

# Press release: £60 million boost to UK children's television

The Government's response to the consultation on the Contestable Fund, sets out proposals for up to £60 million to be made available for content creators to receive up to 50 per cent of the production and distribution costs of original TV shows.

The fund is still in development, but would be available for content broadcast on commercial Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs), as well as for other free and widely available channels and on-demand platforms, and potentially also online.

Over the past decade the output of children's television from PSBs in the UK has been in decline, with spending falling by £55m. This investment will aim to help reverse that trend and is the first of its kind to specifically focus on children's television.

The pilot is also aimed at stimulating greater variety in a market where the BBC is often the dominant buyer and broadcaster of children's content. In 2016, the BBC accounted for 87% of all first run UK originated children's programming by PSBs.

The pilot is intended to complement other measures taken by government in this area, including the introduction of a children's TV tax break and new powers given to Ofcom.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

High quality children's television is not only entertaining but plays a vital role in stimulating learning and giving young people a greater understanding of the world around them.

This significant investment will give our world-renowned television production sector the boost it needs to create innovative content for a wider audience that would otherwise not be made.

Anna Home OBE, Chair of the Children's Media Foundation said:

The Children's Media Foundation welcomes the confirmation that the new Contestable Content Fund will focus on the children's audience. It's a much-needed stimulus for the UK's children's media makers and we hope it will bring new and exciting content for children of all ages that could not otherwise have been commissioned.

John McVay, Chief Executive of PACT said:

Pact has long campaigned for increased investment in original children's content to incentivise new entrants to the market. This along with the introduction of the PSB criteria through the Digital Economy Act, will encourage the commercial PSBs back to the table and foster new talent.

The cash will be distributed over three years as part of a pilot starting in 2019. Programmes from new and diverse backgrounds, and those made in the nations and regions, will be a particular focus.

The funding for the pilot has been made available as a result of unspent funds from the previous licence fee settlement.

The BFI has been provisionally appointed as administrator for the fund, and will work with government on its final design, including whether the fund should include other genres in its scope.

## Notes to Editors

- A detailed policy paper will be published in 2018 setting out how the fund will work, with the first awards distributed from the beginning of 2019/20.
- In the BBC Charter White Paper (May 2016), the government committed to establish a pilot contestable fund for public service broadcasting content. The consultation on the pilot contestable fund closed in February 2017. The government has today publishing its initial response to the consultation: [Public Service Broadcasting Contestable Fund: Pilot Phase](#).
- The UK's public service broadcasters are the BBC, ITV 1, Channel 4, Channel 5 and S4C.
- [PACT](#) is the trade association representing the commercial interests of UK independent television, film, digital, children's and animation media companies.
- The government gave Ofcom powers, through the Digital Economy Act 2017, to introduce children's content quotas on commercial public service broadcasters should it see fit. Ofcom launched a review of children's content in November 2017: [Children's Content Review](#). Ofcom intends to publish its findings, alongside any proposed regulatory measures, in summer 2018.
- The government extended the tax relief for animation and high-end TV programmes to UK children's programmes in 2014.
- [Ofcom's PSB Annual Research Report 2017](#)