

## USING A CLIP FROM A BBC PROGRAMME: A GUIDE

This guidance is for producers who wish to use clips from BBC television programmes in BBC-commissioned programmes.

N.B. the final decision on whether to use a clip from a BBC television programme in a BBC-commissioned programme sits with the Producer/s of the programme you are working on and is subject always to BBC editorial control exercised by the BBC Commissioning Editor.

ARE YOU WORKING ON A BBC-COMMISSIONED PROGRAMME BEING PRODUCED BY EITHER BBC PUBLIC SERVICE, BBC STUDIOS PRODUCTIONS OR AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION COMPANY? [NO/YES](#)

**NO**, I am not working on a BBC-commissioned programme:

If you are working for **BBC Studios Productions** on a programme commissioned by a party other than the BBC but wish to use a clip from a BBC programme please **STOP** reading this guide and contact [BBC Studios' Commercial Archive Team](#) in order to arrange a clip licence;

If you are working for an **independent production company** on a programme commissioned by a party other than the BBC but wish to use a clip from a BBC programme please **STOP** reading this guide and contact [BBC Motion Gallery](#) in order to arrange a clip licence;

or

**YES**, I am working on a BBC-commissioned programme:

If you are working on a BBC-commissioned programme and wish to use a clip from a BBC programme, please follow [initial steps 1-5 below](#):

## INITIAL STEPS

### **Step 1: Obtain a PasC/any other relevant BBC programme paperwork**

Obtain a 'Programme as Completed' (a.k.a. PasC) form and any other relevant BBC programme paperwork (if applicable, e.g. a Music Reporting Form) for the programme in which the clip you wish to use features from [BBC Written Archives](#).

### **Step 2: Identify Genre**

Check the PasC form and identify the genre of the programme in which the clip you wish to use features (e.g. Arts, Children's & Education, Comedy, Drama, Entertainment, Factual, Music, Nations & Regions, Natural History, News).

### **Step 3: Identify who produced the programme**

Check the PasC form to identify who produced the programme (e.g. BBC Public Service, BBC Studios Productions, an Independent Production Company; is it a Co-Production (i.e. the BBC and another party are co-producers); is it an Acquired programme (i.e. the BBC acquired the programme from another party)? **TIP:** checking the copyright © line on the end card of the programme credits may help you to identify who produced the programme).

### **Step 4: What is the source of the clip?**

Check the PasC form to identify the source of the clip (e.g. is the clip 'specially shot' for the programme **OR** is the clip an insert from another programme? If the clip is specially shot for the programme, proceed to [step 5 below](#). If the clip is an insert taken from another source owned by a third party, **STOP** reading this guidance and contact the rights holder of the clip/footage to arrange a clip licence).

### **Step 5: Identify contributors/contributions**

Check the PasC form and make a note of what contributors and contributions (which may give rise to the need for underlying clearances) there are in the clip. (**N.B.** you are responsible for clearing all the contributors/contributions (e.g. actors, interviewees, presenters, live music performers, music, musicians, script writers, stills copyright holders etc.) who appear in the clip).

If you have completed/identified steps 1-5 above and you still wish to use the clip, please continue reading [page 4 below](#).

## WHO PRODUCED THE PROGRAMME?

Next (per step 3 above) determine who produced the programme from the list of four options below, and follow the applicable prompt:

1) **BBC Public Service or BBC Studios Productions:** [please see further guidance](#).

2) **An Independent Production Company:** [please see further guidance](#).

3) **The programme is a Co-Produced or Reverse Co-Produced programme:** If the PasC states that the programme from which you wish to use a clip is a co-produced or Reverse Co-Produced programme, please **STOP** reading this guidance as it is not possible to confirm that the BBC holds clip rights in such programmes (**N.B.** the BBC's clip rights for co-produced and reverse co-produced programmes vary depending on what was agreed between the BBC and the third-party co-producer at the time that the programme was contracted), however if inclusion of the clip is editorially essential to the production of the programme, please speak to your BBC Commissioning Editor.

4) **The programme is an Acquired programme/Acquisition:** If the PasC states that the programme from which you wish to use a clip is an acquired programme/acquisition, please **STOP** reading this guidance and contact the copyright owner directly to arrange a clip licence. The BBC does not have rights to clips from programmes it acquires.

**TIP:** for acquired programmes/acquisitions: usually the programme number begins with 'LLP' or 'LAQ'; the PasC often contains a reference number beginning with 'BD' or 'FD'; check the programme credits end card and copyright © line to confirm copyright status.

## 1) PROGRAMMES PRODUCED FOR THE BBC BY THE BBC (PUBLIC SERVICE) OR BBC STUDIOS PRODUCTIONS

If the clip you wish to use in your BBC-commissioned programme is taken from a programme which was produced by the BBC (Public Service) or BBC Studios Productions then you may use a clip of BBC specially shot footage, free of charge, for UK BBC public service use only, provided that:

- i. **You clear all underlying rights in the clip.** The BBC cannot support this process. You must pay any applicable residual payments to underlying rights holders and should review the PasC (see [step 5](#) above) to identify underlying rights holders/their agents. You must also ensure that any restrictions contained within any relevant industry agreements are complied with (e.g. clips featuring sexual content, restrictions on clip durations and use laid out in talent union agreements and restrictions on comedy and drama clips which are restricted to a maximum of two clips per episode (which also have strict limits on duration)); AND
- ii. **You check both the [BBC Archive Search database](#) and the PasC for any use restrictions against the programme.** If a restriction is flagged on either, you must comply with the terms of that restriction before proceeding. (N.B. some such restricted content may be unavailable for clip use); AND
- iii. **If the clip you wish to use is taken from one of the following programmes/genres, then you MUST contact the applicable email address/web-address and obtain permission to use the clip from the programme/genre at least four (4) weeks in advance of the final edit of your programme:**
  - Royal footage: [email](#);
  - News: BBC users: [webpage](#); or: External users: [email](#);
  - Sports: [follow the instructions on this webpage](#);
  - Natural History: [email](#);
  - Live Music Performances (including single-artist music specials or concerts (e.g. Radio 2 In Concert), pop music festivals (e.g. Glastonbury, Reading, Leeds, T In The Park/TRNSMT, Band/Live Aid), if you are making a new single-artist music programme, or wish to use a clip of a live music performance clip for a potentially controversial purpose): [email](#);
  - Dr Who: [email](#);
  - EastEnders: [email](#);
  - Strictly Come Dancing, Top Gear, Comic Relief, Children In Need, Dragon's Den, Morning Live, Royal Events (e.g. Jubilee Concert, Coronation Concert), War Memorial Events (e.g. Festival of Remembrance, D-Day, VE Day, VJ Day events): [email](#);
  - The One Show: [One Show Gallery PA's](#) & [Entertainment Clips email](#);
  - Panorama: [email](#);
  - Crimewatch: [email](#);
  - Children's & Education: [email](#); AND

- iv. **You check any applicable industry agreements** to ensure that any restrictions contained within them are complied with (e.g. the restriction on clips featuring sexual content in the standard Equity agreement).

## 2) PROGRAMMES PRODUCED FOR THE BBC BY AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION COMPANY

Did the programme in which the clip features transmit on the BBC before or after 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004?

- a. **Before 6th January 2004:** [please see further guidance below](#);
- b. **On or after 6th January 2004:** [please see further guidance below](#).

## 2) a. PROGRAMMES PRODUCED FOR THE BBC BY AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION COMPANY WHICH TRANSMITTED ON THE BBC BEFORE 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2004

If the clip you wish to use in your BBC-commissioned programme is taken from is a programme which transmitted on the BBC before 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and was produced by an independent production company then you may use a clip of BBC specially shot footage, free of charge, for UK BBC public service use only, provided that:

- i. **You clear all underlying rights in the clip.** The BBC is unable to support you with this part of the clip clearance process. You must pay any applicable residual payments to underlying rights holders and should review the PasC (see [step 5](#) above) to identify underlying rights holders/their agents. You must also ensure that any restrictions contained within any relevant industry agreements are complied with (e.g. clips featuring sexual content, restrictions on clip durations and use laid out in talent union agreements and restrictions on comedy and drama clips which are restricted to a maximum of two clips per episode (which also have strict limits on duration)); AND
- ii. **You check both the [BBC Archive Search database](#) and the PasC for any use restrictions against the programme.** If a restriction is flagged on either, you must comply with the terms of that restriction before proceeding. (N.B. some such restricted content may be unavailable for clip use); AND
- iii. **You use a maximum of five (5) minutes footage out of every thirty (30) minutes of footage of the programme from which the clip is taken;** AND
- iv. **Use is not:**
  - a) designed to 'send-up' the original programme from which the clip is taken;
  - b) for the purposes of creating a new compilation;
  - c) for a 'best-of' programme; AND
- v. **If the clip you wish to use is taken from one of the following programmes/genres, then you MUST contact the applicable email address/web-address and obtain permission to use the clip from the programme/genre at least four (4) weeks in advance of the final edit of your programme:**
  - Royal footage: [email](#);
  - Sports: [follow the instructions on this webpage](#);
  - The One Show: [One Show Gallery PA's](#) & [Entertainment Clips email](#);
  - Panorama: [email](#);
  - Children's & Education: [email](#); AND

- vi. **You check any applicable industry agreements** to ensure that any restrictions contained within them are complied with (e.g. the restriction on clips featuring sexual content in the standard Equity agreement).

## 2) b. PROGRAMMES PRODUCED FOR THE BBC BY AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION COMPANY WHICH TRANSMITTED ON THE BBC ON OR AFTER 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2004

If the clip you wish to use in your BBC-commissioned programme is taken from a programme which transmitted on the BBC on or after 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and was produced by an independent production company then you may use a clip of BBC specially shot footage, free of charge, for UK BBC public service use only, provided that:

i. **It been four (4) years (three (3) years for Children's programmes) or less since the programme was first broadcast on the BBC.**

The BBC standard licence period is five (5) years from Full Delivery. If it is close to, or over five (5) years (four (4) years for Children's programmes) since the programme was first broadcast on the BBC, please refer your query to the independent production company that made the programme and ask them to confirm whether the programme is still under licence to the BBC. If the independent production company confirms that:

- a) the programme is still under licence to the BBC:  
go down to ii. on this page below;
- b) the programme is now out of licence with the BBC:  
clear the clip via the independent production company;
- c) they do not hold the clip rights:  
contact the copyright owner directly to arrange a clip licence.

**N.B.** since May 2020, when the BBC extends iPlayer windows for programmes (other than Children's programmes) the licence period can be reduced. If the programme is still on iPlayer, it is unlikely that the licence period will have been reduced to less than five years.

Information on BBC transmission dates as an initial guide can be found on the [BBC Programme pages](#); AND

- ii. **You clear all underlying rights in the clip.** The BBC is unable to support you with this part of the clip clearance process. You must pay any applicable residual payments to underlying rights holders and should review the PasC (see [step 5](#) above) to identify underlying rights holders/their agents. You must also ensure that any restrictions contained within any relevant industry agreements are complied with (e.g. clips featuring sexual content, restrictions on clip durations and use laid out in talent union agreements and restrictions on comedy and drama clips which are restricted to a maximum of two clips per episode (which also have strict limits on duration)); AND
- iii. **You check both the [BBC Archive Search database](#) and the PasC for any use restrictions against the programme.** If a restriction is flagged on either, you must

comply with the terms of that restriction before proceeding. (**N.B.** some such restricted content may be unavailable for clip use); AND

- iv. **You use a maximum of five (5) minutes footage out of every thirty (30) minutes of footage of the programme from which the clip is taken;** AND
- v. **Use is not:**
  - a) designed to 'send-up' the original programme from which the clip is taken;
  - b) for the purposes of creating a new compilation;
  - d) for a 'best-of' programme; AND
- vi. **If the clip you wish to use is taken from one of the following programmes/genres, then you MUST contact the applicable email address/web-address and obtain permission to use the clip from the programme/genre at least four (4) weeks in advance of the final edit of your programme:**
  - Royal footage: [email](#);
  - Sports: [follow the instructions on this webpage](#);
  - The One Show: [One Show Gallery PA's & Entertainment Clips email](#);
  - Panorama: [email](#);
  - Children's & Education: [email](#); AND
- vii. **You check any applicable industry agreements** to ensure that any restrictions contained within them are complied with (e.g. the restriction on clips featuring sexual content in the standard Equity agreement).

## FURTHER INFORMATION

As referenced on page 1, the final decision as to whether to proceed with use of a clip sits with the Producer/s of the Programme you are working on and is subject always to BBC editorial control exercised by the BBC Commissioning Editor.

If you want further information on clip usage and **you are working for BBC Studios Productions**, please speak to your BBC Studios Business Affairs contact and request further information on clip usage in the Operating Level Agreement.

If you want further information on clip usage and **you are working for an independent producer**, please see the BBC General Terms of Trade.

Useful links:

[BBC Commissioning Website](#)

[Find out why it is important to clear any archive content prior to reuse, what do you need to do?](#)

[The BBC production and delivery website](#)

[BBC Production and delivery handbook](#)

[Archive, rights and clearances](#)

[Archive Services: Making Content for the BBC](#)

[BBC Editorial Guidelines 2025](#)

[BBC Editorial Guidelines 2025 - Section 13: Use of BBC Content After Publication or Broadcast](#)

[BBC Radio Commissioning website](#)

Websites of potentially relevant industry organisations/bodies:

[PACT](#)

[Writers Guild](#)

[Equity](#)