

## **Memorandum by BBC Radio 4: You and Yours**

*You and Yours* is BBC Radio 4's flagship consumer and social affairs programme broadcast between 12 noon and 1pm every week day lunchtime.

The programme has 3.181 million listeners per week. Their average age is 59. 56.1 percent of *You and Yours* listeners are female. 43.9 percent are male.

The social grading of listeners breaks down as follows:

- A and B: 36 percent
- C1: 36 percent
- C2: 14.4 percent
- D and E: 13.6 percent.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Between 7<sup>th</sup> March and 21st March, working in conjunction with the BBC Trust, we gave our listeners the unique opportunity to contribute directly to the Trust's formal consultation via our phone in.

Our phone in programme 'Call You & Yours' - which invited listeners to air their views on the BBC Trust - was broadcast between 12.00 – 13.00 on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 on BBC Radio 4. We asked our listeners to give us their views on:

*“the BBC's priorities over the next 10 years”*

## **RESPONSE**

We had a good response; over the course of two weeks we received 325 emails, calls, texts and letters. For this report we have used a sample of 100 calls, emails and texts. They break down into 8 broad categories:

- 26% (26 listeners) wanted to let us know of their ideas to make programmes better
- 23% (23 listeners) responded with their views/comments on whether the BBC is impartial
- 15% (15 listeners) wanted to mention issues they have with technology including the digital switchover
- 12% (12 listeners) were sceptical about what the Trust could achieve and whether it had 'teeth'
- 9% (9 listeners) had other comments
- 5% (5 listeners) contacted us about the possibility of advertising on the BBC

- 5% (5 listeners) wanted to complain about the fact that programmes are very London centric
- 5% (5 listeners) got in touch to show their support to the BBC generally

## **1. Examples of those who emailed with their own ideas on what the BBC's priorities should be**

### **Colin Bennett**

What does the BBC do best - Life On Mars, Waking the Dead, Dr Who, Little Britain, Extras, The Office. Well written, well acted dramas and comedies that are different and imaginative.

What it should not be doing is Castaway (Up market Big Brother), Strictly Come Dancing, Maria, Casualty or anything that using celebrities or members of the public doing things they are not good at and in programs that require little or no imagination or talent to make. These types of programs are overly catered for by other (Free to air) channels already, leave them the low ground stick to the high ground. ITV has already made its intentions to concentrate on quality programming; the BBC should do the same.

### **Juliet Cairns from London**

Please use one of the digital channels for popular foreign language programmes (with English subtitles). According to multilingual foreigners watching soaps or children's series was the way they learned English, more valuable than school lessons. In the UK we are not exposed to the sound of foreign languages, which is one of the reasons we find learning them so difficult. It shouldn't be too expensive to source such programmes, as long as there is a strong plot and clear accents the series doesn't need to be particularly up to date.

## **2. Examples of those who responded with their comments questioning the BBC's impartiality in news and other programmes**

### **Duncan Heenan from Isle of Wight**

BBC News nowadays strays too far in to the realms of speculation. In some things such as future financial and market movements this can lead to self fulfilling prophecies. News should follow events, not lead them, and should be dispassionate, not attempt to lead opinion.

### **Rosamund Young from Evesham**

The BBC is NOT impartial. In every news programme and even in the daily email, biased comments are slipped in. For example: what useful purpose was served by mentioning that the late Sally Clark lived in a 'luxury' home?

There is a miserably free use of words like 'insurgent' when sometimes the people being described are 'inhabitants' who have been invaded. Increasingly it feels as if the BBC is trying to please an unknown master

### **3. Examples of those who responded with regards to problems/issues with technology including the digital switchover**

#### **Hilary Burton from Highlands**

The Highland population may be small but we should be better served than by weak, failing radio signals, particularly VHF/FM. Cricket is not popular here and having the premier LW station dedicated throughout the year to this trivial activity is beyond endurance. Why should we have to sit immobile by computer or satellite to hear you?

#### **Vernon Moyse from Kings Lynn**

I have been complaining for some time about poor reception for TV and Radio here in Kings Lynn. I pay the same fee as a friend in London and the facilities which he can get, which I cannot include: DAB radio, radio via a Walkman, good TV reception without amplifiers and masthead transmitters, reception of ALL Freeview channels. The Board of Governors and the Management of the BBC have hitherto given me no response or redress. The BBC is not answerable to Trading Standards or to the Monopolies Commission and the politicians who drafted the Royal Charter which compels the BBC to provide uniformity of services is paralysed into inaction. If I were to go to law, I could not get redress because the licence fee (which funds the BBC) is payable for possession of a receiving device - whether or not the device receives good quality services! It's an ongoing disgrace!

### **4. Examples of those who responded who were sceptical about what the Trust could really achieve**

#### **Ian Payne from Lichfield Staffs**

I am a great fan of the BBC and always will be but why should I believe that this new TRUST BOARD and its members are any different to the old BOARD OF GOVERNORS and its members?

#### **Monica Darnbrough from London**

I would like to know how I can give the Trust my views in a systematic way - are there new opportunities to join subcommittees of the Trust or to be part of a listening panel?

### **5. Examples of those who had views on advertising on parts of the BBC**

#### **Robert Gerig from Italy**

BBC programmes are generally excellent and way ahead of much of the trash produced by other broadcasters throughout the world. I live in Italy; I should know. But the BBC does not offer sufficient ways for people to hear and view. When will

the BBC stop its hesitant approach to the internet and offer all programmes for download, offer internet subscription services etc.? When will the BBC recognise that there is a huge English speaking audience in the world just waiting to have unrestricted access to BBC programmes, and even to pay for the privilege?

## **6. Examples of those who felt that the regions were underrepresented**

### **Philip Gordon from Truro**

My main complaint about the BBC coverage of news and comment is that it is London centred or urban centred. What suits urban areas in particular is often quite inappropriate for rural areas. There needs to be more comment from rural areas.

## **7. Examples of those love the BBC just as it is**

### **Phil Taylor from Tyne and Wear**

I love the BBC and am a complete Radio 4 addict. I just want to show my support to the organisation which I consider to be the second best organisation in Great Britain second only to the NHS.

### ***You & Yours feedback:***

This programme prompted an excellent response on 'Call You & Yours'. The majority of emails and phonecalls came in during the one hour broadcast (approximately 150 emails and 100 phonecalls). The vast majority of listeners who contacted us were keen to share their views and concerns about the future of the BBC and a good number had well thought out ideas. Most were keen to be involved in the programme and speak direct to the two BBC Trustees live in our studios with many hoping their comments would form part of the BBC Trust's formal consultation.

***BBC Radio 4: You & Yours March 2007***

***Producer: Rabeka Nurmahomed***