BBC – written evidence (CCE0184)

Introduction

1.1 The BBC welcomes this opportunity to feed into the Lords Citizenship and Civic Engagement Committee’s inquiry. As a public service broadcaster, the BBC is guided by public purposes, including:

To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them

To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom’s nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom

1.2 This submission seeks to be of relevance to the Inquiry by providing some recent examples of the BBC’s work in the context of these public purposes. These examples span TV, radio, online and the BBC as an organisation. Given the recent elections, we highlight specific examples from our election coverage.

Radio 1 Big Weekend

2.1 BBC Radio 1’s Big Weekend showcases a range of the biggest and newest musical talent from the UK as well as further afield to young UK audiences - bringing them together for a shared live music moment.

2.2 Radio 1’s Big Weekend travels to areas that wouldn’t usually host large scale music events of this kind. As well as shining a spotlight on the host city, in the lead-up and via the event’s coverage, Radio 1’s Big Weekend provides a major boost to the local economy.

2.3 To coincide with the UK City of Culture celebrations for 2017, this year the event was held in Hull, where over 50,000 music fans were able to enjoy performances from a diverse range of artists including Katy Perry, Kings of Leon, Stormzy, Rita Ora and Royal Blood - with 95 percent of the tickets going to people from the local area.

Radio 1 Academy

3.1 In the lead-up to Big Weekend, Radio 1 and BBC Learning produced Radio 1’s Academy - a programme of exciting outreach activity which aimed to inspire 16-19 year-olds in Hull to take the next step in creative careers.

3.2 Radio 1’s Academy included a series of special events, local engagement and face-to-face activity in the area, beginning in February and culminating in May with a packed week of radio shows, gigs, masterclasses and Q&As featuring a host of stars from the world of music and entertainment.
3.3 During the five-day residency in Hull, influential figures from across the creative industries delivered exclusive hands-on workshops, live music performances and industry insight, providing 16-19 year olds with the tools, contacts and information they need to take the next step in their creative careers.

Radio 1 Campaigns

4.1 In 2016, Radio 1 and 1Xtra’s #1Million Hours campaign aimed to motivate our young listeners (age 16-24) to pledge 1 million hours of time to good causes over 12 months.

4.2 Throughout 2016 both networks shone a spotlight on all aspects of volunteering in a bid to highlight the benefits for young people, as well as the wider community. We worked with four featured charities, Age UK, Barnado’s, Cancer Research UK and Oxfam, and pointed people to a range of volunteering opportunities, as well as inspiring people to seek out their own placements.

4.3 Our Editorial output included iplayer and audio documentaries and a series of special Radio 1 Surgeries. Radio 1 & 1Xtra DJs also spent time volunteering and reflected on their experiences on air across both networks. In December 2016 we comfortably reached our target of #1Million Hours pledged.

4.4 In 2017 Radio 1, 1Xtra and Asian Network launched ‘My Mind & Me’ - a year-long campaign to encourage young people to explore issues surrounding their Mental Health - aiming to get young people talking about Mental Health, to reduce the stigma around mental illness, and to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues that affect young people.

4.5 We partnered with the National Citizen Service to create a group of Social Action ‘Champions’. This group of young people from across the UK have been working with the stations to help shape the campaign throughout the year, offering their unique insights, stories and experiences and leading discussions on the key issues around mental health.

4.6 Throughout 2017 on Radio 1, 1Xtra and Asian Network, ‘My Mind & Me’ has offered a platform for listeners to discuss their own experiences, and will give peer to peer guidance and support covering all areas of mental well-being: from dealing with stress and pressure around exams; self-esteem; confidence and body image; and anxiety and depression.

Newsbeat

5.1 Newsbeat covers news, music, sport and entertainment news that is relevant to the lives of young adults. The focus is on original journalism, giving the audience a voice as well as explaining complex issues on radio, online, through social media, and by short-form visual documentaries. We look at a broad range of subjects from mental health and body image to ticket touts and gaming.
5.2 We’ve made sure our short and informative bulletins, social media videos and articles are where many of our audience are, particularly online including platforms such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. This provides listeners the opportunity to provide feedback, ideas and stories and to take part in debate.

5.3 Whilst we know many people listen to our Newsbeat bulletins – 7.8 million hear a bulletin or 15-minute programme every week – we have also been doing more short (30-90 second) explainer videos on a variety of topics, ranging from the election to the floods in Bangladesh, which gain millions of views and thousands of shares.

5.4 Newsbeat also provides a gateway to young voices and issues for the rest of BBC News. Newsbeat often serves the wider BBC audience with Newsbeat reporters and stories appearing on other outlets including the News at Six, News Channel, Today programme, BBC Radio 5live and more.

5.5 During the election, Newsbeat provided younger audiences with clear and jargon free coverage on the issues they want to hear about including explainer videos, infographics or debates, such as a widely shared video on social media on what the EU is.

5.6 The Wembley Arena debate during last year’s EU Referendum was watched by nearly 700,000 young people. During the 2015 election, three quarters of the Newsbeat debate audience said it helped them understand the issues better.

Newsround

6.1 Newsround is the only dedicated television news service in the UK which engages directly with children, via its live bulletins which transmit every day of the week, both mornings and afternoons.

6.2 Newsround does not shy away from tackling the most serious of stories. It does, however, carefully curate them so that children can make sense of what is going on in the world and process it accordingly - especially as they will come across these stories in other media or in the playground anyway, but often not in a form which is suitable for them.

6.3 A recent example is the reporting of the Manchester bomb attacks, which emphasised the rarity of such events in society and gave the audience onward advice of who they could talk to if they were worried.

6.4 Newsround have also produced pieces that help children to understand and identify fake news, in order to help the audience maintain a balanced worldview and avoid information bubbles.

6.5 These television items are also augmented by a very wide range of content available on the Newsround website. This sector of the BBC Children's website is one of the biggest drivers of audience traffic, indicating the appetite in kids for topical engagement.

1 http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002
6.6 A project is currently underway to look at what other digital activities might be created for the audience who enjoy Newsround online, as children always move quickly in their uptake of new media forms.

**BBC Election coverage**

7.1 More than half of audiences considered the BBC best for election coverage. Throughout the 2017 General Election the BBC gave audiences across the UK opportunities to see politicians debate important issues, and to participate in the debates themselves. Our debates were watched by millions. We know that they were seen by audiences who don’t traditionally tune in to mainstream news programmes.

7.2 In 2017, Mishal Husain hosted The BBC Election Debate live from Cambridge with senior Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Green Party, and UKIP spokespeople, taking questions from the live studio audience. David Dimbleby also hosted a Question Time Leader Special with Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn live on BBC One from York.

7.3 Question Time devoted a programme to the election in Northern Ireland, while BBC One in Wales broadcast Election Questions to Leanne Wood from Swansea, later broadcast in England. BBC One broadcast an Election Leaders Special with Nicola Sturgeon, hosted by Nick Robinson, from Edinburgh. Election Questions to Paul Nuttall came from Bristol and was also shown in England and in Wales.

7.4 The final BBC debate before the election was a Newsbeat Youth Debate, hosted by Tina Daheley. The debate was held in Manchester with an audience of 18-34 year olds, featuring leading Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, SNP, Plaid, Green and UKIP politicians.

7.5 Throughout the Nations there were Leaders’ debates, debates on specific issues, and phone-ins. Sarah Smith chaired the Scottish Leaders’ Debate with a panel of five Scottish party leaders, in front of a live audience. Huw Edwards chaired the Leader’s Debate in Wales, while Noel Thompson hosted a debate on BBC One Northern Ireland. In the English regions, we hosted 12 debates with studio audiences, shown on BBC One in each region.

7.6 Across England, BBC Local Radio stations hosted around 80 election debates, many in front of live audiences, allowing people to talk directly to the candidates. They featured on digital platforms and social media. The debates took place in the heart of communities across England, at locations including: Coventry Transport Museum, Abingdon County Hall Museum, and Chequer Mead Theatre, East Grinstead.

7.7 Our flagship news programmes visited various parts of the UK. Victoria Derbyshire held a debate in Dunstable with a local audience and politicians, and hustings style live debates from towns across the country. The Today Programme had Nick Robinson’s Election Takeaways, where he sat down for food with groups of voters to examine how different parts of the electorate were making up their minds ahead of voting. BBC Asian Network hosted a Big Election Debate live from Birmingham. Nihal Arthanayake was joined by a panel of politicians and an audience of largely young British Asians who led the questioning in the 90-minute long programme.
7.8 Many people came to BBC News online for balanced and accurate reporting - 9th June was a record day for UK browsers coming to BBC News Online, exceeding the previous high recorded the day of the EU referendum result.

7.9 BBC News’ Reality Check\(^2\) also helped audiences decipher the facts used throughout the campaign.

**BBC Online**

8.1 In the 2017 General Election campaign campaign we coined the hashtag #getsmmyvote to create a daily series of videos and interviews asking individuals or linked groups of people – beauticians, Turkish barbers, bodybuilders or chefs - what would ‘get their vote’ on an issue that’s in the news. This was a local idea that gained traction across the BBC with great promotion to national audiences.

8.2 We also created a project called Unreported. The aim of Unreported was to discover ‘unreported stories and voices’ and build new relationships. Over four months we worked with a group of women, all aged under 35 and from diverse communities in Birmingham and the Black Country, to discover new stories and deliver them on the BBC. Through workshops we learned about what interested them, where they got their news and what they thought of our coverage. We then worked with them to develop not only story ideas but how to craft the storytelling to ensure we didn’t lose their voices. That involved training and taking them out on stories.

8.3 Unreported was widely shared across the BBC and on social platforms, particularly with women aged 25-34, receiving hugely positive reactions. It has been a rewarding project to have been part of and it has legacy. We are still working with the women on stories and one has now secured a place on the BBC’s Production Trainee scheme.

8.4 The next group Unreported is working with is young men in the North East. They include keen gamers, young men who live with mental health issues and former addicts. One of the themes which has emerged so far is that some of the group don’t access any news at all, including on the BBC. Our first workshop is planned for mid-September. We always envisaged that the format could be syndicated – not only in the UK but around the world.

**Social media**

9.1 During the 2017 UK general election BBC News used a range of social media platforms to reach and engage younger and harder to reach audiences across the UK.

9.2 On Facebook we re-positioned our BBC Politics Facebook\(^3\) page towards the election and featured a range of stories in video and text to help audiences better understand party positions and what was at stake for voters. These included the *Week in Cartoons*\(^4\) (origina

\(^2\) [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/267ada11-b730-4344-b404-63067c032c65/reality-check](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/267ada11-b730-4344-b404-63067c032c65/reality-check)

\(^3\) [https://www.facebook.com/BBCPolitics/](https://www.facebook.com/BBCPolitics/)

\(^4\) [https://www.facebook.com/BBCPolitics/videos/10154646481797217/](https://www.facebook.com/BBCPolitics/videos/10154646481797217/)
illy broadcast as a Facebook Live), a short Facebook ‘show’\(^5\) and regular editions of an audio Electioncast\(^6\) programme.

9.3 We also carried key moments from the campaign on our BBC News\(^7\) and BBC Stories\(^8\) Facebook pages, spent a lot of time encouraging audiences to engage directly with our reporters and correspondents via Facebook Live at campaign events. We went behind the scenes on debate nights and devoted time and resources to help our audiences ‘make sense’ of the campaign\(^9\) and the result\(^10\).

9.4 We launched a BBC politics Facebook messenger bot\(^11\) to coincide with the Government’s triggering of Article 50 at the end of March. When the Prime Minister decided to call a snap election in April we pivoted this bot towards the election for the campaign and used it to encourage audiences to explore our online manifesto guides\(^12\), see the latest BBC Reality Check analysis on the campaign and to receive (if they wished) an alert to their constituency result. Several thousand people subscribed to this service through the election campaign.

9.5 On Twitter, alongside our regular publication of tweets around key campaign moments, announcements, results and analysis we decided to live-stream a number of our BBC election debate programmes (including the Question Time leader specials and Newsbeat debate) and the TV election night special itself. This allowed audiences on the platform to watch the programmes on their mobile devices alongside a curated stream of BBC and other tweets using agreed #BBCDebate or #BBCElection hashtags. Our analysis of this has shown us that we reached a predominantly younger (under 35) demographic and that peaks of viewing coincided with the same peaks for TV consumption.

9.6 Finally, we also decided to use our successful BBC News Instagram Channel to reach younger audiences though the campaign – and on election night specifically, with a ‘live Instagram story’ as events of the night unfolded. Live stories last for 24 hours and appear at the top of Instagram feeds for subscribers to that channel. They also allow publishers to link to relevant content and so provided another opportunity for us to encourage audiences back into the BBC News website to explore more of our content on the election.

Diversity at the BBC

10.1 Diversity is vital to a modern BBC and is written into our Charter. We’re there for everyone - so we need to reflect and represent the whole of the UK. We aim to be the industry leader, ensuring that every licence fee payer can hear or see something of their world in the BBC. Attracting and developing great talent - whatever their background - both on and off air, is a priority.

\(^5\) https://www.facebook.com/BBCPolitics/videos/1787577774592406/
\(^6\) http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p054mvnl
\(^7\) https://www.facebook.com/BBCNews
\(^8\) https://www.facebook.com/BBCStories
\(^9\) https://www.facebook.com/BBCStories/videos/10155113359960659/
\(^10\) https://www.facebook.com/bbcnews/videos/10154755186442217/
\(^11\) https://www.messenger.com/t/BBCPolitics
\(^12\) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2017-39955886
10.2 In 2016 we launched an ambitious strategy to hardwire diversity into everything the BBC does. In March 2017, we unveiled the results of our recent and most comprehensive staff census that shows the BBC has met its 2017 targets - and is well on the way to hitting our 2020 goals.

10.3 While we welcome the progress made so far, we recognise that there is still further to go if we are to meet all of the ambitious targets we have set for 2020. Some of the schemes established as part of our diversity and inclusion strategy have delivered clear results, including:

10.4 **Creative Access scheme:** Over 30 interns from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds joined us through our Creative Access scheme, with more than three quarters becoming members of BBC staff. Five of the six individuals who joined our first Clore Leadership programme are in roles at the BBC, with one becoming our executive editor for BBC Africa. This year we have expanded the programme to include candidates with a disability.

10.5 **We have programmes across the Corporation:** For example, the BBC News Leadership programme - more than half on it are women - and a £1m scheme for journalists with disabilities launched earlier this year.

10.6 **On air we've also made big strides in reflecting the full diversity of the UK:** Our Assistant Commissioner development programme has been successful, creating content that is as diverse and brilliant as BBC audiences expect - including *The Black And British season* and programmes from *Muslims Like Us*, *World Hip Hop News* to the *Instant Gardener*. Programmes like *Will Britain Ever Have A Black Prime Minister?* on BBC Two have looked in depth at the experiences of black people in Britain today, and *Call The Midwife* has recently challenging stories about disability and ethnicity at the front and centre of Sunday night viewing.

10.7 **BBC Three continues to give a platform to emerging and diverse talent:** Such as the *Five By Five* series of shorts and *The Break*, which showcases five up-and-coming writers from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

10.8 **The BBC has also made progress in improving social mobility:** For example, the growth in apprenticeships from 37 in 2012 to 230 this year, with an aim to have more than 400 by 2018.
11.1 The BBC is committed to seeking out the brightest graduate and non-graduate talent, from the broadest range of backgrounds. Historically, the industry’s over-reliance on Russell Group graduate recruitment has been a barrier to entry for many, especially those from less advantaged backgrounds. This was exacerbated by ‘who you know’ recruitment and young people willing to work for very little money to get a foot-hold on the career ladder.

11.2 To redress this imbalance, the BBC is committed to offering high quality, industry-designed apprenticeships and pre-employment opportunities, alongside our long established graduate level trainee programmes. This ensures that everyone with the raw potential to succeed is given a fair chance to apply for opportunities, opening our doors to all the talents our country has to offer. Examples of how we do this and recent successes include:

11.3 **Long established graduate level programmes**: Our alumni have gone on to become many of the industry’s iconic leaders. In September 2016 we had 130 trainees on programmes in the BBC across the UK.

11.4 **A fast growing portfolio of high quality Apprenticeships**: These are aimed at those who have not been to university but who have the raw potential to succeed in our industry. The BBC Academy has been at the heart of designing new vocational qualifications with other employers in our sector. In the autumn of 2013, the BBC’s Director General set a target for 1% of the BBC’s workforce to be apprentices by the end of that Licence Fee period. By 1st November 2014 (2 years ahead of schedule) we met this target. In September 2016 we had 237 Apprentices on programmes across the UK and we have an ambitious aim to have 400 apprentices by the end of 2018.

11.5 **We offer apprenticeships right across our business**: In TV and Radio Production, Network and Local Journalism, Broadcast Engineering, Broadcast Operations, Digital, Business Management, Legal and Cyber Security. In Broadcast Engineering and Business, there is a degree built into the Apprenticeship.

11.6 **We hire BBC Apprentices right across the UK**: On local radio stations and in BBC departments in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Salford, Glasgow and Cardiff. This means that many of our apprentices can remain living at home, rather than moving to more expensive metropolitan areas.

11.7 **We are passionate about opening up the doors of the BBC to everyone**: Diversity really matters to us. The 2016 intake of Digital Journalism Apprentices are 57% BAME and our 2016 Business Apprentices are 29% BAME. These levels of diversity are unprecedented in our industry and are driven by us reaching out to all communities across the UK; offering a wide range of entry level opportunities, appropriate to everyone with the raw talent to succeed.

11.8 **We work hard to connect with high potential disabled talent**: This year, 50% of our prestigious Journalism Trainees declare a disability, with 23% of Production Trainees
declaring a disability. The effort we are putting into our outreach programmes is delivering unprecedented levels of high quality disabled talent. Across all our Graduate Traineeships and Apprenticeships, 11.5% have a declared disability.

11.9 **BBC Make It Digital Traineeship:** 2015 saw the BBC Academy launch this highly ambitious pre-employment Traineeship in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency, Scottish and Welsh governments, and Department for Work and Pensions. This is an eight week pan industry programme aimed at unemployed young people. It draws on the inspiration of BBC content, and the BBC Academy’s existing training know-how. So far, around 2,000 young people have started on the programme. Its aim is to develop strong employability and digital skills which research tells us are in short supply across UK industry. We are now embarking on phase 2 of the Traineeship which will broaden the age range of the trainees we engage with.

11.10 **We offer approximately 1,200 work experience placements every year on our corporate work experience programme:** These opportunities are open to all, access is via a central website and anyone can apply. In addition, some areas of the BBC also run their own, more locally targeted programmes, such as BBC Scotland. We are also now embarking on a new partnership with Job Centres whereby we will ring-fence places for young people who are unemployed – working with Job Centre staff to identify young talent. We also offer work placements to students from broadcast related Higher Education institutions, for example we reserve 200 places (via the Broadcast Journalism Training Council) for students studying journalism and also work closely with the National Film and Television School.

11.11 **BBC Radio 1 Academy:** Now in its 4th year, the Academy is a key part of the Radio 1 Big Weekend music festival, with career sessions, live radio show experiences and advice surgeries. This is done in partnership with local authorities.

11.12 **We offer shorter pre-employment opportunities:** For example, Radio 1’s Where It Begins programme, BBC English Region’s Kick Off Sports reporter scheme and BBC TV’s Mama Youth programme for BAME talent.

11.13 **In 2014 we launched a pre-employment Traineeship with the Stephen Lawrence Trust:** This saw our two organisations working together (with Job Centres across London) to identify and develop young BAME talent. Everyone who successfully completed the Traineeship was fast-tracked to near the end of the application process for BBC Production Apprenticeships.

11.14 **We work with schools to enthuse young people about taking up a career in broadcasting:** The BBC’s annual School Report, now in its ninth year, helps young people develop skills in Journalism. Last year, 33,000 students from around 1,000 schools took part and 300 staff gave up their time to be mentors for the schools. In particular, we worked closely with disadvantaged areas in the North East and the number of special schools participating went up from 33 to 48.

11.15 **Reaching out to diverse young people via social media:** The BBC Academy’s twitter site @BBCGetIn has been ranked as the UK’s top employer for the most interaction with
young people on Twitter. Overall, @BBCGetIn has been recorded as the second most active employer on Twitter. We have grown quickly to 85,000 followers.

11.16 In the 2015 ‘School Leaver 100’ poll of school students aged 16-18 (not planning to go to university) the BBC was voted the number one employer. In October 2015 we were included in the Sunday Telegraph’s Top Apprenticeship Careers List.

8 September 2017

https://twitter.com/bbcgetin?lang=en