



HOUSE OF LORDS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

BBC governance and regulation

The House of Lords Select Committee on Communications is announcing today an inquiry into the governance and regulation of the BBC.

In 2005, the House of Lords Communications Committee contributed to the debate around the review of the BBC's Royal Charter and published a report of its findings, details of which are available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldbbsc.htm> It has now been five years since the last review of the BBC Charter and the establishment of the BBC Trust. Given the forthcoming change in the Chairmanship of the BBC Trust and Lord Patten's stated plan to review the relationship between the Trust and the Executive and the Trust and Ofcom in the near future this inquiry will consider the role of the BBC Trust.

The Committee would particularly welcome written submissions on the following issues:

1) Are the BBC Trust's duties clear and its tasks the right ones?

- a. Is the current allocation of duties sufficiently clear, defined, transparent and well understood?
- b. The BBC Trust is now responsible for both the Executive's internal governance and for some of its regulation (including some matters which Ofcom regulates for all other broadcasters). Could the Trust's regulatory responsibilities be better allocated elsewhere? Do other bodies have responsibilities and duties which could advantageously be transferred to the Trust?
- c. In particular the regulation of BBC content is divided between the BBC Trust and Ofcom and the procedures for the handling of complaints overlap. Could these arrangements be improved?

2) Is the BBC Trust sufficiently independent?

- a. Is the BBC Trust independent of Government?
- b. Is the BBC Trust sufficiently independent of the BBC Executive?

3) How effective are the BBC Trust's processes?

- a. Does the Trust have sufficient oversight of BBC management?
- b. How effective and transparent is the Public Value Test in assessing proposals for new BBC services?
- c. How well does the system of review of existing BBC services by the BBC Trust work?

- d. Could the working relationships between the BBC Trust and the BBC Executive Board be improved to the benefit of licence payers and its audience?

4) Is the BBC Trust sufficiently accountable?

- a. Does the BBC Trust deliver its responsibilities to licence fee payers to ensure that the BBC delivers value for money?
- b. Is the Trust's accountability to Parliament adequate?

5) How could the governance and regulation of the BBC be improved in the short and long term?

- a. Do you have suggestions to improve the governance and regulation of the BBC within the existing Charter arrangements until 2016?
- b. Do you have suggestions to improve the governance and regulation of the BBC beyond 2016?

10 March 2011

GUIDANCE FOR THOSE SUBMITTING WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Submissions should be sent to:

Audrey Nelson

Select Committee on Communications

House of Lords

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and preferably also as an email attachment in Word to: holcommunications@parliament.uk

The deadline for submitting written evidence is 6 April 2011.

Please ensure that you include relevant contact details. Evidence should be attributed and dated, with a note of your name and position, and should state whether it is submitted on an individual or corporate basis.

Short submissions of 6 pages or fewer are preferred; longer submissions should include a summary. Evidence sent as hard copy should be clearly printed or typed on single sides of A4 paper, unstapled. Paragraphs should be numbered. If drawings or charts are included, we ask that these are black-and-white and of camera-ready quality.

Evidence becomes the property of the Committee, and may be printed or circulated by the Committee. You may publish your evidence yourself, but in doing so you should indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. The Committee may invite some of those who submit written evidence to give oral evidence, usually in public at Westminster. Transcripts will be published.

You can follow the inquiry via the Committee web pages, accessed from:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/communications-committee/>

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.