



# **BBC ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26**

March 2025

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# 1. Foreword

2024 was a tumultuous year of change and conflict across the world. In times like these, the BBC's unique value for its audiences shines through – from truthful, impartial journalism and compelling UK content to joyous, unforgettable shared moments.

Last year we set out our three key roles – **Pursuing truth, Backing the best homegrown storytelling** and **Bringing people together** – and demonstrated their value. BBC News coverage of the UK election reached 82% of the UK public in the week of the results and four times as many people said they would turn to the BBC for impartial election results coverage as would go to our nearest competitor. It was a year of homegrown creative ambition, reflecting the lives of our audiences across the UK, from new series *The Jetty* and Gaelic crime drama *An t-Eilean/The Island*, to much-anticipated returning titles *Gavin & Stacey* and *Shetland*. As part of our Across the UK plans, the *News at One* moved to Salford and we exceeded our target to invest 60% of network TV spend outside London. Unmissable content brought audiences together at scale, with 21.6 million for *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl* and 21.0 million watching the finale of *Gavin & Stacey*. Coverage of the Paris Olympics reached over 36 million on TV and iPlayer. iPlayer became the fastest-growing long-form streaming service in the market.

In this Annual Plan, we set out how we will continue to deliver against our three roles, while transforming the BBC as an organisation.

Looking ahead, we can expect conflict and instability to continue, with wars in Ukraine and Sudan, volatility in the Middle East, and new regimes taking shape in Syria and Bangladesh. Climate change is likely to remain in the headlines, as millions suffer through storms, floods and wildfires. Amid global change and uncertainty, audiences are turning more and more to online sources and social media to make sense of the world. There is a renewed battle for control of these shared online spaces, with technology companies like Meta and X championing the withdrawal of controls and moderators.

In an environment where disinformation can flourish, the role of the BBC has never been more important, both as a trusted provider of news and as a place for robust and respectful debate. With an increasingly polarised political landscape, the BBC will give voice to the widest range of opinions. We will continue to help audiences separate fact from opinion, expanding BBC Verify to make it an 'always on' offer, with daily content. To reach younger audiences with the most important news stories, in the spaces where they spend time, we will expand our presence on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. And when we get things wrong we will put it right, and be transparent with and accountable to our audiences.

2025/26 will be a year of great homegrown creativity, with some fantastic new titles including a second series of *The Night Manager*, *Riot Women* by Sally Wainwright, *Half Man* by Richard Gadd, and *Lord of the Flies* adapted by Jack Thorne, plus some much-loved returning series including *The Gold*, *Doctor Who* and *Silent Witness*. We will continue to do more to represent our audiences around the UK, with *Reunion* set in Sheffield and told in both British Sign Language and English, *Just Act Normal* from the West Midlands, and *The Guest* filmed in Wales, as well as returning titles such as

*Shetland*, *Blue Lights* and *Waterloo Road*. In audio, our plans for new DAB radio stations will offer audiences new ways to discover a unique range of music (subject to Ofcom approval). And sport takes centre stage this summer with live cross-platform coverage of both the Women's Euros and the Women's Rugby World Cup.

We will continue to grow the digital reach of our products by making it easier for audiences to find content they love, with better personalisation and seamless journeys into iPlayer from across the BBC's digital portfolio. A focus on live experiences in iPlayer will ensure the BBC is the best place to bring the nation together. We will step up our ambition to explore partnerships with the wider industry, across media and technology, to deliver greater pace and capability to supplement our in-house digital resource.

Artificial intelligence continues to develop rapidly and we see enormous potential for AI to help us deliver our mission and audience value, as well as helping our teams work more effectively. But we are also alive to its many risks, including the distortions that can happen with AI-presented inaccurate news. We will focus on building core capabilities, both technology and skills, to make the most of AI for audiences and our teams over the long-term; and lead the debate on how AI can support human creativity and growth in creative industries, while protecting the intellectual property of creators.

We want the BBC itself to reflect our audiences and be a great place to work for everyone. We will publish shortly the findings of an independent review of the BBC's workplace culture. This will mark an important moment for the BBC and will send a clear signal about how we expect staff to behave, regardless of seniority or status.

The Government's process of reviewing the BBC's Royal Charter is now underway. We believe the new Charter should secure a universal public service BBC for a generation. This requires a Charter that: safeguards the BBC's independence; ensures that it is sustainable for the long term, including sufficient, reliable funding; and allows the BBC to respond to changing audience needs with speed and agility. We have launched our biggest-ever listening exercise with a questionnaire sent to 40 million BBC account holders. The public owns the BBC and everyone should have their say on its future.

A strong BBC that provides value for audiences, supports democracy, and drives growth in the creative economy will require sustainable public funding. Our income is down £1 billion a year in real terms compared to our funding in 2010. We have delivered significant efficiencies, including cutting 2,000 roles over the last five years but we have reached the limit of substantial future gains from this approach. Despite strong growth from BBC Commercial, the BBC faces an unprecedented content funding challenge, as co-production partnerships with global streamers and media companies have reduced across the sector. Without intervention, it will be difficult to maintain the current ambition and volume of UK content.

This year we must debate and shape the long-term future of our democracy, our creative economy and our society, and the BBC's role in it. The BBC will contribute to that debate, but most importantly we will demonstrate the value we bring every day in our journalism, our storytelling and our convening power. Above all, we can look forward to another outstanding year of creativity, great programmes and brilliant services.

## 2. Market and audience context

The year to come presents a number of clear market and societal trends that will shape the media landscape, audience behaviour, and the BBC's response in the coming year and in Charter Review.

### 2.1 Pursuing truth: market and audience trends

It continues to be a challenging time for global democracy. There are concerns that people who most often use social media to access news are less trusting of democratic institutions than those using TV or newspapers most often. The ongoing shift to news consumption online continues to create a difficult financial situation for publishers, with significant implications for the UK and the BBC.

#### ***A challenging outlook for global democracy***

Last year billions of voters went to the polls with elections in some of the world's biggest democracies including the US, India and Indonesia, as well as here in the UK. Already we are seeing changes in direction for trade, environment, and foreign policy, as President Trump sets the tone for his second term. Meanwhile, conflict and instability continue around the world, including in Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza and the surrounding region, and as a new regime beds in in Syria.

Democracy itself faces an ongoing challenge with the entrenchment of autocracies. The Economist Intelligence Unit registered a decline in its global democracy score in 2024, marked by 'a global picture of stagnation and regression', with just 7% of the global population living in a full democracy and 39% living under authoritarian rule<sup>1</sup>. The news environment in many countries has deteriorated with the repression of free and fair reporting. According to Reporters Without Borders, currently just 25% of countries have 'satisfactory or good' freedom of the press, a decrease of 4ppt (percentage points) from last year<sup>2</sup>.

We are in a volatile political environment in the UK, with political opinion more fragmented than last year's headline election results might suggest. An increasing share of votes is going to parties beyond Labour and the Conservatives, and the 2024 election marked the largest gap in recent history between the number of votes won by the winning party and the share of parliamentary seats<sup>3</sup>.

#### ***Rise of social media news and influencers***

People are becoming more receptive to online news influencers – a recent study showed that two in five (43%) UK voters 'welcome creators posting political content during an

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2024/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://rsf.org/en/2024-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-under-political-pressure?year=2024&data\\_type=general](https://rsf.org/en/2024-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-under-political-pressure?year=2024&data_type=general)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c886pl6ldy9o>

election year', rising to 76% for Gen Z voters<sup>4</sup>. Influencers also played a significant role in the re-election of President Trump in the US - while many established news sources and newspapers largely refrained from endorsing political candidates in a change from previous election years, social media influencers stepped in to fill the gap<sup>5</sup>. A statement of support from Taylor Swift or Joe Rogan became increasingly important to political campaigns<sup>6</sup>. Pew Research Center found one in five (21%) US adults regularly rely on news influencers for information, rising to 37% among those aged 18 to 29. The vast majority of 500 news influencers identified by Pew Research Center (77%) had no affiliation or background with the formal news industry. Among the influencers identified, 85% were active on X (formerly Twitter), and 28% identified with the right compared to 21% on the left, while 48% had no clear orientation<sup>7</sup>.

The research showed the positive impact of influencers in serving audiences: 65% of US adults who get news from news influencers on social media said it has helped them better understand current events and civic issues, and seven in ten said this news is at least somewhat different from the news they get from other sources.

The increasing role of social media influencers in elections shows the broader trend of news consumption shifting to online and social channels. More than half of UK adults (52%) reported using Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to access news last year, up from 47% in 2023<sup>8</sup>. On these sites, legacy media outlets are positioned alongside user-generated content, which is not subject to the same standards and regulation. The shift to online includes older consumers, with 54% of over-55s now accessing news online, mostly from news websites.

While TikTok was not one of the top 10 news sources identified by Ofcom in 2024 with 11% claiming to use it for news, it is growing fast – up from just 1% in 2020. Among younger audiences, usage is even more pronounced, with 30% of users aged 12-15 using TikTok for news, and 12% of this group describing it as their main source of news<sup>8</sup>.

Research conducted by Ofcom has suggested that those who primarily use social media for news are more polarised in their views, less able to correctly identify factual information, and less trusting of democratic institutions than those who use traditional sources<sup>9</sup>.

Meanwhile, social media companies are relaxing content moderation while positioning themselves as champions of free speech, in a move that is likely to increase misinformation. After X was sold to Elon Musk in 2022, it removed moderator positions

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/opinion/the-rise-of-influencers-in-election-campaigning/en-gb/6720>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.niemanlab.org/2024/11/the-washington-post-isnt-alone-roughly-3-4-of-major-american-newspapers-arent-endorsing-anyone-for-president-this-year/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.axios.com/2024/11/05/presidential-election-newspaper-endorsements>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2024/11/18/americas-news-influencers/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand-research/tv-research/news/news-consumption-2024/news-consumption-in-the-uk-2024-report.pdf?v=379621>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/multi-sector/media-plurality/discussion-media-plurality.pdf?v=328775>

as part of 7,500 layoffs<sup>10</sup>. Meta also announced a change in its content moderation approach toward community content notes, in which users, rather than professional moderators and algorithms, are relied upon to flag inaccurate posts<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Shift to news online creating difficult financial situation for publishers***

The shift in news consumption toward online has created financial challenges for traditional news outlets as their online offers have seen mixed results in terms of monetisation. A clear majority of users say they do not pay to access digital news, while increased digital advertising inventory drives down ad prices<sup>12</sup>. In social media, news outlets must also compete for advertising against a large amount of content.

These challenges are particularly pronounced for local news providers. The Reuters Institute identified a mismatch between user preferences in news and supply, where sports and entertainment are oversupplied, while local news is undersupplied despite a high level of interest<sup>13</sup>. Despite this interest in local news, local newspapers and news agencies are struggling as more audiences turn to social media for news. There was a 17% fall in circulation of local papers in the first half of 2024 – albeit at a slower rate of decline than in the same period the previous year (20%)<sup>14</sup>.

Newspapers and broadcasters are attempting to adapt to this new environment by monetising in different ways, as well as engaging in merger and acquisition activity. The London Standard (previously Evening Standard), reported its seventh consecutive year of pre-tax losses<sup>15</sup>. The Guardian Media Group has recently agreed to sell its Observer paper to news start-up Tortoise Media, and The Spectator has been sold to the owner of GB News. Digital news outlets are increasingly using paywalls to more effectively monetise their services. The number of outlets in Europe and North America with a free-to-access model fell from 23% in 2017 to just 6% in 2023, while the number of outlets with a ‘hard paywall’ increased from 16% in 2019 to 29% in 2023<sup>16</sup>.

### ***Implications for the UK and the BBC***

After a period of decline from 2015 to 2020, trust in news in the UK has shown some improvement over the last few years. Research by the Reuters Institute shows that the proportion saying that they trust news most of the time fell from 51% in 2015 to 28% in 2020. This drop was more pronounced than other countries and coincided with a number of polarising elections and referenda in the UK. Since 2021, there has been some recovery with the figure at 36% in 2024. The US has a 32% trust score, which has been flat since 2015. In Europe, trust is higher in Denmark at 57% in both 2015 and 2024, and

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2024/01/10/elon-musk-fired-80-per-cent-of-twitter-x-engineers-working-on-trust-and-safety/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://about.fb.com/news/2025/01/meta-more-speech-fewer-mistakes/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://pressgazette.co.uk/marketing/most-britons-want-online-journalism-ad-funded-but-dont-like-the-ads-they-see/>

<sup>13</sup> Reuters Institute Digital News 2024

<sup>14</sup> <https://pressgazette.co.uk/publishers/regional-newspapers/regional-daily-newspaper-circulation-abc-h1-2024/>

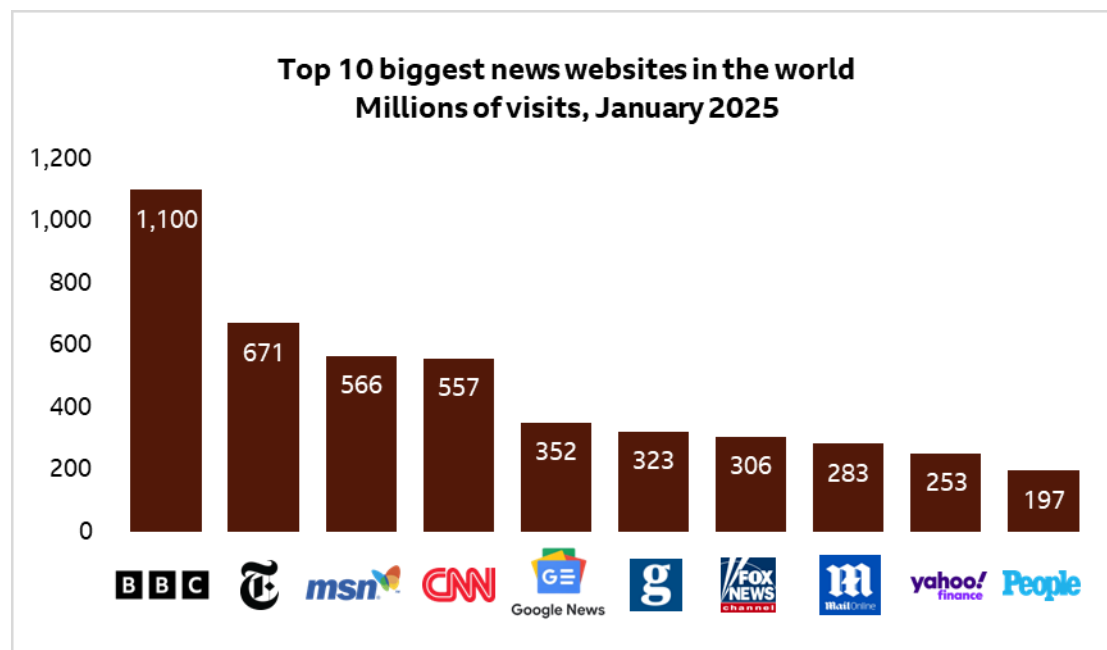
<sup>15</sup> Companies House

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ftstrategies.com/en-gb/insights/dynamic-cheap-and-shocking-the-evolution-of-paywalls-pricing-and-trials-in-the-news-industry>

highest in Finland with a trust score of 69% that has been steady since 2015. In France trust is at 31% but this has only declined 7ppt since 2015<sup>17</sup>.

Consumers retain more trust in broadcast news than in social media: 69% of UK users rate TV news highly for trustworthiness, and 68% of users for radio. In contrast, 43% of users rate social media news highly for trustworthiness, including just 37% among 16-24 year old users<sup>9 18</sup>. Public service broadcasters are the most trusted sources: 63% of PSB channel users rate them highly for trusted and accurate UK news, a figure which has remained stable over the past three years<sup>19</sup>. 62% trust BBC News and there are strong scores also for Channel 4 News and ITV News (59%)<sup>17 20</sup>. An Ofcom study documented the positive effects of PSB news: audiences who view PSB news were found to be 5ppt more likely to vote and 6ppt less polarised in their views vs those who do not<sup>21</sup>.

The BBC remains the no.1 news source in the UK, with a cross-platform reach of 75% on average per week<sup>22</sup>. We saw high use of BBC News during the UK General Election with 82% of adults coming to the BBC for coverage of the results accompanied by strong perceptions of impartiality. The BBC Verify fact-checking brand saw high usage levels with 2.1 million weekly visitors in the week of the election. Globally, the BBC is the no.1 English language online brand for news, with 1.1 billion visits in January 2025<sup>23</sup>.



Source: Press Gazette, February 2025

<sup>17</sup> [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/RISJ\\_DNR\\_2024\\_Digital\\_v10%20lr.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/RISJ_DNR_2024_Digital_v10%20lr.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Ofcom News Consumption in the UK 2024: Ratings from those using the platform for news at least weekly

<sup>19</sup> Ofcom News Consumption in the UK 2024: Ratings among those watching PSB channel(s) in the past six months 2023

<sup>20</sup> Reuters Digital News Report 2024: Ratings from those aware of the brand

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/public-service-broadcasting/the-relationship-between-the-use-of-psbs-for-news-and-societal-outcomes-an-empirical-analysis/>

<sup>22</sup> Compass by Ipsos UK, Apr 24-Jan 25

<sup>23</sup> SimilarWeb, BBC reach in all markets across its English and language sites



The trust audiences place in the BBC is crucial so when we get things wrong, as happened earlier this year with the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone*, we will be prompt in establishing the facts and transparent about any mistakes that may have been made and how we can avoid them happening again.

## 2.2 Backing homegrown storytelling: market and audience trends

Global video platforms continue to grow, driving new types of creator-led content and AI-created content. There is ever more competition in video streaming, which continues to put pressure on advertising-funded broadcasters. Content spending remains high, though benefits are flowing mainly to the largest producers. Radio remains resilient overall so far, even as audiences continue to choose music streaming and podcasts.

### ***Global video platforms continue to grow***

Viewership of video sharing platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, and others, has continued to rise over the last year. This is especially pronounced among over-35s who are catching up with the younger age groups who still spend the most time with video sharing each week. Video sharing has outstripped streaming and broadcast TV for 16-34 year olds in the UK for the last three years. YouTube now takes close to a third of viewing for 16-34s, up 4ppt from 2022, while their next biggest video provider, Netflix, has stayed flat YoY<sup>24</sup>.

YouTube content now competes directly with traditional TV as more viewing is happening on the TV screen. In 2024, c26% of UK YouTube viewing took place via TV sets vs 15% in 2017<sup>25</sup>. YouTube now allows creators to showcase content by ‘seasons’ consisting of ‘episodes’, in a format similar to traditional TV<sup>26</sup>. Further, analysis of the YouTube UK Trending page suggests the service has re-oriented its focus toward long(er)-form content, with the median length of these titles increasing c75% in the last four years to around 12 minutes<sup>27</sup>. YouTube TV, YouTube’s multichannel video programming distributor in the US, is forecast to grow from its 8 million subscriber base (end of 2023) to 12.4 million by the end of 2026, which would make it among the largest multichannel pay TV providers in the country<sup>28</sup>.

The success of YouTube creators proves the value of democratised content creation, whereby individual creators can access relatively high-quality production values. The emergence of AI video creation tools, such as Sora and YouTube’s Veo, will continue to lower the barriers to content production as creators without video production expertise will be able to make videos using basic text input. AI tools will also speed up repetitive tasks during video production, such as colour correction and synching.

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<sup>24</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, 16-34

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.endersanalysis.com/reports/youtube-becoming-more-tv>. 2024 viewing covers May-July 2024.

<sup>26</sup> <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/made-on-youtube-photos-and-recaps-2024/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.endersanalysis.com/reports/youtube-becoming-more-tv>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2024/04/07/youtube-tv-is-forecast-to-be-the-largest-pay-tv-distributor-in-2026/>

### ***Continued competition in video streaming putting pressure on advertising-funded broadcasters***

For video streaming services, SVOD and SAVOD (subscription advertising video-on-demand) continue to grow in viewership, though the financial benefits appear to be concentrated in the larger providers. Netflix added almost 19 million new subscribers globally in Q4 2024 and reported increases in revenue and operating profit<sup>29</sup>. Smaller streamers may be struggling to gain direct consumer scale, with Apple and Paramount opting to offer their streaming services through Amazon Prime Channels. Warner Brothers Discovery's Max, on the other hand, has announced its upcoming launch in the UK, and will offer its streaming service as a channel in Now TV, changing its long-standing arrangements with Sky<sup>30</sup>.

Advertising has become an important revenue stream for video streamers, as they have tried to gain more price-conscious subscribers and to increase overall average revenue per user (ARPU). Disney+ and Netflix found more than 50% of new subscribers are choosing their ad-supported tiers. Evidence so far does not show uplift in ARPU yet, which might be caused by lower advertising rates brought to market by Amazon<sup>31</sup>.

This is also putting pressure on public service broadcasters reliant on advertising. Reach of advertising-funded UK public service broadcasters is in decline across all age groups. In 2024, the BBC was the only broadcaster to see an increase in time spent year-on-year, while Channel 4 declined by 2%, and ITV and Channel 5 by 6%<sup>32</sup>. Channel 4 reported financial struggles with an operating loss of £52 million in 2023 after three consecutive years of profit<sup>33</sup>. Meanwhile, Sky has seen continued financial losses while reporting heavy investment into sports and original programming<sup>34</sup>. In ITV's latest financial results, advertising revenue improved and overall profit rose 11%, though performance in Studios led to overall revenue decline of 3%<sup>35</sup>. There is ongoing speculation about the strategic direction of the broadcaster, including the possibility of a sale for all or part of it<sup>36</sup>.

These pressures are also evident in the US market, where Comcast plans to sell off their NBC Universal networks after a consistent decline in revenue over the last five years at an annual rate of 8%, and where Paramount is in the midst of a sales process and is selling off assets in the short-term as part of cost-saving efforts<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> [https://s22.q4cdn.com/959853165/files/doc\\_financials/2024/q4/FINAL-Q4-24-Shareholder-Letter.pdf](https://s22.q4cdn.com/959853165/files/doc_financials/2024/q4/FINAL-Q4-24-Shareholder-Letter.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/dec/09/sky-warner-bros-discovery-deal-hbo-max>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/d45c4153-6c11-4f1e-9009-62f8adf5ac2b>

<sup>32</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+, 2024 vs 2023

<sup>33</sup> [https://assets-corporate.channel4.com/\\_flysystem/s3/2024-10/Channel%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf](https://assets-corporate.channel4.com/_flysystem/s3/2024-10/Channel%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.sportspro.com/news/sky-sports-financials-losses-revenue-2023/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.itvplc.com/~media/Files/I/ITV-PLC-V2/ITV%20Plc%20Full%20Year%20Results%202024%20-%20Release.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/itv-back-in-spotlight-as-suitors-screen-potential-bids-13258866>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joecornell/2024/11/26/comcast-plans-to-spin-off-its-cable-networks-and-digital-assets/>; <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2024/04/07/youtube-tv-is-forecast-to-be-the-largest-pay-tv-distributor-in-2026/>

### ***Content spending remains high, but total commissions are down***

In terms of content production, we have seen continued high levels of investment from the largest streaming services. Global content spend increased 2% to \$247 billion in 2024 following a return to production after strikes by the Writers Guild of America and The Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. But spend is only predicted to increase by 0.4% this year to reach \$248 billion, with broadcasters' reduced spend balancing increased spend by large international production houses<sup>38</sup>.

Disney, Netflix, Paramount, and Comcast are predicted to have spent \$126 billion on new content last year (original productions and sports rights), of which \$40 billion is reportedly aimed at boosting the firms' streaming services. Despite total spend increasing, the number of global TV commissions decreased in 2024 by 5%, suggesting a higher proportion of spend is going to acquisitions and sports rights (e.g. Netflix with WWE and Christmas Day NFL games)<sup>39</sup>. Streamers spent \$10 billion on sports rights in 2024, and are forecast to spend \$12.5 billion in 2025<sup>40</sup>.

### ***Radio is resilient, though younger audiences choose music streaming and podcasts***

Audiences spent 61% of their weekly audio listening time with radio, making it the most used audio format, though this has declined from 72% in 2019<sup>41</sup>. BBC Radio weekly reach held steady in the last year, bucking its recent trend, while Commercial Radio saw gains. Commercial broadcaster Global increased reach by 2.9 million YoY, while Bauer Media increased by 1 million<sup>42</sup>. This has partly been driven by brand extensions like Global's 12 recent extensions across Capital, Classic FM, and Heart.

Despite radio's continued dominance overall, audio streaming is currently the most used audio format for 16-34 year olds. Spotify stands out as a clear winner in the market, reaching a high in premium subscribers in Q4 2024 and marking its first full year of profitability. Spotify is the top audio streaming platform in the UK, with 58% of audio streaming time spent for adults aged 15+<sup>43</sup>. This transition to streaming has led to protests from artists who feel they are not properly compensated for their music particularly concerning Spotify's pro-rata royalty system. From 2024 on, Spotify only pays royalties on tracks with more than 1,000 streams<sup>44</sup>. While the company has said they will not benefit financially, some musicians have found the change unfair, and fear further increases to the plays threshold<sup>45</sup>.

Music labels and artists have also faced varied challenges from new AI tools. AI music production has come to the fore with the release of Suno, Udio and other similar tools.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.ampereanalysis.com/insight/streamers-to-spend-95bn-on-content-in-2025-surpassing-commercial-broadcasters>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ampereanalysis.com/insight/commissioned-titles-down-5-in-2024-amid-industry-caution>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ampereanalysis.com/insight/streamers-will-spend-125bn-on-sports-rights-in-2025-led-by-dazn>, includes sports content spend for streaming services

<sup>41</sup> IPA TouchPoints, 2023/24 vs 2019

<sup>42</sup> RAJAR, adults 15+, 2024 vs 2023

<sup>43</sup> IPA TouchPoints Superhub, 2023/24. Refers to Spotify Premium

<sup>44</sup> <https://artists.spotify.com/en/blog/modernizing-our-royalty-system>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/nov/22/spotify-announces-royalty-changes>

Some music artists are protesting against unauthorised use of their music for AI model training, with a recent petition with 31,000 signatures from artists including ABBA and Radiohead<sup>46</sup>. It is clear that while AI has potential uses in audio, it will require greater cooperation with music artists to ensure fair use.

Podcasts have seen steady growth over the last few years in the UK as they offer a range of choice for on-demand speech audio beyond what can be found on radio. Around 20% of UK adults listen to a podcast at least once a week, estimated to be up from 11% in 2018<sup>47</sup>. The relatively low production costs of podcasting have drawn many new podcast creators into the market. Podcast advertising revenue grew to c£49 million in 2023, up 16% YoY and 63% on 2021<sup>48</sup>. These growth rates are expected to flatten out toward 2027, as it becomes clear what it takes to establish a sustainable career in podcasting.

Podcast consumption is beginning to extend into visualised podcasts. More than half of the global top 20 podcasts on Spotify have video, and more than 70% of consumers using video podcasts watch them in the foreground<sup>49</sup>. In the US, YouTube occupies the no.1 spot for podcast listening<sup>50</sup>. In the UK, Spotify remains no.1 at 37% of adults who listen to podcasts using the service, ahead of BBC Sounds (32%) though YouTube is close behind at 29%<sup>51</sup>.

### ***Implications for the UK and the BBC***

As viewing shifts to international platforms, consumption of British content is at risk. Only 16% of UK adults agree that Netflix shows the lives of people in the UK, the highest-ranking tracked SVOD on this measure. In comparison, the figure for BBC TV/iPlayer (the highest-ranking tracked UK broadcaster) is four times higher (64%)<sup>52</sup>. Data shows that of the top 100 most viewed transmissions in 2024, 85% were from UK broadcasters, but down to 50% for 16-34s<sup>53</sup>.

Independent producers in the UK have reported difficult times. This results from ad-funded public service broadcasters reducing their content spend, as well as the related decline in global co-commissions from international streaming services. Channel 4 reduced its content spend by 7% in 2023 vs the previous year. Sky reported its increase in spend last year was due to rising sports rights costs<sup>54</sup>. In addition, big streaming services have focused their spend on high-budget content which only the largest

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<sup>46</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/generative-ai-abba-radiohead-thom-yorke-ba9091a6095876affe8c09f6bf9fe12d>

<sup>47</sup> RAJAR, adults 15+ Q1 2024 vs Q1 2018

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/media/music-radio-podcasts/digital-music/podcast-advertising/united-kingdom?currency=GBP#revenue>

<sup>49</sup> <https://newsroom.spotify.com/2024-06-28/250000-video-podcasts-and-counting-creators-and-audiences-are-embracing-video-content-on-spotify/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.westwoodone.com/blog/2024/07/08/youtubes-growth-as-a-podcast-power-player-revealed-in-cumulus-media-and-signal-hill-insights-podcast-download-spring-2024-report/>

<sup>51</sup> Ofcom, Audio Survey, February 2024, all respondents who listen to podcasts

<sup>52</sup> Yonder for the BBC, February 2024

<sup>53</sup> BARB, 2024. Individuals 4+ and 16-34, up to 28 days (sum 000s), highest occurring episode/event. NB Broadcasters run on all devices, SVOD is TV set only.

<sup>54</sup> [https://assets-corporate.channel4.com/\\_flysystem/s3/2024-10/Channel%204%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf](https://assets-corporate.channel4.com/_flysystem/s3/2024-10/Channel%204%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf) ; <https://www.sportcal.com/financial/sky-losses-double-in-2023-amid-growing-cord-cutting/>

producers have the resources and reputations to manage. Producers with a turnover of more than £25 million accounted for the vast majority (91%) of drama spend – the largest genre in terms of spend – and more than three-quarters (87%) of entertainment spend<sup>55</sup>. We have also seen a reduction in international co-commissions from global streamers, as they increasingly seek to buy out global rights for content rather than commission together with local broadcasters.

The change in distribution of production revenues has had a negative impact on freelancers in the UK. BECTU found that half of the UK’s film and TV production workers were out of work in July 2024; this was highest in unscripted TV (57%)<sup>56</sup>.

The reduction in global TV commissions and co-commissioning is likely to put further pressure on British production companies, and a concentration of spend into high-budget genres may lead to proportionately greater activity in and around London, given that the talent and resources is less likely to be available at scale elsewhere.

The BBC continues to invest more in British content than anyone else – with a combined £1.75 billion spend across video genres in 2023; this has been stable since 2018. That investment is continuing to support audience success across the industry, with nearly all of the top TV episodes in the last year coming from the BBC or ITV.

#### **Top 10 most viewed titles in 2024 (highest occurring episode/event shown)**

Rank	Provider	Programme Title	Audience (m)
1	BBC* + ITV	Euro 2024 Final (Spain v England)	22.4m
2	BBC	Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl	21.6m
3	BBC	Gavin & Stacey	21.0m
4	ITV	Euro 2024 Semi-Final (Netherlands v England)	18.6m
5	ITV	Mr Bates vs The Post Office	13.8m
6	ITV	I’m a Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!	10.9m
7	BBC	New Year’s Eve Fireworks	10.5m
8	Netflix	Fool Me Once	10.5m
9	BBC	Strictly Come Dancing	10.0m
10	BBC	Gladiators	9.9m

*Source: BARB 2024, individuals 4+, up to 28 days (sum 000s) highest occurring episode/event. NB: Broadcasters run on all devices, SVOD is TV set only. Data as run 4th March 2025. \*Audience for BBC = 16.7m*

We will continue to work hand-in-hand with the creative industries to drive growth in the creative economy and support homegrown content and storytelling. That may include exploring options with the industry around how global media organisations could contribute more to supporting UK content, and enhancing tax credits. It also includes close partnership with Ofcom as they implement the Media Act to ensure prominence for public service broadcasting in the new media age.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.pact.co.uk/resource/pact-census-2024.html>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.tvbeurope.com/production-post/bectu-over-50-per-cent-of-uk-screen-industry-out-of-work>

## 2.3 Bringing people together: Market and audience trends

Online consumption growth continues to lead to more personal experiences and has changed shared experiences; where shared experiences previously centred around a shared moment in a linear environment, online sharing promotes asynchronous consumption over a longer period of time. As digital platform usage continues to fragment, subscription prices continue to rise sharply, driving churn and leading to household experiences diverging further. While audiences are well on the way to digital transition, the implications for the UK of a full IP transition will be highly significant.

### ***Online consumption leading to more personalisation and different shared experiences***

Viewership of video sharing platforms, and social media usage in general, is higher than ever, with time spent on video sharing matching BBC TV/iPlayer at 5 hours 55 mins for 2024<sup>57</sup>. While these platforms allow creators to find an audience and express themselves, the endless volume of content and hyper-personalisation of feeds is driving a transition to fewer shared live viewing occasions and a lack of exposure to other views and perspectives on the world. A study has shown that algorithmic ranking on platforms like Facebook leads to users encountering approximately 15% less cross-cutting content in their news feeds, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives<sup>58</sup>.

BBC TV had a strong year, with time spent for 4+ up 3% YoY in 2024; however, time spent with the other public broadcasters decreased (down 5% YoY)<sup>59</sup>. This is leading to fewer shared viewing moments: the number of TV programmes attracting over four million viewers has halved in the eight years from 2,490 in 2014 to 1,184 in 2022<sup>60</sup>.

We are online now much more than before, including social media and general browsing. Time online for 18+ internet users has increased by 18% YoY to 4 hours 20 minutes per day on average in the UK, around 75% of which is spent on smartphones<sup>61</sup>. Our time online is dominated by tech giants Alphabet (owner of Google and YouTube) and Meta (owner of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram), with 24% and 23% of average daily time online spent with their products on average among UK adult internet users. Third most used is ByteDance, owner of TikTok, with an average of 13 minutes or 5% of time spent per day across all online adults<sup>62</sup>. However, time per user of TikTok is very high among the young: a 2023 study found that UK TikTok users aged 4-18 spent 127 minutes with the platform per day vs 40 minutes on the next nearest social media platform, Instagram<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+

<sup>58</sup> <https://courses.cs.umbc.edu/graduate/691/spring21/pdf/1130.full.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+, 2024 vs 2023

<sup>60</sup> BARB 28-day consolidated, individuals 4+, TV sets only. Transmissions with a six-minute minimum duration averaging at least 4 million viewers on broadcast TV. Includes 1+ channels where applicable. No combination of simultaneous broadcasts across channels

<sup>61</sup> Ipsos, Ipsos Iris Online Audience Measurement Service, May 2024, UK internet users 18+

<sup>62</sup> Ofcom Online Nation 2024

<sup>63</sup> [https://static.qustodio.com/public-site/uploads/2024/01/19122535/ADR\\_2023-24\\_EN.pdf](https://static.qustodio.com/public-site/uploads/2024/01/19122535/ADR_2023-24_EN.pdf)

### ***Negative impacts of social media on mental health, and an uncertain global regulatory response***

The Government has expressed concern regarding the increase in people reporting hateful, offensive, and discriminatory content, and the lax age controls of many apps, with c.20% of underage children claiming they are adults in order to access social media<sup>64</sup>. Some governments around the world are tightening social media regulations to protect minors, driven by concerns over mental health. Australia announced a ban on under-16s using social media and is exploring age verification methods including biometric data and ID checks to enhance online safety for minors. In the US, Utah attempted to introduce strict laws requiring parental consent for minors to create social media accounts, but these have now been blocked due to First Amendment challenges citing free speech. There is uncertainty around tech regulation in the US more generally following the election of President Trump and the stated aims to reduce regulation in the country.

Studies have shown a causal link between social media use and reduced well-being or mood disorders, particularly depression and anxiety<sup>65</sup>. This negative impact has been shown to be most pronounced during certain developmental periods, such as puberty and young adulthood. A 2022 study analysed data from 84,011 participants aged 10-80 years, finding that higher social media use predicts lower life satisfaction in younger adolescents<sup>66</sup>.

### ***Media subscription prices continue to rise sharply, as usage continues to fragment***

As part of the drive to profitability, Pay TV providers continued to announce price rises in 2024 at or beyond inflation (Virgin Media 8.8%<sup>67</sup>, Sky 6.7%<sup>68</sup>). Spotify and Disney also increased the prices of their subscription streaming services, while Netflix have done so most recently in February this year.

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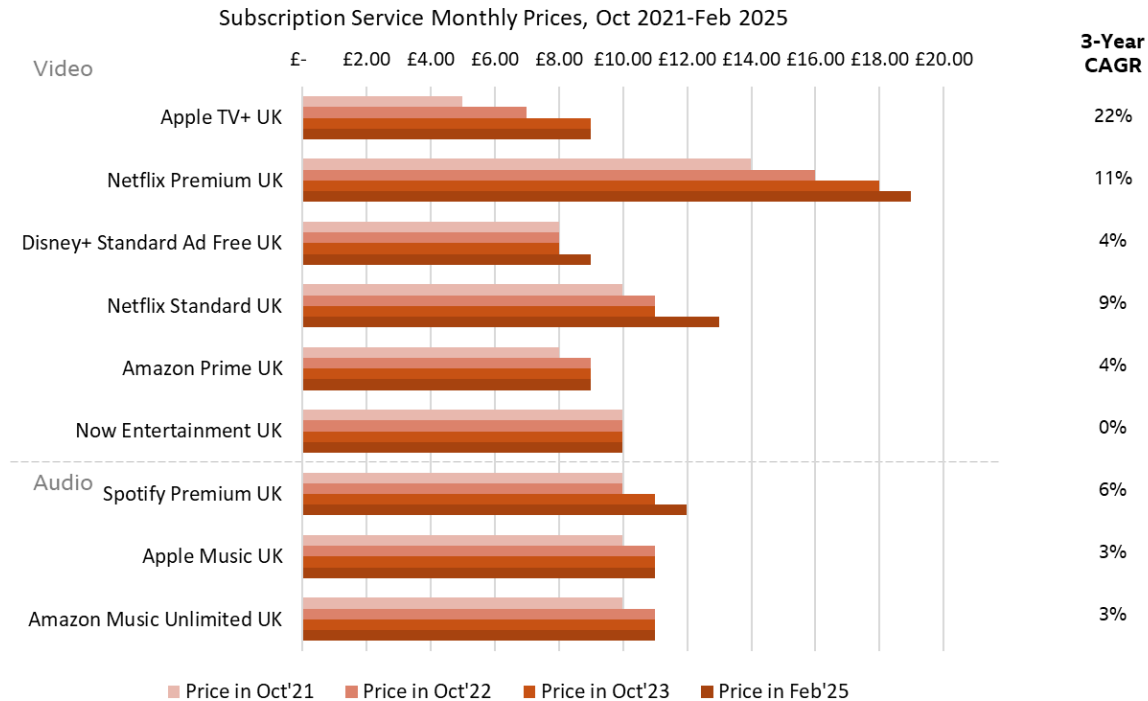
<sup>64</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn4v52ezx17o>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/social-media-teens-mental-health>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-022-29296-3>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.uswitch.com/broadband/guides/virgin-media-price-increase-what-can-customers-do/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.uswitch.com/broadband/guides/sky-increasing-prices-what-consumers-can-do/>



Despite these price rises, the introduction of cheaper ad-tiers means many more households have taken up more subscriptions. SVOD penetration in the UK has remained flat since 2021, but take-up of Disney+, Apple TV+, and smaller SVODs has been increasing<sup>69</sup>. There has been a continued increase in the number of subscriptions per household with the number of households with more than one SVOD subscription increasing by 4ppt between H2 2023 and H1 2024<sup>70</sup>.

This increase in subscriptions per home implies further dispersion of viewing across more platforms and more titles, which is likely to result in fewer shared viewing moments. Streaming services struggle with churn: a YouGov study last year found that 31% of UK consumers have cancelled a service in the last 12 months, and 39% are likely to do so in the next 12 months<sup>71</sup>. This cycling through subscriptions makes it difficult to create shared experiences since audiences do not necessarily stay long on the platforms they subscribe to.

### ***We are well on the way to digital transition***

The UK has advanced in internet connectivity in the last few years: 98% of households have access to a superfast broadband, and 83% have access to gigabit-capable internet<sup>72</sup>. 76% of households own a smart TV, up from just 27% in 2016<sup>73</sup>. However, there remains a persistent number of unconnected households who do not have a TV with internet connection.

<sup>69</sup> BARB Establishment Survey, Q4 2024 vs Q4 2021

<sup>70</sup> MTM 3 Reasons data

<sup>71</sup> <https://business.yougov.com/content/49117-svod-streaming-churn-research-2024>

<sup>72</sup> Ofcom Connected Nations 2024

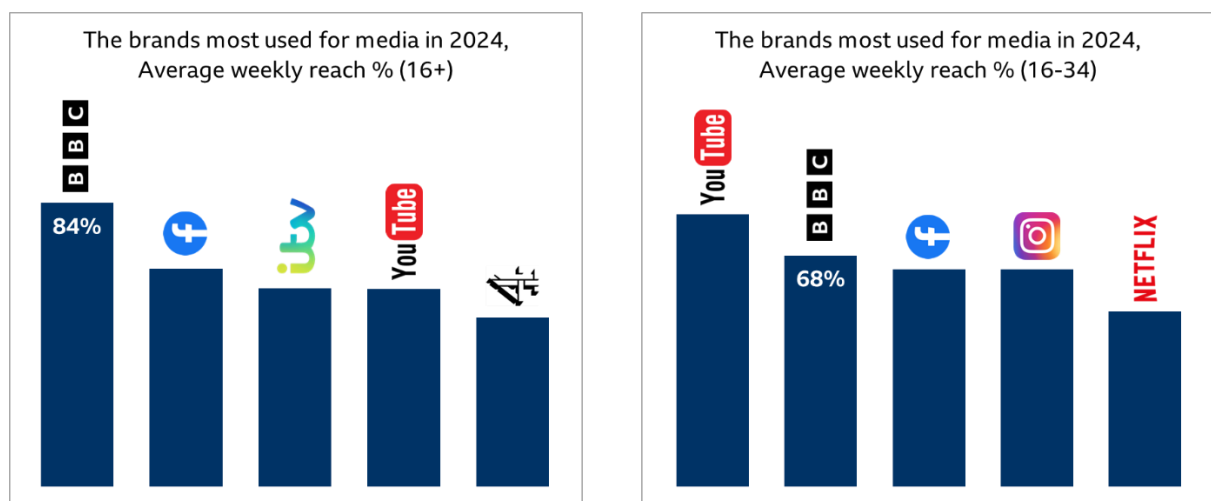
<sup>73</sup> Ofcom Communications Market Report, 2024, 2016



As we transition to IP-dominant TV delivery, it is important to make sure these households do not get left behind. Government research has shown that socioeconomic status and age has an impact on this: 23% of households with an annual income under £10,400 do not have internet at home, compared to just 1% of households earning over £26,000<sup>74</sup>. Research from the Independent Age charity has shown that 48% of low income pensioners struggle to afford broadband<sup>75</sup>.

### **Implications for the UK and the BBC**

In the UK the BBC remains a unifying force in a digitally fragmented world. The BBC is used on average by 35 million adults per day (64%), 46 million per week (84%) and 51 million per month (95%), far more than any other brand for media. Among 16-34 year-olds, the BBC is the only UK brand for media to make the top five, with an average weekly reach of 68%. Across a month, this rises to almost nine in ten 16-34s<sup>76</sup>. The BBC makes the list of top six organisations 18+ internet users spend the most time with on average per day – with 6 minutes of use on average per day, or 2% of total time, no change on last year<sup>77</sup>.



Source: Average weekly reach % (15min accumulated), Compass by Ipsos MORI (on-platform), 2024

Millions of people came to the BBC for unmissable content across genres, showing that high-impact content can still bring people together. Top moments in 2024 included: a summer of sport with the Summer Olympic Games, Men's Euros, and Wimbledon Championships reaching 74% of the UK population on BBC TV, generating 1.4 billion viewing hours; Christmas Day hits, with 10 of the top 10 titles on Christmas Day; UK General Election coverage, with 23 million people coming to BBC news for TV coverage

<sup>74</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2024-0041/CDP-2024-0041.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> [https://www.independentage.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Household\\_costs\\_report\\_2023\\_Independent\\_Age.pdf](https://www.independentage.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Household_costs_report_2023_Independent_Age.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Compass by Ipsos UK, 2024

<sup>77</sup> Ofcom Online Nation 2024

of the results, more than any other broadcaster; plus appointment to view TV, including *The Traitors* which returned with 10.8 million for the first episode this year.

This year we had two titles reaching over 20 million viewers, a benchmark which has only been beaten a handful of times in the last decade (e.g. HM The Queen's Funeral and Lockdown Announcement), which also performed strongly with younger audiences. These titles were *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl* (21.6 million All, 4.1 million 16-34) and *Gavin & Stacey: The Finale* (21.0 million All, 4.6 million 16-34)<sup>78</sup>.

These titles have helped drive strong growth of iPlayer, with 2024 a record year and viewing time per person up 23% YoY, and up 32% for 16-24 year olds. In the UK, total BBC viewing across broadcast and iPlayer is more than Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ combined, and ahead of YouTube and TikTok combined<sup>79</sup>. BBC Sounds hit a new record in 2024 for average weekly active accounts at 4.7 million<sup>80</sup>.

BBC Online overall had its best-ever year in 2024, with weekly active accounts growing 4% YoY. July was a (then) record-setting month (24.6 million weekly active accounts), driven by a very strong first week with the UK General Election, the Men's Euros, Wimbledon Championships which saw record-breaking iPlayer (18.4 million overall and 6.1 million for U35s) and Sport (14.6 million) and very strong News online (13.6 million). And 2025 has started with a bang, with a record-breaking 25.0 million average weekly accounts in January<sup>81</sup>.

The BBC worked with other public broadcasting partners to launch Freely last year, an IP-delivered TV service offering live and on-demand content to help ease the transition for audiences. Freely has gained traction in the UK market, and it is forecast to grow at a compounded annual rate of 66% between 2024-2033, making up 48% of primary sets in 2033. Freely is projected to account for c45% of total Linear IP viewing (watching live, scheduled content via Internet Protocol) in 2029<sup>82</sup>.

Compared to the 30% average price rises for subscription services in the UK between 2021 and 2025, the licence fee rose by 6.6% in 2024 after staying flat since 2021<sup>83</sup>. The BBC continues to offer excellent value – the estimated cost of a subscription bundle including everything the BBC offers (advertising-free video, audio, and news media) would come to more than £624 a year; this compares with the current licence fee cost of £169.50 (rising to £174.50 from April).

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<sup>78</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+ and 16-34

<sup>79</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+, 2024 vs 2023

<sup>80</sup> Piano Analytics

<sup>81</sup> Piano Analytics

<sup>82</sup> MTM 3 Reasons data

<sup>83</sup> Average includes: Netflix all tiers, Amazon Prime, Disney+ Standard Ad-Free, Spotify Premium and Family, Apple TV+, Apple Music, Amazon Music Unlimited

In the light of these market trends, we believe it is more important than ever for the BBC to deliver a unique role for our democracy, our creative economy and our society through great content and services. As we set out in the Foreword above, and in more detail in the recent *A BBC for the future*<sup>84</sup>, we will focus on three essential roles that will guide the BBC. We will:

- 1. Pursue truth with no agenda** by reporting fearlessly and fairly
- 2. Back the best homegrown storytelling** by investing in British talent and creativity
- 3. Bring people together** by connecting everyone to unmissable content.

These roles will shape what the BBC does and focus our creative and strategic choices over the years to come. They will help to ensure that the BBC is as important to future generations as it has been to generations past.

These roles are aligned to the BBC's public purposes laid out in our Charter. As we set out our strategic and creative plans for next year below, we have captured our public purposes under the relevant role:

- Our duty to provide trusted, impartial news to the UK and internationally as part of our role to pursue truth with no agenda
- Our goal to provide distinctive high-quality British content for all audiences, including formal learning and content for children, within our commitment to back the best homegrown storytelling from across the UK
- Our ambition to bring people together by serving communities across the UK and connecting everyone to unmissable content
- How we are focusing our business and organisational priorities to support the delivery of our Value for All strategy.

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/documents/a-bbc-for-the-future.pdf>

## 3. Strategic priorities and creative plans for 2025/26

### 3.1 Pursue truth with no agenda by reporting fearlessly and fairly

The news industry was dominated by a year of global events including over 60 national elections – resulting in new governments in the UK and US, heightened conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, a generational shift in news consumption with more adults in the UK now accessing news from online platforms than from TV (according to Ofcom's annual study), and the rise of disinformation accelerated by the use of artificial intelligence.

In an increasingly complex and confusing world, the BBC remains committed to providing impartial and trusted journalism about the most significant events from the UK and around the world, and about what matters most to its audiences. Our regional and devolved nations news teams will continue serving local communities with the breaking news and in-depth analysis of the major issues that impact them. Our mission statement – trust is earned – has been built from hundreds of hours of conversations with audiences across the UK and around the world. It has shaped our strategic and creative plans.

#### **Purpose 1 – Providing impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them**

##### *Strategic and Creative Plans 2025/26*

In what promises to be another exceptionally busy news year, our focus will remain steadfast on putting our audience at the centre of what BBC News delivers. To do so, we have developed strategic focus areas to guide our plans.

First and foremost, in our effort to fight disinformation and earn audiences' trust, we will continue to show audiences not just what we cover but how, and why. We are expanding BBC Verify to make it an 'always on' offer, with daily digital output and a dedicated commitment to US coverage. Building on the success of our Verify and Newsround brands, we will launch a new initiative in schools to help young people better gauge the legitimacy of news stories for themselves.

Amidst growing competition, we will double down on the high-impact, investigative journalism that makes our offering distinctive and launch BBC Investigates within our online offer. Our Investigations and Current Affairs teams will work more closely together, covering the year's biggest stories, including the Trump presidency and the changing geopolitics of Europe. We will develop our BBC InDepth brand to bring audiences deeper analysis, and continue the success of our 'Why ...?' series, reaching more people with insight into the underlying causes of news events.

Our content needs to reflect the values and interests of its audience to engage them. We will build on the successful launch of 'Your Voice, Your BBC News' to open up our journalism like never before, engaging and encouraging audiences to bring us the stories

they care about to shape the news agenda. With debate and discussion critical to a healthy democracy, we will explore ways to increase the impact of our flagship debate programme, *Question Time*. Our 'Across the UK' initiative will ensure our reporting spans the entire nation. BBC Breakfast and Nations and Regions teams will work together to surface these stories on our flagship programme. We will also broaden the agenda and cover content that is more relevant, positive and engaging – especially to those feeling alienated by the relentless modern news cycle. To support this, we will trial fresh formats and storytelling approaches, and leverage our wealth of existing content across the BBC.

As news consumption increasingly moves online, we are strengthening our commitment to a compelling iPlayer-led news offer, with breaking news and outstanding in-depth documentaries at its heart. In 2024, we launched a News rail on the iPlayer homepage, improving prominence and curation of BBC News content. And in a year of big news events, weekly active accounts viewing news on iPlayer increased 8% in 2024 vs 2023<sup>85</sup>. Capitalising on this momentum, we are bringing together our UK Channel and Live Story Stream teams to generate richer story streams.

To reach young audiences with our most important stories, we will expand our presence on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram this year, and invest further in our vertical and short-form video capabilities, to drive off-platform reach and enrich experiences on our owned platforms. These measures will also help to better serve audiences from lower income, C2DE sociodemographic groups.

Finally, we will continue to embrace AI with pilot programmes that will help us deliver trusted journalism to a wider audience in more relevant formats. However, we are acutely aware of the growing threat to trusted information that is emerging from generative AI technology. Distortion is what happens when an AI assistant 'scrapes' information to respond to a question and serves up an answer that is factually incorrect, misleading and potentially dangerous. That is why the BBC will open up a new conversation with the leading AI technology providers and other news brands so we can work together in partnership to find solutions.

## **Purpose 5 – Reflecting the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world**

### *Strategic and creative plans 2025/26*

BBC News remains the most trusted news provider in the UK and is the world's most trusted international news provider, reaching more than 400 million people globally on average each week. We will continue to build on our reputation as the world's leading news provider and deliver for audiences in critical need of news and information.

Last year, the Government announced additional funding for the BBC World Service in 2025/26. We welcomed this further support and will continue to engage with the government to secure a sustainable long-term financial future for the BBC World Service.

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<sup>85</sup> Piano Analytics

Beyond seeking financial stability, we will build on our announced plans to move closer to the audiences and communities we serve, delivering journalism of relevance to their lives and telling their untold stories. We will reflect changing audience behaviour by increasing digital growth, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where digital take-up is fast rising amongst younger audiences. Enhancing formats, journalism and distribution will also help us reach younger audiences and more women around the world.

Using AI responsibly, the BBC World Service will develop pilot services in new languages and explore how we can deliver the breadth of the BBC's content to new and existing audiences. We will enhance our efforts to counter disinformation in response to the increasing threat and in light of others withdrawing from the fact-checking ecosystem.

World Service English will continue to develop the range of global perspectives it features on world events across its live news and podcast output. It will also provide explanation and insight to audiences through its documentary, arts, science, technology and business programming.

The global network will showcase more of the best language services' original journalism by running at least one such long-form programme a month and publishing at least five more series of the global investigations podcast *World of Secrets*, which has established a strong following.

BBC Monitoring will focus on analysis and insight, and sharing that expertise further across BBC News. Over the coming year we will harness the power of generative AI. We will use technology and expertise to introduce dashboards into our editorial portfolio – something consumers have requested from BBC Monitoring – and we will increase our tracking of the Russian and China narrative, reaction to Donald Trump's presidency and the developments in Syria.

After last year's successful launch of the new bbc.com app, the focus in the US will be on enhancing the user experience with improvements to curation and developing vertical video. The 'Follow the Sun' strategy will ensure news teams in Sydney and Singapore cover more live and breaking news at all hours and ensure seamless handovers between global teams. Such moves will also aid our drive for overall digital growth in parts of the world such as Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

## 3.2 Back the best homegrown storytelling by investing in British talent and creativity

The BBC invests more in original British creativity than anyone else, keeping the UK's creative economy strong and supporting new talent across the sector. But British storytelling is at risk in an extraordinarily competitive global media environment. It is more important than ever that we tell British stories that portray the experiences of people and communities across the UK. The best homegrown content reflects our rich stories and our unique cultural identity back to us and to the wider world.

### **Showing the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services**

#### *Strategic and Creative Plans 2025/26*

In a competitive market where it is increasingly challenging for content to cut through, we continue to prioritise investment in high-impact content that appeals to the broadest audience, across the widest range of genres, delivering sufficient volume of titles to support a year-round release cadence. In 2025/26 we will increase our investment in genres that drive the greatest value in streaming and appeal to audiences who get less value from the BBC, including expanding on successful BBC content brands as well as investing in bold, exciting new stories from across the UK.

Delivering an outstanding streaming offer that attracts and retains audiences is critical for the BBC in delivering our public service mission, driving licence fee value, and growing commercial income through co-production, sales and distribution. Growing iPlayer and Sounds' scale is a key priority, as audience behaviour continues to shift towards streaming. We will continue to enhance the core experience of our digital products, with improvements in personalisation to meet audience expectations, and more seamless journeys into iPlayer from across the BBC's wider digital portfolio. The live experience will remain a key focus, ensuring the BBC is the best place to bring the nation together for cultural, sports and news events. Our approach to marketing and promotion will also continue to evolve, including how we distribute content on YouTube.

Highlights from our video and audio content plans for the year ahead are outlined below, by genre.

#### Drama

BBC Drama will continue to back the best in British storytelling, working with homegrown creatives to air a wide range of distinctive dramas from across the UK.

New titles include *Riot Women*, created, written and directed by Sally Wainwright and set in Hebden Bridge, and Richard Gadd's *Half Man*, filmed and set in Scotland.

William Mager brings us *Reunion*, a Sheffield-set thriller about a deaf man leaving prison; Janice Okoh's *Just Act Normal* tells the story of three young siblings in the West Midlands fighting to stay together following the death of their mother; Nicôle Lecky's *Wild Cherry* is a compelling tale set in an affluent Home Counties gated community; and

Matthew Barry's *The Guest*, set in Wales, is a thriller about the toxic relationship between a successful business owner and her employee.

Jimmy McGovern's latest single drama from Liverpool is about a family reeling from the devastating impact of abuse, while *Mum* creator Stefan Golaszewski's new drama *Babies* focuses on a young couple hoping to conceive.

We will air a six-part factual drama about the investigation into the bombing of Pan Am flight 103, and how the community in Lockerbie came together in the wake of the tragedy.

Global hit *The Night Manager* returns for a second series; William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* will be adapted by Jack Thorne; and Paris Lees adapts her acclaimed *What it Feels Like for a Girl* for a new series set in and around Nottingham. Writer and showrunner Russell T Davies brings us more *Doctor Who* adventures, alongside spin-off series *The War Between the Land and the Sea*. Belfast-based police drama *Blue Lights* will also return for a new series, as well as new series of hit dramas *The Gold*, *Death in Paradise*, *Call the Midwife*, *Silent Witness*, *Shetland* and *Beyond Paradise*, alongside *EastEnders*, *Casualty*, and *Waterloo Road*. Drama acquisitions will also include bold British storytelling in the form of 1066 drama *King & Conqueror*, starring James Norton, and *Lynley* – a new adaptation of the Inspector Lynley books.

## Factual

The BBC continues to bring viewers an extraordinary breadth of distinctive factual content.

New documentary series include *Once Upon a Time in Space*, directed by the award-winning James Bluemel, whilst two new single films mark significant anniversaries – the killing of George Floyd and the 2020 pandemic. Matt and Emma Willis present new series *Inside Therapy*, and *Murder 24/7* returns. *The Catfish Next Door*, a co-commission with BBC Scotland, explores a case of cyberstalking.

Rob Brydon hosts *Destination X*, an innovative new adventure travel and immersive competition series, while hit series *Race Across the World* and *Celebrity Race Across the World* return. The new reality show *Stacey & Joe* launches, and *I Kissed a Boy* and *Glow Up* will also return.

In Science, *Walking with Dinosaurs* stomps back on screen, Chris Packham presents *Inside Our Minds*, Jim Al-Khalili unpacks the *Secrets of the Brain*, and Ella Al-Shamahi looks at human evolution in *Human*. Natural History series include *Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles* and *Kingdom*, as well as an episode on rivers as part of *Our Changing Planet*. New history titles include *Simon Schama: The Holocaust - 80 Years On*, *Unforgotten: the Bradford City Fire*, *Empire* with David Olusoga, *Dimbleby on the Monarchy*, and *Titanic Sinks Tonight*, a co-production with BBC Northern Ireland.

In Religion, the Faith & Hope for Spring season returns marking major faith festivals, with live worship for Easter, the return of *Gareth Malone's Messiah*, a co-commission with BBC Wales, and a new series of *Pilgrimage*. Amol Rajan *Goes to the Ganges*, and there is Live Eid from a mosque in Bradford.



## Arts

BBC Arts continues to showcase premium documentaries with the return of *Civilisations*. The new four-part series will offer unprecedented access to the British Museum's collection, bringing to life the dramatic rise and fall of four ancient civilisations to reveal devastating forces that still threaten us today.

Following the success of major documentaries about Shakespeare and Mozart, a new three-part series *Jane Austen: Rise of a Genius* marks the 250th anniversary of the author's birth in 2025. The acclaimed new BBC One interview strand *In My Own Words* returns for a new series, taking viewers closer than ever to leading British cultural figures, and we celebrate historic British artists with innovative new films exploring the creative minds including *Turner: The Secret Sketchbooks*.

Rob and Rylan return to BBC Two for another cultural odyssey, following in the footsteps of EM Forster's *A Passage To India* in its centenary year. We are also expanding our bespoke *Book Worm* content on TikTok to include other digital platforms and to continue to create and support UK-wide literacy campaigns such as *The Big Tasty Read*.

Classical music and dance on TV remain wide-ranging with new commissions including a pioneering series featuring the BBC Philharmonic and orchestras from around Europe for the first time with *Eurovision Classical Concerts* (w/t). Audience favourites such as BBC Proms and *Cardiff Singer of the World* continue to be championed by BBC Arts this year, alongside one-off performances from The Sixteen, Dance Passion Bradford and *Kiss Me Kate* at The Barbican. *Inside Classical* returns for another series.

## Comedy

BBC Comedy will continue to nurture and develop new voices and collaborate with the most established household names, showcasing a wide range of homegrown shows for all audiences.

New comedies include Alan Partridge embarking on a journey of self-discovery in *How Are You? It's Alan (Partridge)*, Welsh murder mystery comedy-drama *Death Valley*, starring Timothy Spall and written by Paul Doolan, and *Can You Keep A Secret?*, written by Simon Mayhew-Archer and starring Dawn French as a widow who will stop at nothing to protect her family.

Sitcoms *Here We Go*, written by and starring Tom Basden, and Lee Mack's multi award-winning *Not Going Out* return for new series. Cardiff-based *Mammoth*, created by and starring Mike Bubbins as a PE teacher from the 70s getting a second chance at life, will also be back, along with *Things You Should Have Done* from Lucia Keskin.

Further returning series include *Mandy*, written by and starring Diane Morgan, *The Power of Parker*, written by Paul Coleman and Sian Gibson and set in early 90s Stockport, the action-comedy *Black Ops*, created by Gbemisola Ikumelo, Akemnji Ndifornyen, Joe Tucker and Lloyd Woolf and starring Gbemisola Ikumelo and Hammed Animashaun, and

*Daddy Issues*, written by Danielle Ward and starring Aimee Lou Wood and David Morrissey.

Following their BAFTA wins, there are second series of *Such Brave Girls* from Kat Sadler, *Juice* from Mawaan Rizwan, and Glasgow comedy *Dinosaur*, starring Ashley Storrie who also co-created the series with Matilda Curtis.

## Entertainment

The BBC is the UK's destination for entertainment that brings people together, from sequins and glitterballs on *Strictly Come Dancing* and *RuPaul's Drag Race UK*, to backstabbing reality with *The Traitors* and *The Apprentice*.

Bringing the nation together on a Saturday night is at the heart of our offer, with hit shows *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Gladiators* and *Michael McIntyre's Big Show* continuing to entertain millions. The ultimate reality game of trust and treachery returns with the first ever *Celebrity Traitors* edition this autumn alongside a new series in early 2026. New launches include *Stranded on Honeymoon Island*, *Alison Hammond's Big Weekend* and *Tommy: The Good, The Bad, The Fury* following *Tommy Fury* for BBC Three while *The Apprentice* will be celebrating 20 years.

Amanda Holden hosts her first quiz show *The Inner Circle*, and there will be new series of *Alan Carr's Picture Slam*, *The Hit List*, *The Weakest Link* and *Blankety Blank*.

The United Kingdom will take part in the 69th *Eurovision Song Contest* in Basel, Switzerland in May with the Semi Finals and Grand Final all broadcast live, and the absolutely drag-ulous *RuPaul's Drag Race UK* is back. Much-loved *Children in Need* and *Comic Relief: Red Nose Day* will come live from Salford. *MasterChef* makes the move to its new home in Birmingham.

*Mastermind*, *Dragons' Den*, *QI*, *The Graham Norton Show*, *Live at the Apollo*, *Have I Got News for You*, *Would I Lie To You*, *Only Connect* and *University Challenge* will all return.

## Sport

The BBC will bring both live event coverage and tell the stories of sport. We head into April with an epic title battle in Sheffield at the World Snooker Championship, and the 45th London Marathon.

We look forward to another summer of sport launching in June with the Wimbledon Championships and audio coverage of England's home test matches. Women's sport takes centre stage from July, with the BBC offering live cross-platform coverage of both the Women's Euros and the Women's Rugby World Cup.

The Women's Euros, hosted in Switzerland, will see the Lionesses aiming to repeat their 2022 success, with Wales also vying for the title of European champions in their first ever major tournament. Alongside the action from the tournament, fans can get closer to the stars of women's football with an exclusive documentary about a legendary Lioness on iPlayer and series 2 of *The Tooney and Russo Show* on BBC Sounds.

In August, the BBC has exclusive UK broadcast rights for the Women's Rugby World Cup in England, with matches available live across TV and BBC iPlayer as well as the BBC Sport website and app. The sporting summer continues with Great Britain & Northern Ireland battling it out on the track at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo.

The domestic football season will herald a new era for the BBC's offer for fans with new content strands, in-depth storytelling, match highlights on iPlayer from 8pm and a brand new presenting line-up for *Match of the Day* & the Champions League. BBC Sounds will also have live commentary of more Premier League games than ever before.

The BBC will provide exclusive live television coverage of Scotland and Northern Ireland men's football internationals, including all their FIFA Men's World Cup 2026 qualifiers, as well as non-exclusive coverage for the Wales team. The BBC will also continue to cover the Six Nations Championship 2026 as part of a four-year deal signed together with ITV.

*Sports Personality of the Year* is the culmination of the biggest sporting achievements from the previous 12 months, where the public vote decides who will succeed the fourth female winner in a row, Keely Hodgkinson. Early in 2026, the 25th Winter Olympic Games will take place in Italy. The Games will feature more than 100 winter sports events, with Team GB hoping to better its medal tally from last time. Once again, the BBC will provide live free-to-air coverage across TV, radio and online.

### Music audio

Our music offer is critical to helping us reach and engage large and diverse audiences at scale through distinctive and high-quality content. Our programming will continue to offer listeners an impressive breadth and depth of programming, tracks, and live performances, but it will also evolve in response to significant changes in audience behaviour. A core part of this strategy is to launch four new DAB+ music stations to help us better serve all UK audiences in a rapidly changing market; this includes propositions specifically appealing to underserved younger audiences and lower sociodemographic groups. We are currently awaiting a decision from Ofcom on our revised proposals and the Public Interest Test process – announced in 2024 – to launch extensions of Radio 1 (Radio 1 Dance and Radio 1 Anthems), Radio 2 (name tbc), and Radio 3 (Radio 3 Unwind) on DAB+. Usage data from the online stream of Radio 1 Dance, and consumer research into Radio 1 Anthems has shown early success of these extensions with 16-34s and C2DE demographic groups.

We will continue to bring audiences together through live performances and concerts right across our stations and the UK. Radio 1 will host Big Weekend in Liverpool in May, as well as Dance Weekend in Ibiza and Malta, both of which will curate and showcase some of the most exciting talent in the country. Asian Network's exciting events include the Asian Network DJ Takeover, the Melas and Asian Festivals, Asian Network Certified and the Asian Network All Star DJ Takeover. Radio 2's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Folk will return in the Summer, followed by Radio 2 in the Park in September and the much-loved Piano Room month in February. Radio 3 will once again broadcast every note of the world's greatest classical music festival, the BBC Proms, from July to September. The BBC

ensembles will also perform live concerts for broadcast on Radio 3 from venues across the UK. Finally, BBC 6 Music will host BBC 6 Music Festival in Greater Manchester in March 2026 as well as being the radio home of Glastonbury in the summer.

We will increase the presence of BBC Radio outside London as part of the BBC's Across the UK plan. Asian Network will launch its new schedule and programming as a station based solely in Birmingham, including a new Specialist Music Show fronted by Bobby Friction. Radio 3 will roll out a number of changes, including Tom McKinney's new breakfast programme from April 2025 – presented from Salford – and Petroc Trelawny joins Katie Derham as a presenter on *In Tune*. On Sunday evenings, the station will broadcast a new landmark 40-part series diving deep into significant works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the composers behind them. In August, *Breakfast* takes to the road again for a special week of broadcasts from the West of England. This follows previous road trips across the North East, lough-to-lough across Northern Ireland and coast-to-coast through the Scottish Highlands.

The BBC's role in supporting artists and the music industry is unrivalled, as is our role in championing the most exciting and emerging talent. Radio 1 will continue with Sound of 2026 and Dance Awards 2026 as well as Annie Nightingale's Pioneers awards. BBC Music Introducing has announced a partnership with North East venues and festivals to boost artists from the region, including The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, The Fire Station, Tees Music Alliance, Middlesbrough Town Hall and Generator. Opportunities for young artists will also appear on BBC Music Introducing stages right across the UK, at festivals like Radio 1's Big Weekend, Glastonbury and Reading & Leeds.

In addition, our music offer will also deliver a number of partnerships and events to showcase and to bring together the diverse backgrounds of our listening communities. Radio 2 and 1Xtra will once again work in partnership with Children in Need: Radio 2 on the Children in Need challenge in November, and Radio 1Xtra via the We Move Fund, providing funding for young Black people and Black-led organisations across the country. The station will also mark Black History Month with special programming to celebrate the past, the present, and the future of Black communities in the UK, as well as coverage of Notting Hill Carnival. BBC 6 Music will celebrate LGBTQ+ voices throughout June with a Loud and Proud season of special shows, guest presenters and mixes.

Radio 2 will celebrate all things garden and dogs with the RHS/Radio 2 Dog Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show in May 2025 as well as marking the extraordinary career of Elaine Paige with *Elaine Paige: 60 Years In Showbusiness* at the London Palladium.

### Speech audio

Across 25/26, we will strengthen our on-demand and linear content offer across Radio 4, Radio 5 Live, and on BBC Sounds.

Highlights from BBC Radio 4's slate include special programming to mark the 75th anniversary of *The Archers*, a new series of *The History Podcast* presented by David Dimbleby, *Rory Stewart: The Long History of Heroism*, and *The Second Map* – a series about WWII in the East presented by Kavita Puri, following her award-winning podcast,

*Three Million*. Additionally, we will launch a brand new always-on health podcast with the van Tulleken brothers, and *The Smuggler* – an unflinching account of the business of cross-Channel people smuggling, told through the experiences of one former British Army veteran turned people smuggler. *Postwar* is a 20-part series on the 1945 British election presented by David Runciman, who will examine the postwar consensus that emerged from the rubble of WW2, and where it stands today.

Radio 4 will be running a new series of 20 mini-essays, *Extinction*, by the acclaimed writer Katherine Rundell, each highlighting a different endangered species from the perspectives of natural history, folklore and cultural significance. This joins the regular coverage of climate issues on *Rare Earth*, *Inside Science* and *Farming Today*. For arts, there will be an exploration of Virginia Woolf and the political and cultural impact of the counterculture movement. As part of Radio 4's unrivalled audio drama offer, there will be a new *Limelight* drama starring Jack Lowden, *The Fever* with Cate Blanchett, *King Lear* with Richard Wilson, and series 2 of *Central Intelligence* with Kim Cattrall, Ed Harris and Johnny Flynn. This December, BBC Radio 4 will mark the life and work of Jane Austen with a season of dramas, factual series and special programming to mark her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. Dramas will include *Northanger Abbey*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. In comedy, we will be continuing and consolidating our commissioning as we fundamentally refresh the comedy offer. *Call Jonathan Pie* will return for a second highly anticipated series, along with *The Naked Week*, part of *Friday Night Comedy*, and *Unspeakable*, the panel show hosted by Phil Wang and lexicographer Susie Dent.

BBC Radio 5 Live will continue to be the audio home of live news and sport, with a range of sports, current affairs, and entertainment programmes and podcasts, including the daily Nicky Campbell phone-in giving audiences a platform to share their views, Matt Chorley's new daily politics show shining a light on the workings of Westminster in an entertaining and accessible way, and Naga Munchetty with regular in-depth features such as women's health and science. New podcast commissions include *Sporting Giants*, *History's Toughest Heroes*, and *Dead Funny History*.

Our speech offer will continue to build around the core strength of our live news and sport coverage, and we will invest to make this as compelling for audiences as possible. This includes improving the discovery of our live news, sports and events online, enhancing the smart speaker live listening experience, and focusing on our unique proposition of live channels / streams.

5 Live, as a result of recent rights negotiations, will also broadcast more Premier League football matches than ever before, offering listeners vibrant and exciting commentaries throughout the season. Alongside this enhanced football offer, the station will cover more than 20 different sports across 5 Live and 5 Sports Extra including the Women's Rugby World Cup and Euro 2025. In parallel, we are also awaiting Ofcom's decision on our 2024 proposal to expand the remit of 5 Sports Extra from a part-time live-only station which would allow us to showcase a wider range of existing sports podcasts from around the country to our listeners. This also aims to help underserved audiences get more value from us, specifically C2DE sociodemographic groups and audiences from all nations of the UK, both of which have shown particular interest in the planned extension. We expect Ofcom to make their decision in spring or summer 2025.

BBC Sounds will continue to build and curate an engaging online experience to help us cater for listening occasions that are increasingly on-demand and/or via IP. This will include exploring the use of new daily content formats to increase daily habit, different types of curation including 'playlist streams' for speech, and the roll out of successful trials of podcast transcriptions. Sounds will also seek to build on successful cross-platform audio-visual collaborations with iPlayer, specifically *Traitors Uncloaked* which airs on BBC Two and BBC iPlayer as well as on BBC Sounds. In addition, Sounds will become more personalised so that every listener feels like the product represents their tastes and experiences. This will include better search functionality, enhanced recommendations and improved notifications.

As part of the BBC's Across the UK commitment, much of our speech offer already exists outside of London. As 'the Voice of the UK,' 5 Live has been representing audiences and supporting talent from across the country for years. Its base is in Salford and the station consistently broadcasts from locations across the UK, covering a specific topic, news stories, or sporting events. This year 5 Live will shift the production of its weekend overnights programmes (3 nights a week) from London to Glasgow. Radio 4 will continue to take weekly programmes around the UK including *Any Questions*, *Gardeners' Question Time*, *The Kitchen Cabinet* and comedy shows like *Mark Steel's In Town* and *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*. Radio 4 is working in partnership with the Hay and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals as well as taking a variety of performance shows such as *Loose Ends* and *Adverb* to smaller festivals and events including the Kendal Mountain Festival in Cumbria, Heligan in Cornwall, and St Patrick's Day in Belfast.

Similarly, and as in music, our speech offer will continue its commitment to developing new talent. BBC Sounds Audio Lab will expand to include Audio Lab Shorts, providing more talent opportunities as well as more opportunities to surface programming to UK audiences via increased licensing of UK podcasts to the BBC Sounds platform.

Having explored the options for commercialisation in the UK, we have ruled out placing adverts around BBC licence fee-funded programmes listened to on third party podcast platforms. We continue to work with Audio UK and our partners to support the audio production sector and wider market.

## **Supporting learning for people of all ages**

### *Strategic and Creative Plans 2025/26*

BBC Children's and Education is a cornerstone of children's media that gives kids an understanding of their nation and the world beyond. Our significant annual investment underpins the UK children's sector, especially in the face of retreat by other providers. It not only delivers high-quality and culturally relevant entertainment, but it also educates the UK's young people.

Four key brands are at the heart of what we will deliver to audiences this year – Bitesize, Newsround, iPlayer, and CBeebies.

BBC Bitesize is the centrepiece of our Formal Learning offer, and our extra investment project will deliver an adaptive learning pilot later in 2025. As part of the strategy to

meet our audience wherever they are, *Planet Planners* is BBC Bitesize's first educational experience on the Roblox platform, developed with the support of the Roblox Community Fund. The heart of the game is a decision-making exercise, where players learn about human and physical geography across topics like 'Tectonic Hazards' and 'Population Migration', balancing the needs of the population, economy and environment.

This year we will start making our Newsround bulletin available on YouTube, providing a trusted source on the platform for kids to receive unbiased information. Recognising the importance of this platform for young people, we are developing how we bring Bitesize content to YouTube.

The Children's section below highlights the key TV programmes we will be launching on BBC iPlayer, to build on our streaming success which saw hours viewed of children's content increase by c40% in the last two years<sup>86</sup>. CBeebies will go further, providing live events which allow preschoolers and their families to see our content brought to life, such the *CBeebies Christmas Pantomime* and associated *CBeebies Prom* at the Royal Albert Hall, plus the CBeebies Prom tour across the UK. *CBeebies Bedtime Stories* will travel across the UK with live events including a visit to Bradford as part of the City of Culture celebrations. CBeebies will also strengthen its support for parents, growing our offering and making it easier for them to discover content both for themselves and their young children.

### Formal Learning

In addition to the adaptive learning pilot, BBC Bitesize will continue enhancements and developments, focusing on GCSE subjects and the new video player which delivers continuous curriculum-linked video content with the functionality users expect from platforms. This year will see work taking place to upgrade the BBC Bitesize app for better links between mobile and desktop, reflecting young people's online habits.

Following audience research, we will be moving our BBC Teach content under the Bitesize brand, making it easier for teachers to navigate to all our content under one banner.

With the rise of fake news, disinformation, and AI-created material, our media literacy offer *Other Side of the Story*, on both BBC and social platforms like TikTok, is more essential than ever. We will be expanding the reach and depth of learning opportunities through an innovative 'Solve the Story' project in which schools can participate.

Moving to a secondary school can contribute to a decline in young people's mental health between age 11-14<sup>87</sup>. Bitesize is using its relevance to this age group to support young people's wellbeing with a campaign to help pupils thrive and make a successful transition to secondary school, an initiative in collaboration with BBC One's *Waterloo*

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<sup>86</sup> BARB As Viewed, all devices, individuals 4+, 2024 vs 2022

<sup>87</sup> MCR/Camb Uni 22 study: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/wellbeing-falls-sharply-after-starting-secondary-school>

*Road*. For older teens the *Bitesize Careers Tour* will continue visiting schools all over the UK, helping to bring opportunities to life at a critical moment for young people.

We are bringing education and entertainment closer together than ever before and Bitesize has worked directly with the *Horrible Histories* team to produce new CBBC series *Horrible Science*, making five episodes that are linked directly to the KS2 science curriculum including 'Earth and Space' and 'Materials and States'. These episodes will be accompanied by a curriculum quiz on BBC Bitesize to do in the classroom or as homework once the episode has been watched.

### Children's

*Horrible Science* is a perfect illustration of how we commission content which embodies the BBC's mission to inform, educate, and entertain. We also champion homegrown storytelling to provide programming that helps the nation's children understand the world around them.

This is at the heart of the animated '*Blocks*' universe on CBeebies. Recently launched *Wonderblocks* teaches children problem-solving, sequencing and logic, to grasp pre-coding concepts. This series will be complemented by more episodes of *Numberblocks* and *Alphablocks*, enhancing children's enjoyment of numeracy and literacy.

25/26 will be a stellar year for UK-created animation, a medium that is universally loved by children. On CBeebies for 0-6s there are new series including *Rafi The Wishing Wizard*, *Piripenguins* and *Hey Duggee's Squirrel Club*, from the makers of *Hey Duggee*. CBBC's 7-12 audience will welcome the return of *Shaun the Sheep* along with brand new series *Duck & Frog*. *Rafi* and *Duck & Frog* will be the first commissions from our Ignite animation initiative to be seen by our audience.

Our commitment to live action is undiminished, particularly in drama where we continue to be the only UK provider of scale in this genre. A raft of new CBBC titles includes Elizabethan-set *The Lady Grace Mysteries* in which teenage Grace Cavendish is the world's first female detective; and in *Gifted* teens grapple with their unique superpowers.

The younger audience is well served with new scripted titles too. CBeebies will launch new comedy *Football Fantastics*, provide more laughs with favourite wonder dog in *Waffle's After School Club*, and make the most ambitious and exciting yet of Andy Day's natural history *Adventures*, this time on *Dino Island*.

New CBeebies factual and entertainment titles include *I Spy, You Spy* which lets viewers stop, look and listen to enjoy the world around them; *Playtime Towers* which is a magazine show to inspire imagination, set in a fantastical tower block; while *Monster Makes* provides the large, furry creature take on invention, recycling, and creativity.

There is a mix of returners like *Deadly 60*, *Operation Ouch!*, *Game On Grandparents*, and *Saturday Mash Up*, along with a new club in *Football Academy* (this time featuring Tottenham Hotspur). *Go Get Arty!* is a contemporary family-set twist on our tradition of great art shows, and *Stage Stars* documents the lives of young hopefuls at the Tring Park School for the Performing Arts.



### 3.3 Bring people together by connecting everyone to unmissable content

#### **Reflecting, representing and serving the diverse communities of the UK**

##### *Strategic and Creative Plans 2025/26*

The BBC's role at the heart of the UK's nations, regions and communities is more important than ever. Our network of services plays a vital role in bringing people together, celebrating and developing homegrown talent and creativity, and bringing a forensic eye to the issues that impact most on the daily lives of millions of people. In 2024, more than 28 million adults used our local and Nations services on average per week, the UK's most popular local network<sup>88</sup>.

The BBC's goal is to deliver a network of services locally – and in the devolved Nations – that reaches at least half the adult population of the UK on average per week. This commitment is underpinned by:

- 17 BBC regional/Nations TV news programmes – the most watched television news service in the UK
- 45 radio stations and BBC Sounds services serving communities across the UK – reaching 7 million listeners each week
- 43 online news services across England – alongside our national online services in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- 14 investigative teams across the UK – focused on specialist, high-impact journalism
- A portfolio of high-impact sport, drama, factual and comedy content for BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds commissioned from across the devolved nations.

Over the next year, we will seize the opportunities of these editorial commitments to:

- Increase the impact of our local and Nations investigations team online by lifting the lid on the issues and challenges facing communities today
- Ensure locally relevant stories and content are at the heart of the online user experience across BBC News, BBC Sport, BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds
- Support the very best creative storytelling from across the UK by building on the success of our increased focus on major high-impact content from across the Nations
- Strengthen local communities by extending our Make a Difference community awards across Britain and providing a focus for local conversation and debate across our BBC Local Radio network
- Expand our online analysis of the major issues impacting local communities by harnessing our specialist correspondents and data teams.

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<sup>88</sup> BARB/RAJAR/Piano Analytics/Compass by Ipsos UK, 2024, adults 16+

As part of our commitment to partnership across the UK, we will extend the Local Democracy Reporter Scheme through until the end of the current Charter in December 2027, awarding new contracts to commercial media providers across the whole country to support the 165 reporters working on local authority coverage.

### England – BBC Local

Our eleven new BBC Local investigative teams will continue to deliver in-depth investigative reporting and documentaries. We will place a particular focus on stories we know matter most to audiences, including housing and immigration.

Our network of regional TV news programmes will continue to engage local audiences, taking full advantage of our versatile new production sets and technology to tell stories clearly and impartially.

BBC Local Radio remains a cornerstone of our provision. Our focus is ensuring our programming reflects the pride and passions of our communities, and we will continue building on the success of our Make a Difference and Children in Need campaigns. We continue to review audience feedback to the changes introduced at the end of 2023. Audience reach appears broadly stable 12 months after the introduction of the changes, but we continue to make adjustments in response to listening patterns. In the first quarter of 2025 we have introduced three new Saturday morning breakfast programmes.

We will continue to engage with Ofcom to ensure the local regulatory framework continues to meet audience needs, particularly in the evenings. We will also review the weekend programming offer to ensure we deliver the best possible local service in the morning when listening is highest. In parallel, we will maintain our commitment that all weekday programming from 6am-2pm will remain locally produced across all 39 bases.

In 2025 we will develop and implement a new sports strategy for BBC Local ensuring that the best of our sports journalism, match analysis and conversation is available to fans on air and online.

BBC Local will continue to commission homegrown stories from across the country. *Love Bombed* with Vicky Pattison returns to BBC Sounds along with a new series *The DNA Trail: The Promise*.

In Yorkshire, our local teams on BBC Look North and Radio Leeds are central to the delivery of the BBC's coverage of Bradford City of Culture 2025. Highlights include Bantam of the Opera where Bradford City AFC fans will join a choir launched by Chris Kamara for BBC Sounds, as well as the radio play, *Bilal and Ted's Bradfordian Adventure*.

In Liverpool, BBC Radio Merseyside partners with Radio 1 as their Big Weekend comes to the city in May.

## BBC Scotland

News and current affairs remains a central part of our offer, continuing to develop our recently launched *Scotcast* and *Reporting Scotland News at Seven*. We will examine the balance between News, Current Affairs, and Sport on a Saturday morning on Radio Scotland, and consider possible changes in line with audience demand. We will cease broadcasting *Scottish Questions* on BBC One in the spring, with the content available on BBC Parliament. BBC Naidheachdan will aim to grow impact online and on digital and social platforms with more regular live pages. The current affairs brand *Eòrpa* will develop its brand with a regular podcast and radio broadcasts in addition to its TV outings.

We will deliver factual programming reflecting the geography and breadth of Scottish life including *Scotland's Greatest Escapes*, *Paramedics on Scene*, *Highland Cops*, and *This Farming Life*, and BBC Two series *Surgeons* will return. Audiences will see premium factual BBC Network co-commissions *The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone*, and *The Catfish Next Door*.

*Shetland* will return for its tenth season, alongside new dramas *The Bombing of Pan Am 103* and *Half Man*, and the return of hit comedy *Dinosaur*. We will also release the new co-funded dark thriller *The Ridge* with Sky New Zealand.

We will launch new sketch special *Good for Her* from Zara Gladman and commission up to ten pieces for *Short Stuff*. *The Entertainment Mix* with Michelle McManus will take us into the world of events, arts and Scottish culture, on radio and on TV.

BBC ALBA plans to develop feature film ideas in collaboration with BBC Film, and working with BBC Scotland, will commission short form, digital-first drama with a focus on the Highlands and Islands.

BBC ALBA will also continue to develop its overall portfolio of digital and short-form content such as the factual entertainment DIY challenge show *Dùbhlain DIY* (Demus / Seaglass) which returns for a second series as does *Glan Fhèin* (The Comedy Unit), the mockumentary shadowing a company that services short term lets. Following the success of her delicious festive themed treats, a new short form series *Brunch le Abigail* (Moja) features Abigail MacIver taking the audience through her favourite brunch recipes and in *Patagonia* (Caledonia TV) Keith MacDonald, a motorbike-loving crofter from North Uist takes a South American road trip back to the continent he fell in love with.

In audio, we will continue to grow our podcast slate with the return of *The Cruelty*, the continuation of *Sacked in the Morning* and the launch of new podcasts *Lockerbie* and *The Ballad of Big Mags*. BBC Radio Nan Gàidheal will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners in Gaelic, including covering events of significant cultural importance, such as the Royal National Mòd, the Orkney 2025 International Island Games, and festivals such as HebCelt, Ceòlas, and Celtic Connections. 2025 will also see a year-long celebration of new Gaelic song.

We will continue our investment in sport. There will be live action from the Women's Six Nations Championship, Scottish Women's International football, Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) with coverage on BBC Scotland, and BBC ALBA. The BBC will televise live Scotland men's football internationals, including all their FIFA 2026 World

Cup qualifiers. There will be Scottish Cup action for the men's and women's game plus the Youth Cup Final, alongside Radio Scotland's mix of football commentary and analysis. Digital coverage of other sports including curling will continue. Our Gaelic services will also provide regular coverage of women's and men's domestic and international football, rugby and shinty.

### BBC Wales

2025 will be a big year for sport on BBC Wales. From March, BBC Wales will provide TV, radio, and online coverage of the Men's World Cup qualifying matches ahead of a very important summer for Welsh women's sport. July will see Rhian Wilkinson's Wales team feature in their first major tournament after qualifying for UEFA's Euro 2025 tournament in Switzerland. As well as the all-important matches, the BBC will bring the build-up and flavour of the tournament ensuring the whole of Wales can get behind the team. In August, we will follow Wales at the Rugby World Cup in what promises to be a landmark tournament for the women's game.

Comedy will also be at the forefront of BBC Cymru Wales's content this year, with new series *Death Valley* featuring Timothy Spall and Gwyneth Keyworth, and the return of *Mammoth*, following 1970s teacher Tony as he navigates the 21st century.

The impact of our scripted content will also be felt in a new drama series, *The Guest*, and with BBC Wales's first ever feature film, *Mr Burton*, which will appear in cinemas from spring 2025. *Mr Burton* will coincide with the centenary of the birth of Richard Burton and we will be marking this across our services, and in events across Wales, to celebrate the life and career of one of Wales's most famous actors.

To coincide with the bicentenary of Cyfarthfa Castle, BBC Wales has commissioned a season to look in depth at the extraordinary history of Merthyr and Wales's contribution to the industrial revolution. With programmes across BBC Radio Wales, Radio Cymru, online and BBC One and Two Wales, the season will also feature a concert with the BBC National Chorus of Wales in Merthyr Tydfil.

November sees the 90th anniversary of broadcasting from Bangor; BBC Radio Cymru will celebrate with a season of programmes marking the work of the BBC in north Wales.

In News, politics will play a major part once again in 2025 as the parties position themselves ahead of next year's Senedd election. Throughout the year we will be reporting, challenging and holding politicians to account on the issues we know our audiences care about, as well as explaining the big changes ahead – more politicians in the Senedd, a different voting system and potentially the biggest political shake-up since the start of devolution.

The BBC National Orchestra of Wales will be on the road again this year, performing across Wales including Swansea, Newport, St Davids, Bangor and St Asaph.

We will modernise our partnership with the Welsh language broadcaster S4C, with an increased focus on extending the channel's presence on BBC iPlayer.

## BBC Northern Ireland

We will make some ambitious schedule changes (with effect from early May) on BBC Radio Ulster, seeking to build on its established strengths and to create opportunities for talent development and editorial renewal.

New programme formats and slots will allow us to respond to changing audience needs and make the best use of available resources. *Evening Extra's* shorter duration will facilitate additional music and entertainment programming each weekday afternoon, helping to diversify this part of our schedule. We will also introduce a 'news hour' on BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle each Sunday morning.

We will protect the distinctiveness of this service, including its specialist music and other content, and work to ensure our linear service complements, and benefits from, programming for BBC Sounds, drawing on the success of strands such as *Assume Nothing*.

We will consolidate some of the changes that we have made in BBC newsgathering and output in Northern Ireland, seeking to develop its digital presence and region-wide capabilities. Our journalism will reflect and respond to issues affecting local audiences. It will include broadly-based coverage of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and some of the challenges facing different sectors. Local news output will also benefit from the role played by our Foyle bureau.

We will play host to the BBC's Comedy Festival and seek to develop new scripted comedy commissions, complementing existing comedy strands such as *The Blame Game* and innovative work in this area on BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle. We will deliver other distinctive content including the return of *House of the Year*, *Farm 999* and a new network co-commission about the Titanic.

BBC Sport NI will feature a mix of sporting fixtures and tournaments, including the men's football internationals, the Belfast Marathon and NW200. And we will make use of digital technologies and platforms to serve audiences better. Filming is already underway on a new series of *Blue Lights*, reflecting its critical and popular success, and our Blackstaff Studio will be the recording location for *Mastermind* and *The Finish Line*.

We will mark the 10th anniversary of Book Week in partnership with Libraries NI and develop our joint work with the Ulster Orchestra.

BBC programming in Irish and Ulster-Scots will remain a key part of our portfolio and we will continue efforts to develop its appeal, working closely with Northern Ireland's Screen's Broadcast Funds.

### 3.4 The BBC's business and organisational focus

In the UK, our focus is on providing value for all audiences. Outside the UK, our priority is growing reach of the BBC brand and offer, led by news. This will be underpinned by commercial growth within and outside the UK. In order to deliver these business outcomes, we will need to continue our transformation towards an organisation which is agile and future-ready, with enterprise leaders and a great culture.

#### **Grow Commercial**

The BBC's commercial subsidiaries, BBC Studios and BBC Studioworks, have sought to diversify revenue streams, enhance profitability and invest in sustainable future growth. Operating as BBC Commercial, they delivered £1.9 billion in sales and £199 million EBITDA last year despite challenging market conditions.

BBC Studios took full ownership of profitable and fast-growing BritBox International (25% year-on-year growth) and expanded international production with acquisitions in Scandinavia, Spain and Australia. It enhanced digital platforms BBC.com and UKTV Play (now U), increasing BBC.com traffic by 7% with registrations up 70% year-on-year, while U doubled views in two years. BBC Studios also leads in international ad-funded (FAST) channels, now offering 29 including a dedicated FAST BBC News Channel.

BBC Studios showcased world-class creativity with record content investment, winning 123 awards. Moving Audio to BBC Studios in early 2024 saw the podcast *To Catch A Scorpion* win awards, including a Prix Italia. BBC Studios franchises, like the phenomenon *Bluey*, continued to soar. The animation became the most-watched US show across all genres, winning major awards, including a BAFTA and an Emmy.

Looking ahead, the challenging market conditions of the previous twelve months are set to remain as advertising spend continues to migrate to digital platforms. However, BBC Commercial's diversified business model, with operations around the world, ensures resilience, and there is still strong demand for content with the BBC's qualities and values. The much-anticipated *Walking with Dinosaurs*, Timothy Spall-fronted *Death Valley*; and *Outrageous*, which tells the story of the Mitford sisters, are amongst the many titles viewers across the globe can look forward to over the next year. Meanwhile the upcoming *Bluey* film, in partnership with Disney+, is set to arrive in cinemas in 2027.

BBC Studios believes it has a significant role to play in boosting the UK creative industries and taking the UK's soft power to the world. BBC Studios Chief Executive's membership of the Government's Soft Power Council will help deliver on this ambition. In February, BBC.com and the BBC app launched a new listening experience for BBC podcast fans outside the UK. Tailored to international audiences, the service makes a selection of the BBC's vast portfolio of current and archived podcasts easier to find.

In the year ahead, BBC Commercial will continue to invest in infrastructure, services and content. It will take further steps to build key strategic partnerships with the industry's leading players and move into new growth areas with significant long-term opportunities.

Building on its successes to date, BBC Commercial will continue to push creative boundaries in IP development and production, maximising returns in the process as it seeks to meet its five-year returns commitment of £1.5 billion by 2026/27 (a 30% increase on the previous five-year period).

## **Organisational Focus**

We are focussed on building an organisation where everyone is working toward delivering the best outcomes for the BBC and its audiences. We will achieve this by focusing on three areas: fostering enterprise leadership, building a great culture, and building an organisation that is agile and fit for the future.

### *Enterprise leadership*

Enterprise leadership is about developing world-class leaders who are constantly prioritising what is best for the whole BBC while leading highly productive and values-driven teams. We are on a mission to create an organisation where world-class leaders are building a world-class BBC.

In order to realise this mission, we have developed a suite of leadership development programmes, under the brand banner of Enterprise Leadership. This training will ensure that leaders are not only living the BBC's Values, adhering to the BBC Code of Conduct, and delivering the very best for all audiences, but also that leaders are encouraging others across the whole enterprise to do so as well.

The Enterprise Leadership portfolio comprises four key programmes pitched at key transitional leadership levels; a senior leader programme, two programmes aimed at mid-level people managers and a programme available to all staff. In 25/26, we are focused on the expansion and deployment of these programmes, ensuring that they are rolled out widely to strengthen our leadership development offer. These programmes also emphasise the central importance of being a role model, as well as honing core leadership and management skills.

The Enterprise Leadership portfolio sits alongside our core training and development offering that is available to all staff through the BBC Academy as well as a digital Team Leader Dashboard enabling leaders to make data-driven, insight-rich decisions.

### *A great culture*

A great culture is about building a values-led organisation where everyone can do their best work. Our aim, through a variety of initiatives, is to ensure that everyone feels respected, included, and has a sense of belonging.

We will maintain our focus on diversity, inclusion and belonging, ensuring that the BBC is a place for everyone to thrive. Having established a stronger link between reward and performance, we will continue to embed this philosophy, so that people managers and staff feel confident to set clear goals and have constructive coaching and performance

conversations. We will supplement this with a set of re-skilling and up-skilling offers through a variety of development programmes for all staff, including people leaders.

We will continue to support our nine staff networks and eleven community groups, working together to create an inclusive BBC.

We seek regular opportunities to review and strengthen our culture including promoting a speak-up culture, enhancing our wellbeing offer, and seeking staff feedback via our annual staff engagement survey. The Respect at Work review, that engaged with c.2500 BBC employees and freelancers, focussed on how we can ensure everyone working for, or with, the BBC understands and lives the BBC values and, where there are instances of unacceptable behaviour, colleagues are empowered to call this out and confident it will be dealt with appropriately. Recommendations from this report will feed into an employee relations transformation that will evolve how complaints are raised and resolved as well as forming part of a wider change programme to create a great BBC culture.

We remain committed to working with the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority to uphold and improve standards of behaviour across the sector.

### *Agile and fit for the future*

We will continue our ambitious programme of transformation to ensure the BBC, as an organisation, is in the best shape to meet the challenges of a fast-changing landscape. We enter 25/26 with a smaller, leaner workforce following an aggressive savings programme in 24/25, including a voluntary redundancy programme.

In line with this transformation, we are focusing on ensuring that everyone at the BBC has the skills to contribute to an agile, digitally enabled organisation. We will continue to have a number of development opportunities on offer for individuals to learn new skills, through programmes such as 80/20, Hot Shoes, and staff apprenticeships, where we are streamlining our offering to further focus on building AI and Data capabilities. These opportunities also sit alongside our core training and development offering that is available to all staff through The Academy to further incubate skills of the future.

We will continue to look to partners inside and outside our industry to help us provide the best value for audiences and make the most of rapidly advancing technologies. In 25/26 we will look for opportunities to strengthen our current capabilities and build new ones across technology, including AI, and other business functions.

### *Sustainability*

As a responsible business, the BBC is actively driving toward its near-term 2030/31 science-based decarbonisation targets, announced in October 2021 to meet the Paris 1.5 degree aligned ambition. This year our long-term 2050/51 targets were formally approved and published in August 2024 to support our commitment to becoming a true Net Zero organisation by 2050/51; this requires us to decarbonise by at least 90% across all of our greenhouse gas emissions (direct, indirect, and those in our value chain).



In January 2025 we published our Net Zero Transition Plan which explained our three pillars of Net Zero, Nature Positive and People Positive and our pathway to achieving true Net Zero by 2050/51. Our plan demonstrates the tangible actions and initiatives we are taking to achieve our objectives and targets, all underpinned by scientific rigour, to meet the highest standards of accountability and disclosure. To deliver this, we are working collaboratively with our industry peers, suppliers, academics and creative partners across the UK and beyond, to drive toward a sustainable industry both on- and off-screen. We have also launched a carbon accounting platform called EARTH across the BBC to enable divisional and commercial subsidiary decarbonisation to meet our targets. We are developing more details on our Nature and People Positive strategies, which include the impact of our programming through our Climate Content pledge, an initiative involving embedding relatable climate stories across all our non-News programming; these will be published later in 2025.

### *Across the UK*

The BBC's Across the UK programme continues to deliver significant change and impact across the organisation, as the BBC moves further creative spend, programming and journalism across the UK to better represent and reflect audiences.

The BBC has now completed the relocation of over 380 roles across News, Radio, TV commissioning and Technology and Product teams. It has also delivered more than £300 million investment to date across the UK as part of overall plans to deliver £700 million of additional spend by the end of the current Charter.

The BBC's planned relocation of teams will complete during the next financial year, including BBC Radio 3 programming to Salford and BBC Asian Network to Birmingham. Programmes like BBC Radio 4's *Take Four Books* will come from Glasgow and Edinburgh's Audio Hub, whilst portrayal series like returning hit *Blue Lights* from Northern Ireland, new comedy from Wales *Death Valley* and landmark documentary series and BBC Scotland co-commission *Piper Alpha* will land on our screens. In addition, the BBC expects to continue the expansion of its Technology and Product teams as part of the BBC's Tech Hub in Newcastle.

During the next financial year, the BBC will expand its work with regional partners to build creative clusters. The BBC is partnering with Screen Skills and Create Central to expand its skills and talent development focus in the West Midlands, while both *MasterChef* and *Silent Witness* have now relocated and started filming in Digbeth.

During the coming year, the BBC will look to expand its production partnerships in both the North East and West Midlands, subject to partner funding, with the BBC looking to deepen the demonstrable economic benefit delivered to date.

### *Deploying Artificial Intelligence*

The BBC is already forging ahead with developing AI models and tools that can help deliver more value to our audiences and help our teams work more effectively. For example, we are trialling using AI to help journalists create live text pages from football

broadcasts, which could enable us to cover many more games as live text pages; and using AI to create automatic subtitles for BBC Sounds.

We are also exploring how AI can augment our broadcast output, as when we used AI to help recreate the voice of Carol Jennings for the powerful documentary *The Jennings v Alzheimer's*. And we are looking at how AI can help create a more personal and assistant-like experience on BBC Bitesize.

At the same time we are developing the foundational capabilities that will mean the BBC can make the best use of AI over the longer term. We continue to develop our BBC Large Language Model that can power many current and future uses. Alongside technology, we are equipping staff with the skills and tools they need for the responsible use of AI. This includes *AI Essentials*, our mandatory AI training course, and a raft of wider tool-specific training. We are releasing tools into the business including Microsoft Copilot Chat, Github Copilot, and Adobe Firefly alongside policies and editorial guidelines for responsible use.

## 4. The BBC's financial context and 25/26 outline budget

### 4.1 Financial context

The BBC's 25/26 budget is built on the strategic ambitions set out last year, delivering and embedding the substantial savings plans that allow us to reinvest into activities to improve our value to licence fee payers.

Looking forward to next year, CPI growth in our licence fee is expected to be partly offset by a 1% decline in the number of licence fee payers. We expect that our Value for All strategy of an increasingly enhanced offering across our video content and our product capability, both delivered to date and planned in the near future, will slow further declines over the remainder of our current Charter. As set out last year, one-off costs were required to transform the organisation; some of these have been delayed and will be realised in 25/26 whilst we carefully plan for change.

Our Commercial arm is expected to deliver income growth in 25/26 despite challenges in the content market. Investments in infrastructure, services and content brands are expected to continue bearing fruit, with BritBox International in particular performing ahead of growth targets.

The future success of the BBC depends on the Public Service arm (PSB) and Commercial arm working closely, within the statutory obligations set by our Charter and Ofcom. Over the remainder of the current Charter, and into the next, the Group's capital flows will be under review to ensure that we are leveraging our investments into content and services to best support our Value for All strategy.

## 4.2 Summary Group Budget for 25/26

Set out below is the consolidated BBC Group income and expenditure for 25/26. The licence fee remains the single largest source of income for the BBC, and we focus the remainder of this section on the budget for the BBC Public Service.

Group I&E £m	Budget 2025/26
Income	6,072
Operating costs	(6,064)
<b>Group operating surplus</b>	<b>8</b>
Exceptional items including restructuring	(31)
Share of results of associates and JVs	25
Net interest	(60)
Taxation	25
<b>Group deficit</b>	<b>(33)</b>

Our previous 24/25 plan indicated that we would have a one-off deficit reflecting the cost of change and utilisation of our cash reserves. The above table shows us moving back to a group operating surplus, but due to some delayed transformation costs from 24/25 there is still a small deficit for the year in 25/26.

As in previous years, our cash forecast, incorporating the 25/26 deficit, does not anticipate the utilisation of available debt facilities within the Public Service. The Commercial Group will continue to utilise borrowing facilities to drive growth through commercial investment.

## Public Service financial plan

This section provides an overview of income and expenditure in the BBC Public Service.

PSB I&E £m	Budget 25/26
Licence fee income	3,899
Dividend income	197
Other income	395
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,491</b>
Content spend	(2,548)
Audience spend	(1,091)
Other operating costs	(749)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>103</b>
Profit from exceptional asset sales	24
Restructuring	(11)
Interest and tax	(25)
Share of results of associates and JVs	25
<b>I&amp;E surplus</b>	<b>116</b>

The 25/26 budget reflects the CPI-linked licence fee price increase to £174.50. Combined with our forecasts on household growth, TV penetration (the number of households that require a licence) and evasion, we project licence fee income for the year to be £3,899 million.

The BBC World Service continues to receive funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) to support expanded services. Other income also includes royalties and rights sales, the sale of surplus distribution capacity to other broadcasters and property rental income.

When presenting the standalone PSB operating surplus we include dividend income from our Commercial arm which is reinvested into improving our content offering for our audiences.

### *Public Service operating costs*

This section breaks down our spending in greater detail. To reflect the changing nature of audience consumption patterns we are moving away from the historical broadcast linear service spend reporting toward presenting our spend as Watch, Listen and Browse, with supporting spend to deliver content shown separately. We will continue to report television genre spend in our Annual Report & Accounts.

<b>Operating costs £m</b>	<b>Budget 25/26</b>
Watch	1,823
Listen	559
Browse	166
<b>Content spend</b>	<b>2,548</b>
Content delivery spend	634
BBC World Service operating licence	192
Audience support costs	265
<b>Audience spend</b>	<b>1,091</b>
Corporate overhead costs	223
BBC World Service Grant in Aid	139
Costs incurred to generate intra-group and third party income	209
Other (incl. Licence Fee collection costs and S4C)	178
<b>Other operating costs</b>	<b>749</b>

In 25/26 we are planning to spend £2,548 million on content for audiences to watch, listen to, and browse as shown in the table above. Audience spend of £1,091 million includes the direct and support costs incurred to make and deliver content to audiences, such as production technology and distribution channels. Audience spend also includes BBC-funded World Service activity.

Other operating costs totals £749 million and includes the corporate costs of running the BBC and fulfilling obligations, such as licence fee collection costs, the S4C partnership agreement and BBC World Service grant-funded activity.

## 5. Potential changes to the BBC's UK public and commercial services

As outlined in the previous chapters, we are proposing several changes to the BBC's public service activities. However, many of these changes are not 'material changes' as defined in the Charter and Agreement, but rather business-as-usual changes for editorial, creative or other reasons. Such changes are necessary to ensure that our activities evolve in line with audience expectations, market conditions and technology developments, but they do not materially alter the character or scale of the service.

Examples of this include TV and radio scheduling, and commissioning decisions; changing the budget of services; changing online functionality, discovery or navigation; and temporarily changing the hours or content mix of a service or creating a 'pop up' linked to an existing service to accommodate coverage of special events. For example, business-as-usual changes to both BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds will include us continuing to improve search, content discovery, and onward journeys to make it easier for audiences to discover the broad range of programmes now available.

Below we set out those changes that we consider will require either a formal materiality assessment, a Public Interest Test, a Commercial Test or Ofcom regulatory approval (either as part of a material change process or through amendment of the Operating Licence). We will engage with stakeholders – both from industry and audiences – to ensure that the BBC takes these views into account when developing and accessing our proposals. We will ensure that any proposals we do consider during the year that are not set out here are subject to the appropriate regulatory processes and scrutiny including the further publication of plans as necessary.

### *Licence conditions*

We have submitted a range of proposals to Ofcom to amend the BBC licence to reflect changing audience tastes and our budgetary position up to the end of the current Charter period. These will address audience challenges, as well as account for our savings and reinvestment plans. They are aimed at safeguarding delivery during the remainder of this Charter. These proposals include changes to both the BBC Asian Network and BBC Radio Foyle news and current affairs quotas.

### *Network television & BBC iPlayer*

As audience behaviour continues to shift toward streaming, BBC iPlayer development remains a key priority. We will continue to enhance the core experience of BBC iPlayer, with improvements in personalisation to meet audience expectations, and with more seamless journeys into BBC iPlayer from across the BBC's wider digital portfolio. We consider that these changes are likely to be either editorial or business-as-usual developments to our existing services, and as such will not require regulatory approval. However, we will keep this under review during the year, and if necessary, carry out a materiality assessment.

### *BBC Sounds*

We will continue to develop BBC Sounds. BBC Sounds will become more personalised so that every listener feels like the product represents their tastes and experiences. This will include better search functionality, enhanced recommendations, and improved notifications. In addition, we will explore the use of new daily formats to increase daily habit, different types of curation including for speech, and trials of podcast transcriptions. We consider that these changes are likely to be either editorial or business-as-usual developments to our existing services, and as such will not require regulatory approval. However, we will keep this under review during the year, and if necessary, carry out a materiality assessment.

### *Music*

In November 2024, we submitted a Public Interest Test to Ofcom for the launch of BBC Radio 1 Dance, BBC Radio 1 Anthems, BBC Radio 3 Unwind, and a BBC Radio 2 extension as full radio stations. Ofcom are currently assessing that proposed change; we anticipate the assessment to conclude in June.

### *Sport*

In November 2024, we submitted a Public Interest Test to Ofcom to extend the operating hours of BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra to a full-time station broadcasting the best of the BBC's sport content alongside its live sport offering between 09:00 and 19:00 every day. Ofcom are currently assessing that proposed change; we anticipate the assessment to conclude in June.

Alongside the proposed changes to Radio 5 Sports Extra, we are continuing to develop our sports offer within BBC Sounds. We will be curating live sports commentary that we already make available on the BBC Sport website and BBC Sport app into BBC Sounds via two dedicated streams. We have assessed this activity in line with our published guidance and consider it fits within the current permissions for BBC Sounds, aiding discovery of content already available on BBC audio services.

### *Children's & Education*

BBC Bitesize will continue to evolve to ensure that it offers formal learning opportunities for all teenagers and life-long learners. We are looking at how we may be able to editorially curate BBC archive material to offer supplementary content for some A-Level / Scottish Higher subjects. We are conducting initial research to understand the audience need and will be engaging with the education industry. We will keep these developments under review during the year, and if necessary, carry out a materiality assessment.

### *Non-service activities*

Non-service activities support the provision of the UK Public Services. The BBC will explore ways in which we can continue to support the PSB ecosystem through these activities.



We will do this through exploring developments on joint venture platforms (such as Freely) and other opportunities that may arise for PSB collaboration. These will aim to ensure PSBs can maintain and achieve scale in an increasingly competitive media market and enable the BBC to take advantage of new service opportunities as they arise. We will keep these developments under review during the year, and if necessary, carry out a materiality assessment.

# Annex 1: Measuring the performance of the BBC

The framework by which we measure the performance of the BBC will:

- Assess how well or not the BBC is delivering value to audiences; and
- Set targets to ensure universality and delivery of value to audiences overall; to prioritise online reach and engagement, central to the BBC's future universality; and to maintain focus on key audience challenges.

## **Assessment of audience performance during 2025/26**

As we have done since 2017/18, the BBC will continue to track and assess our performance with audiences in terms of the core elements that we know determine the value that the BBC delivers to people in the UK. They are:

- People's experienced value – their usage of the BBC's offer; and
- People's perceived value – their appraisals of the BBC's offer.

### *Delivery of the BBC mission and public purposes*

As in previous years, we will continue to track both the experienced and perceived value for the public purposes in turn, usage of the BBC overall and appraisal of the delivery of the mission. Table 1 sets out the range of measures that are tracked.

This data will continue to be reported in the BBC Annual Report and Accounts with an assessment of the BBC's delivery to the UK public. As part of this assessment, we will identify how the BBC delivers the mission and each of the purposes across different audience groups.

### *The performance of the BBC around the UK*

As Table 1 sets out, the BBC Annual Report contains metrics to gauge the extent of the BBC's delivery to audiences in different parts of the UK as part of measurement for Purpose 4. In addition – to reflect the BBC's commitments – we will continue to report the reach of BBC Nations and regions content in the different Nations of the UK. We will also report the estimated contribution to BBC reach of relevant Nations and regions content – introduced into the BBC Annual Report and Accounts in 2023/24.

### *The performance of BBC online products*

We will continue to track and report in the BBC Annual Report our online performance, to reflect our digital-first plans and our strategy to deliver increasing value to audiences through our online products.

- At a product level, we will continue to report the account reach of iPlayer and Sounds. We will also continue to report the cross-product account reach of BBC News Online and BBC Sport Online.<sup>89</sup> The performance of BBC Bitesize – both experienced and perceived value – will continue to be measured as part of Purpose 2
- At an overall level, we will continue to report: overall account reach; the overall people reach of BBC Online; the contribution of BBC online services to overall BBC reach; and perceptions of the extent to which BBC online services support the BBC’s delivery of the mission and the public purposes overall.

### *The contribution of iPlayer*

Following the iPlayer Public Interest Test and our subsequent reporting in each year since the 2019/20 BBC Annual Report, we will continue to track and report in the BBC Annual Report the contribution of iPlayer to BBC TV viewing and to the delivery of the BBC’s mission and public purposes, and we will also report under 35 account reach (see Table 1). This is in addition to the iPlayer metrics cited above.

### *Levels of audience satisfaction*

We will identify audience groups who are dissatisfied or less satisfied than comparators in terms of how they perceive the BBC so that we can reflect, represent and serve them and understand how they perceive the BBC to deliver the mission overall. The conclusions of this analysis will continue to be reported in the BBC Annual Report.

### *The performance of the BBC in the context of the UK media market*

In the BBC Annual Report, we will continue to examine how the BBC has performed in the context of the UK media market during the year, particularly given the extent of global providers in the UK media market and the need to ensure the special and continued presence of UK PSB in the lives of UK audiences.

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<sup>89</sup> Typically, we also report user perceptions of iPlayer, Sounds and BBC News Online. Survey changes are taking place from April 2025 but we will report any available figures in the 2025/26 BBC Annual Report and Accounts.

**Table 1: Range of measures to assess audience performance**

FOCUS	EXPERIENCED VALUE	PERCEIVED VALUE
Purpose 1: Impartial news & information	BBC News overall reach to adults BBC News online reach to adults	Impartiality, trust and accuracy scores Perception of the quality of BBC News by platform Perceptions of delivery of this purpose among UK adults
Purpose 2: Learning & Children's	Reach and usage of the BBC by under 16s Reach of BBC Children's/Education services by under 16s Reach of BBC Bitesize	Perception of the BBC among under 16s Impact perceptions of BBC Bitesize Perceptions of delivery of this purpose among UK adults and the impact of informal learning among adults
Purpose 3: Creativity, quality and distinctiveness	Reach and usage by adults of the BBC by platform BBC market position	Quality perceptions for television, radio/audio and online Distinctiveness and originality perceptions for television, radio/audio and online Perceptions of delivery of this purpose among UK adults
Purpose 4: Nations & Regions and diversity	Overall reach and online reach by different audience groups and in different parts of the UK Reach of BBC Nations and regions content in the different nations of the UK Estimated contribution to BBC reach of relevant Nations and regions content	BBC quality perceptions by different audience groups and in different parts of the UK Perceptions of portrayal by different audience groups and in different parts of the UK Perceptions of the BBC's overall mission delivery by different audience groups and in different parts of the UK Perceptions of delivery of this purpose among UK adults
Purpose 5: Reflect the UK to the world <sup>90</sup>	Global reach of the BBC, BBC News and the World Service Global reach of BBC News services per platform and region BBC World Service reach by service	Global perceptions of BBC News Perceptions of delivery of this purpose among UK adults

<sup>90</sup> Additional performance measures for this purpose are in the separate licence agreed between the BBC and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Online products performance	<p>Estimated contribution of BBC Online services to BBC reach</p> <p>BBC Online: reach for all accounts and people reach</p> <p>Sounds and iPlayer: reach for all accounts</p> <p>BBC News and Sport Online: reach for all accounts (cross-product)</p>	Perceptions of the extent to which BBC Online services support the BBC's delivery of the mission and public purposes overall among users
iPlayer contribution	<p>iPlayer: reach for under 35 accounts</p> <p>Estimated contribution to all BBC viewing that is delivered by iPlayer for all audiences and 16-34s</p> <p>Time per head</p>	Perceptions of the extent to which iPlayer contributes towards the BBC's delivery of the mission and the public purposes among 16+ users and 16-34 users
Pan-BBC performance	<p>Pan-BBC reach among under 16s</p> <p>Pan-BBC reach among adults overall: weekly and monthly</p> <p>Time per head</p> <p>BBC market position</p>	<p>Overall ratings of the BBC</p> <p>Perceptions of the citizen value of the BBC and the BBC's overall delivery of the mission</p>

## Audience targets for 2025/26

In September 2020, the BBC embarked on its Value for All strategy and set an audience performance framework for the following three financial years with 2023/24 as the third year. This audience framework was refreshed in 2024/25 to reflect the continued concentration on Value for All and to heighten the focus on online as the way to deliver this. This is reflected in the audience targets we set.

In addition, in March 2024 the BBC published *A BBC for the Future*. This sets out ambitions for the BBC to reach and engage with everyone in the UK, aiming for nine in ten adults using us monthly and eight in ten using us weekly and, as audiences continue to shift from broadcast to online, seven in ten using the BBC online on average per week in 2028. Our audience targets for 2025/26 have been extended to follow our progress on this journey up to the end of the Charter.

- To ensure universality and delivery of value to audiences overall, focusing on:
  - The universality of the BBC: the proportion of adults using the BBC overall on average per month and per week
  - A valued habit with the BBC: the metrics that analysis shows drive the value that audiences receive from the BBC – the regularity of interaction, the time spent and the number of BBC modes that people use (BBC TV/iPlayer, BBC Radio/Sounds, BBC Online) on average per week.
- To prioritise online reach and engagement, central to the BBC's future universality, focusing on:

- The number of active accounts using BBC Online overall on average per week and, for the first time, the proportion of people using BBC Online overall on average per week
- The number of active accounts using our products on average per week on BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds, and BBC News Online (cross-product).
- To maintain focus on key audience challenges as the BBC is now the only UK offer of scale with young people amid global media companies:
  - Targets for performance among 16-34, following on from the targets set in each year since 2020/21. These are focused on reaching 16-34s across the BBC overall and the perceived relevance of the BBC offer to them
  - Targets for under-16s, following on from targets set in each year since 2021/22. The BBC is key to ensuring that UK PSB remains among the top media providers for UK under-16s. The targets centre on reaching under-16s across the BBC overall and by BBC Children's and Education services.

In addition, we will continue to set additional targets for iPlayer to further its contribution to the BBC following the iPlayer Public Interest Test in 2019. (Survey changes starting April 2025 mean that we cannot set 2025/26 targets for perceptions of iPlayer among adults and 16-34s but we will report any available figures in the 2025/26 BBC Annual Report and Accounts and plan to resume target-setting for this metric from April 2026.)

The targets are set out in Table 2.

We have calculated the targets below to reflect the following additional considerations:

- Achievement of these targets does not just depend on the BBC, but on overall market trends and what other providers do and how successful they are, against a background of fast-moving audience changes
- Continued improvement and changes to audience measurement systems.

## **Looking ahead**

Delivery of these targets in 2025/26 will mean that the BBC will remain the top brand for media in the UK for adults overall. The BBC will be the top UK brand for media for under 16s and 16-34s amid global providers. BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds will continue to be the largest UK offers in video streaming and audio streaming. BBC News will remain market-leading online. During 2025/26 we will be looking to update the audience performance framework of the BBC with a view to having a refreshed framework in place for 2026/27.

**Table 2: Audience performance targets for 2025/26**

**ENSURE UNIVERSALITY AND THE DELIVERY OF VALUE TO AUDIENCES OVERALL**

ADULTS

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE BBC		
Coming to the BBC overall on average per month – %	Coming to the BBC overall on average per week – %	
16+: 90%+	16+: 80%+	
A VALUED HABIT WITH THE BBC		
Using the BBC 5+ days on average per week – %	Using the BBC 5+ hours on average per week – %	Using two BBC modes on average per week – %
16+: 60-65%	16+: circa 50%	16+: circa 60%

**PRIORITISE ONLINE REACH AND ENGAGEMENT CENTRAL TO THE BBC'S FUTURE UNIVERSALITY**

OVERALL		BBC iPLAYER	BBC SOUNDS	BBC NEWS
Overall reach – Coming to BBC Online on average per week – %	Overall reach – Average weekly active accounts	iPlayer reach – Average weekly active accounts	Sounds reach – Average weekly active accounts	News cross-product reach – Average weekly active accounts
16+: 60-65%	All: 23.5-24 million+	All: 15.0 million+	All: 4.8 million <sup>91</sup>	All: 10.5 million+

**MAINTAIN FOCUS ON KEY AUDIENCE CHALLENGES**

YOUNG ADULTS	THE REACH OF THE BBC	PERSONAL RELEVANCE	UNDER 16S	THE REACH OF THE BBC	THE REACH OF BBC CHILDREN'S / EDUCATION SERVICES
	Coming to the BBC on average per week – %	'The BBC is for me' – mean score / 10		Coming to the BBC on average per week – %	Using a BBC Children's or Education service on average per week – %
	16-34: 60-70%	16-34: 6+/10		Under 16: 65-70%	Under 16: 45-50%

**ADDITIONAL TARGETS FOR iPLAYER TO FURTHER ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE BBC FOLLOWING THE iPLAYER PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IN 2019**

BBC iPLAYER	
Under 35 iPlayer reach – Average weekly active accounts	Overall time spent per head per week
Under 35: 4.0-4.5 million	All: 80 mins+

<sup>91</sup> A measurement overcount affected Sounds data during 2023/24. This impacts the 2024/25 target set in the 2024/25 Annual Plan. Sounds figures for 2023/24 will be reinstated in the forthcoming BBC Annual Report and Accounts and the target for 2024/25 has been reset to 4.8 million to remove the overcount.

## Annex 2: The BBC's commitments to delivering its Public Purposes

The Charter sets out five Public Purposes for the BBC to promote. As the market in which the BBC operates evolves and our strategies develop, it is important for the BBC to clearly set out how we intend to deliver these Public Purposes. In this section we set out how the BBC intends to promote our Public Purposes during 2025/26 across all our activities.

With the modernised Operating Licence being more platform-neutral and outcome-focused, the BBC has greater flexibility to respond to evolving audience habits, technological changes and financial pressures. The detailed commitments we set out below fulfil the transparency requirements that Ofcom has set in the new Operating Licence, and indeed in many cases go significantly further.

Clearly it is likely that a series or programme will contribute to multiple Public Purposes. For example, a programme may help audiences learn about a subject in an accessible, engaging, inspiring and challenging way (Public Purpose two); be creative, high-quality and distinctive (Public Purpose three); and reflect, represent and serve specific or several of the diverse communities that make up the UK (Public Purpose four). In the sub-sections below, we have tried to avoid duplication and allocate our plans to the Public Purpose with the best overall fit.

We will report against these commitments in detail in our Delivering Our Mission and Public Purposes report to be published alongside our 2025/26 Annual Report and Accounts.



## Public Purpose 1: To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them

The BBC should provide duly accurate and impartial news, current affairs and factual programming to build people's understanding of all parts of the United Kingdom and of the wider world. Its content should be provided to the highest editorial standards. It should offer a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers, using the highest calibre presenters and journalists, and championing freedom of expression, so that all audiences can engage fully with major local, regional, national, United Kingdom and global issues and participate in the democratic process, at all levels, as active and informed citizens.

### *What we will do to support impartial news and information in 2025/26*

#### *BBC Television & BBC iPlayer*

- The BBC's network TV stations will continue to provide their existing news schedules.
- Our news and current affairs content will be more easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer through prominent curation and will be regularly updated.
- We will continue to release current affairs documentaries – such as *Panorama* – on BBC iPlayer at 06:00 on the day of transmission.
- We will continue to innovate on-demand and live coverage, building on the success of the earlier, live, BBC iPlayer broadcasts of *Question Time*.
- We will continue developing our reactive live news streams to carry breaking news, helping us reach the greatest TV audiences possible. These will be made available as appropriate through our website, BBC iPlayer and BBC News app.
- The UK feed of BBC News Channel will continue to serve UK audiences with coverage of major local, regional, national UK and global stories, with daytime and peak hours anchored from London and Salford. BBC News Channel will also offer even more choice to audiences across the world.
- As well as core coverage, BBC News Channel will further develop its live news, special programming and will make more use of content from our story streaming offer.
- CBBC will continue to broadcast *Newsround* to young audiences, providing over 45 hours of news on TV and BBC iPlayer.

#### *BBC Radio & BBC Sounds*

- The BBC's network radio stations will continue to provide news schedules providing news and current affairs for a range of audiences.
- BBC Radio 1, 1Xtra and BBC Asian Network will continue to provide news to their audiences through *Newsbeat* bulletins.
- BBC Radio 2's *The Jeremy Vine Show* will ensure news and current affairs content features prominently in our daytime output.
- BBC Radio 4's schedule will continue to prioritise the news and current affairs output our audiences value. Radio 4 is developing a new umbrella strand for one-off current affairs programming.

- The longer version of *Yesterday in Parliament* broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Extra throughout 2024/25 will return to Radio 4 from March 2025.
- BBC Radio 5 Live will continue to report the most up-to-date live news coverage of the big stories in the UK and globally that affect our audience and give listeners a platform to engage with those that make the news, to ask questions directly to politicians and policy makers by continuing to be the BBC's voice of the UK.
- BBC Radio 6 Music will provide regular in-depth journalistic-led programming including discussion of factors that impact live music and the wider music industry within the context of the UK and wider economic picture.
- This year we will implement changes to Asian Network as part of the station refocus to better serve younger audiences, particularly those aged 25-34. This includes changes to news and current affairs, which will see a change in programming with new commissions replacing older formats so that the station will continue to reflect the most pressing issues affecting British Asians. We have submitted a request to Ofcom to reduce the annual Operating Licence quota for news and current affairs to 675 hours as part of these plans.
- BBC Sounds will continue to provide regularly updated on-demand access to BBC News broadcasts on our radio stations as well as daily or weekly news and current affairs podcasts such as *Newscast* and *Americast*, and more reactive podcasts such as *Ukraineast* and specialist titles shedding light on under-represented communities, such as *Access All*.
- Our news content will continue to be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds through prominent curation of our speech stations and on-demand news content, such as the *Latest News Playlist* rail and News being one of the 12 key categories on the Sounds homepage.

### *BBC Online*

- Online, the BBC will continue to provide daily news and analysis for all audiences.
- We will continue to grow our streaming offer, bringing the most important stories to audiences live. The dedicated live and breaking news pages team will continue to be complemented by our live streaming news offer, for reporting on critical events.
- We will implement plans to serve weekend audiences better.
- We will expand formats such as newsletters to reach audiences in new ways.
- Newsround's online output will focus on high production-value 'explainer' content, which has long-tail value for young audiences and in classrooms.
- Recognising the growth of TikTok and other short-form video services, BBC News will seek to grow its brand with younger audiences across these apps while developing routes back to BBC products.
- The BBC will continue to provide links to third parties in its online news stories to provide transparency to audiences about sources, attribution where the story is derived from another news source, and further information where useful. Relevant third parties will include media organisations, social media, government or regulatory bodies and other organisations. We will continue to focus on the quality and editorial relevance of such links.

## Public Purpose 2: To support learning for people of all ages

The BBC should help everyone learn about different subjects in ways they will find accessible, engaging, inspiring and challenging. The BBC should provide specialist educational content to help support learning for children and teenagers across the United Kingdom. It should encourage people to explore new subjects and participate in new activities through partnerships with educational, sporting and cultural institutions.

*What we will do to support learning in 2025/26*

### *Formal learning*

- As part of the extra investment in BBC Bitesize being delivered over several years, we will pilot our new adaptive learning functionality to users later in 2025.
- Further enhancements to the Bitesize site in 2025/26 will focus on GCSE subjects and the new video player feature which allows users to access support materials more easily and intuitively.
- Work will begin to upgrade the BBC Bitesize app, aligning the app with the website improvement and achieving a more seamless learning experience across mobile and desktop.
- To bring our television and education content closer together, as part of the new CBBC series *Horrible Science*, Bitesize has collaborated on five of the episodes to link them directly to the Key Stage 2 science curriculum and devised a curriculum quiz to follow each episode.
- We will launch a new interactive game, *Planet Planners*, on Roblox taking our successful approach to learning-centred games onto this platform for the first time. In addition to the number of popular games based around subjects such as Maths and History on the Bitesize website, *Planet Planners* will enhance pupils' understanding of human and physical Geography.
- CBBC will continue the Bitesize Learning Zone during term-time mornings, with programmes also available on BBC iPlayer. Within this zone, we will broadcast at least 45 hours of formal education content, supplemented with additional factual programmes.
- We will run two educational campaigns for children in 2025/26:
  - Bitesize Surviving Secondary School will aim to aid children in making the often-difficult transition from primary school, a time in which children can undergo a general downturn in their mental health. To maximise the campaign's impact, it will be delivered in collaboration with BBC One's *Waterloo Road*, one of our most popular dramas with the young teen audience.
  - 500 Words, our hugely popular writing competition, will return for its third year in the autumn.
- The series of *Live Lessons* programmes will continue, centring on calendar moments for primary schools including Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day and World Book Day and devising learning opportunities alongside key BBC content such as *Walking with Dinosaurs*.

- Bitesize's *Other Side of the Story* will continue to educate students on how to spot fake news and will expand the reach and depth of learning opportunities through an innovative Solve the Story project for schools to participate in.
- Tiny Happy People this year will be continuing with the ASDA supermarkets partnership, which delivers Tiny Happy People drop-in sessions for parents across their UK store network. There will also be new Tiny Happy People content which incorporates key CBeebies programming including *Bedtime Stories* and *CBeebies Musical Storyland*.

#### *Adult skills*

- The BBC Philharmonic will put partnerships at the heart of its 2025/26 season with new collaborations with English National Opera and Factory International.
- BBC Radio 3 will begin delivery of the next iteration of BBC Open Music with career insight days across the UK and recruiting 15 more trainees onto the programme. BBC Open Music is an early careers programme which aims to open up the BBC to diverse creative voices who can work and belong within the world of classical music in the BBC.
- BBC Sounds Audio Lab will return for its fourth year as a podcast development programme designed to support the next generation of podcasters and audio creators.

#### *Informal learning*

- Radio 5 Live will continue to broadcast Martin Lewis' podcast series into 2025/26 which answers listener questions on how to save money and budget and tackling special topics.
- While all genres can and do contribute to this purpose, those that do so most directly are our arts, current affairs, documentaries, factual entertainment (e.g. cooking and craft), history, music, natural history, religion and science programmes. For further details please see our commitments for Public Purposes 3 and 4.

## Public Purpose 3: To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services

The BBC should provide high-quality output in many different genres and across a range of services and platforms which sets the standards in the United Kingdom and internationally. Its services should be distinctive from those provided elsewhere and should take creative risks, even if not all succeed, in order to develop fresh approaches and innovative content.

*What we will do to support distinctive output and services in 2025/26*

### *BBC Television & BBC iPlayer*

#### Original output produced in the UK

- The commissioning and broadcast of a wide range of UK programming is a vitally important part of the BBC's delivery of the most creative, high-quality and distinctive output.
- BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Three will broadcast a broader range of genres in peak time than comparable channels.
- We will continue to comfortably exceed Ofcom's quotas for original UK productions on all our network TV channels.
- First-run UK programming is particularly important to the BBC's innovation, creative ambition and risk-taking. In 2025/26, across all our network TV channels (excluding our news channels, overnight news simulcasts and national / regional opts) and BBC iPlayer we will broadcast about 7,425 hours of first-run programmes, including around:
  - 4,200 hours on BBC One
  - 2,600 hours on BBC Two
  - 170 hours on BBC Three
  - 125 hours on BBC Four
  - 230 hours on CBBC
  - 100 hours on CBeebies
- This is about 340 hours fewer than our commitment last year, with fewer hours for BBC One (300 hours), BBC Three (30 hours) and CBBC (15 hours). As noted in last year's Annual Plan, first-run volumes are subject to variation due to sports rights and broadcast plans. The smaller number of major sporting events in 2025/26 is the key reason for the volume of first-run hours on BBC One and BBC Three. The 15-hour reduction in CBBC's first-run hours reflects the increased pressure on budgets and our on-going strategy to focus on high-impact titles that will resonate with audiences aged 7 to 12, noting there is a parallel 5-hour increase in CBeebies first-run hours.
- Given the variations in broadcast schedules driven by major sporting events, year-by-year comparisons need to be treated with caution for all services.
- We continue to commission hundreds of hours of new British programmes across all genres, as well as bringing audiences the returning shows they love from the BBC. New titles include two new ambitious factual entertainment shows *Destination X*

(TwoFour) and *Stranded on Honeymoon Island* (CPL Productions), new Sally Wainwright drama *Riot Women* (Drama Republic) and Russell T Davies' *Doctor Who* spin-off *The War Between the Land and the Sea* (Bad Wolf / BBC Studios), new documentary *Once Upon a Time in Space* (KEO Films), in History *Empire with David Olusoga* (Voltage TV Productions) and new comedies *Death Valley* (BBC Studios Productions) and *Can You Keep a Secret?* (Big Talk Studios / Mayhay Studios / CBS Studios). In addition to our annual returning brands including *Traitors* (Studio Lambert), *The Apprentice* (FremantleMedia / Naked Productions), *Silent Witness* (BBC Studios Productions), *Not Going Out* (Avalon) and *Ambulance* (Dragonfly Film and Television Productions), this year will see the long-awaited return of *Walking with Dinosaurs* (BBC Studios Productions) and hit drama *The Night Manager* (The Ink Factory). Our returning series offer is further enhanced by ensuring, where possible, previous series are available to watch on iPlayer.

- Acquisitions will continue to make up a small proportion of the BBC's spend and hours, both on TV and BBC iPlayer. Where we acquire programmes, we will do so to deliver a broad range of programming across our broadcast TV channels and BBC iPlayer to meet audience needs and expectations. Some titles may be acquired to help attract underserved audiences to the BBC and to introduce them to BBC-commissioned programmes. Our acquisitions will be distinctive and cover a wide range of genres. As with all our programmes we will measure the performance of these acquisitions with different audience groups and their success in driving viewing and activations in order to ensure value for all audiences. We set out further detail on our distinctive acquisitions by genre below.
- We will continue to evolve BBC iPlayer. As well as being the best place to watch or catch-up on our latest shows, we will enhance user choice and deliver greater value by featuring more programmes beyond 12 months. We will use older programmes to augment newer programming and to provide a stronger and more rounded offering in each of our sub-genres. BBC iPlayer will continue to offer the broadest range of programmes.
- Given the vast range of programmes across the broadest range of genres, we will ensure that viewers can discover programmes on BBC iPlayer through the use of key genre categories, channel brands to guide viewers to content, improved search and recommendations (including from across the BBC's online portfolio) and editorially curated and algorithmically generated rails.
- For 2025/26, we have changed our methodology for presenting our BBC iPlayer commitments. In previous years, when presenting total hours and hours of acquisitions, we set out total TV hours (first-run plus all repeats on Network channels) and BBC iPlayer-only content (content that would be published only on BBC iPlayer and would have no linear transmission in that year). For 2025/26, we have set out our plans for total hours (and hours of acquisitions) on TV and total hours (and hours of acquisitions) on BBC iPlayer. The total hours on BBC iPlayer (and hours of acquisitions) do not consider whether a programme will also be broadcast on TV. This change has been made to provide more information about total volumes of content on BBC iPlayer and differentiate network TV and BBC iPlayer as two separate platforms.

## Arts & Music

- We will broadcast about 1,500 hours of Arts & Music programming across our TV channels, of which about 150 hours will be acquisitions including performances from a range of UK venues.
- We will publish about 1,800 hours of Arts & Music programming on BBC iPlayer, of which about 200 hours will be acquisitions including a variety of performances from UK venues.
- We will publish / broadcast about 275 hours of first-run Arts & Music programming across BBC iPlayer and channels (55 hours more than our commitment last year).
- Our Arts & Music programming will continue to centre around premium arts and music programming such as *Jane Austen: Rise of a Genius* (72 Films) and *Turner: The Secret Sketchbooks* (w/t) (Passion Pictures).
- We will continue to demonstrate our creative ambition with titles including *Civilisations: Rise and Fall* (BBC Studios Productions) working closely with the British Museum to present objects, in-depth interviews and drama to bring a new perspective to the material culture of the past.
- There will be returning favourites such as *In My Own Words* (from various producers), *Fake or Fortune* (BBC Studios Productions), *Hidden Treasures of the National Trust* (Blast By The Sea Films) and *Rob and Rylan's Passage to India* (Rex TV).
- Music will continue to be an essential part of BBC programming including *Glastonbury* (BBC Studios Productions), *The Proms* (Livewire Pictures Limited), *Big Night of Musicals by the National Lottery* (TBI Media) and a pioneering new series *Eurovision Classical Concerts* (w/t) (various producers) showcasing leading European ensembles in collaboration with public service partners across the European Broadcasting Union.
- BBC Four will continue to be the home of performance with world-class programmes from the worlds of theatre, dance and classical music including *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Gala Showcase* (w/t) (BBC Studios Productions), *Dance Passion Bradford* (Northern Town Ltd.) and a new series of *Inside Classical* (BBC Studios Productions).
- Acquisitions showcasing one-off performances filmed across the UK including The Sixteen's *Choral Pilgrimage* captured on their UK tour and *Kiss Me Kate* from The Barbican.

## Children's programmes

- We will broadcast about 8,700 hours of Children's programming on our TV channels, CBBC and CBeebies, of which about 2,400 hours will be acquisitions.
- On BBC iPlayer we will publish about 5,600 hours of Children's programming, of which about 1,400 hours will be acquisitions.
- About 330 hours will be first-run originations broadcast on CBBC, CBeebies and BBC iPlayer covering a broad range of genres.

## CBBC

- CBBC will broadcast a broader range of genres than other children's television channels.

- CBBC will broadcast about 4,300 hours of programming on TV and publish about 3,600 hours of programming on BBC iPlayer.
- About 230 hours will be first-run originations across a broad range of genres.
- In particular, CBBC will publish / broadcast about:
  - 800 hours of Children's Drama on TV and 1,600 hours on BBC iPlayer. About 60 hours will be first-run. This will comprise about 15 originated Children's Drama series, including new titles such as *Gifted* (Black Camel) and *Lady Grace Mysteries* (Cottonwood Media) and returning favourites *Malory Towers* (King Bert / Wildbrain), *The Dumping Ground* (BBC Studios Kids & Family), *Jamie Johnson FC* (Short Form Film) and *Famous Five* (Moonage Pictures). There'll also be distinctive Children's Drama acquisitions *Sherwood*, *Fright Krewe*, *Gormiti* and *Pokémon*.
  - 800 hours of Children's Factual content on TV and 800 hours on BBC iPlayer. About 55 hours will be first-run. This will comprise about 12 originated Children's Factual series, including new commission *Go Get Arty!* (Ranga Bee Productions) and *Horrible Science* (Lion Television). There will also be new seasons of our most successful factual titles including *Blue Peter* (BBC Studios Kids & Family), *Deadly 60* (Natural History Unit), *Horrible Histories* (Lion Television), *My Life* (various independent producers), *Operation Ouch!* (141 Productions (OUCH)), as well as daily *Newsround* bulletins.
  - 200 hours of Children's Entertainment content broadcast on TV and 250 hours on BBC iPlayer. About 50 hours will be first-run. This will comprise about 6 originated Children's Entertainment series, including new commission *Stage Stars* (Drummer Television) and returning favourites such as *Saturday Mash Up* (BBC Studios Scotland), *Game On Grandparents* (Electric Robin) and *Bros in Control* (BBC Studios Scotland).
  - 45 hours of Children's formal education content across TV and BBC iPlayer, all of which will be broadcast as part of the CBBC Bitesize Learning Zone and available on BBC iPlayer. About 4.5 hours will be first-run *Live Lessons*.

#### CBeebies

- CBeebies will broadcast a broader range of genres than other children's television channels.
- CBeebies will broadcast about 4,500 hours of programming on TV and publish about 2,000 hours of programming on BBC iPlayer.
- About 100 hours will be first-run originations across a broad range of genres (5 hours more than our commitment last year), with about 24 first-run originated titles across a broad range of genres, reflecting our investment in diverse, high-quality and impact programming.
- This will include new titles such *Beddybys* (Jam Media Northern Ireland) and *Waffle's After School Club* (Darrall Macqueen); as well as returning favourites such as *Hey Duggee* (Studio AKA), *Andy's Dinosaur Island Adventures* (Natural History Unit) and *Vida the Vet* (Spin Master).
- CBeebies will continue to lead the industry on commissioning diverse content including *Nikhil & Jay* (Paper Owl Films), *Football Fantastics* (Short Form Film) and *Playtime Towers* (BBC Studios Scotland) and content from across the UK including /



*Can Grow It with Aaron* (Common Story Limited) and *Puffin Rocks* in Northern Ireland (Dog Ears Limited).

- New distinctive acquisitions such as *The Weasy Family* and *Game Catchers*.

### *Comedy*

- We will continue to invest in comedy across the whole of the UK, as well as investing in new writers and talent.
- We will broadcast about 1,200 hours of Comedy programming across our TV channels, of which about 60 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 2,500 hours of Comedy programming on BBC iPlayer, of which about 250 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 100 hours of first-run Comedy programming across BBC iPlayer and channels.
- We will continue to serve a range of audiences for comedy by commissioning and broadcasting a combination of new titles, returning favourites for families and for all age groups, and ground-breaking comedies. These include:
  - New first-run commissions such as *Death Valley* (BBC Studios Productions), *Can You Keep a Secret?* (Big Talk Studios / Mayhay Studios / CBS Studios) and *How Are You? It's (Alan Partridge)* (Baby Cow Productions).
  - Returning favourites such as *Not Going Out* (Avalon), *Here We Go* (BBC Studios Productions), *The Power of Parker* (Boffola Pictures), *Black Ops* (BBC Studios Productions), *Mrs Brown's Boys* (BBC Studios Scotland) and *Amandaland* (Merman).
  - Programming demonstrating our commitment to diversity such as *Such Brave Girls* (Various Artists Limited), *Dreaming Whilst Black* (Big Deal Films / A24) and *Juice* (Various Artists Limited) and reflecting brilliant comedy across the whole of the UK such as *Man Like Mobeen* (Tiger Aspect / Dice Roll Productions) from Coventry, *Mammoth* (BBC Studios Productions) from Wales, *Things You Should Have Done* (Roughcut Television) from Margate and *Dinosaur* (Two Brothers Pictures) from Scotland.
  - Brand new distinctive acquisitions such as *St. Denis Medical* and *Austin* as well as returning series of *Ghosts US* and *What We Do in the Shadows*.

### *Documentaries and other specialist factual*

- We will broadcast about 1,800 hours of Documentaries and other specialist factual programmes (such as business and finance) across our TV channels, of which about 150 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 2,500 hours of Documentaries and other specialist factual programmes on BBC iPlayer, of which about 200 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 240 hours of first-run Documentaries and other specialist factual programmes across BBC iPlayer and channels (80 hours more than our commitment last year).
- This will include:
  - Returning favourites such as *Ambulance* (Dragonfly Film and Television Productions), *Murder 24/7* (Expectation Entertainment), *Sort Your Life Out*

(Optomen Television), *This Farming Life* (BBC Studios Productions), *Saving Lives at Sea* (Blast! Films South).

- New first-run documentaries such as *Stacey & Joe* (Optomen Television), *Once Upon a Time in Space* (KEO Films), *Backlash: The Murder of George Floyd* (Rogan Productions) and *Louis Theroux: The Settlers* (Mindhouse Productions).
- Documentaries exemplifying our commitment to diversity such as *Therapy* (Twenty Twenty Productions) and *Akala Natives* (Banijay UK Productions / Workerbee).
- Documentary programming reflecting the Nations and regions of the UK such as *Murder Trial* (Firecrest Films) from Scotland, *Saving Lives in Cardiff* (Label 1 Television West) from Wales, *Ambulance* (Dragonfly Film and Television Productions North) from Yorkshire and *Forensics: The Real CSI* (Blast! Films South) from the West Midlands.
- New distinctive acquisitions such as *In the Arena: Serena Williams* (ESPN) and *Mystery of the Desert Kites* (ARTE).

## Drama

- We will broadcast about 1,000 hours of Drama programming across our TV channels, of which about 200 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 8,000 hours of Drama programming including box sets of previous series on BBC iPlayer, of which about 1,000 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 300 hours of first-run original Drama across BBC iPlayer and channels (50 hours fewer than our commitment last year reflecting our investment in high-impact drama and the conclusion of *Doctors* in November 2024).
- The BBC will continue to prioritise distinctive, high-quality drama working with the very best new and established on- and off-screen talent. This includes:
  - Returning favourites such as *Death in Paradise* (Red Planet Pictures), *The Night Manager* (The Ink Factory) and *The Gold* (Tannadice Productions).
  - New titles such as *Reunion* (Warp Films), *The Bombing of Pan Am 103* (World Productions), *This City is Ours* (Left Bank Pictures), *The Guest* (Quay Street Productions), *Lord of the Flies* (Eleven), *Riot Women* (Drama Republic), *The War Between the Land and the Sea* (Bad Wolf / BBC Studios), *Dear England* (Left Bank Pictures) and *The Other Bennet Sister* (Bad Wolf).
  - As well as new series of family favourites including *Doctor Who* (Bad Wolf / BBC Studios Productions), *Beyond Paradise* (Red Planet Pictures), *Call the Midwife* (Neal Street Productions), *Silent Witness* (BBC Studios Productions) – which is being filmed for the first time from Birmingham – and *Shetland* (Silverprint Pictures).
  - Titles that demonstrate the BBC's commitment to diversity including *Just Act Normal* (The Forge Entertainment), *What It Feels Like for a Girl* (Hera Pictures), *Reunion* (Warp Films), *Wild Cherry* (Firebird Pictures) and *Babies* (Snowed-In Productions).
  - Titles that demonstrate the BBC's commitment to authentic representation and portrayal across the UK, including *Blue Lights* (Two Cities Television) from Northern Ireland, *Half Man* (Mam Tor Productions) from Scotland, *The Guest* (Quay Street Productions) from Wales, *This City is Ours* (Left Bank Pictures) from Liverpool, *Reunion* (Warp Films) from Sheffield, *The Dream Lands*

(SISTER / Universal International Studios) from Margate and *Riot Women* (Drama Republic) from Hebden Bridge.

- New distinctive acquisitions such as *King & Conqueror*, *Nine Bodies in a Mexican Morgue*, *Lynley*, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and *The Walsh Sisters*, as well as returning series *Marie Antoinette*, *The Newsreader*, *Scrublands* and *Industry*.

### *Entertainment / Factual Entertainment*

- We will broadcast about 4,000 hours of Entertainment and Factual Entertainment programming across our TV channels, of which about 100 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 5,500 hours of Entertainment and Factual Entertainment programming on BBC iPlayer, of which about 550 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 800 hours of first-run Entertainment and Factual Entertainment programming across BBC iPlayer and channels (50 hours fewer than our commitment last year reflecting our investment in high-impact programming).
- This will include:
  - New series such as *Alison Hammond's Big Weekend* (BBC Studios Productions), *Celebrity Traitors* (Studio Lambert) and *Destination X* (Twofour).
  - Returning favourites for a wide range of audiences including *Race Across the World* (Studio Lambert) in the traditional and celebrity formats, *The Traitors* (Studio Lambert), *Strictly Come Dancing* (BBC Studios Productions), *The Apprentice* (FremantleMedia / Naked Productions), *RuPaul's Drag Race UK* (World of Wonder), *Gladiators* (Hungry Bear Media Scotland), *The Wheel* (Hungry McBear), the second series of *I Kissed a Boy* (Twofour) and *MasterChef* (Shine TV).
  - Acquisitions of overseas versions of our original commissions allowing us to extend our much-loved brands such as *Traitors*, *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Shark Tank*.

### *History*

- We will broadcast about 400 hours of History programming across our TV channels, of which about 10 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 700 hours of History programming on BBC iPlayer, of which about 40 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 40 hours of first-run History programming across BBC iPlayer and channels (10 hours more than our commitment last year).
- This will include:
  - New series on a range of historical subjects including *Empire with David Olusoga* (Voltage TV Productions), *David Dimbleby: Monarchy* (The Garden Productions), *The Titanic Sinks Tonight* (Stellify Media Northern Ireland) and *Bradford Fire* (Acme TV).
  - Returning audience favourites *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Wall to Wall South) and *Digging for Britain* (Rare TV).

## Religion

- We will broadcast about 140 hours of Religious programming across our TV channels, all of which are currently planned to be BBC commissions.
- We will publish about 240 hours of Religious programming on BBC iPlayer.
- We will publish / broadcast about 70 hours of first-run Religious programming across BBC iPlayer and channels.
- This includes programmes covering a wide range of religions such as:
  - Long running strands such as *Songs of Praise* (CTVC Manchester), *Sunday Morning Live* (Tern Television Productions Belfast) and *Pilgrimage* (CTVC).
  - New programmes such as *Amol Goes to the Ganges* (w/t) (Wildstar Films).
  - Programmes showcasing our Nations and regions such as *Gareth Malone and the 100 Singers* (Somersault Studio) from Wales.

## Science / Natural History

- We will broadcast about 1,200 hours of Science and Natural History programming across our TV channels, of which about 30 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish about 1,600 hours of Science and Natural History programming on BBC iPlayer, of which about 50 hours will be acquisitions.
- We will publish / broadcast about 150 hours of first-run Science and Natural History programming across BBC iPlayer and channels (20 hours more than our commitment last year).
- This will include:
  - Natural history programmes, including favourites such as *Winterwatch* (BBC Studios Productions) and *Big Cats 24/7* (BBC Studios Productions) and new programmes such as *Parenthood* (Silverback Films), *Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles* (Silverback Films) and *Kingdom* (BBC Studios Productions).
  - Science programmes, including returning favourites *Inside the Factory* (Voltage TV Productions Bristol) and *Secret Genius of Modern Life* (BBC Studios Productions), new commissions such as *Walking with Dinosaurs* (BBC Studios Productions) and programmes reflecting our Nations and regions such as *Highland Cops* (Firecrest Films) and *Surgeons* (Dragonfly Film and Television Productions) from Scotland.

## Sport

- We will broadcast about 1,350 hours of Sport across our TV channels.
- We will publish about 1,450 hours of Sport on BBC iPlayer.
- The volume of output reflects the sporting calendar and TV rights held by the BBC.
- The BBC will broadcast some of the biggest sporting events during 2025/26 including the Winter Olympic Games from Milano Cortina, World Snooker Championship, Men's FA Cup, Men's Scottish FA Cup, UEFA Women's Euro 2025 from Switzerland, the Challenge Cup Final, the Wimbledon Championships, Men's and Women's Six Nations Championship and the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 held in England.
- BBC iPlayer and the BBC Sport website will stream live coverage of approximately 30-40 different sports during the year, including tennis and winter sports.

## *BBC Radio & BBC Sounds*

- Our commitments for 2025/26 prove that the audio services we provide are truly distinctive with the unrivalled range and volume of music played by BBC Radio; our commitment to high-quality live and specially recorded music; the range, quantity, and quality of our speech content; and the broadest range of sports.

### Music on BBC Radio and BBC Sounds

#### *Breadth of music across BBC Radio and BBC Sounds*

- Our music stations will continue to play an unrivalled and vast range and volume of tracks, from specialist music across genres to mainstream music, surfacing artists and works from different decades and spotting new talent.
- We will broadcast more specialist music than any comparable stations, with Radio 1 and Radio 2 broadcasting about 4,270 hours. The slight decrease in specialist music compared to last year is as a result of the launch of the new Radio 1 Anthems stream in 2024, with some early-morning hours of the Radio 1 schedule now carrying programming designed for that service, rather than Radio 1 Dance as previously.
- Radio 1Xtra will continue to showcase contemporary Black music, particularly new and live music, and act as a champion for new and emerging UK acts.
- Radio 3 continues to be the only station for daily live classical music, offering distinctive and diverse programmes unlike anything available elsewhere. April sees a new breakfast programme from Salford hosted by Tom McKinney and Petroc Trelawny joins Katie Derham to present *In Tune*. Live music will be showcased from festivals and concerts by BBC ensembles and British Orchestras from venues across the UK and, during August, a week of Radio 3's Breakfast broadcasts from the West of England.
- Radio 6 Music will continue to broadcast a wide range of alternative and distinctive music.
- Asian Network will continue to provide a range of music from established and rising British Asian artists from across the UK, from UK Bhangra to Asian Drill and beyond.
- We will continue to evolve our digital music offer in BBC Sounds, focussing on a clearer, simpler offer centred around key Network music brands and talent. This will help make the broadest range of music easily discoverable.

#### *Live and specially recorded music*

- Radio 1 will broadcast at least 175 live or specially recorded performances, including:
  - Traditional sessions and live lounges;
  - *Chilled Piano Sessions*;
  - *BBC Introducing* performances from UK festivals, including Radio 1's Big Weekend in Liverpool; and
  - Live DJ sets at Radio 1's *Dance Weekend: Ibiza*.
- *Europe's Biggest Soundsystem Party* and *Europe's Biggest Dance Show* will once again see Radio 1 partner with similar youth stations across the continent for two special evenings of shared and simulcast programming.

- Radio 1Xtra will broadcast a special *Dancehall Weekender* in May featuring interviews and live music recorded in Jamaica, with a range of *Live Lounge* sessions and freestyle performances across the schedule throughout the year.
- Radio 2 will broadcast about 68 hours of the most distinctive, creative and high-quality new live music sessions, including:
  - *Piano Room* sessions;
  - *Radio 2 in Concert*;
  - *Sunday Night is Music Night* specials; and
  - *Radio 2 in the Park*.
- Radio 3 will broadcast more than 440 live or specially recorded performances, including at least 25 newly commissioned musical works. This will include live and specially recorded performances from festivals across the country such as:
  - The Aldeburgh, Hay, York Early Music, Lammermuir, East Neuk, Belfast International Arts and Chipping Campden festivals;
  - BBC New Generation Artists in concert at the Ryedale, Cheltenham and Norfolk and Norwich festivals and the Barber Institute in Birmingham;
  - Orchestral concerts from Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Belfast, Cardiff, Liverpool, Poole and Gateshead;
  - A broadcast of Welsh National Opera's forthcoming production of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* from the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff;
  - Chamber music from across the UK including the Edinburgh International Festival, Belfast Music Society and Cowbridge Festival in Wales; and
  - The 8-week Proms season from the Royal Albert Hall and Proms residencies across the UK.
- Radio 6 Music will continue to feature live music through coverage of events such as the 6 Music Festival and Glastonbury.

#### Speech-based programming on BBC Radio and Sounds

- The BBC will continue to broadcast and make available the very best range, quantity, and quality of speech content, including genres like comedy and drama, that no other radio stations offer.
- We continue to commission the very best of speech content that is suitable for both radio and on-demand audiences.
- Given the wide range of our speech-based programmes, we will ensure that listeners can discover programmes on BBC Sounds through the use of the dial of radio stations, key genre categories, Back-To-Back Sounds (our curated playlists of related programmes, including for news, sport, comedy and other subjects), improved recommendations (including from across the BBC's online portfolio) and editorially curated and algorithmically generated rails.

#### *Arts & Culture*

- Radio 2 will broadcast about 113 hours of arts programming with about 110 hours being first-run, including *Elaine Paige on Sunday* and *The Radio 2 Book Club*.

## Comedy

- BBC Radio and BBC Sounds will broadcast / publish about 1,615 hours of comedy programming, of which about 170 hours will be first-run.
- Radio 4 will broadcast about 180 hours of comedy including about 135 first-run hours (10 hours fewer than our commitment last year reflecting financial pressures and our recent savings plans). Our comedy programming will include longstanding audience favourites and will also champion new and diverse comedy voices with new commissions, such as:
  - *Call Jonathan Pie*, a series about a political journalist with a radio phone-in show, returning for its second season after a hugely impactful first series and two successful American election specials that demonstrated that scripted comedy can top the charts and bring in mass audiences.
  - *The Naked Week*, a series launched in 2024/25 replaced *The Now Show* which ran for 25 years, returning with its high level of inventiveness with satirical angles and investigative journalism on the week's headlines.
  - *Unspeakable*, a smash hit new panel show hosted by Phil Wang and lexicographer Susie Dent that combines spontaneous laughter and wit with smartness as their guests invent new words for concepts and emotions everyone deals with.
  - *Time of The Week*, a comedy returning for its second series as a satire on a women's current affairs show with actor Sian Clifford playing host and a predominantly female writing team.
  - *Icklewick FM*, a co-commission with BBC TV Comedy, returning for its second series of this highly inventive sitcom based in a deeply eccentric fictitious Yorkshire town inhabited by some very odd people.
- Radio 5 Live will broadcast about 35 first-run hours of comedy, including *Elis James and John Robins*, where the duo brings laughs and top-quality content every week. Their broadcast programme is taken from their twice weekly podcast published on BBC Sounds.
- Radio 4 Extra will also broadcast about 1,400 hours of classic comedy from the BBC's archives, including replays of *The Goon Show*, *Hancock* and *On the Hour*, as well as narrative repeats from Radio 4.

## Documentaries

- BBC Radio will provide about 1,560 hours of documentaries, informative speech and speech features across a broad range of genres, which will also be available on BBC Sounds, with over 900 hours being first-run. This is about 140 hours lower than our commitment last year, largely as a result to our schedule changes to Radio 6 Music (see below).
- Radio 1 will broadcast at least 100 hours (all first-run) of informative and educational speech content, including Radio 1's *Life Hacks*, a weekly advice programme designed for young adults. Specialist music programmes will hear directly from artists and producers, with in-depth interviews and deep-dives into the creative process.
- Led by the weekly *1Xtra Talks* discussion programme, Radio 1Xtra will broadcast around 50 hours (all first-run) distinctive speech programming and features which

reflect the lived experiences of young Black Britain. We will celebrate key moments in the Black music cultural calendar, including Notting Hill Carnival and Black History Month, and broadcast in-depth interviews and music specials across our specialist music offering.

- Radio 2 will broadcast about 150 hours of documentaries, of which about 130 hours will be first-run. These will include:
  - *Gary Barlow: We Write The Songs*, a series where Gary Barlow speaks with some of the world's most exciting songwriters delving beyond the melodies and lyrics to discover the stories behind the songs.
  - *21<sup>st</sup> Century Folk*, a series that continues to explore the wide range of traditional and contemporary folk and acoustic music from around the UK and the world through regular interviews and live sessions.
  - *Kings of Jazz*, a new documentary on the biggest names in the jazz world.
  - *Elaine Paige: 60 Years in Showbusiness*, a documentary celebrating the First Lady of British Musical Theatre's 60-year career in showbusiness.
  - *Eras*, a podcast exploring the stories of the biggest artists in the world through a deep dive into the BBC archive and conversations to people who were there.
- Radio 3 will broadcast about 390 hours of documentaries including about 300 first-run hours. This will include programmes on a range of arts and cultural topics:
  - Special episodes of *Composer of the Week* including marking the birth of one of the finest composers of late 16th Century Europe, Gionvanni Pierluigi da Palestrina in June; an exploration into the life of one of the most performed living composers in the world, Arvo Pärt, and a celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in September 2025; and a celebration of John Rutter's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and work in the run up to Christmas. All episodes will be produced in Cardiff.
  - *The Joys of Yiddish Tango*, a story of how pre-war Central Europe transformed the South American Dance craze in the 1920s.
  - *Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau Behind the Words* marking the centenary of the birth of one of Europe's most famous singers of the twentieth century.
  - *Music Matters* episodes showcasing the diversity of radio audiences including an episode where soprano Elizabeth Watts evaluates life as a neurodivergent musician, and where classical music specialist Eleanor Oldroyd invites sporting stars and big names in the classical world to share their experiences and draw comparisons between their professions on the stage or in a stadium.
  - An episode from our thought-provoking series on the use of sound, *Between the Ears*, focusing on how medical and scientific data is being directly transformed by composers and performers into arresting compositions.
- Radio 4 will broadcast about 500 hours of documentaries, of which about 295 hours will be new, first-run documentaries. This includes:
  - *The Invisible Hands*, a series told by David Dimbleby about the most influential economic shift of the 20th century – the free market revolution – through the individuals who made it happen.
  - *The Smuggler*, an unflinching account of the business of cross-Channel people smuggling, told through the experiences of one former British Army veteran turned people smuggler.



- *Postwar*, a 20-part series on the 1945 British election presented by David Runciman who will examine the postwar consensus that emerged from the rubble of World War Two and where it stands today.
- *The Second Map*, presented by Kavita Puri, is a three-part series remembering the attack on Pearl Harbour and the atomic bombing of Japan during World War Two through remarkable audio testimonies that have never been broadcast before, of soldiers and civilians on all sides.
- *The Patch*, an innovative series where producer Polly Weston will tell remarkable stories from around Britain after using an online random postcode generator to pick out four destinations in Britain.
- Radio 5 Live will broadcast at least 18 hours of new documentaries from six upcoming series on a variety of subjects, including *Gangster* featuring crime stories from across the UK, *Gangster Presents* telling crime stories from different worlds including a drugs scandal in prison and *Sports Strangest Crimes* featuring two stories this year – one on rugby union and another on cricket.
- Radio 6 Music will broadcast about 350 hours, including 38 first-run hours of a range of speech-based features across a wide range of subjects, including *Jamz Supernova's Global Sounds* discovering music scenes from across the world and *Journeys in Sound* exploring the link between music and our minds. Radio 6 Music is evolving, as well as the expectations of our audience over the years. For these reasons, we have refocussed our speech and essay content to lean more heavily into our music programming. This means hours we previously dedicated to our speech programming will be more music focussed. With the introduction of BBC Sounds, we have worked with BBC Sounds to evolve, create and curate new strands that continue to embrace our network ethos and offer our content in a digitally audience focussed way. Our documentary content remains key to our storytelling and is built around the BBC's extensive archive and will continue to be scheduled alongside our evolving content offer to complement and support the network remit, offering a deep archive dive into an artist, movement or genre.

## Drama

- BBC Radio will remain the home of audio drama in the UK, broadcasting over 1,500 hours. Of this, we will broadcast about 410 hours of drama programming on Radio 4, of which over 220 hours will be first-run. This will include:
  - Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* reimagined in 1946 Palestine.
  - *The Fever*, a monologue starring Cate Blanchett.
  - *Scammer*, a story about when a telephone scammer from India alights on elderly British Asian women.
  - *Faith, Hope & Glory*, a series on the West Indian migrant story reaches the 1980s.
  - *Pretender Prince*, in which Golden Globe-nominated actor Jack Lowden plays Bonnie Prince Charlie returning to the Scottish Highlands.
  - *Mothercover*, a Welsh spies set in Aberystwyth and produced in BBC Cymru Wales.
- From April 2025, we will no longer be commissioning drama on Radio 3. Significant financial pressures mean we are sharpening the focus of Radio 3 as a music network,

investing its budgets in music content, both speech and performance. We are looking at ways to increase the number of longer plays on Radio 4 to maintain the range of creative opportunities within our audio drama offer.

- Radio 4 Extra will also broadcast about 1,100 hours of classic drama, poetry and readings from the BBC's archives, including dramas such as *Poirot*, *Marple* and *Sherlock Holmes*.

### *Religion*

- BBC Radio will broadcast about 485 hours of religious programming across our stations and covering a wide range of faiths.
- Radio 2 will broadcast about 185 hours of religious output (all first-run), including our weekly strand, *Good Morning Sunday*, produced in and presented from Salford each Sunday and inviting guests from across different faiths to contribute each week; our daily *Pause for Thought* drawing from all faiths across the UK; programming supporting the BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition; and bespoke programming reflecting on Easter and Christmas.
- Radio 3 will broadcast about 110 hours of religious output, with about 58 hours being first-run. This will include:
  - *Easter and Christmas Across Europe* – two days of live music in collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union bringing performances from countries in Europe, and Australia and Canada.
  - Weekly *Choral Evensong* live from cathedrals, churches and chapels across the UK, supplemented with ten editions of Compline specially recorded for the six weeks of Lent and four weeks of Advent.
- Radio 4 will broadcast about 128 hours of religious programming, of which about 96 hours will be first-run. This will include *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* – a key Christmas event for listeners, *Prayer for the Day* which supports prayers from a range of religions and weekly *Sunday Worship* from church services across the UK.
- Radio 4 Extra will continue to broadcast *The Daily Service*, representing about 60 hours of religious programming.
- Asian Network will reflect and celebrate key South Asian religious festivals such as Diwali and Ramadan.

### *Social action campaigns / special seasons*

- BBC Radio will continue to provide and participate in social actions campaigns and broadcast special seasons.
- Radio 1 will run an outreach campaign in Liverpool ahead of Radio 1's Big Weekend, which will include panels and discussions on areas of concern to young audiences. Selected highlights of the campaign will be broadcast on Radio 1 ahead of the event.
- Radio 1 will collaborate with Comic Relief in March to raise awareness and funding for the charity.
- Radio 1Xtra's *Future Figures* will put a spotlight on exceptional individuals and organisations who are making Black history, as well as highlighting the work of BBC Children in Need's We Move Fund, which aims to empower Black children and young people through youth social action.

- Radio 2 will run an outreach event in the community around Radio 2 In The Park to support the network's presence in that area of the country which might not necessarily come into direct contact with national BBC presenters and output.
- Following the success of Paddy McGuinness and Vernon Kay, Radio 2's BBC Children in Need charity event in November will be a multi-day event again held across the UK around the annual fundraising moment.
- BBC Ten Pieces continues to support teachers throughout 2025 with a new series of continuous professional development workshops and webinars, delivered around the UK by the BBC Orchestras. Plus, a brand-new piece for young musicians will be co-commissioned by BBC Ten Pieces, in partnership with Music For Youth, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and the Royal Albert Hall. The new piece by Aileen Sweeney will be performed by thousands of young people at the Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in November 2025.
- The BBC and Royal Albert Hall will co-host the BBC Open Music insight days exploring careers across live events and broadcast production at the BBC Proms in partnership with East London community organisation as part of our ongoing collaborations with East Bank.
- BBC Young Composer, that creates opportunities and resources for 12- to 18-year-olds across the UK who make their own original music, will launch its next competition in 2025.
- Radio 3 will continue focusing on the restorative function of music with targeted programming around Mental Health Awareness Week.
- In May 2025, Radio 3 will explore the pros and cons of being a neurodivergent musician and explore ways classical music industry can support neurodiverse musicians and audiences.
- Radio 4 will broadcast a month of programming looking at endangered animals as part of climate change and biodiversity coverage.
- Radio 5 Live will hold Teen 25 in Bradford during 2025/26.
- Radio 6 Music will focus on Mental Health Awareness week with a dedicated series of *Journeys in Sound*.
- In October 2025, Asian Network will celebrate Diwali all day long with hours of Bollywood, Bhangra and Asian Beats to ring in the festival of light.

### *Sport*

- Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra will offer live commentary of at least 20 different sports, amounting to about 3,000 hours of live sports output including key sporting events such as The Ashes, UEFA Women's Euro 2025, Women's Rugby World Cup and Women's Cricket World Cup.
- The events we offer commentary on are dependent on the sports rights we have available for radio.
- The sports output will include a wide range of sports from regular competitions such as men's domestic, international and European football competitions, Women's Super League and women's international football, Formula 1, men's and women's cricket, men's and women's rugby union, and rugby league.

- We will also cover the major championships in tennis, golf, athletics and swimming, alongside commentaries from major boxing title fights for men and women, key horse races and coverage of other major sporting events across the year.
- We will offer more extensive sport coverage with deeper analysis, to help reach younger men and those from lower socio-economic groups who are less well served.

Public Purpose 4: To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's Nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom

The BBC should reflect the diversity of the United Kingdom both in its output and services. In doing so, the BBC should accurately and authentically represent and portray the lives of the people of the United Kingdom today, and raise awareness of the different cultures and alternative viewpoints that make up its society. It should ensure that it provides output and services that meet the needs of the United Kingdom's Nations, regions and communities. The BBC should bring people together for shared experiences and help contribute to the social cohesion and wellbeing of the United Kingdom. In commissioning and delivering output the BBC should invest in the creative economies of each of the Nations and contribute to their development.

*What we will do to reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities across the UK and support the UK's creative economy in 2025/26*

In this section we set out how we will promote the fourth Public Purpose through our network services (such as BBC One, Radio Three and BBC iPlayer) and national and regional services (that is BBC Local, BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Scotland and BBC Cymru Wales). First, we set out how the BBC is refocusing its creative and commissioning spend as well as moving editorial teams and programming across the Nations to better reflect and represent audiences and regions across the UK. Second, we set out how our network TV programming will deliver authentic representation and portrayal. Third, we set out what we are doing with our local, regional and national services.

We will continue to support on-air and on-screen representation in all our genres with integrated and landmark portrayal through the mix of contestants, presenters, actors and voices. We are also working with diverse-led indies and industry partners, increasing diversity and inclusion off-air and off-screen through the production teams and crews we work with, and within our own commissioning teams. We will continue to be key members in the TV Access Project, working across the industry to create a substantive and permanent structural shift, to ensure provision and inclusion of disabled talent.

### *The BBC across the UK*

- The BBC is putting local relevance at the heart of how we deliver to audiences. In 2025/26, we will continue to deliver our Across the UK programme – getting the BBC closer to audiences across the UK and growing its portrayal and representation of audiences across the UK.

#### Network TV

- The BBC will continue building its production focus in the West Midlands and North East of England, including further new commissions and working with partners to build regional creative clusters and provide support for employment opportunities and skills development.

- For example, in the West Midlands, in 2025/26 the BBC will deliver the following production activity:
  - The BBC has commissioned major scripted programming which will be filmed and set in the West Midlands. This will be filmed across the West Midlands during 2025/26 and is a major opportunity to support the growth of the regional production sector.
  - The BBC will broadcast the first series of *MasterChef*, produced by Shine TV, which is now produced from its new studios at Digbeth Loc, in Birmingham. The production, which covers four different titles will bring 130 new roles and involve 65 hours of primetime TV production from the city. The BBC will also broadcast the first series of *Silent Witness*, which is now in production in Digbeth and produced by BBC Studios.
- The BBC's West Midlands production focus is complemented by the relocation of the BBC's Midlands headquarters to the Tea Factory in Digbeth in 2027. This is being delivered as part of a separate BBC programme of work but working closely with the Across the UK team. Construction will accelerate in 2025/26 as will the BBC's work with regional partners to grow the regional impact of this project.
- Elsewhere, the BBC will continue to commission high-impact content that reflects and represents audiences and regions across the UK. This includes a particular focus on scripted content which is a powerful driver of audience perceptions of the BBC. 2025/26 will see an exciting range of new scripted commissions from across the UK, including a second season of *Mammoth* (BBC Studios Productions), *Death Valley* (BBC Studios Productions) and *The Guest* (Quay Street Productions) in Wales as well as recommissions of popular programming from key UK regions, including *Blue Lights* (Two Cities Television) in Northern Ireland.
- The BBC will continue to develop the impact and scope of its regional partnership in the North East, with additional commitments and support for talent and skills development. The BBC will continue to grow jobs and opportunities in its Tech Hub at BBC Newcastle, with additional jobs and opportunities meaning that the BBC will have over 100 product and technology jobs employed in the region.

### Network Radio

- 2025/26 will see the completion of major relocations of BBC Radio teams across the UK, including moving major BBC Radio 3 programming to Salford and the full relocation of Asian Network to Birmingham.
- The coming year will see the continued growth of the new network audio production hub across Scotland and Northern Ireland. The hub will be home to new Radio 4 commission *Take Four Books*, as well as ambitious landmark documentary series *Piper Alpha*.
- BBC Radio will continue to showcase local and regional talent across its output and through its live events, including Radio 1 Big Weekend from Liverpool in 2025, Radio 2 in the Park which takes place outside of London, another ambitious programme of BBC Proms concerts from across the UK and the 6 Music Festival staged and broadcast from Greater Manchester.
- BBC Radio will broadcast content from major events and festivals across the country including:

- Radio 1 coverage of Parklife in Manchester, Boomtown in Hampshire and TRNMST in Glasgow;
- Radio 2 coverage of the Country to Country content from Belfast and Glasgow;
- Radio 3 broadcast from The Edinburgh International Festival, West Cork Chamber Festival and BBC Proms;
- Radio 4 broadcasts from Hay Festival and Edinburgh Festivals;
- A continued presence with Radio 4's *Loose Ends* and *The Adverb* at festivals across the UK including The Kendal Mountain Festival (Cumbria), Heligan Festival (Cornwall) and Celtic Connections (Glasgow); and
- Coverage of events throughout the year as part of Bradford City of Culture.
- The next year will see the BBC deliver its first significant regional partnership for *BBC Introducing* in the North East to showcase new and emerging talent. *BBC Introducing* has partnered with a range of regional venues and partners including The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, The Fire Station, Tees Music Alliance, Middlesbrough Town Hall and Generator to create new opportunities for North East artists.
- The new partnership will provide regional musicians with opportunities to perform at live gigs, access to artist development and content creation for the *BBC Introducing* network.
- Radio 5 Live's overnight news output will move to be provided by BBC Local Radio with 3 nights a week hosted from Glasgow.
- As part of Radio 6 Music's New Music Fix live, we will broadcast a week of shows platforming a city's underground and alternative music scenes.
- Radio 6 Music's annual week exploring the State of Independent Venues will take the network around the UK. This will continue the discussion on the state of regional live music venues, their impact on the local community and economy and for artists.

*High-impact content that represents, portrays and serves audiences across the UK*

In the year ahead we will continue with our plans to move more of our commissioning spend outside London and tell more stories reflecting lives in the Nations and English regions.

We consider that representation and portrayal of audiences across the UK will be best served through commissioning a smaller volume of bigger, even more ambitious, high-impact shows with a very strong sense of locality but with much greater appeal beyond the borders of the Nation or region within which they were commissioned. These will be broadcast UK-wide on our network channels, be prominent in BBC iPlayer, but will not necessarily also be run on opts. This is in addition to our many shows that travel the length and breadth of the UK such as *Sort Your Life Out* (Optomen Television), *Escape to the Country* (Naked Television) and *Antiques Roadshow* (BBC Studios Productions).

We will broadcast about 560 hours of high-impact programmes, excluding sport, set in and portraying specific areas of the UK on our network TV channels and BBC iPlayer. This is about 45 hours more than our commitment last year. It is important to note that volumes may vary by nation or English region year on year, in part due to the balance between new commissions and returning programmes and in part because of the creative ideas presented to us. It is also important to note that these programmes are

only part of the BBC's programme-making in the Nations and regions of England, which also include programmes that are not intended to represent or portray their production location (e.g. *The Weakest Link* (BBC Studios Productions) in Scotland, *Doctor Who* (Bad Wolf / BBC Studios) in Wales, *MasterChef* (Shine TV) in Birmingham, etc.) and programming for regional and national opts.

In addition to the above programming, we will also broadcast live television coverage of international sport including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland's men's football internationals, Women's Rugby World Cup, UEFA Women's Euro 2025 and Women's and Men's Six Nations Championship.

### English regions

- We will commission and broadcast on BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, CBeebies and CBBC about 400 hours of high-impact content representing and portraying audiences across the English regions (outside of London). This will encompass a range of genres including:
  - Dramas such as *Waterloo Road* (Rope Ladder Fiction / Wall to Wall Media), *Silent Witness* (BBC Studios Productions), *This City is Ours* (Left Bank Pictures), *The Dream Lands* (SISTER / Universal International Studios) and *Riot Women* (Drama Republic).
  - Comedies such as *Man Like Mobeen* (Tiger Aspect / Dice Roll Productions) in Coventry, *Daddy Issues* (Fudge Park Productions) in Stockport and *How Are You? It's Alan (Partridge)* (Baby Cow Productions).
  - Factual and factual entertainment series such as *Animal Park Goes Wild* (Endemol Shine UK Ltd), *Forensics: The Real CSI* (Blast! Films South), *Dance Passion* (Northern Town Ltd) and *Robson Green's Weekend Escapes* (Signpost Productions).

### Northern Ireland

- We will commission and broadcast on BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three and CBBC about 35 hours of high-impact content representing and portraying audiences in Northern Ireland. This will encompass a range of genres including:
  - Dramas such as *Blue Lights* (Two Cities Television).
  - Factual series such as *Ride or Die* (DoubleBand Films), *Anna Haugh's Big Irish Food Tour* (Below the Radar) and *Farm 999* and *The Titanic Sinks Tonight* (both produced by Stellify Media).

### Scotland

- We will commission and broadcast on BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three, CBeebies and CBBC about 90 hours of high-impact content representing and portraying audiences in Scotland. This will encompass a range of genres including:
  - Dramas such as *The Bombing of Pan Am 103* (World Productions), *Shetland* (Silverprint Pictures) and *Half Man* (Mam Tor Productions).
  - Comedies such as *Dinosaur* (Two Brothers Pictures).



- Factual and factual entertainment series such as *Surgeons* (Dragonfly Film and Television Productions), *Highland Cops* (Firecrest Films) and *This Farming Life* (BBC Studios Productions).

### Wales

- We will commission and broadcast on BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Three about 35 hours of high-impact content representing and portraying audiences in Wales. This will encompass a range of genres including:
  - Dramas such as *The Guest* (Quay Street Productions) and *Mr Burton* (Severn Screen).
  - Comedies such as *Death Valley* (BBC Studios Productions) and *Mammoth* (BBC Studios Productions).
  - Factual series such as *Saving Lives in Cardiff* (Label 1 Television West) and *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Gala* (BBC Studios Productions).

### *Our national and regional services*

We will also continue to represent, portray and serve audiences across the UK through our easily discoverable local, regional and national services.

### BBC Local

- Following the changes we implemented in 2023/24, we have created a strong network of journalists across England providing more in-depth reporting to audiences on television, radio and on the BBC News app, BBC Sports app and BBC Sounds.
- The BBC will continue to increase its delivery of investigative and current affairs content across England in 2025/26 as part of its additional investment in local and regional journalism.
- Our network of multimedia investigative teams across England will continue to deliver around special reports and investigations which will be broadcast across regional television news programmes and BBC Local Radio, as well as being published on our enhanced local online news services.
- In Yorkshire, BBC local teams are partnering with Bradford City of Culture 2025 providing opportunities to be involved for people of all ages and backgrounds.

### BBC Local TV on BBC One

- Across the regional programmes on BBC One England, we will broadcast about 3,680 hours of programming representing, portraying and serving regional audiences in England. Nearly all of these hours will be first-run. All these programmes will also be available across the UK and easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- We will broadcast about 3,480 hours of local news and will continue to invest in our flagship TV bulletins.
- We will broadcast about 199 hours of relevant current affairs programming for broadcast and BBC iPlayer across the English regions with all of these hours being first run.
- This will include our 11 local opts as part of the *Politics England* brand, as well as 12 films (6 hours total) produced by the long-form investigations unit.

- We will broadcast about 3 hours of programming other than news and current affairs, such as coverage of the BBC Children in Need campaign and *Our Lives*. Our commitment has decreased by 10 hours compared to our 2024/25 commitment due to our decision to increase network representation and portrayal programming.

#### BBC Local Radio

- Our 39 BBC Local Radio stations will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners across England. We will:
  - Broadcast weekday breakfast shows (which will remain entirely speech between 7am and 8.30am) and daytime programmes (10am to 2pm), news bulletins and local sport at the same level of localness as we always have.
  - Broadcast over 3,000 live football commentaries.
  - Maintain and grow our commitment to Make a Difference, our hugely successful community help brand, where we highlight the work of unsung local heroes.
  - Provide unique opportunities for local grassroots music and spoken word talent to be heard through *BBC Introducing* and *BBC Upload*.
  - Create bespoke content for BBC Sounds. Each BBC Local Radio station now has a dedicated section on the platform, where their content can be profiled.
  - Broadcast a series on immigration prompted by the riots that occurred across the UK in 2024.
  - Following the success of *Farmwatch*, broadcast the series again delving into the challenges faced in rural communities and broadcast a special series on dementia.
  - Partner with *Morning Live* on its coverage of scammers.
  - Continue to benchmark RAJAR audience/listening in Quarter 2/3 2025 against the same period in 2024 to assess the impact of our scheduling changes during 2023 and 2024.

#### BBC Online England

- Our new 39 local multimedia hubs will deliver a consistent high-quality and easily discoverable news offer to audiences online.
- These local stories will in the appropriate areas be more prominent on the BBC News website and News app.
- We intend to build on the increase in the number of online news stories generated by local teams.
- BBC Local will invest in a broader range of podcasts for BBC Sounds so that local stories have a wider audience. This will include a number of series as part of BBC Sounds' *Crime Next Door* and *In Court* podcasts.
- We will invest in a compelling daily and weekly local offer on BBC Sounds for audiences who have moved away from linear radio and we will double down on our commitment to local sport, developing a richer offer for clubs online through live team pages, team update articles on BBC Sport, and sport podcasts on BBC Sounds, which will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds through the 'Local to me' rail.

## Northern Ireland

### BBC One Northern Ireland & BBC Two Northern Ireland

- Across BBC One Northern Ireland and BBC Two Northern Ireland, we will broadcast about 737 hours of programming representing, portraying and serving audiences in Northern Ireland. Of this about 542 hours will be first-run. All these programmes will also be available across the UK and easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer, either through personalised recommendations, live viewing or via the Northern Ireland category.
- We will broadcast about 290 hours of news programming for audiences in Northern Ireland on BBC One Northern Ireland.
- We will broadcast about 80 hours of locally produced and relevant current affairs programming across BBC One Northern Ireland (about 58 hours), BBC Two Northern Ireland (about 22 hours) and BBC iPlayer, of which about 58 hours will be first-run (all on BBC One Northern Ireland). This will include *Nolan Live*, *Sunday Politics*, *Spotlight* and *The View*.
- BBC Northern Ireland will broadcast around 307 hours of programming other than news and current affairs across a broad range of genres, of which about 169 hours will be first-run. Of this combined total, about 117 hours will be on BBC One Northern Ireland, including about 92 hours of first-run programming, and about 190 hours on BBC Two Northern Ireland, of which about 77 hours will be first-run. These programmes will cover a wide range of non-news genres, including arts, comedy, drama, indigenous minority languages, factual, factual entertainment, film, music performance and sport. All these programmes will also be easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- BBC One Northern Ireland will broadcast about 10 hours of Irish and Ulster-Scots programming, of which about 7 hours will be first-run. BBC Two Northern Ireland will broadcast about 50 hours of Irish and Ulster-Scots programming, of which about 18 hours will be first-run. All this content will be easily discoverable in a dedicated area on BBC iPlayer.
- The changes to some committed hours totals compared to previous years reflects adjustments to the BBC's television commissioning strategy in Northern Ireland, including the focus on high-impact video and additional network co-commissions.
- BBC Northern Ireland will continue to authentically represent and portray life in Northern Ireland by showcasing local stories, talent and production skills. Examples include:
  - Returning series such as *North West 200* (Greenlight TV), *House of the Year* (BBC Northern Ireland Factual), *The Blame Game* (Moondog Productions) and *The Crime I Can't Forget* (Green Inc Film & Television / Rare TV).
  - New commissions such *Farm 999* (Stellify Media), *Fightland* (Below the Radar TV) and *Principal Ballerina* (Ronin Films).
  - Programmes and series that explore contemporary themes, everyday experiences and community diversity including *Ceolta* (Sonas Productions), *Nollaí* (Taunt Studios), series four of *The Band* (DoubleBand Films), *The Rise of Hip Hop in Northern Ireland* (Republic of Story / Lindsay Entertainment Group) and *Wheels of Progress* (Triplevision Productions).

- Live television coverage of the GAA All Ireland Finals as well as live Ulster rugby fixtures, soccer, Northern Ireland's men's international fixtures, Gaelic football and North West 200.

#### BBC Radio Foyle & BBC Radio Ulster

- We will refresh our schedule on Radio Ulster/Foyle, seeking to maintain its broad popular appeal and mix of programme styles. Radio Ulster/Foyle will:
  - Maintain the breadth of programme styles and genres on Radio Ulster/Foyle and seek to enhance its presence and uptake on BBC Sounds.
  - Provide a forum for listener interaction and debate and reflect community life, experience and events across the region, including through outside broadcasts.
  - Provide broadcast coverage of major sporting fixtures, including GAA, soccer and rugby.
  - Reflect important civic and community occasions and provide programmes that showcase the arts and cultural life more generally, including specialist music, comedy and entertainment.
- Over the summer, Radio Ulster will broadcast from locations across Northern Ireland with planned live coverage from local festivals.
- We will deliver activities and events building on our partnerships with Libraries NI and the Ulster Orchestra, including Book Week NI.
- BBC Radio Ulster will take part in the pan-Nations Make a Difference initiative, including a special broadcast event in early autumn.
- Our Radio Ulster/Foyle content will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail.

#### BBC Online Northern Ireland

- We will continue work to enhance the impact of our digital news output.
- We will focus more of our existing resources on digital sports audiences, including national and local sport with live team pages and team update articles.
- We plan to livestream local soccer and GAA matches on the BBC Sport Northern Ireland website and BBC iPlayer, as part of our wider digital-first plans.
- This content will be easily discoverable on the BBC News website via the prominent Northern Ireland category or by selecting a local postcode for news updates.

#### Scotland

##### BBC One Scotland & BBC Scotland

- Across BBC One Scotland and BBC Scotland we will broadcast about 2,540 hours of programming representing, portraying and serving Scottish audiences. Of this about 1,110 hours will be first-run. All these programmes will also be available across the UK and easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- We will broadcast about 345 hours of Scottish news programming on BBC One Scotland and about 150 hours of Scottish news on BBC Scotland (reflecting the changes to BBC Scotland's news output agreed with Ofcom following a public consultation and Operating Licence amendment last year).

- We will broadcast about 140 hours of Scottish current affairs programming on BBC One Scotland, of which about 25 hours will be first-run. We will broadcast about 140 hours of Scottish current affairs programming on BBC Scotland, of which about 115 hours will be first-run. The increase in current affairs programming on BBC One Scotland and BBC Scotland reflects the addition of *Scotcast*, the BBC's Scottish news podcast hosted by Martin Geissler, launched in January 2025.
- We will broadcast around 230 hours of programming other than news and current affairs on BBC One Scotland, including about 75 hours of first-run programming, and about 1,535 hours on BBC Scotland, of which about 400 hours will be first-run. These programmes will cover a wide range of non-news genres, including arts and music, comedy, drama, entertainment, factual, factual entertainment, film, hobbies / leisure, religion / belief and sport. All these programmes will also be easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- The small reductions in committed hours above reflect the BBC's savings and reinvestment plans.
- Our programming in Scotland will include:
  - Brand new distinctive titles such as *The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone* (Rogan) and *The Catfish Next Door* (STV).
  - Returning favourites such as factual series *Highland Cops* (Firecrest Films), *Paramedics on Scene* (Firecrest Films), *Scotland's Home of the Year* (IWC) and *This Farming Life* (BBC Studios Productions).
  - Programmes and series that explore contemporary themes, everyday experiences and community diversity with BAFTA award-winning comedy *Dinosaur* (Two Brothers Pictures) returning for its second series and *The Firm* (STV).

### BBC ALBA

- BBC ALBA will broadcast about 2,500 hours of Gaelic programming, of which about 570 hours will be first-run, across a range of genres including children's, comedy, current affairs, drama, education, entertainment, factual, factual entertainment, music and events, news, weather and sport.
- Of this about 700 hours will support the learning of Gaelic, with about 32 hours of this being first-run.
- All these programmes will also be easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer, with BBC ALBA having the same channel prominence as all other BBC TV channels.
- BBC ALBA will continue to offer programming in order to engage young audiences and children, featuring new writing, talent and production, including:
  - A partnership with the European Broadcasting Union on a prestigious short drama and documentary exchange, making new 15-minute drama and documentary programmes that will be shared and broadcast across Europe.
  - For younger audiences, a second series of *Glan Fhèin* (The Comedy Unit), a mockumentary shadowing a company that services short-term lets.
  - Following the success of Abigail Maclver's delicious festive-themed treats, a new short-form series – *Brunch le Abigail* (Moja) – will take the audience through her favourite brunch recipes.

- *Patagonia* (Caledonia TV), Keith MacDonald, a motorbike-loving crofter from North Uist will take a road trip back to the continent he fell in love with exactly a decade ago – South America.
- Returning programmes include entertainment DIY challenge show *Dùbhlain DIY* (Demus / Seaglass), adventure climbing series *Dàna* (Solus Productions) and *Lìos Mhàiri* (Corcadal), a programme where an old garden is transformed in the Hebrides.
- BBC ALBA will also continue to broadcast learning show *SpeakGaelic* (BBC Scotland / MG ALBA / Sabhal Mòr Ostaig), Celtic music series *Seirm* (Beezr Studios), as well as daily children's programming from CBeebies and CBBC ALBA featuring documentary and drama projects with the European Broadcasting Union.
- We will also continue to showcase cultural events and music festivals such as Celtic Connections, The Mod and Belladrum. We will also provide regular coverage of women's and men's domestic and international football, as well as domestic rugby and shinty.

#### BBC Radio Scotland

- We will maintain the current news and current affairs provision on Radio Scotland.
- Radio Scotland will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners in Scotland with programming across a range of genres including:
  - News and current affairs, culture and the arts, religion and ethics, and music including Scottish traditional, folk, country, classical and piping.
  - Celebrating music in Scotland, including young talent competitions.
  - There will be special events focused on Burns, TRNSMT and Scottish Education week.
- Our Radio Scotland content will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail.

#### BBC Radio nan Gàidheal

- We will maintain the current news and current affairs provision on Radio nan Gàidheal.
- Radio nan Gàidheal will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners in Gaelic, with programming on the Heb Celt Festival and Royal National Mod.
- Our Radio nan Gàidheal content will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail.
- A radio visualisation project will be ongoing throughout the year, focusing on finding and delivering content through synergies with key audio brands in Scotland.

#### BBC Online Scotland

- We will look to deliver a more consistent Scotland news offer to better serve digital audiences with more live pages and explanatory articles.
- We will focus more of our existing resources on digital sports audiences, including national and local sport with live team pages and team update articles.
- This content will be easily discoverable on the BBC News website through the prominent Scotland and ALBA categories and the ability to set your postcode or hometown to receive local news.

- We will continue to invest in high-impact podcasts for BBC Sounds and we will look to visualise certain titles to enable content to have maximum reach across platforms.

## Wales

### BBC One Wales & BBC Two Wales

- Across BBC One Wales and BBC Two Wales, we will broadcast about 670 hours of programming representing, portraying and serving Welsh audiences. Of this about 520 hours will be first-run. All these programmes will also be available across the UK and easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- BBC Cymru Wales will broadcast about 295 hours of news, with about 275 hours on BBC One Wales and about 20 hours on BBC Two Wales.
- BBC Cymru Wales will broadcast about 25 hours of current affairs programming, all of which will be first-run and on BBC One Wales.
- BBC Cymru Wales will broadcast around 350 hours of programming other than news and current affairs across a broad range of genres, of which about 200 hours will be first-run. Of this about 200 hours will be on BBC One Wales, including 100 hours of first-run programming, and about 150 hours on BBC Two Wales, of which 100 hours will be first-run. These programmes will cover a wide range of genres including comedy, drama, entertainment, factual, music and sport. All these programmes will also be easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer.
- These will include:
  - New distinctive titles such as *Death Valley* (BBC Studios Productions) and *Mr Burton* (Severn Screen).
  - Returning favourites such as *Saving Lives in Cardiff* (Label 1 Television West), *Crash Detectives* (BBC Cymru Wales News and Current Affairs) and *SOS Extreme Rescues* (Darlun).
  - A season of content celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle and the vital role which the town played in shaping the modern world.
  - Titles which showcase our diverse output working with It's My Shout, an initiative working with diverse, grass-roots talent.

### BBC Radio Wales

- We will maintain the current news and current affairs provision on Radio Wales.
- Radio Wales will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners in Wales, including:
  - Special programmes from The Hay Festival celebrating literature and the arts. The station will also celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of legendary Welsh actor, Richard Burton.
  - Broadcasting from the Royal Welsh Show with presenters on site bringing all the colour and atmosphere from the show to the daytime audience.
  - News and political coverage on issues impacting our audiences, with a particular focus on our breakfast news programme serving the whole of Wales.
  - Coverage of Welsh sport, culture and events in locations across Wales. Our 'Summer of Welsh Sport' will feature extended coverage of the Welsh

women's participation at the UEFA Women's Euro 2025 and the Women's Rugby Union World Cup.

- Our Radio Wales content will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail.

### BBC Radio Cymru

- We will continue our strong news and current affairs provision on BBC Radio Cymru.
- Radio Cymru will continue to reflect, represent and serve listeners in Welsh, with programming across a range of genres including:
  - News and political coverage on issues impacting our audiences.
  - A refreshed Sunday schedule featuring Heledd Cynwal's new show combining newspaper reviews and stories drawn from across Wales.
  - Coverage of Welsh, culture and events in locations across Wales. Radio Cymru will provide extensive coverage of the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham. Radio Cymru will also provide in-depth coverage of the competitions and events from the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show.
  - The station will also continue its collaboration with the National Centre for Learning Welsh aimed at providing content for those interested in acquiring or improving their Welsh Language skills.
- Our BBC Radio Cymru content will be easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail.

### Radio Cymru 2

- We will continue to develop the Welsh music-led Radio Cymru 2 offer aimed at younger and less fluent Welsh speakers.
- We will continue to provide the same news and current affairs on BBC Radio Cymru 2.
- We will provide live coverage of the Tafwyl Music Festival in June 2025.

### BBC Online Wales

- We will look to deliver a more consistent local news offer to better serve digital audiences.
- We will focus more of our existing resources on digital sports audiences, including national and local sport with live team pages and team update articles.
- This content will be easily discoverable on the BBC News website through the prominent Wales and Cymru categories and the ability to set your postcode or hometown to receive local news.
- We will continue to develop our BBC Sounds offer whilst maximising the benefits of audio visualisation.



## Public Purpose 5: To reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world

The BBC should provide high-quality news coverage to international audiences, firmly based on British values of accuracy, impartiality, and fairness. Its international services should put the United Kingdom in a world context, aiding understanding of the United Kingdom as a whole, including its Nations and regions where appropriate. It should ensure that it produces output and services which will be enjoyed by people in the United Kingdom and globally.

*What we will do in 2025/26 to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world*

### *BBC World Service*

- The BBC is the world's most trusted international news provider, committed to producing accurate, impartial and independent news and information for audiences globally and reaching 414 million people weekly.
- We will continue to cover the world's most important stories widely and deeply, using the most relevant platforms and technologies to deliver our compelling journalism to audiences wherever they are.
- We will continue our impactful coverage of wars and conflicts, including powerful reporting around the 'forgotten war' of Sudan, special reports on how Russia funds and fights the war in Ukraine, and continuing coverage of the conflict in the Middle East. We will continue investing in services for audiences in areas of conflict and other crises that deliver much-needed news and information.
- Building on the success of our learning programme, *Dars*, we will expand our learning offer as more and more countries report children out of school due to conflict and instability.
- We will do further work on key themes of global importance, for example health, in particular countering health disinformation and mental health and climate journalism, a key highlight being an exploration of climate activists under pressure. We will also use data exploration and solutions journalism to cover other globally important topics such as inequality, education and population shifts.
- On English language digital, we will continue to develop more relevant journalism for audiences in English-first markets such as USA and Australia, but also in regions of the world with significant English-speaking audiences such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and South East Asia. We will enhance our coverage and understanding of China alongside our world-leading coverage of the United States.
- On World Service English (WSE) audio, we will continue to develop the range of global perspectives on world events across our live news and podcast output, while seeking to explain the world through our documentary, arts, science, technology and business programming. We will also showcase original journalism and investigations, and launch further series of the investigations podcast *World of Secrets*. There will also be a new season of *The Bomb*, the WSE series looking at the key moments in the nuclear arms race and a further revelatory series about international hacking and cybercrime, building on the success of *The Lazarus Heist*.

- On BBC Monitoring, we will be focusing on analysis and insight and sharing that expertise further across BBC news and programmes. We will increase our tracking of Russia and China-driven narratives, reactions to the new American government and presidency and the developments in Syria, amongst others.

*BBC Studios (part of BBC Commercial)*

- BBC Studios will continue to deliver unique homegrown stories for the BBC, third-party broadcasters and their platforms, partnerships with the best media companies and our own channels and streaming platforms. Investing in British content, BBC Studios will pursue growth through market opportunities and priorities in line with our commercial plans. While our commercial success supports the BBC through the dividend, we also support the wider creative community as we deliver against the BBC's fifth Public Purpose, "to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world". Integral to this is empowering our workforce and meeting ethical and sustainability commitments. A key focus for BBC Studios this year will be delivering digital growth in direct-to-consumer services through BritBox, UKTV (U) streaming and BBC.com while seeking to develop key global franchises like *Bluey*.

## Annex 3: Governance and General Duties

### Governing and managing the BBC

The Board has clear responsibility for the running of the BBC and accountability for its activities guided, in part, by documents such as this Annual Plan.

As of the end of March 2025, the Board consists of:

- |                   |                                                     |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| • Samir Shah      | Chairman                                            |
| • Tim Davie       | Director-General                                    |
| • Nicholas Serota | Senior independent director*                        |
| • Shumeet Banerji | Non-executive director                              |
| • Damon Buffini   | Non-executive director                              |
| • Robbie Gibb     | Non-executive director; member for England          |
| • Muriel Gray     | Non-executive director; member for Scotland         |
| • Chris Jones     | Non-executive director                              |
| • Michael Plaut   | Non-executive director, member for Wales            |
| • Marinella Soldi | Non-executive director                              |
| • Michael Smyth   | Non-executive director; member for Northern Ireland |
| • Leigh Tavaziva  | Chief Operating Officer                             |
| • Deborah Turness | CEO, BBC News and Current Affairs                   |

*\* Nicholas Serota steps down from the Board on 2 April 2025 and will be replaced by Caroline Thomson*

The Board is responsible for ensuring the Corporation fulfils its mission and delivers the BBC's five public purposes. The public purposes define the fundamental focus of the BBC and it is the responsibility of the Board to demonstrate that these are being fulfilled.

The Board is responsible for all of the BBC's activities – public service and commercial, within the UK and globally – and makes its decisions in the public interest and in the best interest of licence fee payers.

A number of committees support the work of the Board. More detail on both the Board and these committees can be found at [www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/howweare/bbcboard](http://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/howweare/bbcboard) and the work of the committees is reported in detail in the BBC's Annual Report and Accounts.

### General Duties

The Charter sets out ten General Duties that apply to the BBC. This chapter sets out how the BBC will continue to comply with these duties. Each year, in the Annual Report, we set out how we have performed against the commitments below.

## 1. Acting in the public interest

### *Description*

The BBC must act in the public interest, aiming to serve its audiences not just as consumers, but as members of a wider society, with programmes and services which, while seeking to inform, educate and entertain audiences, also serve wider public purposes.

### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- The BBC will publish an Annual Plan ahead of each financial year setting out its intentions, including the creative remit and work plan for that year and how it proposes to comply with its General Duties.
- After each financial year, the BBC will publish an Annual Report assessing progress, including how it delivered the creative remit and work plan and how it complied with each of its General Duties and its regulatory obligations.
- The BBC Board will approve any material changes to the UK Public Services and non-service activities which are subject to a Public Interest Test, in line with our published policy.
- The BBC will publish data to demonstrate fulfilment of the mission and public purposes, and compliance with the other General Duties.
- The BBC will continue to comply with its framework for handling complaints.
- The BBC will continue to comply with its published distribution policy.

### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the publication commitments above.
- We will publish the number of complaints upheld where we have failed to comply with the BBC's obligations under the Charter and Agreement or with the Ofcom Operating Framework or World Service Licence.
- We will publish the number of complaints upheld on BBC editorial matters and overall volumes of complaints made.
- We will publish performance measurement data, including data on the fulfilment of the public purposes.

## 2. Engagement with the public

### *Description*

The BBC must assess the views and interests of the public and audiences, including licence fee payers, across the whole of the United Kingdom.

#### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will continue to use extensive audience data from both industry measurement systems and tracking surveys to analyse and assess the views and interests of UK audiences.
- We will continue to organise regular qualitative and quantitative research projects and also 'Meet the Audience' sessions, including our successful 'Virtual in Person' sessions, where senior leaders, content creators and commissioners can meet directly with audiences.
- The Board and Executive Committee will also engage with panels of audience members across the country on specific topics.
- We will monitor social media on an ongoing basis as another tool for understanding audience views and we will continue to invest in our Audience Services function, enabling the public to correspond with us on any issue.
- We will use audience research on proposed material changes to the BBC's public service activities as part of our Public Interest Tests.

#### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will publish annually data on audiences' views about the BBC as part of the Annual Report.
- We will hold at least six events for Board members to meet with audiences and report on the findings in the BBC's Annual Report.

### 3. Market impact

#### *Description*

The BBC must have particular regard to the effects of its activities on competition in the UK. In complying with this duty the BBC must (a) seek to avoid unnecessary adverse effects on competition and (b) promote positive market impact.

#### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will adhere to our published Policy on how we will consider proposed material changes to the UK Public Services and non-service activities, including publishing and consulting on any planned material changes.
- Under our complaint handling guidelines, any third-party regulatory complaints about the BBC's impact on competition will be handed by the BBC's Complaints Unit.
- The BBC will make arrangements for the training of its staff and do so in a way that contributes to a highly skilled media workforce across the audio-visual industry and to the competitiveness and productivity of the industry as a whole.

#### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the publication commitments made above.
- We will publish annually the number of regulatory complaints upheld and actions taken in response.
- We will publish the number of Ofcom enforcement actions in relation to compliance with the Ofcom Operating Framework in this area.
- We will publish the outcomes of any Public Interest Tests.

## 4. Openness, transparency and accountability

#### *Description*

The BBC must observe high standards of openness and seek to maximise transparency and accountability.

#### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will publish:
  - an Annual Plan that sets out the BBC's strategic priorities, creative plans, budget and any planned material changes to services;
  - minutes of the meetings of the Board;
  - summary minutes of the meetings of committees of the Board;
  - important decisions concerning changes to the creative remit, work plan and material changes to the UK Public Services, non-service activities and commercial activities;
  - an Annual Report and Accounts, supported by a detailed summary of performance against our regulatory quotas, full financial details and accounts;
  - information required as part of our Equality Information Report and pay gap reporting; and
  - information required as part of our approved Science Based Targets and carbon reporting to the Carbon Disclosure project.
- We will also continue to publish the salary disclosures required under the Charter relating to pay for the highest earners in the BBC, along with our voluntary regime of quarterly expenses, gifts and hospitality disclosure for senior leaders.
- And we will publish information about the governance and operation of our commercial subsidiaries, including information on how we ensure operational separation and oversee trading across the Group.

#### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the publication commitments above.

## 5. Partnership

### *Description*

The BBC will work collaboratively and in partnership, especially in the creative economy, in the public interest. It should partner with a wide range of organisations of all sizes, including commercial and non-commercial, throughout the UK. Partnerships should be fair and beneficial to all with due attribution and recognition for partners.

### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will continue to maintain a partnerships framework that will aid the BBC and its partners in developing new collaborations to add value to our respective audiences.
- We will further develop our understanding of the impact of our partnerships.
- We will regularly bring together partners to understand their needs and discuss future collaboration opportunities.
- We will be transparent about our partnerships approach.

### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will collect and publish performance data on key partnership output and activities, including on the BBC's range of partnerships, range of partners, geographical breadth and impact.

## 6. Diversity

### *Description*

The BBC must ensure it reflects the diverse communities of the whole of the United Kingdom through its output, the means by which its output and services are delivered, and in the organisation and management of the BBC. This includes support for the regional and minority languages of the UK.

### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- The BBC has set workforce diversity goals of 50:20:14:25, for gender, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E.), disability and socio-economic diversity, in our Workforce Diversity and Inclusion plan.
- We have set out clear targets to increase production and spend all over the nation through our Across the UK plans and Creative Diversity commitments.
- We will publish detailed diversity data for all our staff, including on socio-economic background, as part of our annual Equality Information Report.
- We will report annually on progress against our Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice and our targets for diversity off screen in all new commissions.

- We will continue to publish gender pay gap information, and analysis of our pay gaps for other groups.
- We will continue to support the sector to increase diverse representation by developing, nurturing and progressing diverse talent at all levels.
- We will continue to engage closely with key stakeholders and audience groups through roundtables, audience engagement sessions and regular feedback events.
- We will continue to make progress toward our apprentice targets, as set out in the Framework Agreement.
- We will continue our long-standing commitment to the indigenous languages of the UK on TV, Radio and Online, through BBC Alba, Radio Cymru and our provision across the nations and regions.

*How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the publication commitments made above.
- We will also publish performance measurement data collected on the fulfilment of our fourth public purpose.

## 7. Technology

*Description*

The BBC must promote technological innovation, and maintain a leading role in research and development.

*Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will continue to invest in the BBC's Research and Development (R&D) department in line with the BBC's long-term objectives.
- We will continue to share our insights from R&D, for example using industry white papers and relevant professional gatherings, including standards bodies. We will use our web and social presence to highlight key messages to a wider audience.

*How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the commitments made above.

## 8. Stewardship of public money

*Description*

The BBC should exercise rigorous stewardship of public money in accordance with the principles of regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility.



### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We have a clear financial delegation and approvals framework in place, approved by the BBC Board, so that investment cases receive appropriate scrutiny at the right level of the organisation.
- Oversight is exercised through a reporting process requiring monthly financial reports to the Executive and quarterly reports to the Board, with monitoring of performance against approved budgets as a key performance measure.
- Independent assurance is sought from internal and external reviews including statutory audit opinions, Internal Audit reviews, National Audit Office (NAO) Value for Money reviews and other commissioned third-party reviews.
- Our Internal Audit and project assurance function provides direct and independent assessment of project performance and delivery confidence to ensure action is taken to mitigate the risk of project failure and optimise for success across our critical projects.
- We prepare our Annual Report and Accounts in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and subject to a full statutory audit by the NAO as our statutory auditors.
- We will monitor our commercial activity and the performance of our commercial subsidiaries through the Commercial Board.

### *How we will measure our activity*

- True and Fair statutory accounts will be prepared in line with IFRS, based on an audit opinion from the BBC's external auditors.
- We will report on our mechanisms for provision of information to the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee, as well as on compliance with the Charter, to ensure that the transactions reflected in the BBC's financial statements have been applied to the purposes as intended and conform to the relevant frameworks governing them.
- We will seek to receive a propriety opinion from the BBC's independent external auditors to ensure that the management of the BBC's resources has met high standards of public conduct.
- We will comply with funding conditions as part of separate funding agreements, e.g. grant funding for the BBC World Service.
- We will publish our response to Value for Money reviews conducted by the NAO.

## 9. Guidance and best practice

### *Description*

The BBC has to have regard to general guidance concerning the management of the affairs of public bodies and generally accepted principles of good corporate governance, where applicable and appropriate.

### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- We will audit our voluntary compliance with the UK Corporate Governance Code and principles of good corporate governance based on a general aim of compliance with the Code wherever applicable.
- We will also publish an annual Equality Information Report, in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- An annual statement on licence fee collection will be audited by the NAO and laid before Parliament.
- We will continue to comply with best practice in offering training on a range of issues such as anti-bribery, data protection and safeguarding.
- We will continue to comply with best practice on a range of environmental sustainability issues and standards including science based targets, carbon reporting and disclosures, including the Carbon Disclosure Project and alignment to the Taskforce for Climate-based Financial Disclosures.

### *How we will measure our activity*

- We will meet the publication commitments set out above.
- Our Annual Report will set out the BBC's performance against the Code; areas where the Code does not apply to the BBC; areas where the Charter overrides the Code; and areas where the BBC does not comply. It will also include statements and reporting as set out above.

## 10. General duties in relation to commercial activities

### *Description*

The BBC's commercial activities need to act in the public interest, engage with the public, and ensure openness and transparency. They must not distort the market nor gain an unfair competitive advantage.

### *Our plans to fulfil this duty*

- The Board will continue to keep under review the BBC's compliance with Ofcom's trading and separation requirements; commission annual independent assurance; review, consider and approve the BBC's transfer pricing methodologies; and report progress in the BBC's Annual Report.
- We will abide by our published policy on material changes to Commercial Activities.
- Our complaints framework includes a procedure for complaints about a failure to meet any commercial activities requirements.
- We will publish forthcoming potential material changes to commercial services in the BBC's Annual Plan, subject to issues of commercial confidentiality.

- We will carry out the commercial test for any proposed material change to our commercial activities, and publish the proposed change once we have done so.
- We will report financial information on the performance of our commercial subsidiaries on a six-monthly basis to Ofcom.
- We will publish transfer pricing methodologies concerning our commercial subsidiaries, as required under Ofcom's Operating Framework.
- We will continue to train key staff on compliance with the trading and separation rules.

*How we will measure our activity*

- We will publish the number of upheld complaints about compliance with the commercial activities requirements under the Charter and Agreement or in the Ofcom Operating Framework, and our response to such complaints.
- We will continue to meet our publication and information provision obligations to Ofcom, detailing the financial performance of our commercial subsidiaries and setting out detailed methodologies for transfer pricing within our group.
- We will publish the number of Ofcom enforcement actions in relation to compliance with the Ofcom Operating Framework in this area.

## Corrections

Post publication, we have corrected the labels on the table in Section 4.2, page 45.