

I do think it's important that the criteria are tightened up around regional production and that the, near ubiquitous, working of the system is less easy to get away with.

However, in addition to arguments about economic value and work opportunities, I think there is another dimension that the public service broadcasters, specifically, need to address.

I've been in extensive dialogue with the BBC and C4 around supporting talent development initiatives that are led and operated in the North – but the same would go for other areas.

In the US, the PBS system has specific entities/ slots such as Black Public Media (<https://blackpublicmedia.org/>) and <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/>

They are empowered to encourage independent and alternative voices and support creative diversity. In my view, the major channels should work with separate, devolved entities, placed outside of the capital, that actually are empowered to commission and produce content. Currently this is not the role that C4 Nations and Regions plays and save for the handful of Inside Out slots there is a complete lack of BBC regional commissioning.

To support true diversity of output, there needs to be an empowering brief, which, once set/ agreed, is not controlled and dictated centrally, that creates a space for a creativity which will serve a cultural purpose – as well as boosting and supporting the economic/ employment agenda.

We work specifically in documentaries and are in the process of finalising a project with the BBC called 'Northern Docs' that will, to a certain extent address some of these issues. This has taken 2 years of dialogue and extensive stakeholder engagement. However, I hope this and other initiatives can really boost a more diversified engagement with media production in the UK.

It is my view that there should be a certain compulsion/ commitment to have to support and encourage such devolved initiatives and that a degree of creative control/ production decision making in different spaces is handed over to different areas within the UK. This is not just about having regionally based commissioners but having projects and individuals empowered with decision making to support the specific mission of promoting alternative regional/ cultural voices.

Guaranteed spend, guaranteed slots, guaranteed broadcast – and a clearly defined brief that specifically is aimed to support creative diversity and operated outside of London. It would make a big difference and really boost the out of London creative eco system in a more fundamental way.

I have attached some research we conducted around people's attitudes towards documentary production in the North.