Dear Lord Hall,

BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18: Equal Pay at the BBC

As you will have seen, we published our report BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18: Equal Pay at the BBC on Thursday 25 October. We are assuming that the Corporation is working on a response to the report. We would expect to receive this in the same timeframe as government responses to select committees are submitted, within eight weeks. This takes us to 20 December.

Members of the Committee wished me to pass on that they are continuing to receive reports from BBC staff that they are very unhappy about equal pay issues and issues arising from PSCs. We ourselves were disappointed at the BBC management press comment after publication, particularly the assertion that much of our report was “already out of date.” This is patently untrue. You also commented that “recent disclosures by other media organisations show that the BBC’s gender pay gap is amongst the smallest and well below the national average.” As we stated in the report, a smaller gender pay gap by no means precludes equal pay issues. We would appreciate your reassurance that you fully appreciate this point.

We anticipate a full response to our report, in the form of a memorandum, that deals with each recommendation in turn (again, in line with government responses to select committee reports.) We remain particularly concerned about the number of outstanding grievances, and draw your attention to Recommendation 22 of our report seeking a timescale for the point at which all grievances will be resolved.
The BBC submitted supplementary written evidence on 23 October. We have several specific questions relating to the letter detailing the Cliff Richard case. First, have you received a reply to your letter to the Attorney General and, if so, are you able to let us have a copy? Second, in questioning in Salford, the panel said they had not conducted an internal review as to whether the reporting on the police action at Sir Cliff’s home had followed the BBC’s Editorial Guidelines. We found that somewhat surprising. Your views on the court judgement notwithstanding, could you let us know whether you consider Guidelines had been breached at all, and if so in which respects? Third, you also said a new version of the Guidelines was due to be published shortly. Do you have a date?

We look forward to receiving your response.

Best wishes,


DAMIAN COLLINS MP
CHAIR, DCMS COMMITTEE