

Consultation response form

Please complete this form in full and return via email to childrensreview@ofcom.org.uk or by post to:

Claire Local Ofcom Riverside House 2A Southwark Bridge Road London SE1 9HA

Consultation title	Children's content review
Full name	Bishop Jan McFarlane
Contact phone number	020 78981796
Representing (delete as appropriate)	
Organisation name	Sandford St Martin Trust
Email address	admin@sandfordawards.org.uk
We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Are there any additional details you want to keep confidential? (delete as appropriate)	Nothing
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	Yes

Your response

Question 1: What characteristics do (i) children and (ii) parents/carers most value about content aimed at children? How does this vary depending on the age of the child?	
Question 2: Are there certain genres within children's (e.g. live action, animation) that children or parents/carers particularly value and watch, and if so why?	The Sandford St Martin Trust's work with children's broadcasters and content providers as well as feedback from other stakeholders suggests that both parents and young audiences value children's programming that explores religious, ethical, philosophical or spiritual themes. This interest is not limited to a particular genre and nominations and entries for the Sandford St Martin Children's Award for religious and ethical broadcasting have included animation, live action, news and drama. Our experience reflects Ofcom's own findings that children and particularly the 12-15

	<p>age group are interested in and, increasingly with age, actively look for trustworthy news content that deals with the “big” questions like faith and the role that belief plays in their communities and on a global level. For these reasons the Trust strongly advocates for children’s programmes in the religious and ethical programme genre but also programmes that support religious literacy and explore faith across different genres.</p>
<p>Question 3: Do children or parents/carers have different expectations in terms of quality or other characteristics depending on the format (e.g. long-form vs. short-form/broadcast vs. online), or the provider/brand (e.g. BBC/ITV vs. Netflix vs. YouTube etc). Do they value content in these different formats or from these different providers differently? Do these different formats or providers meet different needs for children?</p>	
<p>Question 4: When and why do children and parents/carers choose online or streaming services (for instance iPlayer, Netflix, YouTube) instead of watching TV on a TV set? Is this for particular sorts of programmes? Do you have any evidence in support of your view?</p>	
<p>Question 5: How do children discover programmes and decide what to watch? What role do broadcasters, platforms, parents, and friends play, and does this change as children get older?</p>	
<p>Question 6: Are there specific genres within children’s content (on any platform) where demand or audience need is not currently matched by supply from PSBs, commercial channels, or on-demand and streaming services, or a combination of the former? What supports your view on this?</p>	<p>The Sandford St Martin Trust believes the drop in UK-made children’s content and the fact that no public service broadcaster in the UK offers systematic programming across the full age range of children (0-17) have had a particularly negative impact on the quantity and quality of ethical and religious programming for young audiences. Entries to our annual children’s broadcasting awards suggest that the BBC is the only public service broadcaster in the UK making or broadcasting children’s programmes in this genre. Nor are we aware of any such content on the commercial channels. While our awards are increasingly receiving entries from non-regulated online content makers who are making programmes for young people that explores religious or ethical themes, we note that this content is unregulated, of vastly ranging quality and trustworthiness, making</p>

	<p>finding good programmes difficult for young audiences to find and access. Frank Cottrell Boyce, who judged our 2016 Children’s Award put it thus: “ When young people engage with questions like immigration, sexuality and their own mortality and morality, they’re not puzzling over intellectual questions, they’re building their own identities. And in doing that they are building the future identity of this nation. So huge praise is therefore due to the BBC who, among all the broadcasters, absolutely - to use a teenage phrase - ‘owned’ this shortlist. The absence of the commercial broadcasters from it, I think, is depressing - but also really dangerous. I’m going to quote Simon Schama who said that our society offers our young people two options: shopping or extremism. And if our cultural arbiters vacate the field on which our young people wrestle with the great questions, then other forces will step in. These are questions which have to be answered. And if we don’t help young people grapple with the complexity of those questions then there will be people who will cheerfully come along with murderously simple answers. To leave a gap in the schedule around this area is to leave a hole in our nation’s heart.”</p>
<p>Question 7: What is the role and importance of first-run UK-originated programming for audiences? For broadcasters? Does this vary by sub-genres or by age group?</p>	<p>We believe first-run UK-originated programming exploring religion and ethics is very important as this best reflects and serves the wants and needs of young audiences. Anecdotal evidence from our stakeholders supports Ofcom’s own findings that young audiences actively seek programming that reflects their lives and their communities. In an increasingly multi-faith and multi-cultural UK, the Trust believes better representation of the UK’s faith communities are essential.</p>
<p>Question 8: How are on-demand and streaming services changing the nature of competition in children’s content? Is this impacting on the range or quality of content available to UK audiences?</p>	
<p>Question 9: How have funding models and investment in children’s content changed over the last five to ten years? Do you have evidence you can share with this to support your view?</p>	
<p>Question 10: If certain genres within children’s</p>	

content (for instance news, factual, or drama) are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain funding for, what are the reasons for this? Are certain genres more difficult to generate financial returns from, and if so, why?

Question 11: Are there other incentives and disincentives you think we should consider as part of the review?

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