

# Consultation launched on potential change of ownership of Channel 4

Press release

The public and interested parties are being asked to contribute their views on the potential change of ownership of the Channel Four Television Corporation (Channel 4).



- Will consider a change of ownership of Channel 4 to ensure its future success and sustainability
- Views and evidence provided will be taken into account before a final decision is made
- Responses will feed into the government's ongoing review of public service broadcasting

Today the government has launched a [public consultation](#) on the future ownership of Channel 4, as part of the government's review of public service broadcasting. The consultation will consider both the ownership and remit of Channel 4.

The current strength and variety of the UK's TV production sector is in part thanks to the role of Channel 4 which the government wants to protect. However, the fast evolving media landscape, with increased competition and changing audience habits, is posing serious challenges to traditional 'linear' TV broadcasters, which means it is now time to review its ownership structure.

The government wants to preserve Channel 4's status as a public service broadcaster producing original, distinctive content as well as high quality news and current affairs serving every corner of the country.

It believes private-sector ownership of Channel 4 and a change to its remit could enable it to thrive in the decades to come as a successful and sustainable public service broadcaster.

Private ownership could benefit Channel 4 by enabling it to access new capital and diversify its income streams to give it a greater and more

resilient financial base from which to invest in new technology, content and programming. It could also help the broadcaster form new strategic partnerships and reach international markets.

The government is seeking views and supporting evidence on what the economic, social and cultural costs and benefits could be if it were to release Channel 4 from the constraints of public ownership.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The media world has changed immeasurably since Channel 4's creation in the early 1980s, but whilst we have more choice today the need for a strong and successful Channel 4 continues.

So in the face of rising global competition, now is the right time to strengthen UK public service broadcasters and consider releasing Channel 4 from the constraints of public ownership, enabling it to thrive for the next 40 years and beyond.

All responses received as part of the consultation will be carefully analysed before the government publishes its response and sets out next steps.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors:**

- The [consultation](#) will last for 10 weeks and closes on 14th September 2021 at 23:45
- At present Channel 4 is entirely commercially funded, but it has been publicly-owned since it began broadcasting in 1982.
- The UK's system of public service broadcasting (PSB) is the result of a series of regulatory interventions designed to make sure UK audiences can enjoy a wide range of high-quality programmes which meet people's needs and interests. There is no single piece of legislation covering public service broadcasting, but the Communications Act 2003 provides many of the key building blocks. For example, it designates certain broadcasters as 'public service broadcasters' – the BBC, ITV, STV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and S4C.
- In November 2020 the government announced that it was bringing together a [Public Service Broadcasting Advisory Panel](#) made up of experts from broadcasting and other related sectors. The panel will support the government in taking forward the recommendations in the reports from both the House of Lords Communications Committee and the DCMS Select Committee, as well as Ofcom's PSB Review.
- The government will publish a broadcasting white paper due in the autumn which will consider the future of the country's broadcasting landscape with the ultimate aim of making sure it serves listeners and viewers on all platforms and across the UK.
- The White Paper will also be influenced by Ofcom's ongoing PSB review, the government's own strategic PSB review as well as the recommendations

of the Digital Radio And Audio Review which will report this summer.

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