

Ofcom decides on PSB future: BBC and C4 ahead of the pack

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Ed Richards of [Ofcom](#) presents his three refined options for public service broadcasting tonight but it's pretty clear which one he favours.

He has now dismissed the idea that the BBC should be the only PSB. In effect this was the market forces option as it would have exposed the BBC as the only publicly subsidised organisation.

As [The Guardian](#) reports Richards' speech to be given tonight there are three options:

1. Refined BBC/Channel 4 (ITV and Five are released from PSB obligations and funding)
2. Refined Evolution (more money has to be found to give ITV and Five a reason to do PSB)
3. Competitive funding (everyone fights for the cash on the basis of PSB content)

This is how Tom Sweeney reports Richards' version of option 1 which does look like the most likely:

A "refined BBC/Channel 4 model" ...focuses on a situation where "ITV1's and Five's incentives are no longer credibly aligned with public service purposes". In this case not-for-profit organisations would become the main route for delivering PSB content. "In this model the BBC and Channel 4 would be the main recipients of public funding and regulatory assets," said Richards, in a nod to the option of "top slicing" the licence fee. Richards said in this scenario the licences held by Channel Five and Channel 3 would "be auctioned or the spectrum rights and other regulatory assets transferred directly to Channel 4 and the BBC to enhance their public service propositions". This model would introduce an element of limited competitive funding introduced for "nations, regions and potentially local news too," said Richards. Current Channel 3 licensees, such as ITV, and Channel Five would have no ongoing PSB benefits or obligations but could also bid for funding if they wished to continue to play a role in public service broadcasting.

Adrian Monck's comments on this speech, which question Ofcom's role are [here](#).

You can come and ask Ed Richards what it all means when he gives his annual talk at Polis on November 12th in an event sponsored by [Hanover](#). Contact us at polis@lse.ac.uk to reserve a place.

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