

**David Emson**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I would like to respond to the review of how the nations, regions and diverse communities of the UK are represented and portrayed in BBC TV programmes.

I live in Worcestershire very near to the West Midland conurbation. In my opinion, and that of many others in our region, we in the Midland region are massively under represented by the BBC, indeed ignored might be a more accurate description.

As to the question of how we are portrayed in BBC TV programmes, this is very easy to answer since people from our region, or actors playing Midlanders in drama productions are rarely seen on BBC television programmes.

Tune in to any BBC channel on any night (or day) of the week and you will be sure to hear many people with London/South East/South of England accents, either members of the public, presenters, or actors within a drama. The same applies when it comes to the North of England, especially the North West, and to a lesser degree Scotland.

Many people in the Midland region believe that the BBC have little or no interest in including people from our region or to produce programmes with a Midland "flavour".

If anyone doubts these claims I would suggest that they sit in front of a television set to watch any BBC channel with an A4 pad and note how many times they watch programme after programme dominated by accents from a number of regions within the UK and compare that to the number of times any Midland accent is heard.

This state of affairs is largely due to the BBCs appalling decision to close the Pebble Mill Studios in Birmingham many years ago, thus signalling, in a very graphic way, their lack of interest in our region. Since that time they have regularly moved programmes from Birmingham to other regions and have also reduced their investment in our region

on a consistent basis.

If you look at the BBCs own figures for reinvestment in the regions/nations within the UK, London and the South East receives almost 50% of the total amount. The South of England receives 7.5% and the North receives almost 20%.

I'm no great mathematician but even I can work out that these three regions receive approximately 75% of the total of reinvestment funding from the Corporation.

The BBC is reliant on the licence fee payers of the UK and everyone with a television is required to pay the licence fee, whether they watch BBC programmes or not.

If the Midland Region was a sparsely populated area the Corporation would easily be able to use this as justification for the shamefully small amount of reinvestment in our region, which currently stands at 1.5%. Compare that to London's 50% (almost) and the 20% (almost) allocated to the North. However, as I'm sure you are aware the Midland Region is the BBCs largest region by population, having 25% of the total population of the UK within it's borders.

Hardly an even handed or fair distribution of financial support and a situation that I and many others believe is a serious breach of the tenets the Corporation should ensure they uphold.

Therefore, if anyone should question claims whether the Midlands is so woefully represented by our national broadcasting corporation they only need to consider the above facts.

Despite the efforts of various people within our region to get the BBC to look into this unjustifiable situation, over many years, the Corporation's executives appear to have adopted a "heads below the parapet response" to any criticism of the current arrangements. This means that the status quo is maintained and creative people from within our region find themselves at a serious disadvantage to those within other regions. Not to mention the lack of employment opportunities and the positive advantages a region can realise by having a vibrant broadcasting industry within the local area.

In conclusion there is a general feeling within our region that we have little or no representation as far as our national broadcasting company is concerned. Whilst the BBC don't want to acknowledge this problem or do anything about it they are more than happy to take our licence fee money to invest in other regions. Regions often much smaller than the Midland Region.

All regions should receive fair amounts of reinvestment. It appears that most do, but we in the Midlands certainly don't.

Many Midland licence fee payers would request that your organisation, as the first independent regulator of the BBC, carries out a proper investigation into this unjustifiable national scandal.

The one thing that is crystal clear is the BBC's current policy in respect of reinvestment leaves their biggest region at a serious disadvantage as compared to any of its other regions.

Perhaps Ofcom could ask the Corporation why this is the case and why it is acceptable that the Midland Region is treated as the poor relation as compared to other regions within the UK.

Ofcom, as the independent regulator could also demand that significant changes are made regarding this indefensible state of affairs. This would ensure that the Midland Region is treated in a fair and even handed way, much like the other regions within the UK.

One thing is certain that if left in the hands of the current BBC Management Team nothing is likely to change.

I look forward to confirmation that you have received this email.

Regards,

David Emson