plurality, and we intend to play an active role in the Digital Radio Working Group which has been established to explore radio's digital future. Our proposals to relax the regulation of localness in commercial radio have recently been the subject of a further consultation. In general we received a positive response to the consultation, including support from 16 Members of Parliament and we hope to publish our conclusions on this issue very shortly.

14 January 2008

List of Reports from the Committee since 2005

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2005–06

First Special Report	Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships: Replies to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2004-05	HC 358
First Report	Broadcasting Rights for Cricket	HC 720
Second Report	Analogue Switch-off	HC 650 I, II
Third Report	Preserving and Protecting our Heritage	HC 912 I, II, III
Fourth Report	Women's Football	HC 1357

Session 2006–07

First Report	Work of the Committee in 2006	HC 234
Second Report	London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: funding and legacy	HC 69 I, II
Third Report	Call TV quiz shows	HC 72
Fourth Report	Call TV quiz shows: Joint response from Ofcom and ICSTIS to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2006-07	HC 428
Fifth Report	New Media and the creative industries	HC 509 I, II
Sixth Report	Caring for our collections	HC 176 I, II
Seventh Report	Self-regulation of the press	HC 375

Session 2007–08

First Report	Public service content	HC 36 I, II
Second Report	Ticket touting	HC 202
Third Report	Work of the Committee in 2007	HC 234
Fourth Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07	HC 235
Fifth Report	On-course horserace betting	HC 37