

NON-NEWS PROGRAMMING IN WALES

While we recognise that Ofcom proposes 4 hours of non news production for ITV Wales, we are anxious that the regulator should resist any attempt by ITV to reduce this further. This could come in the form of a proposition by ITV to increase budgets and improve slots for a reduced amount of programmes or by means of comparisons with the new lower levels of programming in the English regions. We expect Ofcom to hold to its evidence-based proposition which reflects the different requirements and diversity of Wales.

Ofcom should require ITV Wales to reconsider its current scheduling procedure with a view to moving its own productions to more favourable broadcasting slots. Further and in recognition that some programmes will still be scheduled for late night viewing, we wish Ofcom to require that budgets for these late slots be increased to those commanded by programmes scheduled for earlier in the evening.

In respect of the production development fund, we welcome its establishment. However, we are mindful that the commissioning procedure that has failed Wales in the past is to remain unchanged. We therefore call upon Ofcom to ensure that ITV undertakes a level of production in Wales that more accurately reflects Wales as a proportion of the UK population.

We are concerned by the consideration of a greater degree of outsourcing by the ITV network. We call upon Ofcom to resist any proposals which will require ITV Wales to move beyond the current 25% quota. In this way, we hope to protect and increase the in house capacity of ITV Wales in order to fulfil its licence obligations.