

## Your response

Question	Your response
<p><b>Question 1:</b> Do you have any comments on Ofcom's proposed Work Plan for 2025/26?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>The Scottish Government welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to Ofcom’s proposed Work Plan for 2025/26. The following comments cover broadcasting and wider creative industries interests.</p> <p>The Scottish Government strongly supports broadcasting and the important role that the distinct and essential services provided by broadcasters have in Scotland, in relation to our audiences and the creative sector. We value Ofcom’s initiatives to improve and support public service media and ensure that everyone in the UK feels represented in the programmes they watch and listen to.</p> <p>The Scottish Government welcomes the ongoing work by Ofcom to implement the Media Act 2024 and will continue to engage with Ofcom as this progresses. We have a strong interest in Ofcom’s plans for the next Public Service Media review and we will be keen to continue engaging on this to ensure that the interests of Scottish audiences and our creative industries are recognised and appropriately reflected in this important piece of work.</p> <p>The Scottish Government fully supports Ofcom’s priority to ensure audiences can continue to access a variety of broadcast media and are protected against harmful content. As the proposed plan sets out, it is particularly important that audiences are able to find and access a plurality of news that is duly accurate, duly impartial and trusted. As the Scottish Government continues to make clear, we believe that local news is high priority, and we agree with Ofcom’s findings from Ofcom’s final report from the review of local media in the UK, which sets out its valuable role in the lives of people across the UK and in society more broadly. Local news provides a vital</p>

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	<p>source of up-to-date news and information for local audiences in Scotland's diverse communities, and helps to support local democracy and hold power to account. There is a risk that regional specificity in broadcasting is reducing and the Scottish Government has been clear on, and will continue to champion, the importance of local news. As Ofcom is aware, we were concerned by the changes to the BBC licence regarding its news provision in Scotland. We understand that Ofcom will pay particular attention to how the BBC says it is going to meet Scotland's audiences' needs for news in its next Annual Plan. The Scottish Government will continue to engage with Ofcom and the BBC to hear how plans are taken forward and to ensure that Scottish audiences receive the best possible service under these changes.</p> <p>Ofcom states that it seeks to achieve the outcome that 'audiences can watch and listen to public service content which is produced across the UK and reflects its diversity'. The Scottish Government strongly believes that broadcasting media should deliver for each part of the UK, with an appropriately reflective and authentic representation for Scottish audiences. As set out in past years, this is partly built upon the diversity of the creative sector, and we are keen to ensure that plans for improving diversity of the creative sector in Scotland are clearly set out.</p> <p>The Scottish Government appreciates specific reference to Gaelic language content and the important role of MG ALBA in the Plan of Work. However, as we have previously stated, we would welcome a much broader reference to help address the imbalance that is evident in the consideration given to Gaelic compared to Welsh. As we have said in previous years, it would be helpful to recognise the needs and challenges facing MG ALBA.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has a strong interest in the role of the BBC in supporting the creative economy across the whole of the UK and we will continue to press for the BBC to do more so that it can make a positive impact for audiences through distinctive content which reflects,</p>

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	<p>represents and serves the Scottish people, and supports our thriving creative economy, including through Scotland-based commissioning, which is essential to support our screen sector to its fullest potential.</p> <p>As Ofcom is aware, the Scottish Government, and our dedicated public agency for the screen sector, Screen Scotland, is concerned that meaningfully Scottish, and Scotland-based, production, is not adequately prioritised by our Public Service Broadcasters. We are clear that more could be done by the PSBs – and Ofcom as the regulator – to support authentically Scottish productions, and Scotland-based screen and broadcasting professionals who choose to build careers here. We are hopeful that the actions outlined in your Plan of Work will help the PSBs to make progress towards the spirit, as well as the letter, of meaningful and diverse regional commissioning and production in Scotland.</p> <p>The Scottish Government strongly believes that broadcasters need to be genuinely representing the whole of the UK, and a robust, publicly funded BBC is a vital part of the ecosystem which maintains investment in Scottish-produced content, develops Scottish talent and companies, and supports our creative industries more widely. We welcome the continued commitment in the proposed Plan of Work to holding the BBC to account for how it delivers its Mission and Public Purposes across its public services across the nations, and Ofcom’s second Periodic Review of the BBC before the BBC Charter ends in December 2027. In Ofcom’s review of the BBC’s performance and relevance to UK audiences, we expect close consideration of its role in Scotland, in particular to ensure that Scottish industry, and audiences, are properly represented and the BBC performance is delivering genuine benefits for our creative economy.</p>

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