

EQUITY

**Culture, Media and Sport Committee:
Inquiry on the future of the BBC**

April 2026

About

Equity is the largest creative industries trade union with 50,000 members united in the fight for fair terms and conditions across the performing arts and entertainment. Our members are actors, singers, dancers, designers, directors, models, stage managers, stunt performers, circus performers, puppeteers, comedians, voice artists, supporting artists and variety performers. They work on stage, on TV and film sets, on the catwalk, in film studios, in recording studios, in night clubs and in circus tents.

Contact

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Summary

Equity welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to this inquiry on the future of the BBC.

Purpose

- One of the BBC's core purposes must be to create art and entertainment.

Funding

- The BBC's funding model should align with principles of universality, independence and fairness.
- Equity opposes the Green Paper's proposals to commercialise the BBC, which would undermine the principle of universality.
- The government must guarantee stable, ring-fenced, long-term funding and full editorial and structural independence for S4C as a public service broadcaster in its own right, sustaining Welsh-language representation and creative employment in Wales.
- We reject the proposal to sell the BBC's archive to train AI models, which fails to meet Equity's criteria for ethical AI.
- The government should consider a levy on the revenues of large streaming platforms, as has been successfully implemented in Canada (leading to the internationally successful show *Heated Rivalry*) as well as several European countries.
- Efficiency savings could be achieved by reversing the outsourcing of core BBC functions. We recommend rebuilding the production capacity of the BBC and the introduction of an in-house production quota of 25%, to be gradually increased over time.

- The savings that the BBC achieves by shrinking its procurement bureaucracy could be spent instead on creating arts and entertainment content and ensuring that the corporation acts as the gold standard on employment rights. In a more vertically integrated organisational structure, the corporation would also keep a larger share of the longer-term profits that its content generates, via higher IP retention, thus helping ensure a sustainable source of income.

Across the UK

- The regionalisation of BBC investment should be accelerated, with the corporation given specific responsibilities regarding sites of production in each UK nation and each English region, and obliged to develop a clear strategy to ensure success and an effective plan to track progress. As a first step, the corporation must urgently invest in under-represented areas, starting with the Midlands.
- The BBC should produce a continuing or returning drama series that films for more than six months of the year in each of the UK's Ofcom-defined reporting areas.
- Ofcom should incorporate a meaningful ratio of on-screen talent into their definition of what constitutes an out-of-London production, as this portion of the workforce is currently excluded from such considerations.
- The UK government should develop a coherent, place-based arts and entertainment industrial strategy, which treats the sector as an ecosystem linking local theatre, film, audio and TV production. The BBC could act as an anchor institution in creative clusters across the UK's nations and regions.

Future of PSM

- The BBC must abide by the highest standards regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence. Equity urges the corporation to follow the eight principles that we have outlined in our AI Vision Statement.

Independent and accountable

- Equity proposes that the BBC be democratised: it should be insulated from future political interference by placing it on a statutory footing, and the creative workforce should be represented at the highest level of the corporation, including via union voice.
- Equity is calling for the BBC to be cooperativised: the corporation should be reconfigured under a new structure in which it is owned and run by licence fee payers and its workforce – both those permanently employed and the thousands of freelancers that it relies on.
- Equity urges the implementation of a Workforce Covenant, which would recognise that the BBC's commissioning and operational decisions must respond to the needs of the workforce as well as audiences, and imposing a legal duty to conduct workforce impact assessments and implement mitigation measures.

Equity's response

PURPOSE

The purpose of the BBC given developments in technology and choice, and the fragmentation of audiences

1. Equity recommends that in the next Charter, one of the BBC's core purposes must be to create art and entertainment. Our reasoning is threefold.
2. First, this would reflect one of the BBC's overarching missions, which is "to entertain."¹ At present, none of the five public purposes of the BBC, as set out in its current Charter, adequately conveys this element of the corporation's mission, which has remained unchanged since the 1922 founding of the British Broadcasting Company Ltd.
3. The second reason is more concrete, and concerns the creation of intellectual property (IP). The BBC has said that "owning IP materially improved margins compared with producing for others, and therefore increasing the proportion of BBC-owned programming was important for durable revenue streams."² In November 2025, the Committee of Public Accounts observed that the BBC had not met its target in this area, achieving "31% of income for 2024-25 from its most profitable streams through new intellectual property (IP), against a 40% ambition for generating revenue from new (IP). Owning and developing IP is central to securing sustainable long-term returns."³ One straightforward and practical way to increase the proportion of BBC-owned programming is to give the BBC an explicit mandate to create more art and entertainment.
4. A third advantage with this formulation is helping ensure that the public and political attention devoted to the BBC's cultural output is proportionate to its actual work in this area. At present, discussions about the BBC's legitimacy and future are dominated by the corporation's news and current affairs output – i.e. the "inform" branch of the BBC's overarching mission. While such debates are important, they are entirely out of proportion with the actual spend in these areas. In 2024-25, the BBC devoted only about 10% (£324 million) of its content spend (£3.1 billion) to news and current affairs.⁴ A fair and formal recognition of the "entertain" element of the BBC's century-long overarching mission is long overdue.

¹ BBC, [Mission, values and public purposes](#), n.d.

² Committee of Public Accounts, [BBC Accounts and Trust Statement 2024–25](#), House of Commons, November 2025, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ National Audit Office, [Department for Culture, Media & Sport, and the BBC 2024-2025](#), January 2026, p. 22.

FUNDING

5. As a preliminary point, we note that funding cuts inflicted by successive UK governments have been devastating – licence fee income has fallen by 24% since 2016-17, equal to £1.2 billion less per year in real terms⁵ – and have driven job losses and the decommissioning of several shows. The BBC announced a further 2,000 job cuts on 15 April 2026.⁶
6. Whichever funding model is implemented in the next Charter, it must provide ample and stable funding to a critical foundational institution of this country, as well as align with the principles of universality, independence and fairness. We oppose the Green Paper’s proposals to commercialise the BBC, which would undermine the principle of universality. The government must also guarantee stable, ring-fenced, long-term funding and full editorial and structural independence for S4C as a public service broadcaster in its own right, sustaining Welsh-language representation and creative employment in Wales. We reject the proposal to sell the BBC’s archive to train AI models, which fails to meet Equity’s criteria for ethical AI.⁷
7. Equity urges the government to reconsider its rejection in the Green Paper of a levy on the revenues of large streaming platforms. These types of measures have been successfully implemented in several European countries. In Canada, the Online Streaming Act 2023 empowered the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to impose a rule ordering all streaming companies with at least \$25 million in annual Canadian revenue to put five per cent of that sum into national funds to support the creation of Canadian content, including movies, television and local news. One of those funds, the Canada Media Fund, helped create the global phenomenon *Heated Rivalry*.⁸

The potential for further efficiency savings and reinvestment

8. One under-explored source of efficiency savings is through insourcing i.e. reversing the outsourcing of core BBC functions that has taken place via enforced vertical disintegration. The privatisation of the BBC began in earnest with the Broadcasting Act 1990, which introduced statutory quotas for independent production.⁹ The position of independent producers vis-à-vis public sector broadcasters was further strengthened by the Communications Act 2003. At present, at least 25% of the BBC’s qualifying television hours must be made by independent producers. The corporation exceeds this figure, which

⁵ BBC, “BBC Funding & Charter Review – Headline Briefing” (confidential), April 2026, p. 1.

⁶ Paul Glynn and Ian Youngs, [BBC to cut almost one in 10 staff in £500m savings](#), BBC, 15 April 2026.

⁷ Equity, [AI Vision Statement](#), n.d.

⁸ Daphne Rena Idiz, Claudia Siccondolfo, MaryElizabeth Luka, [Heated Rivalry: How investment in Canadian content can pay off at home and abroad](#), The Conversation, 20 January 2026.

⁹ Christian Potschka, [From Broadcasting to Communications Policy \(1990–2003\)](#), *Towards a Market in Broadcasting*, 2012, p. 109.

stood at 34% in 2024-25.¹⁰ The current Charter requires 100% of relevant television content to be open to competition by the end of 2027.¹¹

9. These developments form part of a broader trend towards the outsourcing of public services. Beginning in the 1970s at the local level with services such as waste collection, successive governments have broadened outsourcing to areas including adult social care, prisons, immigration detention, probation and IT.¹² A damning report by the House of Commons' Committee of Public Accounts found that public authorities have been ineffective in engaging with potential suppliers and that the government was unable to demonstrate that it is achieving value for money.¹³ In 2023-24, procurement from the private sector stood at £340.9 billion – representing 32% of all government spending.¹⁴
10. At the BBC, outsourcing has been expensive and inefficient. First are the costs associated with a procurement bureaucracy i.e. tendering processes, oversight, compliance, negotiations over rights and the management of suppliers. Then there is the leakage of profits for producers, as every outsourced commission must include profit margins for the independent production company. Once the programmes have been commissioned, the BBC has reported that in-house programmes are less expensive than those made by independent producers.¹⁵ Subsequent control and flexibility over the actual content itself raises further concerns; with independent productions, BBC holds the UK licence for only five years¹⁶ – rights use beyond Terms of Trade requires negotiation and extra payment.
11. A final major concern about outsourcing relates to intellectual property (IP). As discussed at paragraph 3, the BBC owning and developing IP is essential to it securing a sustainable source of funding. With independent productions, the BBC reported in 2015 that it only “typically receives 15% of net profits, reducing the returns to licence fee payers.”¹⁷ With the growing power of global streamers, the BBC’s retention of IP has shrunk even further. As the National Audit Office reported in 2024:

“Streamers often require production to be on a ‘work for hire’ basis where the IP and distribution rights from commissioned programmes are retained by the streamer. The

¹⁰ BBC, [BBC Commissioning Report 2024/25](#), July 2025, p. 11.

¹¹ DCMS, [Britain’s Story: The Next Chapter - BBC Royal Charter Review, Green Paper and public consultation](#), 16 December 2025.

¹² Institute for Government, [Government outsourcing: What has worked and what needs reform?](#), September 2019, p. 5-6.

¹³ Committee of Public Accounts, [Competition in public procurement](#), House of Commons, 13 December 2023, p. 3.

¹⁴ House of Commons Library, [Procurement statistics: a short guide](#), July 2025, p. 3.

¹⁵ BBC, [British Bold Creative: The BBC’s submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s Charter Review public consultation](#), October 2015, p. 56.

¹⁶ BBC, [Business and contractual information](#), n.d.

¹⁷ BBC, [British Bold Creative: The BBC’s submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s Charter Review public consultation](#), October 2015, p. 56.

proportion of [the BBC's] production income from 'work for hire' contracts has increased significantly from an average of 3% between 2018-19 and 2021-22 to an average of 30% between 2022-23 and 2023-24. [This] can be highly profitable in the short to medium term but does not generate longer-term returns through the sale of distribution rights. [...] In 2023-24, of the 10 titles from its production business which provided the most profit to the BBC, only one was from new IP generated by BBC Studios."¹⁸

12. For concrete proof of the efficiencies associated with insourcing, we have only to look at the organisational structures of the world's major media companies: Disney, Amazon and Netflix. In contrast to the BBC, whose production capacity was hollowed out by enforced vertical disintegration, these companies have amassed market power via an extreme form of vertical integration, transforming their streaming services "into a walled garden for self-produced content – a model built for and dependent on restricting the availability of independent content from competing producers."¹⁹ As the BBC expressed it in 2020,

"[T]he BBC is unable to replicate the vertical integration others have the freedom to use to increase their own in house production pipelines and therefore distribution catalogues which they can profitably control. BBC Studios is reliant on generating the best ideas and winning commissions from the BBC and third-party commissioners to keep adding to its distribution catalogue. Our peers will continue to have natural incentives to favour their own in-house production arms to do the same, while also competing for and winning BBC commissions."²⁰

13. Outsourcing at the BBC must be understood as a decades-long transfer of vast amounts of public funding – in the form of the licence fee – to private pockets. Indeed, the 2005 Green Paper candidly described income from the licence fee as "venture capital for the flourishing independent production sector."²¹ From the point of view of a government trying to grow the UK's creative industries, the ultimate location of those pockets is relevant. At one time, the independent sector was mostly composed of small-scale UK companies, but it is now dominated by global US-based conglomerates. As Professor Paul Dwyer expressed it,

"[M]uch of the UK public service broadcasters' spending on new UK production [...], including the public licence fee of the BBC, supposedly the 'seed funding' for UK creativity, is actually the development funding for US-owned companies to develop entertainment formats which they can sell globally. It is not too much of an

¹⁸ National Audit Office, [Report: BBC Studios](#), November 2024, p. 25.

¹⁹ Writers Guild of America West, [The New Gatekeepers: How Disney, Amazon, and Netflix Will Take Over Media](#), August 2023, p. 3.

²⁰ BBC, [BBC Studios' lines of businesses: BBC Response](#), December 2020, p. 10.

²¹ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Review of the BBC's Royal Charter: A strong BBC, independent of government](#), 2005, p. 82.

exaggeration to say that UK broadcasters and the UK licence fee payer, are deficit financing US format production.”²²

And what does the British public receive in return for their colossal investment? One problem is that this question is virtually impossible to answer, as BBC Commercial does not report on the precise “support for programme funding”²³ (via co-financing, etc) that it provides to the BBC Group. The only concrete figure available is the sum returned by BBC Commercial to the BBC Group – a cash dividend of £161 million in 2024-25 – representing 0.3% of the group’s income of £5.9 billion that year.²⁴ By any measure, this hardly qualifies as “maximising the value of the licence fee for audiences,”²⁵ as the BBC claims. In effect, vast amounts of money from the British public have created assets that are not publicly owned – or even owned in the UK.

14. Besides being poor value for the licence fee payer, the other significant concern with outsourcing is the downward pressure it has exerted on the terms and conditions of the BBC’s workforce. The fragmentation of the production landscape has led to project-based freelancing as the dominant form of work in the arts and entertainment industry. For the working lives of Equity members, this means income volatility, gaps between contracts, weaker job security and diminished bargaining power. Equity holds collective agreements for our members working on BBC, ITV, streamers, and Welsh language TV, as well as with PACT, the UK screen sector trade body for independent production and distribution companies. While these collective agreements have been essential in ensuring a minimum level of terms and conditions, successive UK governments have erected structural barriers – via primary and secondary legislation, as well as the BBC’s Royal Charter – that materially disadvantage trade unions in the creative industries. The experience of member Hywel Morgan is illustrative of how outsourcing at the BBC has moved public investment away from the labour that creates the BBC’s value, and towards global capital:

“I once did a film that originally went out on the BBC, but has since been sold onto a global streamer. Hardly anybody saw it on the BBC, but now I get messages from people saying they’ve seen it on the streamer and I can see it’s in the platform’s top watches - yet I probably get about a tenner a year for it. Without us, you wouldn’t be able to make these shows - we should be sharing in the success.”²⁶

15. Insourcing would be less expensive and more efficient than the current vertical disintegration of the BBC. As a leading scholar on law and technology has asserted, “the cost structure of producing television programming is such that vertical integration is likely

²² Paul Dwyer, *Understanding Media Production*, 2019, p. 161.

²³ BBC, [Annual Report & Accounts 2024/25](#), p. 148.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61, 126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁶ Equity, [Equity PACT | Demand Better in Film & TV Working Conditions](#), n.d.

to lead to the realization of significant efficiencies.”²⁷ The savings that the BBC achieves by shrinking its procurement bureaucracy could be spent instead on creating arts and entertainment content and ensuring that the corporation acts as the gold standard on employment rights, thus driving up terms and conditions for workers across the creative industries. In a more vertically integrated organisational structure, the corporation would also keep a larger share of the longer-term profits that its content generates, via higher IP retention, thus helping ensure a sustainable source of income.

16. The Labour Party has committed to “bring about the biggest wave of insourcing of public services in a generation.”²⁸ In the view of many people – including Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy²⁹ – the BBC should be viewed as an essential public service, similar to the NHS. Equity wholeheartedly agrees, and urges the government to include the BBC within this ambitious insourcing drive. For the next Charter, Equity calls on the government to return to the BBC processes that have been outsourced to independent production companies. We recommend rebuilding the production capacity of the BBC and the introduction of an in-house production quota of 25%, to be gradually increased over time.

ACROSS THE UK

The balance of its activities, including decision making, throughout the UK

17. As a public service broadcaster funded by people living in every nation and region of the UK, the BBC should be regionalised. By this we mean that people across the UK should see their lives, interests and concerns reflected in the BBC’s content, and they should share equitably in the employment opportunities generated by the BBC.
18. The imperative of ensuring that the BBC must reflect and promote the diversity of the entire UK has long been recognised. In 1924, as Managing Director of the British Broadcasting Company Ltd, even consummate centraliser John Reith acknowledged that the BBC’s regional stations “should be centres of real interest and influence in their areas.”³⁰ A few decades later, however, the 1951 Beveridge Report on Broadcasting criticised the BBC’s excessive “Londonization” and the “comparatively small” proportion of programmes from the regions.³¹

²⁷ Christopher S. Yoo, “[Vertical Integration and Media Regulation in the New Economy](#),” *Vanderbilt Law and Economics Research Paper No. 02-01*, 2002, p. 179.

²⁸ [Labour’s Plan to Make Work Pay: Delivering A New Deal for Working People](#), June 2024, p. 18.

²⁹ [Culture Secretary speech at Society of Editors conference 2026](#), 17 March 2026.

³⁰ Cited in Amy Genders and Andrew Spicer, [The BBC and the UK’s Nations and Regions: Hierarchies, Rivalries and Contradictions](#), 2025, p. 57.

³¹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 59.

19. While progress has been made in the intervening 75 years, film and television production remains heavily concentrated in London and the South East. Performers in the UK's nations and regions often struggle to find enough employment to sustain a career and many are forced to move to the capital for opportunities. As Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy expressed it in a speech to the Royal Television Society: "Talent is everywhere, opportunity is not."³² The National Audit Office's report on the BBC's implementation of Across the UK found that the BBC was behind schedule, had not developed a clear implementation plan and lacked an adequate way to track and measure progress.³³ At present, the majority of English regions "persist solely as producers of local radio and television news."³⁴
20. The corporation must urgently remedy this situation by investing in under-represented areas, starting with the Midlands.³⁵ In this region, the scale of the longstanding disparity in investment is striking. In 2024, the Midlands received only 3.4% of the BBC's network TV programming spend,³⁶ despite being home to approximately 25% of the UK's licence fee payers.³⁷ Equity calls on regionalisation to be accelerated, with the BBC given specific responsibilities regarding sites of production in each nation and region, and obliged to develop a clear strategy to ensure success and an effective plan to track progress.

Creating a workforce that is representative of the UK

21. The creative industries have long been dominated by the wealthy and privileged, and the problem is getting worse. People from working-class backgrounds make up just 16% of those in creative occupations, and proportions of working-class actors, musicians and writers have halved since the 1970s.³⁸ The problem is particularly acute in film and television; only about 8% of those working in these industries come from households where the main earner was in a semi routine/routine occupation (categorised by Creative PEC as "working class") – the lowest level seen in a decade.³⁹ On matters of access and opportunity, intersectionality is key:

³² "Talent is everywhere, opportunity is not": DCMS Secretary Lisa Nandy on TV's need for regionalism, Royal Television Society, 8 October 2024.

³³ National Audit Office, [The BBC's implementation of 'Across the UK'](#), November 2023.

³⁴ Amy Genders and Andrew Spicer, [The BBC and the UK's Nations and Regions: Hierarchies, Rivalries and Contradictions](#), 2025, p. 77.

³⁵ Please note that Ofcom includes within this region the entire east of England. This is the same area used by the BBC in their reporting (as confirmed to Equity by email on 1 December 2025), although they abbreviate it to "Midlands" only.

³⁶ BBC, [Annual Report & Accounts 2024/25](#), p. 47.

³⁷ Campaign for Regional Broadcasting and Production, [The case for the Midlands & East](#).

³⁸ Orian Brook, Andrew Miles, Dave O'Brien, Mark Taylor, [Social Mobility and 'Openness' in Creative Occupations since the 1970s](#), *Sociology*, November 2022.

³⁹ Erica Holt-White, Dave O'Brien, Orian Brook, Mark Taylor, [A Class Act: Social mobility and the creative industries](#), Sutton Trust, November 2024, p. 80.

“Class does not exist in isolation but intersects with other identity markers such as race, gender, sexuality, disability and regional identity. Intersectional approaches reveal how different forms of marginalisation can compound and create unique experiences of disadvantage or privilege within the television industry and in on-screen representations.”⁴⁰

22. One straightforward way to broaden opportunities for the creative workforce is via the production of continuing and returning TV dramas. We note our disappointment that the Green Paper failed to include these series in its definition of underserved types of content. These series are integral to the UK production landscape in providing a training ground for cast and crew, which in turn supports the wider production ecosystem. At a minimum, Equity calls on the BBC to be required to produce a continuing or returning drama series that films for more than six months of the year in each of the UK’s Ofcom-defined reporting areas.
23. Equity is also concerned that in Ofcom’s updated guidance to the BBC and other Public Sector Broadcasters, the regional production “talent spend” criterion still explicitly excludes on-screen talent.⁴¹ We are calling on Ofcom to incorporate a meaningful ratio of on-screen talent into their definition of what constitutes an out-of-London production.

The relationship between the BBC and the priorities in the Government’s Creative Industries Sector Plan and Ofcom’s Transmission Critical report

24. We recognise the government’s inclusion of the creative industries within its industrial strategy,⁴² but believe that it falls short in several ways, including the absence of dedicated new revenue for the performing arts and entertainment industries. The Creative Industries Sector Plan⁴³ remains the only plan of its type without allocated funds; significant investment is urgently needed. The UK government should also develop a coherent, place-based arts and entertainment industrial strategy, which treats the sector as an ecosystem linking local theatre, film, audio and TV production. Creative clusters should be developed in each region of every UK nation, around key, well-resourced national anchor institutions – such as the BBC. These can act as centres of creative production on decent terms and conditions, inform local skills pipelines to provide opportunities for the local workforce, and attract private investment.

⁴⁰ Laura Minor, Beth Johnson, Anna Viola Sborgi and Dave O’Brien, [What Do We Know About Class in Television Studies?](#), *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 23:1 (2026), p. 63.

⁴¹ Ofcom, [Regional production and regional programme definitions: Guidance for Public Service Broadcasters](#), 16 October 2025, p. 7-8.

⁴² UK Government, [The UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy](#), November 2025.

⁴³ Department for Business and Trade and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [The UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy – Creative Industries Sector Plan](#), June 2025.

FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

The challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence

25. As a publicly funded corporation and a foundational civic institution of this country, the BBC has a responsibility to abide by the highest standards regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Equity urges the corporation to follow the eight principles that we have outlined in our AI Vision Statement,⁴⁴ which recognises that artists being engaged for the purpose of performance cloning have the right to:

1. Consent (and not consent) for past, current and future performances
2. Licence their performance or likeness on personal, non-exclusive, time limited basis
3. Be identified and object to derogatory treatment of their performance and work
4. Transparent information
5. Meaningful consultation
6. Fair and proportionate remuneration
7. Equal access and treatment
8. Be engaged under a collectively bargained agreement

AN INDEPENDENT AND ACCOUNTABLE BBC

The effectiveness of the current Governance arrangements for the BBC including the processes for appointments to the Board

26. The BBC is a civic institution, which must be accountable to the people who fund it (the British public) and to those who create its value (the BBC's workforce). Equity calls for the BBC's democratic credentials to be radically improved in two ways, as the current structure of the corporation fails to reflect the values that should animate a public institution.

27. First, we are calling for mechanisms of genuinely independent oversight that are separate from both the management of the BBC, as well as the government of the day. This would help the BBC retain its political independence, reflect a diversity of views from across the UK, and rebuild trust with the British public. The government should insulate the BBC from future political interference by placing it on a statutory footing. We also urge the government to ensure that the creative workforce is represented at the highest level of the corporation, including via union voice.

⁴⁴ Equity, [AI Vision Statement](#), n.d.

28. Second, we are calling for the BBC to be cooperativised. By this, we mean that the BBC should be reconfigured under a new structure in which it is owned and run by licence fee payers and its workforce – both those permanently employed and the thousands of freelancers that it relies on.
29. Equity proposes cooperativisation at three levels. *First*, the new Charter should create Workforce Panels, which would complement the Members’ Panels proposed by the Media Reform Coalition and Common Wealth.⁴⁵ These Workforce Panels, empowered to assess and shape the BBC’s operations, would be composed of representatives from the BBC’s permanent employees as well as its freelance workforce. *Second*, the Charter should establish a British Digital Cooperative.⁴⁶ The BBC would form the hub of a network of not-for-profit platforms and apps designed with the corporation’s public purposes in mind. All BBC digital services would be underpinned by algorithms that serve public service values. The BBC could use its algorithms to help users access personalised content that would better inform, educate or entertain them. These civic priorities stand in stark contrast to commercially oriented algorithms, which are wholly driven by the profit motive. *Third*, the BBC should establish a strategy to encourage different models of production, such as cooperatives or mutuals. Structures in which power is shared more equitably are also likely to improve “workplace culture”⁴⁷ outcomes.

The effectiveness of mechanisms for holding the BBC to account, including the public, Parliament, Ofcom, and the devolved administrations

30. There is a range of formal mechanisms by which the BBC is held to account, but none of them encompass the vast workforce that powers the corporation (according to the BBC’s response to the Green Paper, the corporation supports over 77,000 jobs).⁴⁸ To remedy this gap, Equity proposes the implementation of a Workforce Covenant, which would recognise that the BBC’s commissioning and operational decisions must respond to the needs of the workforce as well as audiences, and imposing a legal duty to conduct workforce impact assessments and implement mitigation measures. This would not only benefit the BBC’s employees and freelancers; it would also foster certainty and enable forward planning for the independent sector.

⁴⁵ Dan Hind, Tom Mills and Tom Chivers, [Our Mutual Friend: The BBC in the Digital Age](#), Media Reform Coalition and Common Wealth, April 2025.

⁴⁶ Dan Hind, [The British Digital Cooperative: A New Model Public Sector Institution](#), Common Wealth, September 2019.

⁴⁷ DCMS, [Britain’s Story: The Next Chapter - BBC Royal Charter Review, Green Paper and public consultation](#), 16 December 2025.

⁴⁸ BBC, [A BBC For All: Our response to the government’s Green Paper](#), 5 March 2026, p. 53.