

*I am writing in response to Ofcom's consultation on its review of regional TV production and programming guidance. I am disappointed that on-screen talent is excluded from the criteria for a production to qualify as regional.*

*I've been an actor and Equity member for over 40 years and have lived outside London for 30. There is an abundance of talent in the regions and nations which is being disadvantaged by a London-centric approach.*

*My experience has been that on screen casting has always been London-centric but that some on screen regional casting has developed over recent years, in Manchester in particular. However, as London has become an unlikely option for young actors due to unaffordable rents and the impossibility of buying a home, many, many actors have moved out. You would think, that being the case, that on screen casting would have reflected this change by doing more regional casting. Not so. In fact, it seems to me the opposite has occurred.*

*This is both problematical and discriminatory. On screen casting is beginning to reflect a smaller and less representative pool of actors. I've actually heard directors bemoan the 'lack of working class actors'. Of course! Working class actors in the main are unable to live in London. If those directors and casting directors were obliged to look to the regions for regionally-based projects they would find as many young and older working class actors as they could possibly need. London-centric artistes think in London-centric ways. In my opinion they need to be more firmly guided to think outside the London box. This is unlikely to happen 'naturally' and therefore I urge you to include on-screen talent in the criteria for a production to qualify as regional.*

*As a northern-based actor I find it particularly galling, by the way, to pay travel costs to audition in London for productions which qualify as regional. If casters do audition locally, they pay London-based actors' travel costs. This is a historical injustice which needs to be addressed and it sums up a historical snobbery about 'London' versus 'regional' actors. This needs to change if screen drama is to reflect the society we live in.*

*There are notable exceptions amongst the casting directors and producers - Kahleen Crawford, Beverley Keogh, for example, who genuinely seek out northern actors for dramas based in the north but I'm sorry to say they're the exception.*

*Please re-consider your decision and encourage a change to a more open and inclusive approach.*

*Yours faithfully*

*Kate Rutter*