

*"Working for quality
and diversity in
British broadcasting"*



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Press Release - Immediate

Secretary of State Ben Bradshaw describes the BBC's opposition to 'top-slicing' the licence fee as "wrong-headed", but Voice of the Listener & Viewer strongly disagrees with him.

The VLV Board today decided unanimously to oppose the Government's plan to take 3.5% of the Licence Fee income away from the BBC and give it to other media organisations.

Said Richard Lindley, Chairman of Voice of the Listener & Viewer:

"VLV recognises the value of 'plurality' - competition between broadcasters to make quality programmes – and is leading a campaign to maintain it, but VLV firmly believes it is even more important to maintain the strength and independence of the BBC.

To 'top slice' the BBC's income once would be the beginning of a process which would fatally damage an institution admired around the world – a great British success story. 'Top-slicing' would weaken the BBC's ability to make good programmes with no guarantee that they would be made by anyone else. This would do licence fee payers - listeners and viewers - a grave disservice.

It is right to criticise the BBC for its recent failings, and question whether its top executives deserve such extraordinarily high salaries, but quite wrong for the Government to bully the BBC into giving up licence fee income that pays for high quality programmes. Rather than 'top slice' the licence fee and damage the BBC the Government should investigate the other sources of income such as industry levies that have already been suggested as ways of maintaining public service broadcasting on commercial channels."

(ends)

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