

## **Campaign for Broadcasting Equality CIO comments on Ofcom Proposed Annual Plan 2018/19**

### **Diversity**

This response relates to what Ofcom reported at Ofcom's Annual Plan 2018/19 Stakeholder Event in London on 10 January 2018, rather than to a section or paragraph in the proposed plan.

The Campaign for Broadcasting Equality (CBE) is impressed with the increased scope and depth of Ofcom's plans to advance diversity, reported at the Stakeholder Event.

### **Ofcom Diversity Summit on Effectiveness**

Ofcom has announced that in the spring, it will hold its first diversity summit to get a better understanding of what measures are effective.

At the London stakeholder event, Sharon White made it clear that Ofcom was at an initial stage of considering the nature of this event and suggested that it might just be a private event with the heads of the main public service broadcasters and Sky, with no published outcome.

In October 2000, at the launch of the Cultural Diversity Network, the BBC, ITV, Carlton Television, Granada Media, GMTV, ITN, Channel 4, Channel 5 and BSkyB each produced an action plan, with employment targets and commitment to increase BAME numbers off-screen and on. Broadcasters now have 17 years of experience on which to draw.

In preparation for the Ofcom Diversity Summit, Ofcom should be asking the broadcasters how they measured the effectiveness of the different elements in these and subsequent diversity action plans and initiatives. Ofcom should publish the outcome in advance of the summit.

After the summit, a report on the outcome of the summit should be published.

At the stakeholder event, it became clear that Ofcom works cooperatively with the National Audit Office. It should ask the NAO to review the value for money of the BBC diversity initiatives.

### **Ring Fenced Funding**

Ofcom has said "The BBC is free to set ring fenced funding for diverse production if it wishes. However, we would be concerned if this led to diversity being marginalised or restricted to certain departments or programmes. We expect to see all of the BBC's programmes making a contribution to promoting diversity and the wider cultural change that is required for the BBC to deliver its mission and public purposes on diversity. We consider that requiring the BBC to implement a new commissioning Code of Practice will bring about material improvements to the diversity of BBC productions right across the board, and not limited to certain productions."

We must hope that Ofcom's optimism on the effectiveness of the new Code of Practice driving material, rather than marginal, improvements is not misplaced.

Nevertheless, Ofcom should consider how ring fenced funding could be applied most effectively to drive diversity so that "ring fenced" funding is an available option if other interventions have proved to be inadequate,

### **Programme Diversity Data**

Ofcom is concerned about diversity being marginalized or restricted to certain departments or programmes. It should require and publish programme diversity from broadcasters to provide transparency on the extent to which diversity is marginalized.

### **Extending Ofcom's scope on employment diversity**

Ofcom should identify areas where it lacks the powers to be an effective regulator on broadcasting diversity and discuss with DCMS how these powers might be extended.

Independent production provides an increasing proportion of programme supply. Ofcom says it does not have the power to monitor diversity in the independent sector and in external supply.

With diversity champions, Matt Hancock and Margo James at DCMS, as Secretary of State and Minister of State respectively, Ofcom might find an open door for extending its powers on diversity to enable it to become a more effective regulator.