



# Programmes in the Nations

**A deliberative audience research project conducted  
by MORI for Phase 3 of Ofcom's PSB Review**

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# Summary of findings

## **The importance of reflecting the nation**

In all three nations of the study, participants identified with their nation as a whole, felt it had a distinct identity and that it needed specific dedicated programming provision.

In Wales and Scotland, participants also expressed a need for programming reflecting the different regions of these countries.

In Northern Ireland, this desire was expressed less strongly and there was simply a need to show programming which reflected more than Belfast.

## **Benefits of current provision and potential for improvement**

In general, dedicated programming was appreciated. Dedicated news and current affairs were seen to do a very good job at present, and there was interest in more local news and the use of alternative channels in the future for delivery of local information. Other genres including sport, comedy, consumer affairs programming and documentary were also appreciated.

For older participants, light factual and nature documentaries were also popular. However, younger participants (including those up to their mid-30s) felt distanced from dedicated programming and expressed concern that there seemed to be little provision targeting them.

In all nations there was interest in showing the nation to the UK – so that the rest of the UK could see more of the richness and subtlety of culture and life within the nations than happens at present. This was particularly apparent in Northern Ireland as these participants felt that their image as pictured by the rest of the UK was one-sided and sometimes negative. For most, however, better network representation was not seen as an adequate *alternative* to dedicated programming: both were felt to be necessary.

In Scotland, participants tended to feel under-served by UK-wide news bulletins, and were interested by the concept of replacing a main UK-wide bulletin with one giving a Scottish perspective on both national and international news.

## **Priorities for the future**

Overall, participants felt that there were specific cultural and social benefits associated with dedicated programme provision. It was these *benefits* they wished to see retained, rather than rigid quotas on genre, peak-time scheduling or quotas on the budget for specific programme types. Preferences tended to be similar across the three nations, with any differences highlighted in the nation-specific sections of this report.

When thinking about specific genres and types of provision, viewers prioritised the following types of dedicated programming. The consensus was that these required higher quality production values and ideally, peak or near-peak scheduling:-

- News
- Current affairs
- Investigative social documentary
- Light entertainment including comedy and live entertainment

Participants were also keen to *support* these key genre shows with extra, regular, cheaper (possibly shorter), examples of genres where high production values were not seen to be so important. These shows were seen as a means of ensuring that dedicated provision for the nations appealed to particular minority groups. These programmes included sports, light factual programmes, listings or magazine programming (to appeal to younger viewers).

Discussion of **quality** and **scheduling** resulted in the consensus that it would be important to show key genres at peak times (or near peak) to maximise the benefits that the nations would get from them; building a following, providing social cohesion, and so on. However, it would be acceptable to compromise on the other programming, showing it off-peak or shortening the time available. The principle was that some provision could still exist even though not at peak.

The range of programming available on other channels was relevant. For example, in Wales, S4C was felt to do a very good job showing Welsh programming, and thus it was felt to be less of a priority for the ITV licensee. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, many participants felt that because some channels from the Republic of Ireland broadcast in Irish, which was available (although not universally) in Northern Ireland, there was less need to replicate this on UTV. In Scotland, by contrast, it was felt to be important that Gaelic programming was maintained, because there is no dedicated channel.

Participants also felt strongly that dedicated programmes should be given regular time-slots and supported by trailers and appropriate continuity. They felt that these elements were part of what constituted, or defined, programme quality.

### **The digital future**

Participants acknowledged that digital TV take-up was increasing (and indeed recruitment of the sample ensured that both terrestrial and digital viewers were represented). However, there was some concern that if digital TV became too hi-tech, too quickly, the digital divide might widen between people, especially for those in more rural areas and for older people.

Participants agreed, therefore, that in the future there would be more channels available, and a more non-linear way of watching TV, but felt in the short term that it was important to continue provision across the terrestrial channels.

Using digital channels or broadband to offer more localised content was of interest to participants and they saw a number of advantages. However, they also foresaw some practical challenges, such as the amount of content and calibre of productions.

## Section 1

# Introduction

### 1.1 Research context

As part of its Review of Public Service Television Broadcasting, Ofcom commissioned MORI to carry out a piece of qualitative research with audiences in the devolved nations of the UK. The key areas to explore included:

- Perceptions of the current provision of dedicated programming on ITV and BBC
- The relative importance of dedicated programme genres on ITV in relation to schedules and programme budgets
- Views about the extent to which UK-wide reflection of each nation exists and whether audiences find this desirable
- Views about the future of dedicated language provision, including Welsh, Scots Gaelic, Irish language and Ulster Scots
- Whether more local TV services are wanted and what role these should take
- The relative importance of TV provision in relation to other media and new media forms

There were also specific objectives for each nation:

- **Northern Ireland:**
  - To explore the role of dedicated programming on UTV
  - To examine what younger people think of programming for Northern Ireland
- **Scotland:**
  - To examine views about the distinctions between STV and Grampian programmes
  - To find out whether region-specific and nation-specific programmes are perceived any differently from each other
- **Wales:**
  - To examine views about the role and focus of S4C
  - To find out which elements of BBC provision are appreciated

## **1.2 Methodology**

Nine four-hour long workshops were carried out with around 20 people attending each.

Workshops were carried out in Dumfries, Glasgow and Inverness in Scotland; Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Enniskillen in Northern Ireland, and Caernarfon, Cardiff and Aberystwyth in Wales.

The workshops broke into two groups at various points to allow a more in-depth exploration of the issues, as well as sessions in plenary. Breaking out into smaller groups allowed for different groupings of participants, for example, by religion in Northern Ireland, age, and whether people were regular viewers of non-news dedicated programming. During each workshop, two different breakout groups took place, selected according to these different relevant groupings. In the plenary sessions, the extended discussion allowed both the moderators and Ofcom to present the policy issues for comment and reaction.

For a full explanation of the methodology and the sampling, see Appendix A.

## Section 2

# Current Provision

This chapter explores how participants defined the terms and concepts of localness, regional and national provision. It also examines their views about current provision of dedicated programmes, including whether there are any gaps and unmet needs<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.1 Identifying with a nation

In all the workshops, the sense of 'a nation' was clear and there was strong agreement that these nations would benefit from their own television provision. All participants felt they identified with their nation as a whole. When asked to draw on a map the boundaries of the principal area of interest to them, all initially circled the whole of their nation, defining it by its official boundaries.

In Scotland, participants were the most vocal about their status as a nation and the need for representation both of the nation as a whole, as well as the different areas of diversity within it.

*'You get a quiz show, they say Margaret from Plymouth and John from Exeter, but somebody from Scotland and they don't say whereabouts. It's patronising.'*  
(Glasgow)

In order to establish which kinds of television provision felt most relevant, participants were asked to define what 'localness' meant to them, along with the meaning of the terms 'regional' and 'national'. Maps were used to encourage visual representation.

The terms were used variably by participants. Sometimes the term 'national' was used to describe Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, but on other occasions it was used in the context of discussing the UK as a whole. Participants acknowledged that although they thought of their own nation as a nation, they were still part of the UK. Many felt it would seem over-dramatic to try and separate themselves off from the rest of the UK.

**Figure 1: Scottish perceptions of localness.**

This illustrates that the whole of Scotland is of relevance, but that there are other areas of interest. This Dumfries resident would be interested in information and entertainment centring on the cities, but also finds the trans-border region relevant.



<sup>1</sup> Half the participants in each workshop were recruited as regular viewers of these programmes (see Appendix A), and so appreciation levels may be higher than would otherwise be the case

*'Moderator: and what is Wales?*

*Participants: National*

*Moderator: How about the UK, what's that?*

*Participants: International! [laughter]' (Aberystwyth)*

In all three nations the term 'regional' was also used. For Scotland, this did not exactly tally with the TV regional areas. For example, in Glasgow the term 'regional' represented the Central Belt, in Inverness it meant the Highlands, and in Dumfries there was some indication that their 'region' also included locations across the border, such as Carlisle (see Figure 1).

**Figure 2: Localness in Northern Ireland**

Some of the participants in Derry/Londonderry and Enniskillen felt that areas over the border were local to them, as they often go into the Republic for leisure purposes or for work.



In Northern Ireland, there was acknowledgement that the population was small in comparison with England, which meant that terms were used variably. On the one hand, the whole of Northern Ireland was described as 'local'; on the other, participants said that Northern Ireland felt like a separate distinct country which certainly needed its own television provision. Additionally, there was a range of different levels of interest in, and affinity with, the Republic of Ireland.

This interest was often split along religious lines, with the Catholic community believing that areas over the border were local and of interest to them, particularly if they had relatives or holiday homes there.

Participants in Northern Ireland were the least interested in 'regional' coverage – that is, coverage which distinguishes between different parts of Northern Ireland. There was interest in hearing about the different areas of Northern Ireland outside Belfast, but participants explained that this would be to show the variety of different things going

on across the 'nation' of Northern Ireland, rather than to point up any great differences in lifestyle or culture across the different areas of Northern Ireland.

This can be contrasted with discussions in Scotland and Wales, where participants clearly felt that regions within their nations had distinct elements of heritage and culture which could be represented to advantage on television.

In Wales, participants in Aberystwyth and Caernarfon talked about their 'region' and its differences from South Wales, such as different types of work and communities.

*'You go down to Cardiff; it's a different kind of working altogether isn't it. I mean it's completely different.'*  
(Aberystwyth)

Those who lived in South Wales claimed to be most interested in the 'three cities' of South Wales as they would be likely to go to those places, and therefore keen to know about news and events there (see Figure 3).

Despite this differentiation, there was a sense that Wales was coming together more in the past few years, as people moved between North and South Wales. Participants also mentioned that more national events had been taking place, which they thought would help to bring the country together.

*'Because things have evolved haven't they... there's now more links between Cardiff and North Wales than there used to be. I think it has progressed a lot and I think it will continue as more of our people go down there and they come up.'*  
(Caernarfon)

In summary, all identified with the UK, their nation within it, and (especially in Wales and Scotland) their region. There were a number of factors that influenced participants' definitions of *localness*:

- Where friends and family currently live or lived in the past. Participants wanted to hear about where they were brought up when younger, or where friends or family were currently living
- Where they worked
- Where entertainment and leisure facilities were available
- Where places were easily accessible to them

What participants wanted to know about their local area varied. For example, if a city nearby was easily accessible and had entertainment facilities, then people wanted to hear leisure information. However, while they were always concerned about their own city in terms of news, they were less concerned about news in a city nearby.



**Figure 3: Localness in South Wales**

A participant in Cardiff explained that for her, local interest could be indicated with these stars - the stars relate to places she had been to for a great night out). In general, the orange colour related to the area she felt was local and regional to her.

Participants were interested in hearing about sport when it was on a national basis, but not if it was the results of a local league in another part of the nation.

*'It's something Gareth Edwards said once when he was playing rugby and he said, when he was playing New Zealand and he was arriving back in Heathrow, he was home. When he was playing somewhere in Britain, he was home when he came back to Cardiff. Again, when he was playing in Cardiff, he was home when he was in his home village. It all depends, as this gentleman says, it's perspective, isn't it?'* (Aberystwyth)

## **2.2 Views about current provision**

Views about dedicated provision were very similar across the nations and also across social classes. Workshop participants in this session were not asked to focus exclusively on ITV provision; rather, the discussion was more wide-ranging, encompassing BBC programmes as well.

Participants were aware of dedicated television provision, and able to articulate the benefits they felt that came from it. They felt that television needed to show dedicated programmes because there was a shared culture within the nation that was different to the other nations within the UK, and which therefore required its own programming. For example, each nation believed that it had its own specific sense of humour that other people would find difficult to understand. More widely than this, participants believed their country had its own culture and shared heritage, and needed dedicated programming to help reinforce a sense of national pride.

*'[Discussing Give My Head Peace] I don't think the 'English would get the same sense of humour from it. The English people I know just haven't got the same sense of humour as us.'* (Enniskillen)

*'I think it's in our culture to have to see, have to watch. We do have a lot of UK TV and being part of Northern Ireland we consider ourselves maybe part of the UK as well, but when it comes to Northern Ireland we actually see the difference between our culture and the UK culture.'* (Belfast)

Many of the older respondents (usually those over 35 across the workshops) were happy with the status quo and the amount of provision at the moment, especially as they perceived that dedicated programming had improved over time. When constructing schedules, these participants often initially developed ideas which reflected the scope of current provision.

Despite valuing this dedicated provision, participants did not want such programming to be parochial, and did not support, for the most part, lower-quality programmes. Although they acknowledged that budgets will usually not be as high as those of programmes on the network, there was much discussion about the negative effects of dedicated programmes that were seen as low quality, poorly made, lacking in ideas and 'too embarrassing to watch'. In general, many participants preferred that dedicated programming did not exist, rather than that poor quality programming was shown.

This could sometimes impact on whether dedicated programmes were currently being watched by participants – a number commented that there was an assumption that programme quality will be poor. On the other hand, if dedicated programmes were well made, then participants in the groups said that they would watch them.

A striking example of this is programmes made in Gaelic or Welsh, which were felt by many in the workshops to be of high quality and were often watched and appreciated even by people who could not speak the language. Other examples of high quality programmes were *The Ferret* in Wales and *Spotlight* in Northern Ireland.

*'I've come across the odd programme on BBC2 as well, and it is a Gaelic programme and I'm not a Gaelic speaker, and I've watched the programme because the content's been fantastic.'* (Inverness)

Dedicated news was seen as the most important genre currently provided and the most watched. Most agreed that news of crime or breaking political events were the most important news to be disseminated across the nation, and felt that in these cases that their region should be reflected in such provision. As mentioned above, in Northern Ireland there was least emphasis on the need for region-specific provision, although still a need for representation of other areas of the country beyond Belfast.

*'If you see something advertised... a paedophile in Northern Ireland, you probably watch it because ... you want to know what's going on your own doorstep.'* (Belfast)

Participants often blurred the line between genres when discussing current provision. For example, current affairs was seen as encompassing social documentary through to extended news reporting and analysis. Similarly, entertainment shows were felt to range from chat shows, music and entertainment listing programmes through to comedy and light factual elements.

Programmes that show social issues were especially valued, for example *The Fix* in Wales. However, participants liked having a range of genres within the current provision and programmes such as local history, comedy and light factual were also appreciated.

Many participants were interested to see areas and people they were familiar with on region-specific television, and suggested they would be more likely to watch the programme when they knew the area.

*'If you actually see a programmes about a locality, you tend to watch it because you are sort of interested... you can ...relate to it.'* (Caernarfon)

Indeed, it was often suggested that region-specific programmes could be shown more widely across the UK to change people's perceptions and show the more positive aspects of the nations and as information for potential tourists.

*'[Most people] seem to think that Wales is like a little country and with sheep and everything, well that's what we're saying, things are going on in Wales.'* (Caernarfon)

*'A large amount ... relies on tourism. These are the kinds of programmes that pull people towards us.'* (Dumfries)

Participants also discussed dedicated programmes that are equivalents of UK-wide shows such as home makeover or job swap shows such as *Fish out of Water* in Northern Ireland. There were mixed views about these programmes. On the one hand, it was believed to be interesting to see a local area that people are familiar with. However, these programmes were felt to be of lower quality at times compared with the UK-wide equivalent.

*'The content will be sort of diluted from the national level.'* (Inverness)

In Scotland, the Central Belt was felt to dominate in provision. Participants in Dumfries, for example, pointed out that there was a lot more to Scotland that they would like to see covered, in terms of news, social and current affairs, and entertainment. Similar sentiments were expressed in Aberystwyth, where participants felt that some of the bigger cities like Swansea and Cardiff dominated.

However, the role of television was also seen to be important in bringing the nation together. For example, in Wales coverage of the Welsh League was seen as a way of bringing people together, and the Millennium concert was particularly appreciated.

The existing schedules for dedicated programmes have their impact on participants' views. For example, participants in Northern Ireland were familiar with UTV's Friday 9pm entertainment slot, and therefore appreciated this as a natural timeslot for dedicated provision.

*'I believe we need entertainment on a Friday night.. it's the start of the weekend, you're off from work, you have the tea over and you're not going to go around doing housework or anything because you're off the next day.'*  
(Derry/Londonderry)

Similarly, the Sunday teatime slot was thought to be a good time to show dedicated programmes because it is when all the family are available to watch television together. *School around the Corner* in Northern Ireland was cited as a good example of this type of programme.

### **2.3 Gaps in current provision**

The younger age-groups felt significantly under-served by current provision across all three nations. This included teenagers through to those in their mid-thirties.

This group particularly appreciated what they saw as good and funny dedicated entertainment programmes such as *Chewin' the Fat* in Scotland and *Give My Head Peace* in Northern Ireland, but believed that other than these programmes, there was little for people of their age and interests.

Older participants also remarked that they felt there was little dedicated provision for younger people, and that there was a need for young people to be re-involved with it. Fears were expressed that if this did not happen, such television provision might disappear, as young people grew older with no real connection to it.

Younger people from all three nations called for more dedicated entertainment programmes in the future, of the type that they want to watch. In particular, they suggested the concept of magazine programming with listings. Some could already access this content on the Internet or through local listings magazines but they felt that television would also be an important outlet for such information. They argued that it would show that younger viewers (teenagers, young adults, pre-family viewers) were valued by the broadcasters.

Younger people also suggested new films and drama, as well as allowing younger people access to making dedicated programmes, without the need to incur high production costs. This view was also expressed when more localised content was discussed (Discussed further in Section 4: Future provision).

All the nations felt that they were not reflected well to the UK as a whole. There were a number of comments about stereotypical or unattractive characters from the nations being portrayed in UK-wide programmes, such as Trevor in *EastEnders*, or Jim McDonald in *Coronation Street*.

*'He uses his fists – what a great advertisement for Northern Ireland' (Enniskillen)*

## **2.4 Other media**

Participants tended to listen to local radio stations for news, traffic information, music, listings information and discussion. The younger participants in Belfast especially valued the listings information on radio. Radio was also felt to be useful for more localised information in comparison with television.

National papers were also read by participants, although in Northern Ireland they were felt to be biased for one side of the community. Participants in Scotland and Northern Ireland noted that UK papers are produced with their own national element such as the *Scottish Sun*. These were appreciated as they gave news from a national UK perspective but also included stories from the nations.

Websites were also used for local information, such as the BBC's or council websites. However, across the nations, it was felt that that the internet was not yet sufficiently embedded to be able to reflect or inform the whole community. Rather, television was seen as the most powerful medium because of the power of the images and speedy response to news and current affairs.

*'You're reading it in the papers, the local papers, the Derry Journal reports every week the young ones are often, you know, been sentenced and put on probation... But to actually see it, as you say, you know, live or recorded as live, and then broadcast it's just so ... it's dreadful.'* (Derry/Londonderry)

## Section 3

# Priorities

Exercises were carried out at different stages during the workshops to ascertain priorities for the delivery of different elements of dedicated programming. These exercises specifically addressed requirements on the Channel 3 licensees, and not the BBC. Illustrative, indicative material of the different potential budgetary and scheduling challenges facing commercial licensees was given to participants in stages, and trade-off exercises were carried out.

This section provides a synthesis of the different (and at times contradictory) opinions expressed at different stages in the discussion.

### 3.1 Methods

In the first session, cards which illustrated different dedicated programmes were used. Participants discussed genres using particular programmes as stimulus, and chose several which represented the kinds of provision they felt were the most beneficial at national and regional level.

In the second session, a trade-off exercise was carried out. This involved different genre cards stuck to a simplified representation of a weekly ITV1 schedule. This schedule was indicative rather than actual: it was not intended to fully represent each licensee's requirements, but rather to illustrate the key programme areas under discussion. The genre cards could be moved around the various slots each day in the week; into and out of peak time, during the day and the evening, and at the weekend vs. during the week. Participants could also add more cards with more of the same genres, or different ones. They could take away any they felt were superfluous.

Participants created different versions of the schedule and they were asked to:-

- Redesign a typical weekly schedule so as to provide the best provision for their region/nation overall; and to explain and defend their choices
- Then take into account the relative illustrative costs of different programme types and time slots, and make any necessary changes to their schedule bearing this in mind
- Then reduce the budget available<sup>2</sup> and allocate resources to provide the best solution on a smaller budget

### 3.2 Overall choices

In all sessions, viewers mentioned that populations of the devolved nations are low compared to those of the large conurbations in England. Because of this they found it hard to imagine that in practice, large amounts of resources would be likely to be available for programming for their nation, or region within the nation. They also tended to find it difficult to think beyond the status quo of the scheduling they were used to, to the ways they might use television in future.

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<sup>2</sup> to reflect the increasingly competitive pressures on regional programming on ITV1

*'If you put it to a vote we'd get outvoted, let's put it that way. That's simple. That's political. There's only 5 million people in Scotland. So what say do we get? None.'* (Glasgow)

Future plans of the BBC were also, naturally, unknown to participants, and so on occasion it was hard for them to make judgements about whether it would be necessary to preserve some services on ITV1, given that the BBC could potentially increase its current offering for the nations.

Overall, participants felt that there were specific cultural and social benefits associated with national/regional TV. It was these *benefits* they wished to see retained, rather than rigid quotas on genre, peak-time scheduling or quotas on the budget for specific programme types.

All nations were interested in the idea of improving the way they were represented on UK-wide TV to the nation as a whole. For most, however, better network representation was not seen as an adequate *alternative* to dedicated programming. Nation-specific provision remained important and motivating for all participants. As mentioned below, participants also felt that some of the solutions proposed to improve dedicated programming might have the effect of improving the image of the nation to the UK as a whole: for example, showing fewer but better quality shows which could be taken on by the network.

The overall consensus, combining views from all three nations, was that the following dedicated genres<sup>3</sup> required higher quality production values and ideally, peak or near-peak scheduling:-

- Current affairs
- Investigative social documentary
- Light entertainment including live entertainment and comedy
- Entertaining 'lifestyle' social documentary

However, reducing ITV1 provision to *only* a few high quality, key genre shows was not the preferred option for the majority of participants. Their ideal solution was to *support* key genre shows with extra, regular, cheaper and possibly shorter examples of genres where high production values were not seen to be so important, although participants stressed that these shows too should be in regular slots if possible:-

- Local sport coverage
- Region-specific news or discussion of issues affecting the region, ideally as an adjunct to the nation-specific news
- Dedicated language programmes (except in Wales, where S4C was felt to provide all that was necessary), which could also incorporate some educational shows, children's shows or comedies
- Magazine shows or up-to-date listings for the region (particularly popular among the youngest in the workshops)

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<sup>3</sup> Dedicated news programming was excluded from the trade-off exercise, to better focus on the perceived relative merits of the other types of dedicated programmes.

Participants were keen to ensure that as far as possible ITV adhered to the principle of including all minority groups and interests within dedicated provision. These extra programmes would help to provide this “minority” representation. The higher-budget, prime-time genres were seen as having an entertainment-driven function, and the “minority” programming as fulfilling a more socially-purposive role.

It was acceptable to the majority to lose *some* dedicated programming in genres such as light factual or nature documentary. The trade-off here was that nation-specific content could be found in UK-wide programming from time to time, and that resources would be given to increasing the quality of key genres.

Figure 4 sets out the eventual priorities by each nation, combining participants’ interest in both types of dedicated programme provision:

**Figure 4: Programme genre priorities by nation (excluding news)**

Priority	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
1	Comedy	Social documentary and consumer affairs	Light factual, social documentary
2	Sport bulletins (even if off-peak)	Entertainment	Youth entertainment, music
3	Social documentary	Current affairs	Investigative journalism
4	Gaelic	Sport bulletins (even if off-peak)	Political current affairs

To a certain extent, the compromise of fewer high quality shows plus a smaller number of shorter, cheaper shows was an attempt by participants to cover all bases. They were trying to obtain high quality, prestigious dedicated television, *and* make sure that local issues and people were cheaply and regularly seen on-screen.

The compromise does, however, represent the **principles** which participants believed should govern the eventual provision. It also illustrates the importance to them of having a *range* of local, region-specific, and nation-specific television.

A further set of genres was discussed. These were felt to be ‘nice to have’ but were not a priority. These included:-

- Religious or worship programmes
- Children’s programmes
- Lifestyle programmes such as house renovations

Participants felt these were available on terrestrial channels for the whole UK, and hence there was no need to preserve them for the nations specifically.

During the trade-off process, most participants, when they first saw the illustrative representation of dedicated programming across a typical week, expressed initial surprise that the number of hours was more limited than they expected.

In the first exercise they tended to move dedicated shows in key genres into peak-time slots and spread these evenly through the week to try and obtain representation of some provision each day.

When they then noted that these peak-time slots would be more expensive, and perhaps also prevent the nation from watching networked shows which could have higher appeal, some key dedicated genres were moved out of peak into near-peak slots, and the number of key genre shows, particularly current affairs, tended to decrease.

Some genres like language shows and sports were moved into the cheapest time slots and shortened to very quick bulletins. At this point light factual, local language, children's shows and religious shows were questioned and often decreased in number.

The sections below discuss the decision-making process and the changing views on specific genres in detail.

### **3.3 Quality, scheduling and distribution**

Maintaining high quality programmes in the key dedicated genres was seen to be more important than retaining the status quo of total hours of coverage.

Quality was felt to be connected with originality and high production values<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, there was recognition that higher quality dedicated programming may be more expensive to provide than some of the existing programming.

This resulted in the decision to bring down the *number* of hours devoted to key genres, but to increase the resources devoted to them. Participants across the workshops felt that this funding should involve more money spent on production, but also, crucially, should be used to ensure that dedicated programming was given regular time slots and supported by trailers and appropriate continuity. If these shows were to bring the nation together, argued participants, then the licensees needed to make the nation more aware of them and make it easy for people to watch them. This was perceived to be an important element of quality programming.

It was suggested that dedicated programming was important partly because it created pride. Thus it was important that these programmes were seen to be produced especially for the nations and did not give the impression of being a low-quality or second-rate alternative to networked shows. This was particularly important for the younger participants, who felt most disaffected from existing dedicated provision. However, it was a feature for all age groups.

On the other hand, all participants acknowledged that quality programming also benefits from UK-wide scope and budgets, so they would not want too much of their TV schedule to be regional or national in scope.

*'Yes, you like to see your own ...but sometimes things like for instance car programmes, like Top Gear, they just can't compete over here because they*

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth pointing out that an extensive discussion of the meaning of 'quality' was not part of the remit of this research, so moderators did not push respondents to strictly define their terms.

*haven't got the budgets that are used for it. Some things are better not local.'*  
(Enniskillen)

Scheduling was seen as a way to send a signal of quality, and an important way to make sure that the programmes reached the audiences they were intended for, and fulfilled their remit to serve the nation. Appropriate scheduling added to the perceived value of genres and programmes, and so scheduling, quality and genre went hand in hand especially for the 'key genres'.

The younger participants across the nations pointed out that demands on viewers' time would only increase in future, as would the available variety of high quality programmes, and so dedicated programming in key genres would need to compete with UK-wide programmes. They would need to be in or near peak to build a following and maximise their benefit to the nation.

Participants supported any dedicated programming that had 'carved out a niche' for itself in the schedules. These established slots were seen as assets that they wanted to keep and fill with high quality content.

Specifically, the early evening timing for local news was seen as essential to retain, and the Friday evening entertainment slot in Northern Ireland was seen as well-established and a good mechanism to introduce new and lively talent.

*'You get celebrities and people from across the water and that's good to see for us'* (Enniskillen)

There was also spontaneous interest in the distribution footprint of national and regional programming; whether it was shown in the nation or to the whole of the UK. Participants noted the way that their nation was depicted on networked shows to the UK as a whole, and were also interested in learning about the world outside their own nation and themselves finding out about other corners of the UK. This was particularly apparent in Wales.

*'We want to know about other things as well, we're not narrow-minded, we want to open up to the world'* (Aberystwyth)

However, participants felt that UK-wide coverage which included their nation would not be an acceptable *total* substitute for dedicated national programming, however high profile or well-resourced the offering.

*'Some form of saving, and the few big budget programmes, but a mixture – we don't want to lose our identities'* (Caernarfon)

### **3.4 News**

Across the nations, age and social groupings, dedicated news provision was always first mentioned as vital programming which reflected and enhanced the life of the community at local, regional and national level. It was felt to play a special role in reiterating the existence and importance of the nation, by providing immediate feedback on political and social issues and giving a sense that the nation is 'taken seriously' by the UK as a whole.

There was also interest in news with a more local remit. Participants were interested in hearing about their *region* on terrestrial television, particularly in rural areas such as North Wales or West Northern Ireland where residents felt ignored by the nation-wide coverage, which they felt focused on cities. Scottish participants, similarly, wanted to hear about areas of Scotland outside the Central Belt.

Local papers and radio were felt to do a good job of informing people and helping them feel involved with their local communities. These were often warmly regarded, and seen as homely, friendly ways to keep up with local stories, people and events.

In light of this, there was a general acknowledgement that very local news might not be appropriate for a regular slot on the nation-specific TV news, and certainly would not be welcome as a *replacement* for nation-wide news. Participants felt that there would simply not be enough happening to warrant such a shift. Furthermore, many participants said they were interested in parts of the nation beyond the region where they lived, having relatives or roots there. As such, the idea that they would only hear about their area, while others would only hear about their area, felt artificially divisive.

There was, however, a place for more localised news content. This could possibly be shown online or through other new media formats in future such as interactive television. Though many participants could not clearly imagine themselves using this, some of the more internet-literate individuals did already look for listings and local headlines online. The point was also made in Cardiff that the news would then be updated only as much as would be relevant rather than regularly to suit the demands of a linear bulletin on terrestrial TV.

Community issues such as crime investigations and traffic updates were felt to be the most relevant and interesting forms of news provision. There could also be scope for hearing about the local area and relevant ongoing social and political issues under the umbrella of current affairs or social discussion programmes. This was considered to be one of the most valuable aspects of current affairs coverage (discussed below).

Finally, plurality of provision was welcomed and participants wished to retain both BBC and ITV1 provision, especially if these were to be scheduled at slightly different times to take in slightly different audiences. It was felt important that there were more than one journalistic output on television, in order to feel confident that the stories being covered were indeed the main ones of the day.

### **3.5 Current affairs and social documentary**

Current affairs was usually initially interpreted as political discussion, or extended news journalism.

*'Like an extended, more detailed news bulletin' (Aberystwyth)*

However, a wider aspect of current affairs was also discussed. Participants often blurred it with 'social documentary'. This wider genre of relevant, up-to-date social discussion and reporting was very highly valued across nations.

Participants called for social documentary shows to be thorough and high quality rather than cheaply produced. There was a general feeling that this would lead to current affairs in general being more investigative and concerning itself with real issues and problems facing the people of the nation, and hence being more entertaining as well as informative. These kinds of shows could uncover stories of crime, social problems such as drinking and drugs, or take a look at economic changes affecting those with traditional professions or those in rural areas.

Participants felt current affairs discussions would best be shown at a time when adults were relaxing and prepared to give the programmes their attention – therefore later evening slots were seen as more valuable than daytime slots. As with all key genres, there was support for the idea that these shows would be regularly timetabled within the schedules. Even if the shows ran in short series rather than every week, there was a call for the shows to be at predictable times.

There was interest in the idea that such social documentaries could be of high enough production quality to be worth showing in peak (even, potentially, rolling out to the network).

Another important facet of current affairs was the overlap in participants' minds between current affairs, social reporting and consumer affairs. Programmes like *The Ferret* in Wales were seen to do a valuable job. Consumer affairs and relevant social documentaries were all felt to contribute to the current affairs remit, and indeed some suggested that some of this type of content could be in a magazine format and be associated with dedicated news programming.

### **3.6 Entertainment**

As with current affairs, the idea of entertainment meant very different things to different groups of people. For the older participants, across nations, the most resonant and socially important aspects of entertainment for the nation were historical, nature and social documentaries which were seen as both educative and entertaining.

The youngest (broadly, those under 35) tended to think of magazine-style programmes, comedy, music, light factual programmes, talk shows, original drama and soaps as the most important elements falling within dedicated entertainment.

All agreed that entertainment could play an important role in maintaining high quality, original programming specifically for the nations. It was felt to contribute to a sense of national pride in television and even to social cohesion. Participants could imagine discussing these programmes with friends afterwards.

However, across the workshops in general there were differing opinions as to how 'polished' such shows would need to be, and whether the aim would be to *compete* with the network offering or to provide off-peak *alternatives*.

The eventual recommendation in most workshops was that there should be room for some 'flagship' dedicated comedy, drama or light entertainment. These could be well-crafted, well-resourced original drama or talk shows. Participants were also prepared to lose religious programmes, light factual shows and even some current affairs (although there was some debate over this) in order to ensure entertainment quality.

However, if this option was taken up, participants felt there would also be a need for shorter programmes, off-peak, so that in the intervals between the higher-profile, higher-budget shows there would still be some dedicated entertainment provision. These shows could appeal to niche audiences such as young adults. In some instances, participants suggested that these would not need full half-hour slots, but could be shorter.

ITV1 was seen to have a key role to play in the provision of drama and light entertainment, as all the licensees across nations were seen as less 'serious' than their counterpart, the BBC. Family-oriented entertainment in particular was felt to be natural to ITV1.

### **3.7 Sport**

Valuing the relative merits of sport, current affairs/social documentary and entertainment caused the most debate in the workshops and no single decision emerged from the discussions. However, these three genres were always the ones which were rated most highly.

In the Belfast workshop, sports provision was seen as limited, and some argued that this meant there should be more. Across the rest of Northern Ireland, sport was valued but was not, in a trade-off, the highest priority. In Scotland, sport was consistently valued more highly than the other genres. This may be to do with the popularity of football and a desire to see more of the Scottish leagues. Short round-ups of results from games across divisions were felt to be a good (and inexpensive) way of bringing a more local and regional feel to Scottish sport. It was suggested that these could simply be added to news bulletins.

In all the workshops, the idea that sports discussion could form part of a more quirky, possibly late-night entertainment offering was raised. The *scheduling* of sport was seen as the most important element in how well it served the public, even more than the quality or budget of the show itself. Many pointed out that there was a need for sports coverage to be fresh and relevant, which meant showing results soon after all the weekend games.

Overall, football was the highest priority for sports coverage and other sports were seen as 'nice to have' rather than essential to provide in each nation.

### **3.8 Light factual**

There was a real need expressed across the workshops for the nation to 'see itself' in everyday situations, which was most apparent in Northern Ireland. Light factual programmes were felt to offer this. However, in the trade offs, other genres were valued more highly, and it was felt that the nation-specific benefits of light factual programming could be taken on by entertainment or social/consumer documentary.

Older women across nations were the group who supported light factual programming most strongly initially, but tended to decide on entertainment and sport later in the discussion.

### **3.9 Religious broadcasting**

For most, religious programming was considered 'nice to have' rather than a vital element in provision. However, there was a strong sense, especially from Wales, that religion formed part of the historical and cultural backdrop of society. Therefore, religious topics could be of interest in the context of dedicated social documentary.

It was not, however, seen as imperative that ITV1 should provide such programmes, given that participants enjoyed religious programmes on S4C in Wales and on BBC Scotland. Both these channels were seen to take a broad educative view of both linguistic and religious issues and there was no apparent pressing need for further plurality. In Northern Ireland, the principle was that religious provision should be even-handed.

### **3.10 Dedicated language programming**

Attitudes to language provision differed by nation and also in the light of other elements such as religious background in Northern Ireland. The nation-specific chapters below detail this.

### **3.11 Children's programming**

This type of programming was often included when participants noted that children's provision was absent from the schedule exercise they were shown. It was mentioned by several groups as a 'nice to have' but was not a high priority when it came to trading off different genres.

## Section 4

# Future Provision

This chapter explores participants' views about how the benefits of dedicated programming could be provided in the future given changes in technology. Some indicative scenarios were presented to help develop the discussion, including City TV, a station broadcasting over four hours a night to a population of about 300,000, and Community On Air, a local community service staffed by volunteers broadcasting to about 40,000 residents. The concept of a 'broadband box' was also presented to stimulate debate, which would allow viewers access to a regional archive.

### 4.1 Future technologies

Overall, new technologies were seen to offer an alternative way to access regional and local services, but were not considered to be a replacement yet for analogue television. Younger people in particular were able to imagine accessing local/regional and national content through more hi-tech methods in the future, such as mobile phones and interactive television.

Despite this, for many participants in all of the nations, such technologies were believed to be out of reach and unlikely to affect their day-to-day lives in the short- to medium-term. Participants acknowledged that digital TV take-up was increasing (and indeed recruitment ensured that both terrestrial and digital viewers were represented). However, there was some concern that a digital divide might become wider, especially for those in more rural areas and for older people.

There were a number of spontaneous mentions that technologies similar to Sky Plus would be more widely available in the future, allowing people to schedule easily their own programmes. These were seen as likely to become increasingly important as people started to work more flexible hours. However, even with such technology, it was felt there were certain times of the day when it was more natural to watch certain genres of programmes, such as sport.

Some participants found it difficult to express what the impact of personal scheduling would be on dedicated programming. There was a view that the consumption of dedicated programmes might fall, because people would be more likely to stick to the mainstream programmes they knew best and had therefore recorded. People would be much less likely to stumble on programmes or flick channels when there was little else on, which is sometimes how they had discovered regional programmes in the past.

*'Everyone will lose something because you're definitely going to record Neighbours, EastEnders and Coronation Street, you'll miss the chance to flick to one of the shows.'*  
(Belfast)

*'So you could for example watch last night's episode of The Simpsons instead of the Gaelic programmes that come up, you would probably do that that, so you might tend to lose your Gaelic programmes. In that respect [it is watched] now because you haven't got the choice - not that it's not interesting.'*  
(Inverness)

Participants felt that in the future, technologies would converge with the ability to watch television programmes through the internet or on mobile phones. Similarly, participants found it difficult to express what impact this would have on how they might view dedicated programming, although they believed it may be possible to search for local information through interactive television.

## **4.2 Very local content**

Very local content, perhaps available on a separate TV channel, was of interest to participants. It was felt to have a number of advantages. Firstly, those that were living away from their home area would be able to pick it up on digital television and keep in touch with local events. Furthermore, it could become a way of promoting and developing local talent and allowing it room to experiment before moving onto more mainstream channels.

*'For independent programmes to come through... good ones could maybe come through and shine.'* (Belfast)

Other advantages included providing an opportunity for people in the local area to get started working in the media and raising awareness of local companies through advertising.

Given that there would be long timeslots to fill, it was considered that programmes would often be repeated, therefore allowing more time to see them. The tourist argument was also mentioned, whereby visitors would be able to access the localised service to find out about the area. Some participants believed that seeing local councillors discuss issues with members of the community was of potential interest.

*'Seeing our officials being grilled by people from this area on issues that affected us all, that'll be quite good.'* (Inverness)

A number of participants expressed curiosity about and interest in watching their local area on television because of the familiarity of the locations, even if the quality of programming was not that high.

*'But something is of interest because it's about where you live. If you recognise somewhere I think you're more interested in watching it than somewhere you don't recognise. And even if it's about a restaurant... if you've been to that restaurant and know what it's about it doesn't really matter, it's something that's interesting and you'll watch it.'* (Dumfries)

Participants felt with the proliferation of digital channels, a local TV channel could usefully be of benefit to local communities, even if only servicing a minority.

Participants in Derry/Londonderry were able to access Channel 9, a local television service for the city, broadcasting on an analogue signal. Not all participants were able to get clear reception for the station, and many encountered variable signal quality. Overall, there was appreciation of the mix of programmes shown on Channel 9 as they were believed to cater for different age groups and interests. There was a belief that the music programmes would especially appeal to the under 35s.

*'There was one thing that was mentioned earlier here that young people do not have any coverage, and the young people do watch Channel 9 because it is constant music.'* (Derry/Londonderry)

Some of the older participants in the workshop particularly liked the news, social affairs and programmes showing Derry/Londonderry in the past. There was an expectation that the programme quality would continue to improve in the future, although there were some doubts as to whether such channels were viable in the longer term.

*'It's just a local company trying to set up a local TV station, fair play to them for doing it. And really as we say with more experience, expertise, money it could become that it will get off the ground. I mean I don't think you can create a TV station like that and have it successful, without experience.'*  
(Derry/Londonderry)

While participants were positive about the benefits of localised TV provision, a number of caveats were raised about its practicability. There was a perception that it would be difficult to fill the space with enough output, especially if it was shown over several hours a night. Any service would need to be well marketed to people to make them aware of the programmes available. Participants did not think such output would be an appointment to view, but would be flicked over to, when there was little else on.

*'I think there might be a problem, filling three hours though with Inverness News.'*  
(Inverness)

*'They're going to run out of ideas quickly with this.'* (Belfast)

Concern was also expressed about the professionalism and creativity of such output, as budgets would be many times smaller than national television. In particular, it was felt that very localised content covering a suburb of a city or a town only would be amateur in content and presentation.

*'It sounds really nice but I think we know who would turn up, cheesy people'*  
(Inverness)

Participants questioned whether such stations would be financially viable. Participants across the three nations did not like the idea of a local TV community service being paid for by the local council, for example, as it was feared that this would result in council tax rises or would divert resources away from other services.

*'Even if it was low budget, I think that the money could go elsewhere to maybe better effect... Simple things like parks... instead of investing in a TV programme.'*  
(Cardiff)

*'If the council were paying for it then surely it would cost us to pay for something that we wouldn't want to watch. I would be very angry paying for something that's boring and you're not going to watch.'* (Dumfries)

Finally, participants were unsure how increased localised services would fit in with other media. For example, it was felt that such services might overlap with what was already broadcast on local radio as well as information contained in some of the listings magazines. It was also suggested that in the future there may be more localised websites, which would have particular advantages for local people away from home to keep up to date with things going on.

### **4.3 Broadband box/regional archive**

There were mixed views across the three nations about the concept of a broadband box with regional archive of programmes. Some participants liked the possibility of viewing and choosing programmes on demand.

*'Because it's all there, you access it when you feel like it and find something you're interested in, you've got time to look through it and then decide.'* (Caernarfon)

Some participants suggested that such an archive might lead to more dedicated programmes being watched as it would be possible to scan the content first, perhaps on a menu to find programmes of interest. However, others doubted that people would bother going to the effort of scrolling through archives, and therefore whether there would be widespread interest for such a product

Those participants who had these features already were concerned about having another gadget for their already cluttered television sets, although it was suggested that a product such as a broadband box would eventually converge with DVD players or Freeview boxes.

## Section 5

# Northern Ireland

This section looks at the priorities for different elements of dedicated programming in Northern Ireland. It sets out the overarching themes from the Northern Ireland workshops, and then describes how each genre was perceived.

### 5.1 Overview

There was a strong sense from participants that Northern Ireland needed its own dedicated programme provision, although they acknowledged that its population was small.

Across the workshops, news provision was chosen as the most important element of Northern Ireland television. Because of the political history and culture of the country, it was important for participants to have plurality of coverage. This meant also that it was a priority to maintain dedicated current affairs.

However, in all the workshops participants expressed a desire for their dedicated programming to reflect Northern Ireland's life *beyond* its political situation. Currently, Northern Ireland was felt to give a limited and negative impression of itself to the UK as a whole, and participants felt that terrestrial television had a positive role to play in showing the rich variety of life and culture there. This was seen as a priority.

It was seen as a particular priority for the ITV licensee, because the BBC was perceived as having a more serious, news-oriented focus, while UTV had a more apolitical and entertainment-oriented brand.

Therefore, participants tended to choose programming genres which were light-hearted, and sometimes cut the amount of current affairs programming on offer in favour of comedy, entertainment and social documentary.

In order to boost the image of Northern Ireland for both residents and those in the rest of the UK, participants wanted dedicated programming which could compete in quality with UK-wide programmes. They felt there should be elements of entertainment and social documentary which were good enough to be put out across the network. At the same time, they were keen to preserve programming which could 'help the people of Northern Ireland feel good about themselves'. Younger participants especially suggested that even viewers in Northern Ireland itself had a negative view of Northern Irish people and programmes.

*'We think we sound like the people on Friends... we're surprised when we hear a Northern Irish accent... we turn it off.'* (Belfast)

All participants under the age of around 35 called for more programming which would reflect them and their interests. Young participants in Belfast and the youngest in the Enniskillen group felt most disaffected from dedicated programming, across the study as a whole.

The eventual decision in all the workshops was for 'flagship' dramas, documentaries or comedies which, although they would be shown initially in Northern Ireland only, would be of competitive quality with the network. Equally important was a steady provision of cheaper, fun, light factual programming, involving humour and music, even if programme length or volume had to be cut back.

*'There should be some level of cultural awareness on Irish television, music, something geared towards your interests. You could go and look it up on the internet I suppose, but if it was broadcast on the television people from all cultures would watch it and become a little bit more aware.'* (Enniskillen)

This aspect of the debate was of much greater interest to participants, and of higher priority for them, than discussion of religious programming and different language provision.

High priority genres for Northern Ireland were:-

- **Entertainment** – light factual, lifestyle, comedy elements, including music and more edgy, youth-oriented programming
- **Current affairs** – once a week discussion show, to keep political discussion relevant and provide an alternative view to the BBC
- Entertaining but hard-hitting **social documentary** (for example investigative reporting on binge drinking)

There was also interest in **sport**, although there was more disagreement in Northern Ireland than other nations about this genre. Participants in Belfast wished to retain sport as a priority while for others, the entertainment and social documentary genres were more important.

Local radio news and information was seen as having a role to play in reflecting Northern Ireland. It was perceived as being more upbeat and light-hearted than television, even when discussing serious issues. However, it was not seen as a substitute for television provision.

Many participants from both communities in Northern Ireland also watched channels from the Republic of Ireland such as RTE, as these channels showed high quality films and series such as *Friends*. Generally, participants were happy for all of Northern Ireland to be able to see the Republic's channels and for those in the Republic to receive the BBC and UTV, although there were some concerns about whether people in the Republic would be getting access to channels without paying the licence fee.

Because participants saw television as a way to cohere society and show the richness of Northern Ireland social life, it was particularly important that key genres were scheduled in or near peak time. People were used to UTV's dedicated entertainment slot on Fridays at 9pm, and it was felt that key shows like *School around the Corner* show how TV can bring people together, so participants wanted to build on this in the schedules.

## 5.2 News

There was a distinct tendency for participants to use *either* the BBC *or* UTV as their preferred source of dedicated news. This correlated to a certain extent with participants' affinity with the UK. However, because the channels were seen to represent different points of view, all participants agreed that they were important to retain.

Local radio news was seen as important because the approach was felt to be more light-hearted, and the radio could cover social as well as national issues in detail, plus local information such as traffic and travel. However, television news was vital in being convenient, immediate, and taking little effort to watch. News was also gathered from the papers. Northern Ireland editions of UK papers were mentioned particularly in Belfast.

There was interest in a more socially-focused, localised news, although participants in Enniskillen expressed doubt as to whether there would be enough news happening in their area.

This localised news could possibly be delivered through other new media formats in future such as interactive television. Because these would be more flexible methods of delivery, there would be scope for this type of news to cover some of the things happening over the border with the Republic of Ireland. In general, participants felt that UTV news and current affairs programmes should cover Northern Ireland specifically, but there was also interest in what was going on in the Republic, and also in north west England, which might be accessed through new media forms of delivery.

All participants were keen to see stories about Northern Ireland on UK-wide news bulletins - especially stories which were not about political conflict .

*'They had a story about picking mussels from Belfast Bay, and they tidied it up and made it more exciting by adding a gourmet chef cooking them, and it was on the UK news. I thought that was good.'* (Derry/Londonderry)

The early evening slots for news for the nations were appreciated. The eventual decision of participants was that it would be important to preserve this news at this time.

## 5.3 Current affairs and social documentary

Participants wanted dedicated current affairs, in peak time, or later in the evening, during the week. This would ideally be on a Monday night, or early in the week 'to get a fresh look at the week's events'.

Some of this ideally would be debate *between* politicians. However, while participants noted that this was necessary and should continue, many in all the workshops also expressed their weariness with this style of programming.

*'I don't normally watch that kind of stuff because to be honest I'm fed up listening to, basically listening to politicians'* (Londonderry/Derry)

As a result, there was some call for elements of current affairs which get the public involved, either debating between themselves or questioning those in power. It was seen as important for such programmes to be shown near peak time so that even

younger teenagers, who might not naturally seek out these programmes, could be exposed to this important genre.

*'I know we all sit around blaming the politicians – but who put them there? We have to be involved too.'* (Londonderry/Derry)

*'It's something for everyone, from the oldest person to the youngest child, that has an impact on our lives'* (Enniskillen)

However, in Enniskillen in particular, participants pointed out that the dedicated news provision in Northern Ireland included discussion and editorial comment on politics. They also said, pragmatically, that because the situation in Northern Ireland was so relevant to the whole of the UK, if there was a breakthrough in the peace process or another important event, they would expect to see a great deal of coverage on the UK-wide BBC and ITV programmes.

The kind of investigative journalism presented in *Spotlight* and *Insight* was appreciated and discussed under the umbrella of current affairs. There was particular interest in the kind of journalism which covered social problems more expansively than would be possible on the news. Participants mentioned shows about binge drinking and adoption.

*'It's interesting – it's not politics'* (Londonderry/Derry)

*'On a Monday or a Thursday, the kids are in bed, you want to settle down and watch something of a serious programme that might have something to do with your local area.'* (Enniskillen)

They were happy to see fewer examples of these programmes if they were of good quality, and happy for them to compete with the network offering in or near peak time.

#### **5.4 Entertainment and light factual/social documentary**

Entertainment, light factual and documentary genres shaded together during the discussion and were seen to have both an entertaining and socially-purposive function.

*'You expect the usual paramilitary to be on the news programmes so if we get something that is more like our version of Northern Ireland. For instance we have a Miss Northern Ireland doing the Northern Ireland version of Faking It, she's good enough for me. She's not Miss Brazil or Miss USA or Miss New York or something like that, she's just from Belfast now'* (Belfast)

*'It's relaxing, nice to see the good side of the country we live in'* (Londonderry/Derry)

*'Doesn't matter if you're Catholic or Protestant, you want a big TV and a nice apartment and you want a holiday in Ibiza or to travel to Europe'* (Belfast)

Local reality shows and fly-on-the-wall programmes were more appreciated in Northern Ireland than they were in the other nations. The priority for participants was to see shows specific to Northern Irish life and events rather than formulaic reality shows set in

Northern Ireland. *School around the Corner* was mentioned as a programme which showed the real life of Northern Irish people and also illustrated their particular sense of humour. *School Choir of the Year* was also seen to be a show particularly appropriate to Northern Ireland.

*'School Choir represents what I would like Northern Ireland to be, mixed. There are Protestant and Catholic children on there from everywhere.'*  
(Londonderry/Derry)

When the group had to decide on priorities and scheduling they prioritised this light factual/entertainment programming highly.

Viewers in Northern Ireland had mixed views of UTV's Friday night dedicated entertainment programme. It was generally acknowledged that because the show and the time-slot for a Northern Irish talk show had been established, the opt-out should continue, and they prioritised it highly.

However, while *Kelly* itself was seen as a popular show, there was some call for it to be updated and made more relevant. If more resources could be invested, this show could be made more appropriate for wider audiences in Northern Ireland.

*'It's not the personality of Kelly, or John Daly [which is the problem] it's just I don't think we have enough people here of exceptional talent and ability'*  
(Londonderry/Derry)

Within contemporary talk-show entertainment, participants felt it would be important to include local live music.

*'I think the biggest section of young people are into music. They're not catered for, we only get boy bands and that X-Factor type stuff. There's no alternative music for them. I'm not saying it has to be every week but couldn't there be a segment, one week it could be alternative rock bands, the next week it could be a completely different entertainment programme'* (Derry/Londonderry)

Finally, comedy was another aspect of dedicated entertainment prioritised by participants. *Give My Head Peace* was universally seen as a valuable programme, showing the particular Northern Irish sense of humour. *Pulling Moves* was also appreciated. Participants saw a role for both the BBC and UTV in delivering this programme genre.

## **5.5 Sport**

Many participants claimed to value dedicated sport on UTV. Some claimed that it would help local young people get involved, and some argued that it simply showed what was going on in the area. In Belfast, participants argued that there was not enough sports coverage.

*'In the grand scale of sports coverage, it's not good. They try to cover too much at once so should have some more'* (Belfast)

However, when it came to choosing priorities, sport was seen more as a 'nice to have'. Participants pointed out that RTE had sports provision, which they could receive, and many said that they were not interested in local sport, and felt that access to high quality international sport was more interesting. There was a consensus that there was no one local sport with a massive following which needed to be shown on dedicated programmes.

If resources were unavailable for separate sports programming as part of dedicated television provision, participants suggested it could be fitted into the news provision or perhaps even delivered on radio, local press, or websites.

*'I think of sport as part of the news' (Belfast)*

The advantage of these other media forms were that they could provide the most important aspects of sports coverage: fresh, relevant results.

## **5.6 Religious broadcasting**

When asked about dedicated religious provision, participants felt that the main issue was the need to ensure that no offence was given to either Catholics or Protestants. Furthermore, most in the workshops expressed some concern that providing any new religious provision, beyond what currently existed, would be likely to open up unnecessary debate. Many therefore felt that the only certain way to avoid offence would be simply to retain current limited provision.

*'UK-wide because there isn't any Catholics and Protestants' (Derry/Londonderry)*

Some were concerned that dedicated religious programmes might become a means of delivering a political agenda, which viewers would have already seen in news and current affairs. Participants were most interested in different types of religious heritage being represented within other sorts of programming.

*'I don't think the religious programme is necessary. How would you cover everything, we're so multi-cultured if you have one you have to have the other. Just stick with Songs of Praise on the BBC and it will be fine.'* (Enniskillen)

*'It's that Irish thing, you've have to show everything, trying to get everything in together on the TV and it's hard' (Belfast)*

*'Pulling Moves was about Catholics and Protestants but it wasn't about being that religion, it was about being a lad about town' (Belfast)*

## **5.7 Language programming**

Participants saw little pressing need for dedicated language programming. The fact that some channels from the Republic of Ireland broadcast in Irish meant that for most, there was no need to replicate this on UTV. For those with a Catholic background, there was greater interest in the role of dedicated programming to describe the history and heritage which was relevant to both the Republic and to Northern Ireland.

*'There are so many strands in there, it's such a complex place, we're all intertwined. The concept of Irish nationhood, it's a language which gives expression to that and the indigenous Irish have every right to be proud of their own language. But it also should be remembered that there used to be a sizeable proportion of Protestant clergy who are fluent in Irish, so it's of interest to Northern Ireland also.'* (Londonderry/Derry)

Social documentaries about the history of Ireland were seen as more valuable than programming in Irish.

There was little awareness of Ulster Scots from participants, although when the context was explained, there was acknowledgement that if there were going to be programmes in Irish, there should also be programmes for the Ulster Scots community. There was felt to be little need for this programming to be in peak time and also little need for it to be regularly scheduled. Some also suggested that in the digital future these programmes could have their own channels, there would be no need to have them on UTV.

## **5.8 Children's programmes**

The younger participants in Belfast and Enniskillen suggested that a positive move would be to ensure that Northern Ireland-based children's programming was shown across the UK as a whole. Using the example of *Balamory*, they argued that this would help the positive image of Northern Ireland in general.

However, they did not place a high priority on Northern Irish children's programming only to be shown in Northern Ireland. A short and cheaply-produced show on a Sunday morning would be a 'nice to have' and this was considered to be of more social benefit than religious programming.

## Section 6

# Wales

This section covers priorities for dedicated television provision in Wales. It sets out the overarching themes from the Wales workshops, and then describes how each genre was perceived.

### 6.1 Overview

Welsh viewers wanted to retain the following dedicated non-news genres on ITV, and for these to be of high production quality even if that meant the programmes were less frequent.

- **Social documentary** and a small amount of political discussion, both under the current affairs umbrella
- **Drama, music and youth** programming
- **Sport** (although this could be of lower quality, it should be regularly broadcast).

In general, older men were more interested in maintaining and improving sports provision and women more interested in maintaining and improving entertainment (whether this was drama or social documentary).

Older participants tended to be keen to preserve local history and lifestyle documentary within social documentary, and younger people to want to see social documentary relating to the more gritty reality of social problems in Wales. Investigative journalism was often mentioned, as was consumer investigation such as *X-Ray* and *The Ferret*.

There was also a need to make sure that within news provision, there was adequate reporting of the Welsh Assembly and any decisions which affected Welsh society.

Carrying out research in the week when the Millennium Centre opened on TV, there was evidence in all locations of participants feeling proud of the Welsh Assembly, the new Welsh public buildings and infrastructure. They were keen to see more about the contemporary life of their country on television.

There was a desire for some of the nation-specific television to be of sufficiently high quality to be taken up by the UK-wide network, so that others could see evidence of Wales' development.

*'The Millennium Centre is made of history and culture, by Welsh design. It's made physically of Welsh wood, slate and steel and the doors have got wavy lines on them to reflect the waves on the sand and the waterfalls ... it makes you wonder if they show these in England and Scotland. It would be nice if these could be shown in the other regions to attract these people down' (Aberystwyth)*

*'I think people would be surprised at how Cardiff can compete with other cities, how developed it is' (Cardiff)*

There was generally complimentary discussion of *Mine All Mine* and its positive, humorous representation of Wales to the rest of the UK.

*'I think you'd think you could have a good night out in Swansea if you saw that programme' (Aberystwyth)*

Participants in Cardiff and the university town of Aberystwyth commented that was also beneficial for Wales to look outwards.

*'It's good for people to get out of the country, people who live in this area to see how the rest of the people of the world live' (Aberystwyth)*

Hence, for participants in Aberystwyth and Cardiff, the priority was on nation-specific rather than region-specific television. They were interested in learning about all areas of their nation. Non-Welsh speakers in the workshops expressed an interest in Welsh history, language and culture.

However, those in North Wales felt more distant from Cardiff, and were more interested in their own region. In Caernarfon, participants believed that the North-South divide was still apparent and that they were slightly cut off from the rest of Wales.

*'I go to Manchester: you've got all the big places there, it's easier for us to go to Manchester than it is to go to Cardiff' (Caernarfon)*

They claimed to be most interested in local information and entertainment relevant to their area. They were very used to television with an extremely local remit.

*'If there's a carol concert or something, you'll always see someone you know singing. It's a small community. Everyone has been an extra in a film, or you see them in the background on the news' (Caernarfon)*

*'If they show a village you haven't been to for a while, you take the opportunity to see how the children are growing up, how the people you know have aged...'*  
(Caernarfon)

Thus, participants in North Wales were keen to retain some lower-budget magazine programming relating to the North, and participants in the other Welsh regions acknowledged that this might be a good use of resources to make sure that those in the North were included.

Participants appreciated the nation-specific offering of S4C, BBC 1 Wales and BBC 2 Wales. This affected the debate about Welsh television, in that participants were aware that peak-time programming of nation-specific interest was always available, even if in Welsh. Sometimes the decisions about priorities for ITV Wales felt less difficult than the decisions which the other nations had to make.

*'Welsh TV has improved a lot over the last 10 years. We're lucky really with what we've got.'* (Caernarfon)

S4C in general was very highly-regarded. It was considered to be a great asset to Wales and the Welsh language.

However, the ITV licensee was felt to have a clear role in programming for Wales. Many mentioned that they engaged with fewer programmes on S4C than they would like to watch, such as documentaries and discussions, because the programmes were in Welsh. They felt there was scope for ITV1 to cover some of the same issues, but in English.

In most workshops, participants expressed frustration that they sometimes missed network programming. It was felt that in general, dedicated programmes should only be scheduled competitively if the broadcaster really felt that they were of comparable quality and budget to the network offering.

Very local magazine-type programming for North Wales, religious programming, listings and reviews could potentially be delivered in other forms than terrestrial TV. However, there was a real concern that these benefits might not reach those in rural or impoverished areas, so there would be a need to ensure that the digital or broadband infrastructure was present.

*'People in the valleys haven't got jobs, they won't be able to have all this new stuff' (Cardiff)*

*'People don't have the full access yet, it's something we'll have to grow' (Aberystwyth)*

Participants felt that Wales did not have sufficient travel or transport links, and so television had an important role drawing bringing people together. Notwithstanding, participants said they would rather have fewer high quality documentaries and dramas with higher production values than lots of cheaper programmes.

As stated above, representation to the UK as a whole was valued by participants, because of the need to make Welsh people proud of cultural achievements. However, participants did not want this to come about through reducing the budget for dedicated programming.

That said, there were some participants, especially in Aberystwyth and Cardiff, who actually took the opposite point of view – they wanted to ensure that they got to see more of what the UK as a whole saw, to make them feel less parochial.

## **6.2 News**

ITV Wales' news was seen as the most important element of provision to retain. Different editorial points of view were seen to be important for news provision in Wales, especially given the need for political reporting of the Welsh Assembly. Therefore it would not be sufficient to simply retain S4C and BBC news.

For the youngest, news programming on both BBC Wales and ITV was their main link with national events. They were unlikely to read newspapers and felt that the internet did not offer a great deal of information as yet.

*'I only use the newspapers to look and see if anyone I know's been in court and what they've done!' (Cardiff)*

*'ITV Wales news doesn't just show what Wales Today shows. If there's something in the local paper like a big story it might not be covered, so you need to turn over to make sure it's on the other channel.'* (Cardiff)

Region-specific news was seen as important. Community issues such as crime investigations and traffic updates were felt to be the relevant and interesting. Across the workshops there was interest in hearing news of one's own area and news from the other regions of Wales. ITV Wales was felt to be more likely to show these kinds of socially-relevant parts of the news as well as politics and international or UK news.

Given the other priorities for ITV Wales, there was some feeling that a very regular and detailed provision of local and regional news could be left to radio, shown online or through other new media formats in future such as interactive digital television.

Although participants could not clearly imagine themselves actually using the new media formats, younger members of the groups could envisage looking for listings and local headlines online. The point was also made in Cardiff that the news would then be updated only as much as would be relevant, rather than regularly to suit the demands of a linear bulletin on terrestrial TV.

There could also be scope for hearing about different local areas and relevant ongoing social and political issues under the umbrella of current affairs or social discussion programmes. ITV1 was felt to be well placed to deliver these also.

### **6.3 Current affairs and social documentary**

Current affairs were seen as valuable and educative. Programmes like *Dragon's Eye* were appreciated but most wanted to broaden the remit of current affairs beyond national or international politics, to social documentary.

People in Cardiff also talked about the need for '*Shockumentaries*' which they saw as both entertaining and educative about social problems. Programmes like *The Fix* were mentioned.

*'Drug addiction is very much underground and you don't come in contact with that sort of thing. So I think sometimes when you look at these types of programmes you think, oh my god I didn't realise that was around my town.'* (Cardiff)

Country and nature documentaries were seen as more important for Wales than for the other nations, especially for those in more rural areas. Even though younger respondents did not feel personally interested in *Coast to Coast* or *Fishlock's Wild Tracks*, they recognised that shows which relate to the landscape and history of Wales were important to have in the schedules. These were also seen as having social relevance, because they showed how people live.

*'There was this thing about the castle walls, I remember seeing something about it years ago, it was on S4C and it was really interesting.'* (Caernarfon)

Participants preferred the prospect of fewer documentaries, but a greater variety of topics and more investment in the quality of programmes. They then felt that such programmes might have the potential to contribute to the network's UK-wide offering.

There was also a call to retain some element of consumer affairs. This would be ideally weekly and in peak time, but participants were prepared for this programming to move out of peak or to become shorter. They did, however, wish to retain a regular position for it in the schedules.

*The Ferret* was very well-known and felt very locally relevant, even though it may sometimes deal with issues across all the different regions of Wales.

More rural participants wanted to see rural issues covered but were happy for this to happen off-peak and at a lower budget and level of quality. Also, although S4C currently shows agricultural programmes at peak times, they felt there would be interest in some discussion of agricultural issues within the ITV Wales current affairs offering as a whole. This would only need to be occasional, but would help with the sense of national cohesion by bringing up issues relating to the whole nation in a current affairs programme.

#### **6.4 Entertainment**

During the discussion, participants agreed that it was important to allow people in Wales to watch network output, particularly at peak time. However, as well as giving people access to the soaps and other entertainment shown in peak, there was a call for quality Welsh drama on ITV Wales in or near peak.

*'We'd be on a par with the rest of the country' (Caernarfon)*

None had heard of the programme *Chosen*, although when the idea was explained it was met with interest from all participants, especially those in Cardiff and among the women in Caernarfon. Participants commented that this sort of programme needed to be 'built up' in the schedules to increase its popularity.

As well as high-profile entertainment, which might require more investment, the younger respondents in both Caernarfon and Cardiff pointed out that it would be possible to express the creativity of Welsh people through shorter, cheaper, off-peak slots, and that this might be a key role for entertainment programming on ITV Wales. Participants suggested short film slots, cookery programmes, sci-fi series, and even comedy or animation which could be shown briefly and late at night to pick up a less mainstream audience. These types of programme would not be competing with the network offering in peak, and therefore would not need to be so high-quality.

Participants acknowledged that some of this could perhaps in future be found on the internet or in other digital formats such as in a regional archive, but felt that in order to be socially cohesive and showcase the best of Wales to the nation now, it should be on terrestrial ITV or BBC channels: although S4C provides entertainment, there was a need for this genre to be in English too.

## 6.5 Sport

Each workshop expressed interest in nation-specific sports information which would cover football teams.

*'It's that sort of thing that's quite good because it brings the whole of Wales together because it is a Welsh league' (Caernarfon)*

For some, this information would best be included in news bulletins at the weekends.

*'Less things happen on Saturday because we don't get as much news, and this fella comes in and talks about football and all sorts of things. So why not stick the sports on then for the whole of Wales' (Caernarfon)*

However, there was little discussion of sports programming beyond bulletins and updates of match results; participants generally felt that the main focus should be upon updates rather than dedicated, high budget sports programmes.

## 6.6 Light factual

There was a real need expressed for the nation to 'see itself' in everyday situations. However, for many in the workshops, the nation-specific benefits of light factual programming could be taken on by entertainment or social/consumer documentary.

Older women across nations were the group who supported light factual programming most strongly initially, but tended to decide on entertainment and sport later in the discussion.

*'I like it, it's more interesting when it's Wales not Spain or somewhere. It's about your life.'* (Caernarfon)

## 6.7 Religious broadcasting

Religion was more important to the older participants in Wales than it was in any of the other workshops across nations. They felt there was room for dedicated religious programming, particularly in the context of documentary rather than worship programmes, to teach young Welsh people about the history and culture of Wales as well as the country's religious and even musical heritage.

*'Wales used to be the most religious country of the lot!'* (Aberystwyth)

However, it remained a 'nice to have' option rather than a real priority.

*'Take the religion off. It's not expensive, but we can go to church. It's going to have to lose out in the competition'* (Caernarfon)

Participants mentioned *Songs of Praise* in Welsh, and S4C's programmes, and often perceived language provision and religious provision to go hand in hand.

*'It's for the old folk isn't it, the ones who speak Welsh and get up in the morning and go to chapel. At four in the morning.'* (Aberystwyth)

## 6.8 Language programming

All participants agreed that Welsh language programming was very important. S4C was seen as a central part of Welsh culture, and contributed to the plurality of other genres by showing interesting entertainment, youth programming, news and current affairs in Welsh.

*'There's a tendency to forget the language, and local news bulletins in both languages helps you. And you get a different point of view.'* (Aberystwyth)

S4C's programming was also seen to keep Welsh alive in the minds of viewers, showing different styles and situations of Welsh usage.

*'The programme like Question Time in Welsh, they use a purer Welsh there, they use words properly and it helps with your language usage'* (Caernarfon)

For some, showing Welsh programming sometimes on every channel would benefit the community by illustrating the country's commitment to its language.

*'Perhaps the Welsh-speaking population would just have a look at the one channel, but I think it's important in Wales that everybody realises that they are in Wales and that you can pick up the language'* (Aberystwyth)

However, for most, the other genres took priority for ITV Wales. In Cardiff, the participants who were in favour of short, creative slots suggested that some of these could be in Welsh, thereby creating two offerings at once.

*'They could have small programmes on, just the sort of thing that teaches you a word at a time'* (Cardiff)

## 6.9 Children's programming

In Cardiff, children's programming was briefly mentioned as an interesting option for ITV Wales. However, it was perceived to need significant investment to compete with the network in terms of quality, and participants felt resources would be better deployed elsewhere.

## Section 7

# Scotland

This section looks at the priorities for different elements of nation-specific programming in Scotland. It sets out the overarching themes from the Scotland workshops, and then describes how each genre was perceived.

### 7.1 Overview

There was much more discussion of the differences between regions in Scotland in comparison with Wales or Northern Ireland. For example, the Highlands did not feel local to those in the Lowlands, and participants in Glasgow claimed they had a different culture and sense of humour in comparison with other areas of Scotland. Similarly in Dumfries, there were participants living very close to the border who felt Scottish, but different to the Central Belt.

For Scotland, region-specific identity did not tally with the regional ITV footprints - in Inverness for example people stressed the differences between the Highlands and areas around Aberdeen, and felt that the news from Aberdeen was of little interest to them. In Border, some of the participants were unhappy because they received the English version of its transmission rather than the Scottish version.

Participants in Scotland were very vocal about their status as a nation, and the need for representation both of the nation as a whole as well as the areas and regions within it. Across the workshops, news provision was chosen as the most important element of dedicated provision, followed by the following types of programme:

- **Comedy**
- **Sports**
- **Social documentary**
- **Gaelic**

Participants felt that comedies, social documentaries, and dramas should be of high production quality, and be shown in peak time<sup>5</sup>. They would need to set across Scotland, and not just be focused the Central Belt.

These dedicated programme genres could be combined with shorter programmes about sport, broadcast off-peak. Equally important was a steady provision of cheaper, light factual programming, even if the volume had to be cut back.

*'I'd rather have a decent Scottish aspect, as opposed to having a local one, just for the sake of having a local one. If you can have a decent local perspective all well and good, that's fine, but if that's at the expense of something else, well, no I'd rather you had a good Scottish perspective.'* (Inverness)

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<sup>5</sup> However, there were some participants who wanted to make sure that Scotland did not lose out on the best network provision, and therefore wanted to make sure that the scheduling of dedicated programming did not disrupt this.

Representation to the UK as a whole was a priority for participants, but not if it this meant less money for dedicated programming. For example, *Monarch of the Glen* provoked mixed views in the workshops. Some participants were proud that such a programme was being shown to the whole of the UK, especially as it showed the Scottish landscape. However, others felt it was an unrealistic portrayal.

## 7.2 News

Participants noted that the BBC news covered the whole of Scotland whereas the ITV news covered one of the three regions within Scotland. Overall, participants liked having both to gain a plurality of perspectives.

*'I sometimes watch something relating to Scotland that's important and when you go over to the other channel you say oh, are they talking about the same thing here? They've reported it from a different angle.'* (Glasgow)

There were mixed views as to whether the ITV or BBC coverage was preferred - some liked what they saw as the more formalised coverage of the BBC, others believed that their regional ITV news programme was more relevant as it included news from their city or town. However, in Inverness, it was pointed out that although the news programme *Look North* covered the Grampian area, half the news came from Aberdeen, an area they had little interest in and did not feel was local to them.

Participants in all three workshops also emphasised the diversity of people within Scotland and the difficulties in providing relevant content for everyone.

*'I was in a bar up in the north east of Scotland having a beer and the topic of conversation was fish quotas and what's been done in terms of politics and the EU. And if you went down to say maybe Renfrewshire the conversations will be about their roses or who's grown the biggest turnip.'* (Glasgow)

Local radio news was seen as important in the workshops because the approach was felt to be more light-hearted and the radio could cover local information such as traffic and travel. News was also gathered from the papers, and Scottish editions of UK papers were mentioned in the workshops as a valuable means of providing national and international news from a Scottish perspective. Local newspapers were also referred to. However, television news was seen as vital as it is convenient, immediate and more powerful.

In news there was demand for some 'flagship' programming that presented Scotland as a nation of the world from a Scottish perspective and with Scottish presenters. UK news bulletins were felt to be disproportionately dominated by English news - participants mentioned this was particularly noticeable during events such as football championships. Participants liked the idea of a possible news programme that would cover both international and national news from a Scottish perspective.

Despite the demand for a nation-wide Scottish news programme, there was also a need for region-specific news, especially as there were fears the Central Belt would dominate this type of service. In Dumfries it was acknowledged that with a less dense population,

local news was unlikely to be as eventful as nation-specific news. This nation-specific news programme could therefore contain a small regional opt-out at the end:

*'You could do it here on the radio, they have something on the news that is Scottish news ... ten minutes which concentrates solely on local stuff ... they could do the whole of Scotland type thing and then a portion of the programme could be ... local area.'* (Dumfries)

### 7.3 Sport

Sport was more important to Scottish viewers in comparison to the other nations. It was felt to be important that sports programmes were scheduled regularly, at a time in the week when people could get fresh information on recent games. It was also considered important to have sport at times when sports lovers were at home to enjoy it - e.g. at the weekend, not necessarily at peak time. This view was most strongly expressed by the men in the workshops, but also echoed by some of the women.

A number of participants were dissatisfied with current provision, believing that it was shown too late after games and was not of high enough quality.

Football was mentioned most often and was the top-of-mind sport when participants thought about the provision they would like. This was more so than in the other nations. Hearing more about the Scottish leagues would be welcomed. Programmes need not be very long – and could for example be represented by a short round-up of results or goals.

*'I think it's important not to lose that Scottish sports programme. BBC don't have SPL, it's as simple as that, so if they lose it, we lose the Scottish football completely, which is not going to happen, or shouldn't happen.'* (Inverness)

*'I suppose some of the national results from the football could be included with something else, you don't need a whole dedicated half an hour.'* (Dumfries)

Currently it was felt that the Rangers and Celtic football teams dominated coverage, and there would be interest in other more local teams, although any sports programme could be shown across all three regions. However, participants acknowledged that the quality of play was not the same as the big international matches shown on Sky. They also understood that what was shown was influenced by who owned the rights to broadcast - currently Setanta.

### 7.4 Comedy

Comedy was prioritised by participants. Most were proud of Scotland's record in producing innovative nation-specific comedy. Comedy was seen as distinctive to Scotland and part of a shared culture which was important to preserve. In Inverness and Glasgow in particular; participants commented that the BBC had produced strong comedy over recent years.

*Chewin' the Fat* was seen as a valuable programme, particularly by the younger respondents, showing the Scottish sense of humour through the stereotypical characters

portrayed in the series and the language used. There was seen to be a role for either the BBC or ITV1 to deliver this type of programming - if the BBC stopped providing this, then it should be broadcast by ITV1. There could even be scope for some Gaelic programming to take in comedy.

Because of the shared social experience inherent in comedy, participants felt that this was an important genre to keep on nation-specific television. Many suggested putting more resources into comedy even if at the expense of other genres such as light factual and other entertainment shows.

## **7.5 Current affairs**

Participants wanted dedicated current affairs, in peak time, or later in the evening, during the week, although there was little preference for any specific weekday. As with the other nations, definitions of current affairs varied from political discussions through to investigative documentaries. In Scotland, participants valued the political side of current affairs and were keen to see local politicians and local political issues covered on television.

*'I'd watch my local politicians getting a grilling, that would be OK' (Inverness)*

In Dumfries and Inverness, the Central Belt was felt to dominate current affairs provision. Furthermore, in Dumfries participants pointed out that it would be beneficial to hear about local politicians, but were unsure whether there would be enough material to fill a whole half-hour segment, and that perhaps a ten-minute slot might be more appropriate.

## **7.6 Entertainment and light factual/social documentary**

As with the other nations, some dedicated light factual programming was perceived to have the value of social documentary, showing people the real life of the regions of Scotland. Such programmes were also felt to have a wide appeal across ages and also to visitors to the local area.

*'When you get your people coming up here to look, like tourism and that, want to look round the area, the chances are they're coming on a weekend and they'd be interested to see where they can go and you get the older people who like it as well.'* (Dumfries)

There were a number of programmes that were viewed positively in this genre including *Medics of the Glen* and *Getting Away with Murder*. These were felt to be well-made, interesting and informative. There were other light factual programmes which were liked such as *Raw Chefs* and *Trout and About* because of the areas they showed, although there was much lower awareness of these programmes. Participants were unsure whether these programmes were best shown throughout Scotland or more regionally, arguing that it depended upon the specific appeal, quality and relevance of the programme.

Young people often mentioned the potential for dedicated entertainment listing shows, perhaps on a Friday night, or alternatively on a Monday night to review the entertainment at the weekend and look forward to the following week. However, again there were mixed views on whether this should be regionally or nationally focused. For example, in

the Dumfries area participants did not feel enough was going on, but did not want any programme to be dominated by the Central Belt.

In this genre participants felt there might be scope for either more localised broadcasting, or provision to be made through different delivery mechanisms such as the Internet.

### **7.7 Dedicated religious broadcasting**

Participants did not think it was important that there should be dedicated religious provision, as long as there continued to be some on UK-wide television. Such religious programmes should cover a range of religions and include educational information on religion.

*'In this day and age there's that many different religions in our area that if you had a religious programme for it, you'd be on all night to cover all the different religions.'* (Inverness)

*'On a Sunday evening on the Beeb you've got Songs of Praise and I think you've got quite a few religious programmes on BBC2 as well on a Sunday morning as well so why does every channel need to have it?'* (Inverness)

### **7.8 Language programming**

There was variation in views about the need for dedicated language programming, with those in Inverness most strongly advocating some Gaelic programming. Those in Dumfries did not think there should be any Gaelic provision in that area on ITV1:

*'Well Gaelic for this area I don't know anybody who speaks it in this actual area, but if you went further up north then that would probably be more applicable.'* (Dumfries)

Participants wanted to retain Gaelic programming for the percentage of the population that spoke it and because it was part of Scotland's shared heritage. Furthermore, the quality of the current Gaelic programmes was felt to be very good, and some participants watched them without necessarily understanding the language.

*'I like the Gaelic. I don't speak Gaelic but I love the Gaelic programmes. They've got subtitles and that's to do with something that's dying out, this language that we should be speaking, our national language ... I just look up the paper and see what's on. It interests me because I've got relatives in the islands and that's why I watch Gaelic programmes that are pertaining to Scotland.'* (Glasgow)

Some suggested that Gaelic programmes could cover a number of genres from documentaries and drama through to children's programmes. Many thought that this might 'kill two birds with one stone', in that children's provision and Gaelic provision could go together.

Some participants believed it was important for children to watch these programmes to gain some ideas of the language and to also learn about the shared heritage.

*'My grandson watches the Gaelic programmes for children. I often say to him put that off, you don't even know what they're talking about. And he says I do because he is watching it and picking up words. So I think the way Gaelic is spreading down this way, I think it's a good thing to leave it on TV for children coming up. They can learn the language from just watching it.'* (Glasgow)

Some also suggested that in the digital future these programmes could have their own channels, although it was pointed out that with this people would be less likely to 'stumble' across a Gaelic programme. Furthermore, it was felt that many Gaelic speakers are older and less likely to own digital television.

## **7.9 Children's programming**

In Scotland, unlike the other nations, children's programming was not spontaneously discussed. Unprompted, a few participants in Glasgow mentioned that they sometimes noticed that there was less children's programming during the school holidays: because school holidays are different from those in England, parents felt there was less for their children to watch. However, this was seen as a 'nice to have' rather than as a priority for the network to remedy, in the context of the other dedicated genres under discussion.

In Dumfries, there was a suggestion that dedicated Scottish programming such as light factual and social documentary could be of interest to anyone from ten and older, and that within the general range of such programming, subjects could occasionally be chosen which would involve young teenagers as well as the older audiences.

In Inverness, participants agreed that some Gaelic programming could be of interest to children, without having to be specially made for them. It could ideally be shown at times of day when children could watch, as it would be important for children to be exposed to the language.

# Appendix A: Methodology

This research project required that detailed views be gathered in relation to a subject that participants may not have thought about in much depth before. Furthermore, previous research for Ofcom has discovered that when asked about the potential for cutbacks, the public are unwilling to countenance cutting back programming, even if it is not always highly valued.

We therefore conducted a series of nine **half-day workshops**. In these workshops we were able to explore in depth all the relevant elements under scrutiny, and invite a more diverse profile of participants within each chosen location than would be possible with traditional focus groups.

The workshops also allowed us to give information to the participants over time, so they were able to move beyond their current situation and preferences and look to the future. By looking at the various different ways people evaluate the same situation over time, we gain a sense of their most reliable preferences. We also ensured that participants were thinking about the perspectives of people across their nation or region as a whole, rather than solely about their own individual points of view.

Nine four-hour long workshops were carried out with around 18-22 people attending each. Workshops were carried out in Dumfries, Glasgow and Inverness in Scotland; Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Enniskillen in Northern Ireland and Caernarfon, Cardiff and Aberystwyth in Wales. The workshops broke into two groups at various points to allow a more in-depth exploration of the issues, as well as sessions in plenary. Breaking out into smaller groups allowed for different groupings of participants, for example, by religion in Northern Ireland, age, and whether people were regular viewers of non-news dedicated programming. During each workshop, two different breakout groups took place, selected according to these different relevant groupings. In the plenary sessions, the extended discussion allowed both the moderators and Ofcom to present the policy issues for comment and reaction.

## Structure of the workshops

Each workshop was structured as follows:

- **Introduction and Warm-up:** Participants were asked to create a story which said something interesting about where they live and to choose which medium would work best for the story.
- **Current Provision:** Participants discussed the dedicated programming currently shown in their area to get top of mind reactions, likes and dislikes, and to gauge their knowledge of the dedicated programmes. In this session the role of other types of media was also explored and definitions were established of 'localness'.
- **Trade-off exercise:** This session identified which elements of dedicated programming were felt to be important, by asking participants to make a series of

trade-offs between different genres of such programmes and different scheduling times. Indicative costs of the different dedicated genres were given to participants

- **Future provision** across a range of media. In this session participants outlined the key changes in media provision that they expected over the next 5-10 years and explored how their preferences for changes in dedicated provision of entertainment/information could encompass these. A number of indicative future scenarios were also presented to participants for their comment and evaluation.

Prior to attending the workshop, each participant was asked to watch television programmes that were felt to reflect them, their community, region or nation, and decide whether these programmes met their expectations. They were also asked to find outputs from other forms of media such as radio, newspaper or the internet that reflected them, their community, region or nation.

### **Limitations and benefits of a qualitative approach**

Qualitative research is less concerned with measurement and more with understanding nuance, motivations, attitudes and feelings. The nature and complexity of the structure of dedicated television programming meant that a considerable amount of explanation, probing and 'unpacking' was required to draw out participants' views. A qualitative approach was therefore a useful vehicle to use to try and discover some of the underlying reasoning and rationale behind participants' choices and attitudes.

The research does not seek to provide representative statistics for the population as a whole, but rather to reflect accurately the range of views and opinions to be found among participants.

### **Participants**

Half the participants in each workshop were recruited on the basis of being 'regular viewers of dedicated programming'. During recruitment, respondents were presented with a list of nation-specific news and non-news programmes (around 15 programmes, which were different for each nation or region) and were asked whether they had regularly watched or enjoyed any of them in the last 12 months. Those who said they had regularly watched at least three such programmes, with at least two non-news programmes, were recruited as regular viewers.

The additional sampling quotas for each workshop are detailed overleaf.

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Quotas</b>
1	Scotland: Dumfries	Age: 16-30, Class: ABC1 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 4 with broadband Mix of singles, pre-family couples and parents 7 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Dumfries, 10 from rural locations outside Dumfries
2	Scotland: Inverness	Age: 31-50, Class: C1C2 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 3 with broadband Mix of parents with no children and parents with children at home 6 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Inverness, 10 from rural locations outside
3	Scotland: Glasgow	Age: 51+ , Class:C2DE Technology: 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 2 with broadband Mix of parents with children at home, empty nesters and retired 4 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Glasgow, 10 from suburbs
4	Northern Ireland: Belfast	Age: 16-24, Class: C1C2 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 4 with broadband access Mix of singles and pre-family couples Equal mix of catholic and protestant 2 with knowledge of Gaelic 7 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Belfast, 10 from suburbs
5	Northern Ireland: Derry/ Londonderry	Age: 45+, Class: ABC1 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 3 with broadband Mix of parents with children at home, empty nesters and retired Equal mix of catholic and protestant 2 with knowledge of Gaelic 4 with strong interest in new media/technology

		All from Derry/Londonderry
6	Northern Ireland: Enniskillen	Age: 25-45, Class:C2DE 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 2 with broadband Mix of singles, couples with no children and parents with children at home Equal mix of catholic and protestant 2 with knowledge of Gaelic 5 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Enniskillen, 10 from rural locations outside Enniskillen
7	Wales: Cardiff	Age: 16-30, Class: C2DE 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 4 with broadband Mix of singles, pre-family couples and parents 4 Welsh speakers 7 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Cardiff, 10 from the valleys
8	Wales: Aberystwyth	Age: 51+, Class: C1C2 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 3 with broadband Mix of pre-family couples and parents with children at home 4 Welsh speakers 4 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Aberystwyth, 10 from rural locations outside
9	Wales: Caernarfon	Age: 31-50, Class:ABC1 7 terrestrial, 7 Sky or Cable, 4 Freeview 2 with broadband Mix of parents with children at home, empty nesters and retired 9 Welsh speakers 6 with strong interest in new media/technology 10 from Caernarfon, 10 from rural locations outside