

**CITIZENS' PSM FORUM**  
**BBC Charter Review**  
**December 2025**



The Citizens' PSM Forum comprises British civil society organisations which believe that high quality media, and public service media specifically, make a valuable contribution to UK democracy, society, culture and the welfare of its citizens. Significantly, the Forum is the only coordinated, non-partisan, citizen-led platform feeding into UK media policy. More information about the membership of the Forum can be found here <https://vlv.org.uk/get-involved/citizens-forum-for-public-service-media/>

We believe three fundamental public purpose reforms are needed for the renewal of the BBC Charter. These reforms are essential if the BBC is to remain independent, trusted, properly funded and accountable to citizens in the streaming and AI era.

We put these demands forward in a constructive spirit and we stand ready to work with government, Parliament, the BBC, regulators and all stakeholders to ensure that civil society voices are central to the Charter process and embedded in the BBC's future governance.

**Our three core demands are:**

- 1. Independent governance, free from political control**
- 2. A fair, progressive and sustainable funding system based on a universal payment**
- 3. Meaningful public accountability and participation in BBC decision-making**

In detail:

**1. Independent governance**

The BBC should be renewed with a permanent Charter, enshrining its independence in perpetuity.

The BBC must be governed independently of political influence. Appointments to the BBC Board should be made by a genuinely independent, non-partisan appointments body, not by ministers.

Board members should not hold political affiliations, to protect editorial integrity, institutional autonomy and public confidence.

Governance structures must include meaningful public representation, reflecting the UK's regions, nations, demographics and communities.

## **2. A Fair, Progressive and Sustainable Funding Model.**

The current licensing system must be replaced or substantially reformed, not only to deliver secure, long-term funding insulated from short-term political decisions and funding freezes, but to also ensure universal public subsidy.

Based on available evidence, and ahead of proposals expected in the forthcoming Green Paper, we believe a progressive household levy should replace or succeed the TV licence.

A levy should protect those least able to pay, with exemptions or discounts for lower-income households, students, disabled people and those in care, while providing predictable income for the BBC.

Universal access must be guaranteed: BBC services should remain free at the point of use, with no subscriptions, paywalls or exclusion through digital or equipment barriers.

## **3. Enhanced Accountability, Transparency and Public Participation**

The BBC must strengthen public oversight through widely publicised consultations, open public meetings, and regular Citizens' Assemblies or representative advisory panels.

Editorial, strategic and policy decisions—particularly those affecting public service output, regional provision and digital services—must be transparent and clearly explained.

The BBC should publish accessible annual performance reports, measured against delivery of its public mission, and make information on funding, service changes, digital algorithms (e.g. those that prioritise content) and audience reach openly available.

The government must commit to an inclusive nationwide public consultation process for Charter Renewal, ensuring that people from all regions, backgrounds and demographics have a say in the future of the BBC and public purpose media.

### **Who We Are**

The Citizens' PSM Forum brings together British civil society organisations committed to high-quality media and the public value of public service media. We believe the BBC plays a vital role in UK democracy, culture, social cohesion and the everyday lives of citizens.

Forum members hold diverse perspectives on how the BBC should evolve to meet the challenges of the streaming and AI era, and those views are published individually on our respective websites. However, we are united on the foundational principles set out in this statement as essential to public trust in the BBC's future.

The Forum meets regularly to discuss media policy and made significant interventions on behalf of citizens during the passage of the 2024 Media Act. This joint statement reflects our shared priorities for Charter renewal.

### **Signatories**

Better Media

<https://bettermedia.uk/>

Decentered Media	<a href="https://decentered.co.uk/">https://decentered.co.uk/</a>
The Campaign for the Arts	<a href="https://www.campaignforthearts.org/">https://www.campaignforthearts.org/</a>
The Children's Media Foundation	<a href="https://www.thechildrensmediafoundation.org/">https://www.thechildrensmediafoundation.org/</a>
The International Broadcasting Trust	<a href="https://www.ibt.org.uk/">https://www.ibt.org.uk/</a>
The Media Reform Coalition	<a href="https://www.mediareform.org.uk/">https://www.mediareform.org.uk/</a>
Public Interest News Foundation	<a href="https://www.publicinterestnews.org.uk/">https://www.publicinterestnews.org.uk/</a>
The Sandford St Martin Trust	<a href="https://sandfordawards.org.uk/">https://sandfordawards.org.uk/</a>
The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity	<a href="https://ukccd.org/">https://ukccd.org/</a>
The Voice of the Listener & Viewer	<a href="https://www.vlv.org.uk/">https://www.vlv.org.uk/</a>

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