

Your response

Question 1: Which factors have, since the guidance was introduced in 2004, had the biggest impact (positive or negative) on the TV production sector in the nations and regions and why? Are these different to the factors affecting London-based productions?

Confidential? N

From a North West perspective there has definitely been a significant increase in productions made in the region since the 2004 criteria were implemented.

Unfortunately, with regard to drama the vast majority of these projects are still gravitating back to London for post production finishing. Whilst a small number of regional drama producers have stayed loyal to 'local' talent, the vast majority of commissions are still being given to London/SW based production companies who all prefer to take the craft finishing back to London.

The main reason for this southward drift, is that all the senior production executives and the broadcast commissioners are still based in and around London and I believe it is just easier for them to stay close to home once the shoot has concluded. As a result the bulk of the highly skilled finishing work is completed in the south.

The popular term for this behaviour is 'shoot and run'.

<p>Question 2: What impact, if any, has the BBC's move to Salford had on the sector, and on regional production specifically?</p>	<p>Confidential? N</p> <p>The BBC's move to Salford did result in a large increase in the volume of post production work coming to the North West, particularly in Childrens and Sport. Unfortunately as with the 2004 guidance, this did not have any significant effect on the established regional post production sector. The BBC did a deal with the developer, and their landlords at Mediacity, Peel Holdings, guaranteeing levels of studio business which was tied up in a minimum annual guarantee (MAG). When it was realised that the agreed studio utilisation levels could not be met then a MAG plus deal was agreed which included a vast chunk of post production work that had been destined for the local market.</p> <p>The problem with giving one company such a large contract is that this does not give the recipient any incentive to train and nurture local talent, conversely it is simply an arrangement that incentivises the recipient to simply do what is specified in the contract.</p>
<p>Question 3: Do the opportunities for nations' and regions' producers vary by genre? If so in which genres is it easiest and hardest to get commissions?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>It appears that drama is by far and away the most difficult genre for local producers to get commissioned. Currently drama production is dominated by London based companies.</p>
<p>Question 4: What are stakeholders' views on the impact anticipated future structural changes in the industry might have on the production sector in the nations and regions?</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/N</p>
<p>Question 5: In your experience does the definition of a substantive base work well in practice? If not, how could it be improved?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>No.</p> <p>There are hardly any companies with substantive bases in the North West. In a recent survey of broadcast production companies there were 22 businesses working in the region, of those only 3 had what could be considered substantive bases in the north west.</p>

<p>Question 6: Does the criterion currently contribute to the objective to strengthen regional production? If so how, if not why not?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N NO The substantive base criterion is largely ignored by London production companies. They use the old 2004 criteria of 70% of production budget and 50% production talent to ensure that they can work in London for all the programs finishing work.</p>
<p>Question 7: Are there any circumstances in which an office designated as the usual place of employment of senior or executive personnel should not be considered a substantive base? If yes, please provide further explanation.</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/N</p>
<p>Question 8: Does this criterion currently create any unintended consequences?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N Not really because it is largely ignored.</p>
<p>Question 9: We would welcome any information/examples from production companies on the range and roles of staff in production offices outside of London.</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/N</p>
<p>Question 10: Do producers tend to share space in the nations and regions in order to expand and contract in line with their commissioning slate and thus to help with costs/efficiencies?</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/N</p>

<p>Question 11: Is the production budget criterion set at the right level?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>The 70% of the production budget is not now justifiable at this level, if its aim is to truly develop the skill base in the nations' and regions'.</p> <p>The 70% of production budget and 50% production talent were set to reflect the market in 2004, it does not in any way reflect the situation in 2018. The national talent base has grown exponentially and the 70% and 50% criteria now need to be amended upwards.</p> <p>This criterion is continually exploited by London based producers as the reason why programs have to be finished in London, "oh the commissioner wants us to use this colourist or that dubbing mixer at this facility" in reality it is used to ensure executives can stay in their own homes whilst finishing their projects.</p> <p>Any increase of the 70% would be welcome but the drive to develop regional talent has to come from the broadcasters and their commissioners. if regional production is really to give economic benefit, the broadcasters have to drive the initiative by insisting that projects are shot and finished in the Nations and Regions.</p>
<p>Question 12: What challenges do producers face in meeting this criterion? Do these differ dependent on the substantive base of the production?</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y/N</p>
<p>Question 13: Does this criterion currently create any unintended consequences?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>It is preventing key areas of creative talent being trained and nurtured in the regions.</p>

<p>Question 14: We welcome any evidence/data of how production budgets for nations' and regions' productions work in practice.</p>	<p>Confidential? – Y [X]</p>
<p>Question 15: Is the off-screen talent criteria set at the right level?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N As with the 70% production budget spend, the 50% of off screen talent, again, is a historic figure set to reflect the available talent map in 2004. There is now a very good spread of talent across the country and the 50% figure could easily be increased to reflect this.</p>
<p>Question 16: How easy or difficult is it for programme makers to fulfil the current criterion?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N It is not difficult if program makers are prepared to utilise experienced local talent and are prepared to use technological advances offering quality remote viewing.</p>
<p>Question 17: Is there a representative spread of nations' and regions' talent at all levels available to hire? Are there certain roles where it is not possible to fill roles from the nations and regions alone? If yes, which roles and what impact does this have on production budgets?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N Most definitely the talent is available in the Nations' and regions' the problem comes from production companies preferring to use talent close to home, usually in London. Interestingly, BBC Childrens department which is based and has its commissioning team in Salford produces the vast majority of its content locally and is more than happy to use local talent for all types of programming, including drama.</p>

<p>Question 18: Do broadcasters give producers the flexibility to employ the staff they want regardless of location?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N. In the document accompanying this Review, in section 4.12 one stakeholder warned that the 70% production budget spend was already difficult to achieve ‘particularly if the commissioners stipulate the use of particular London based staff and facilities’ So allegedly it is the broadcasters themselves who prevent local talent being used! If true this must be simple for Ofcom to rectify.</p>
<p>Question 19: Which roles, if any, are most often prescribed by the broadcaster? Does this vary by genre?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N Apparently, In post production, the roles most often prescribed are the finishing roles, the jobs at the very end of the production process when the broadcaster and the production company executives are involved in final viewings. Surely in this age of file based delivery and viewings over IP it must be possible for remote viewings to happen thereby allowing the finishing work to be completed in the Nations and Regions.</p>
<p>Question 20: Does this criterion currently create any perverse incentives?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N I do not believe that the current criterion creates perverse incentives, rather that it is used as an excuse to ensure that southern based production companies can work close to home. It does seem strange however that local drama productions and BBC Childrens dramas can be filmed, edited and finished in the region.</p>
<p>Question 21: We welcome any evidence to suggest whether the distribution of off-screen talent and the range of skills available has changed since this level was set in 2004.</p>	<p>Confidential? – N The 2004 levels were set to reflect the availability of regional talent, since then the national and regional skills pool has expanded exponentially. As I mentioned in my answer to Question 14 in the last four years 34 productions have been shot in local sound stages, only 6 of these were post produced in the region where they were shot, and these were all made by local production companies. The rest, made by production companies from outside the region, were taken back London when filming was completed. How is it that local companies can make drama for PSB’s and BBC Childrens drama can be completed in the regions, but projects made by southern based production companies either can not or will not stay locally to finish their projects?</p>

<p>Question 22: Are the three criteria used to define a regional production for the purposes of the quotas the correct ones or are there other factors that should now be included instead/ as well?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N I believe that the criteria are as good as anything but the percentages need to be adjusted to make it even more compelling for productions to be completed regionally. I also feel that the criteria must be much more rigorously policed.</p>
<p>Question 23: How well do the criteria collectively contribute towards the sustainability of the production sector outside of the M25?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N The criteria have helped sustainability and I believe that was the intention in 2004. It is now 2018 it is time to move on from the original reasoning, to take regional production and post production to the next level. ALL production companies, wherever their home may be should be made/encouraged to support production talent in the nations and regions.</p>
<p>Question 24: Are there any unintended consequences of the criteria or guidance more widely that undermine the sustainability of the sector beyond the M25?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N I do not think that it was the intention in 2004 to create an environment that allowed producers of to simply not finish projects regionally but that is what has happened. The vast majority of high profile projects shoot in the North are completed in the South, preventing the development of regional post production opportunities and talent development.</p>
<p>Question 25: Are the criteria too narrow? For example, are there cases of nations' and regions' productions that fail ultimately to qualify towards the regional production quota?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N No, the criteria are not the problem, in fact if the percentages should be adjusted up, to reflect how the regional capabilities have grown in the last 14 years.</p>
<p>Question 26: Is the criteria-based approach the best for regulation in this area, or are other models that might work better?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N I am confident that the criteria will work if the PSB's via their commissioners ensure that regional production is a priority and that it happens where it is supposed to.</p>
<p>Question 27: In your experience how big a role does London play in nations' and regions' productions and in what way?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N London still has a huge impact on nations' and regions' production. There are still only 3 large, London based, Independent production companies with bases in the north, despite ITV and BBC having a large presence locally. You only need to look at the regional drama productions shot in local studios, almost 80% were made by London production companies. It is fair to say that London is dominating the regional drama market.</p>

Question 28: What benefits/disbenefits do you consider 'Lift and Shift' production brings to the nations and regions? We would welcome case studies/examples of 'Lift and Shift' productions.	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 29: Does 'Lift and Shift' help or hinder the sustainability of production in the locality of a production and in the nations and regions more widely?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 30: Are there different parts of the production process which are more likely to happen in/out of London?	Confidential? – N Yes. Filming in the regions, post production in London.
Question 31: We would be interested in receiving evidence or case studies from stakeholders which could develop our understanding of the contribution that regional productions currently make to representation and portrayal of the nations and regions in order to gain a sense of the scale of this consequential benefit.	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 32: Does the process by which productions are allocated to a nation or macro-region work well in practice, or are there any other approaches you think we should consider instead? E.g. allocating proportions of one title to the different areas in which it was made.	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 33: Where a production has met the three criteria in different nations/ macro-regions the allocation defaults to the substantive base. Is this the right approach or does it deliver unintended consequences?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 34: Is there anything else we need to take into consideration here? E.g. are the current nations and macro-regions the right areas to use for allocations?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 35: Are the on-screen criteria used to judge regionality appropriate, or are there other factors that should now be included instead/ as well?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 36: Are the three criteria used to determine whether a regional programme was made in the area for which the service is provided appropriate, or are there other factors that should now be included instead/ as well?	Confidential? – Y/N They are appropriate and if the percentages can reflect 2018 regional capabilities then the only other requirement is serious policing.

Question 37: Are there any other aspects of the regional programming section of the guidance which require more detailed review?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 38: What is useful about the current 'Made outside London programme titles register' and why?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 39: Are there ways in which the Register could be improved? If yes, how?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 40: Is there additional information which could be included in the Register to aid transparency?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 41: Are there any other ways in which we could improve the transparency of our reporting?	Confidential? – Y/N
Question 42: Are there other issues stemming from the guidance that are not addressed in this Call for Evidence? If yes, please set out what they are.	Confidential? – Y/N

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