

14 September 2012.

Rt. Hon Maria Miller MP
Culture Secretary
Dept for Culture Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH.

Dear Secretary of State

Communications ‘Review’

I am writing to express our organisation’s concern at the way in which your department is dealing with the formation of policy in advance of the expected Communications White Paper in 2013.

In May 2011 we were told to expect a Green Paper for wide public consultation leading to a White Paper and draft Bill in 2013. Publication of the Green Paper was repeatedly delayed, until in June 2012 the then Culture Secretary announced that it had been cancelled only to be replaced by a series of ‘restricted’ seminars dominated by media industry figures. These replacement seminars were by invitation only with a limited number of additional places. We were not invited and were unable to secure an invitation. We found that the subjects of these seminars largely concerned the commercial aspects of the media, with very little attention paid to the cultural and citizen aspects; in particular there appeared to be no opportunity to discuss the all-important question of media ownership, a matter which the Leveson Inquiry has quite clearly identified as being central to the whole question of media regulation. Nor is there any reference to the future of public service broadcasting and the BBC.

We are already on record to your Department emphasising the need to change the regulatory structure of the UK media. In our response to Jeremy Hunt’s 16 May 2011 ‘Open letter to all those who work in fixed or mobile communications, television, radio, online publishing, video games, and other digital and creative content industries’ we said that: ‘There is no doubt that the regulatory structure for the media in the UK is in need of change. The current regime is confused and driven by an over simplistic conception of the social and economic purposes of mass communications. The structures of regulation are profoundly undemocratic in constitution and the procedures adopted by the main media regulator, Ofcom, can fairly be characterised as more concerned with the commercial interests of the industry it regulates than with the wider interests of the public.’

In view of the restrictive and undemocratic nature of process surrounding these seminars, the Campaign can only reiterate the points made in our submission to the then Culture Secretary's 'Open letter' which was submitted to your department on 29 June 2011 and is enclosed.

Yours faithfully

Barry White
National Organiser