

# PRESS RELEASE

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## CHRIS BRYANT MP SAYS FUTURE REGULATION OF BBC NEEDS TO CHANGE

Speaking at Radiocentre's #Tuningin conference today (July 8<sup>th</sup>), Labour's Shadow Culture Secretary, Chris Bryant MP, said 'backroom deals' around the finances of the BBC before the Charter renewal process is underway were 'completely' wrong and 'posed an enormous question over the future of how the BBC is regulated.'

He was referring to the recent announcement that, as part of the funding deal agreed with Government, BBC will meet the cost of providing free licences to the over 75s.

"It is wrong to talk about the finances before we have sorted out the Charter. Backroom deals arranged without any public involvement at all are completely wrong. What is the purpose of the BBC Trust if they are completely circumvented and have no role in a decision that is briefed to the Sunday papers? It poses an enormous question for the future about how the BBC is regulated."

Bryant added that he believes that the Charter renewal process may already be complete. He said: "John Whittingdale will launch the process but my fear is that it is already done."

Bryant went on to say that the BBC should have to abide by some of the same rules and regulations by which the commercial sector is governed. He added that the ecology of public and private broadcasting has worked well in the British interests, with commercial radio creating channels which have directly challenged the BBC's dominance. But he added that a more level the playing field was required.

"Commercial sector needs cross pollination between public sector broadcasting because that's the way to create a flourishing sector."

Bryant also called for more to be done on diversity in the creative industries after Ofcom's released statistics showing that the percentage of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic has fallen over the past few years.

Taking place at Bounce, a new events space in Holborn, the Radiocentre conference was opened by Chief Executive Siobhan Kenny, with the unveiling of a fresh new identity and direction for the trade body as it evolves to meet the challenges of the digital age.

Other speakers included Tony Blair's former Director of Communications and Strategy, Alastair Campbell.

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