

I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the recent news from the BBC that they have applied to OFCOM to ask if they can reduce news output on the CBBC channel – by axing the main afternoon edition of the much loved Newsround.

I am appalled that the BBC would even think this is a good decision. As far as I understand, they say that less children are watching Newsround and more are getting their news online, from the Newsround website and other sources.

I cannot understand this reasoning. This is same reasoning they applied to the removal of BBC3 as linear service – and we all know that the end result of that was the BBC reached even less young people.

To say more children are watching things online is a cop out. Why are children spending more time watching online? The answer is because they are poorly catered for by linear services. Don't children spend enough time online as it is? Do we really want to encourage them to spend more time online?

Newsround has been a fixture in the CBBC schedule for over 40 years. Surely, this is what the BBC should be spending their money on – a daily news programme for children aged 7-15. CBBC broadcasts for 14 hours a day- is it really too much to ask that they provide 7 minutes of news in the afternoon / evening?

The CBBC channel narrowed its focus to 7-12 year olds in 2013. Some of the continuity presenters can hardly string a legible sentence together and others would be more suited to Cbeebies. No wonder older children feel poorly catered for. Newsround is an ideal format for that age group – especially given the uncertain world we now live in. And with many young people having mental health issues, a programme like Newsround helps navigate the world around them.

Shows like The Lowdown, Byker Grove and Grange Hill which were aimed at the teen audience were also lost, leaving a void in the schedules. Sadly many teens now go to Netflix and other services in search of entertainment- the majority of which is not suitable for their age group.

They say viewing figures for Newsround have fallen, I'm not surprised. Newsround as it is now, appears to be a watered down version of the programme I knew. Around a decade or so ago its length was cut from around 7 to 5 minutes, and it has been moved earlier and earlier in the afternoon. On BBC1 it was broadcast around 5.00pm. Then when it moved to CBBC only in 2013 – it was shown at 4.20pm – and now has been dumped to 4.00pm. No wonder children don't see it- It would do much better later in the afternoon when more children are home.

The BBC say they will keep the morning edition of Newsround and scrap the afternoon edition – why not the other way round?

I am also concerned about the side-lining and declining visibility of BBC children's programmes on their digital channels. Since no longer having a dedicated slot on the main BBC1 or BBC2, children's programmes have become invisible to many. In fact, as PSB's, up to 2012, BBC1 and BBC2 had to provide a certain quota of children's content on the main

channels. A decision i think that was reversed by OFCOM. A decision that was wrong in hindsight.

BBC2 current daytime output for most of the year consists of 4 hour simulcast of the BBC new channel followed by 5 hours of repeats of BBC1 daytime shows, old BBC documentaries and films. Whilst new well-made first run children's shows go under the radar hidden down the bottom end of most EPG's.

I would like to see Weekend mornings / school holiday mornings on BBC2 given back over to CBBC. Even if it is a simulcast service. It would give more visibility to the output CBBC provides that is passing 5 out of 6 children by.

Shows like Newsround and Blue Peter are exactly the sort of programmes the BBC should be providing for young people. Programmes that only y the BBC can provide that no commercial channel would ever produce. Let's not lose them.