



Department for Culture, Media & Sport

The Rt Hon Ian Murray MP
Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
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11 December 2025

Dame Melanie Dawes
Chief Executive Officer
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

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Dear Dame Melanie,

In the Creative Industries Sector Plan, published in June this year, the Government committed to take action to support public service media (PSM) and the wider television ecosystem.

Our PSM providers (the BBC, Channel 4, ITV, 5, STV and S4C) sit at the heart of our hugely successful and globally admired television industry, driving growth and investment in the sector. They also deliver significant cultural and democratic benefits: bringing viewers together for moments of national importance and programmes that steer the national conversation; and providing impartial and trusted news that helps people understand the world around them, combating the rising threat of online disinformation.

However, the television market is transforming. Our PSM providers, alongside other broadcasters, are having to contend with rapid technological advances and changing audience viewing habits in an increasingly competitive and fragmented market. These trends have led broadcasters in many countries to cut costs and pursue consolidation to increase economies of scale. In this context we believe there could be significant benefits to public service media providers pursuing deeper and more strategic partnerships, particularly those that enable them to engage with hard to reach audiences and benefit their financial sustainability.

Ofcom's latest review of public service media, 'Transmission Critical', considered this issue in detail and recommended that PSM providers engage in more ambitious and strategic partnerships. As significant merger or partnership cases in the television sector do not come around regularly for consideration by regulators, we are aware that perceptions within industry may be shaped by previous decisions that were taken in a different market context. We therefore support Ofcom's further recommendation that regulators "assess any mergers or partnerships in the context of an up-to-date assessment of market conditions, recognising there continues to be fundamental change in the sector."



In line with the commitment we made in the sector plan I have written to the CMA to ask them to set out how changes in the sector – such as the convergence of broadcast, on-demand and video sharing – could be taken into account as part of any future assessment of television and advertising markets. As part of this I also asked the CMA to set out how they would work with Ofcom and take on board your sectoral expertise in relation to media mergers. The commitment, and the Government's delivery against it through this letter, has been made to support the Government's objectives for PSM as a whole, and is not intended to influence or pre-empt any individual cases.

In this context it would be helpful if you could set out your latest assessment of how and to what extent the television and advertising markets are changing, and how you would consider these developments in advice you might put to the CMA.

In making this ask, we recognise the importance of the statutory framework underpinning the merger regime, which is set out in the Enterprise Act 2002. You will be aware that we have recently made changes to modernise and strengthen this regime, so that the DCMS Secretary of State is now able to intervene on public interest grounds or on foreign state influence grounds in mergers involving a print or an online newspaper or a news magazine enterprise. The Secretary of State is also able to intervene on public interest grounds in a merger involving broadcasters or an enterprise which produces news programmes. For the avoidance of doubt, these questions are not intended to impact DCMS Secretary of State's powers to consider mergers under the public interest and foreign state influence regimes.

I am copying this letter to Sarah Cardell, CEO of the Competition and Markets Authority.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Murray

**The Rt Hon Ian Murray MP
Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts**