

## Children's media industry joint statement - 11 February 2016

### Leading TV lobby groups call for BBC funding commitment for children's programming

Leading children's TV lobby groups – Pact, Children's Media Foundation and Animation UK – are calling for the BBC to commit to a minimum of 8% of its annual original content budget for network programming to be allocated to children's programming, and for the actual figure to not fall below £100m per year over the course of the next Charter period.

This joint position was established as a result of concerns about the future of BBC spend and investment in children's media content.

These organisations are particularly concerned about the following:

- The BBC Children's content budget has decreased by 8% since 2008<sup>1</sup> and has not been ring-fenced from BBC cuts over recent years, with further cuts announced in 2015 still to be implemented (although the BBC Director for Children's has initially indicated that investment in children's content will be maintained);
- The BBC is a monopoly buyer and its spend makes up 97% of all spend on originated children's content in the UK; and
- There has been a dramatic reduction in spend and investment in children's content by the commercial PSBs, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 over the last ten years<sup>2</sup> (95% since 2003, £58m to £3m in 2013).

Children's programming has been defined for some time as a special area of content production. However, over the past twelve years there has been a sharp decline in the commissioning of original content across the PSBs. Commissioning is now minimal at the commercial PSBs and the 8% decline in investment at the BBC is in reality much larger considering that production costs have risen significantly since 2008.

### Quotes

John McVay, Chief Executive at Pact said:

*'Pact published a report a year ago with the Ragdoll Foundation outlining our concern about the crisis of choice in children's TV. Although this joint statement doesn't solve the issue of the lack of commercial PSB investment in children's programming, we think that such a commitment by the BBC would go some way to securing excellent content for British children in the future. We want to secure a children's production sector in the UK that is both internationally competitive and one that we can continue to be proud of.'*

Anna Home, Chair of the Children's Media Foundation (CMF) said:

*'The Children's Media Foundation supports the proposed target as the minimum needed to fulfil the BBC's essential and unique public service role in the provision of culturally and socially relevant content for children and young people in the UK.'*

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<sup>1</sup> Ofcom Children's PSB Annual Report 2014

<sup>2</sup> 'The crisis in choice: the case for more commercial PSB investment in children's content', Pact/Ragdoll Foundation February 2015

Oli Hyatt from Animation UK said:

*'Animation UK is pleased to be part of this initiative to secure original content for children on the BBC. Ring fencing the BBC budget at this level would be the first step in slowing the erosion of UK PSB content for children, and would stop the rapid decline of original programming for under 16's on the BBC.*

*Historically, funding for children's has been disproportionately low, and with the industry that supplies it at breaking point, the BBC can use this initiative to show the value it places on children's TV. The 8% represents an improved but not ideal position, with 19% of our population being under 16 the imbalance is obvious. However we believe this is a realistic and achievable red line that the BBC should be held to'.*

## **Background**

**Current spend on original content, first run hours** (figures from the Ofcom PSB Annual report 2015)

BBC overall network programme spend 2014	£1.36 billion
BBC network spend on first run UK originations	£1.27 billion
PSB spend on children's 2014	£99m
PSB spend on first run children's originations 2014	£88m
BBC spend on first run children's originations 2013	£84m

Current children's original content spend as a percentage of BBC network original spend is around 6% (based on figures publically available)

**Proposal for a minimum of 8% of BBC original content network spend dedicated to children's = around £100m**

### The organisations

Pact (the Producers Alliance for Cinema and TV) is the body representing the commercial interests of the independent production sector in the UK including TV, film, digital and children's and animation production.

Children's Media Foundation (CMF) campaigns on behalf of UK children and young people to ensure they benefit from a range of quality content, appropriate to their age, interests and concerns, that connects them to the diverse culture and society in which they live

Animation UK campaigns for fairer trading conditions for UK animation producers, to help protect or increase the production and ownership of IP that is of such value to the UK.

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