



BBC
RADIO



MUSIC

COMMISSIONING BRIEF



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SECTION A: EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITY

6 Music extension for BBC Sounds
Commissioning Brief No.: 99143
Bundle 2: Big Hugs & Independent Icons

Commissioning Owner	Samantha Moy Samantha.Moy@bbc.co.uk
Commissioning Contact	Rory Connolly rory.connolly@bbc.co.uk Robert Gallacher Robert.Gallacher@bbc.co.uk
Commissioning Brief Title	Big Hugs Independent Icons
Network	6 Music extension for BBC Sounds
Guide Price	Big Hugs: £750 Independent Icons: £750 'Guide Price' does not include presenter fees, which will be paid directly by 6 Music.
Genre	Music
Duration	The initial contract will be for a set number of delivered shows within the first twelve months, with an option for the BBC to renew for a further year on the same terms.
No. of Episodes	Big Hugs: In total: 20 eps for the first twelve months/2 eps to be delivered pre first TX Independent Icons: In total: 40 eps for the first twelve months/4 eps to be delivered pre first TX
Transmission Period	From Summer 2026
Slot Day and Time	On-Demand
Production Location	Flexible
TX Type	Pre-Rec

Important Points to Note:

- Suppliers will only be eligible to participate in the tender process if they meet the Production Eligibility Criteria. Suppliers unable to meet the BBC's requirements on their own could seek complementary third parties to work with in partnership. The Production Eligibility Questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1; all suppliers will be asked to complete it.
- Short Proposals and your responses to the Production Eligibility Questionnaire must be submitted via **PiCoS** before the deadline at noon on Thursday 12th March.
- The contract is offered as a fixed price deal. This doesn't include the Presenter fee.
- Suppliers should submit a **500 Words** Proposal per title via PiCoS – these proposals will be short-listed.

- Please also submit the information in Part 2 – this includes the budgetary information.
- Shortlisted suppliers will also be invited to a pitch with the Commissioning Team.

More information relating to all commissioning briefs and rounds, regardless of Networks can be found on the Pitching Ideas page of the Radio Commissioning Website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4fC4NcVXqkZntJv8ZHpCID8/pitching-ideas>

We strongly advise you to submit your Proposals in good time to avoid the possibility of difficulties caused by unforeseen network or transmission problems. No late submissions will be accepted.

6 Music's Extension for BBC Sounds

Since 6 Music's launch in 2002, the station has championed alternative music: punk, post-punk and indie were the alternative in the 1980s and 1990s. This sound has defined 6 Music and its perception. Over the past 5 years, 6M has evolved. We play music beyond the mainstream – we play and explore a broader range of music and scenes than ever before.

The new 6M stream is a genre-pure, uncomplicated listen and dedicated space for indie music fans, offering them more choice from the BBC.

The stream will be dedicated to the biggest and best indie rock and pop from the 1980s - 2010s and will feature:

- An extensive range of nostalgic tracks which have soundtracked listeners lives and memories. Some new programming, as well as historic interviews and live sessions from the unrivalled BBC Archive, which tell the story of UK independent music in a way only the BBC can do.
- A programme which will platform emerging British artists, spotlight independent venues and explore the UK's regional music scenes, past and present, celebrating the UK grassroots sector's contribution to the rich legacy of indie music.
- Music mixes to match listeners' moods, as well as a chance to revisit indie-focussed playlists previously broadcast on 6 Music.
- A simulcast of 6 Music's flagship indie music show, Indie Forever (Fridays 9-11pm).

The mission of the new 6 Music Sounds stream is to engage and grow underserved audiences, giving them more choice on BBC Sounds. By matching Indie music to mood throughout the day, this stream offers an uncomplicated listen designed for everyday ease and nostalgic moments creating a soundtrack unmatched in today's marketplace.

We are looking for ideas within the tendered titles that will attract indie fans and help build new daily and weekly habits with the stream and BBC Sounds.

1. Editorial Opportunity 1

Big Hugs – 2 hours

20 x 120' episodes in the first twelve months (2 eps to be delivered pre first TX)

This show is an on-demand title and should aim to reach audience groups across the UK in the 25-44 age group.

'Big Hugs' is a flagship 'as-live' programme, presented by an indie hero. The show is designed to help listeners beat the 'Sunday scaries', distracting them with a warm, inviting, restorative indie playlist, and light presentation.

Listeners should feel as though they are joining a club of fellow indie fans who are all leaning on the show, and its host, to get them through any feelings of anxiety that arise when they start thinking about their return to work, university or college the next morning.

The programme should evoke musical memories and be an insightful listen for those interested or who want to 'deep dive' into this particular artist's oeuvre and inspirations, and offer a digital space for listeners to share their own stories with the host, as they unwind into the evening.

Programmes will be batch recorded and suit the artist's schedule and location. Programme makers will need to be flexible in terms of methods & locations of RX.

Our aim is to reach indie music fans who have an emotional and enthusiastic connection with the genre, use music to match their mood, and need a gentle, uncomplicated listen to distract them at the end of the weekend.

We encourage production suppliers to consider the title as an on-demand title first and foremost. Subscribers/listeners are likely to incorporate the show into their daily routine, at a time that works best for them, whether that's while they cook an evening meal, prep for work the following day, or a show they request on their smart speaker to help them drift off to sleep.

To help build awareness of the title, suppliers are encouraged to include original ideas for ways in which we can promote the show on social platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, reaching fans and artist communities outside of the core 6 Music listenership.

Our ambition for Big Hugs is to welcome indie fans who already have a weekly radio habit, to come and feel at home on the 6 Music extension for BBC Sounds, with a calm, nostalgic, and satisfying offer of genre led music content.

2. Programme Content

The show is first and foremost an uncomplicated mood based playlist, with sympathetic audio imaging and IDs - driving the listener back to subscribe and explore the 6 Music extension for BBC Sounds. The presenter will deliver brief links and messaging around the on-demand nature of the show in a manner which complements the mood of the programme.

Suppliers to consider how they might build a Big Hugs club or community through listener engagement and habit.

3. Music Policy

We're targeting 25-44 year old indie fans, particularly those who use indie music to soundtrack their daily lives. They enjoy using social media and are usually part of fanbases. They are a diverse audience from across the UK and are frequent gig goers. We know that they are listening for a simple, nostalgic hit of alternative spirit wherever and whenever they want.

The programme should feel warm, mellow and familiar, both in the music and presentation style, satisfying the listener's desire to hear indie classics (80% nostalgic) alongside newer tracks (20% from new artists/new tracks from established artists).

BBC session tracks that fit the tone of the show to be sprinkled throughout. We are open to the presenter curating the programme's playlist too – although mood should guide the track listing.

Big Hugs should include a broad range of indie music from the 1980s-2010s, centred on music from the 90s and 00s.

Examples of Hero Artists:

Vampire Weekend, The Stone Roses, Florence + the Machine, Arctic Monkeys, Oasis, The Strokes, Gorillaz, Wolf Alice, The xx, Tame Impala, alt-j, Self Esteem, The 1975, Bloc Party, Elbow

4. Measures of Success

Growing on-demand figures for the title and contributing to the 6 Music extension as the go-to nostalgia indie brand in Sounds for 6 Music.

The show should be navigable and promotable across the network, in Sounds, on smart speakers, and via socials.

5. Social Media / Digital / Extra deliverables

- To ensure the show in BBC Sounds looks enticing with accurate programme descriptions, artists photos, track-listings and information for future episodes.
- To deliver additional or reformatted content for BBC Sounds when needed.
- To work collaboratively with network departments and other suppliers across 6 Music and the Sounds Stream to maximise strategic key moments and wider station messages.
- Regular catch up with 6 Music Commissioning team.
- Suppliers to pitch a social format that can be recorded within the show, and shared on both the presenter's and network's social platforms.

6. Editorial Opportunity 2

Independent Icons – 2 hours

40 x 120' episodes in the first twelve months (4 eps to be delivered pre first TX)

This show is an on-demand title and should aim to reach audience groups across the UK in the 25-44 age group.

This is a flagship 'as-live' programme designed to showcase and platform an Independent Icon and their musical loves. This is about the icon telling their story via the music that made them – which inspired them to reach for independence – to do things differently and apart. It should feel like the listener is getting to know the icon and their reference points. It should evoke musical memories and be an insightful listen for those interested or who want to 'deep dive' into this particular artist's oeuvre and inspirations.

Programmes will be batch recorded and suit the artist's schedule and location. Programme makers will need to be flexible in terms of methods & locations of RX.

Our aim is to reach indie music fans who have an emotional and enthusiastic connection with the genre, use music to match their mood and want to hear the sound of home on BBC Sounds.

With this in mind, we encourage production suppliers to consider the title as an on-demand title first and foremost. Subscribers/listeners are likely to incorporate the show into their daily routine, at a time that works best for them, whether that's as part of their commute, a gym session, or a show they request on their smart speaker before going to see their favourite artist play live.

To help build awareness of the title, suppliers are encouraged to include original ideas for ways in which we can promote the show on social platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, reaching fans and artist communities outside of the core 6 Music listenership.

Our ambition for Independent Icons is to welcome indie fans who already have a weekly radio habit, to come and feel at home on the 6 Music extension for BBC Sounds, with a focussed, upbeat and satisfying offer of genre led music content.

7. Programme Content

The show is first and foremost an ‘as-live’ music format with speech providing contextual links, any contribution should not be tied to a specific time of day, as well as audio imaging and IDs - driving the listener back to subscribe and explore the 6 Music extension on BBC Sounds. The presenter will deliver any messaging around the on-demand nature of the show in a lively, personable and warm way.

Any feature must feel wholly loyal to the on-demand nature of the show and add to the thoughtful listen rather than pulling the listener out of the music and bringing them back to a world of speech.

8. Music Policy

We’re targeting 25-44 year old indie fans, particularly those who use indie music to soundtrack their daily lives. They enjoy using social media and are usually part of fanbases. They are a diverse audience from across the UK and are frequent gig goers. We know that they are listening for a simple, nostalgic hit of alternative spirit wherever and whenever they want.

The programme should feel upbeat, infectious and celebratory, both in the music and presentation style, satisfying the listener’s desire to hear indie classics (aim for 70% nostalgic) alongside newer tracks (aim for 30% from new/unsigned artists/new tracks from established artists). The Independent Icon should have a free hand in programming their own show – this programme is entirely their curation.

9. Measures of Success

Growing on-demand figures for the title and contributing to the 6 Music extension as the go-to nostalgia indie brand in Sounds.

The show should be navigable and promotable across the network, in Sounds, on smart speakers, and via socials.

10. Social Media / Digital / Extra deliverables

- To ensure the show in BBC Sounds looks enticing with accurate programme descriptions, artists photos, track-listings and information for future episodes.
- To deliver additional or reformatted content for BBC Sounds when needed.
- To work collaboratively with network departments and other suppliers across 6 Music and the Sounds Stream to maximise strategic key moments and wider station messages.
- Regular catch up with 6 Music Commissioning team.
- Suppliers to pitch a social format based around the host that can be shared on both the presenter’s, and then network’s social platforms. This does not necessarily need to include audio from the recording itself, but its aim should be to build awareness of the series and stream.

11. Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity & Inclusion is a priority for ALL of us. We want BBC Radio & Music to be demonstrably the best organisation in the audio sector to work for and with; one which reflects the diversity of the UK; and where people feel welcomed, appreciated, respected, and can be themselves and produce their best work.

The 6 Music extension for BBC Sounds wants to reflect the diversity of the UK and the network are looking for new approaches to evolve listener engagement – which will broaden the appeal of the show to new audiences.

We are interested to hear your inclusive content ideas and how they might be expressed across the music played, stories told, and scenes explored. You may wish to consider how this show might contribute to the expanded 50:50 Diversity initiative (more details in Appendix 3).

12. Sustainability

The BBC is committed to informing and inspiring listeners about how they, as individuals, can take steps towards more sustainable living.

Your proposal should consider how the editorial and production methods contribute towards the BBC's Net Zero strategy – you can read about this [here](#).

Where appropriate sustainability themes should be woven into the editorial – either implicitly or explicitly. Unsustainable portrayals should be avoided in favour of showing more sustainable practices, e.g. if the narrative allows maybe a character takes a train journey instead of a flight, or presenters use re-usable cups instead of disposable ones.

Production methods should demonstrate good practice – minimising negative environmental impacts (e.g. from energy, waste, travel) and where possible making a positive contribution.

For further information please discuss sustainability with the Commissioning Editor, and see our Radio Commissioning site [here](#).

13. Additional Information / Requirements

- The 'Guide Price' does not include presenter fees, which will be paid directly by the Network.
- The contract will be offered as a "fixed price" and the BBC will assume that any elements included in proposals can be successfully delivered within the guide price given.
- Production teams will be expected to adhere to all relevant editorial and copyright guidelines in place; and deliver all necessary production related paperwork meeting required deadlines – e.g., Compliance forms, music reporting, and keeping Proteus up to date.
- We expect these shows will be pre-recorded and will be delivered as directed by the Network. The producer is fully responsible for the editorial compliance of the programme.
- Access to all necessary broadcast production systems, as well as studios, to enable the broadcast/recording of the show will be made available in a BBC Building at no cost to the successful supplier throughout the contract. Any additional studio time above this allocation will be at your own cost.

Compliance and BBC Editorial Guidelines

You will be required to deliver programmes that are in line with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines and be able to adapt to the BBC's changing editorial and business needs during the period of the commission.



SECTION B: COMMISSIONING PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

Below are the timing and the specific details for this round. Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Stage	Timings (all midday)	Activities
Invitation published	Tuesday 3rd February	Round opens in PiCoS. You will be required to respond to the Production Experience Questionnaire outlined in Appendix 1. Proposals should be no more than 500 words per title summarising your specific ideas. It should answer the editorial objectives and other requirements as set out in the Editorial Opportunity.
Eligibility and Short Proposal	Thursday 12th March	Deadline for Eligibility Questionnaire and 500 Word Proposals to be submitted via PiCoS.
Shortlisting Decision	Tuesday 17th March	Suppliers shortlisted and notified of outcomes. Successful suppliers invited to pitch
Pitching	w/c 13th & 20th April	Microsoft Teams pitches with shortlisted suppliers. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE AVAILABLE FOR PITCHING FOR THIS WEEK – PITCHES WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AT ANY OTHER TIME. Following the pitch, the evaluation team will re-evaluate your Proposal against the assessment criteria outlined on page 12, considering the responses given during the pitch, and any additional material requested. The evaluation team may then decide to award the contract to the producer(s) which best meets the assessment criteria Note: At any stage of the process, we may need to come back to you to seek clarification. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.
Conditional Commission and Contract	24th April TBC	Award decision made, commissioning specification completed, and contract issued. Agreement of all programme related deliverables and technical specifications.
Feedback		Feedback may be requested by suppliers on rejected Full Proposals. Once notified of the result you have two weeks to request feedback. Requests for feedback should be made to robert.gallacher@bbc.co.uk . Feedback will be provided within two weeks of receiving the request.

If you have any questions about this commissioning brief that need answering before you submit your Proposal and Eligibility responses, please ensure you email them to either Robert.Gallacher@bbc.co.uk or Helen.Weatherhead@bbc.co.uk by Friday 6th March at the latest.

Evaluation Team

The following people may be involved in the evaluation of your proposal at various stages:

Samantha Moy, Head of BBC Radio 6 Music

Rory Connolly, Head of Content Commissioning, BBC Sounds

Camilla Pia, Editor, BBC Radio 6 Music, Music Team

Helen Weatherhead Assistant Commissioner, BBC Radio 6 Music

Robert Gallacher, Commissioning Editor, BBC Radio Pop Networks

Raluca Albu, Senior Procurement Manager

Sammy Jancovich, Senior CRBA Executive

Subject matter experts (e.g. production experts, visual content specialists, network management or finance advisors etc.) may also be consulted.

APPENDIX 1: PRODUCTION ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Guidance

The Production Eligibility Questionnaire is the first part of your submission that the BBC will consider as part of the process. Suppliers who proceed in the process will be determined by those with the strongest scores. The questionnaire is designed to allow the BBC to understand more about your company and your experience of producing the type of programme being tendered.

Once completed, please copy and paste your responses into the 'Production Experience' section of PiCoS.

- Pass / Fail Eligibility Criteria:
 - Organisational details (registered limited company)
 - Ability to meet specific programme requirements (e.g. regional)
 - Sufficient insurance cover
 - Ability to meet general BBC strategic objectives (e.g. sustainability, payment of real living wage)
- Evaluated Eligibility Criteria:
 - Recent experience of producing similar type of content
 - Conflicts of interest (and how any are mitigated)
 - Health and safety issues on previous productions (and how they were mitigated)

The evaluated Eligibility Criteria will be weighted according to their importance to the tender and the Evaluation Team will score the responses accordingly.

Any fails would automatically exclude a Tenderer; though follow up information from the Tenderer and sufficient clarification and/or mitigation may sufficiently offset a failure.

The Evaluation Team will then meet to consider the evaluated Eligibility Criteria. The Procurement Manager will moderate that session as required.

You MUST complete Section 1 ONLY if you plan to submit a full proposal as part of a partnership.

Please list each partnership and describe the responsibilities each partner will take.

[Insert details]

Please indicate the lead company with whom the BBC will contract.

[Insert details]

Please include the key personnel responsible for the production and delivery of the programme and details of the partnering company they are currently contracted to.

Part 2: Production Experience

You MUST still complete Section 2 - Eligibility Production Experience.

In no more than 200 words per response, please outline your relevant production experience, using recent examples, in the following areas:

2.1 We require a production base with relevant experience and staffing depth in national music-radio production, particularly within programming a specialist music show. Experience of launching and delivering a new show with music as its focus is extremely desirable.

[Insert details]

2.2 We require a production base with relevant ‘production team’ experience of producing an On Demand playlist style programme.

[Insert details]

2.3 We require a production base with an understanding of the importance of multi-platform content, and recent company/production team experience of producing engaging content for online and social platforms.

[Insert details]

2.4 We require a production base with relevant production team experience of talent management to the level required and the ability to build those relationships quickly and effectively. Experience of developing new talent would be desirable.

[Insert details]

2.5 We require a production team with a realistic understanding of the pressures, staffing and infrastructure involved in producing different types of programming – whether it be pre-recorded as live, on location, in a studio, or a purely voice tracked playlist where links are recorded remotely and built afterwards.

[Insert details]

2.6 We require a production base with relevant ‘production team’ experience of producing a non-mainstream music radio programme, with strong current relationships with record labels, venues, artists and the wider industry particularly within the grassroots sector.

[Insert details]

APPENDIX 2: ASSESMENT CRITERIA

We will assess your Proposal and pitch according to the main criteria below. More details on how we will make our assessment will be given to all those shortlisted at the same time as they are invited to pitch.

Your Proposal should include:

- Key production personnel
- How the proposal responds to the criteria outlined below
- Risk Management – including how the transition from the current to the new production would be managed with minimal disruption
- Response to key contract terms
- Details of your proposed total programme and per episode cost, broken down by price to BBC Public Service and any other funding sources. As part of our strategic priorities the BBC is making a commitment to the real living wage (as described by the Living Wage Foundation – see livingwage.org.uk). The per episode cost of the programme should be budgeted to account for the real living wage and the Proposal should include details of how compliance with the real living wage will be achieved. And all details should be included in a template as below:

Production Costs	Daily Rate	Days/Week	Total
Executive Producer			£0.00
Producer			£0.00
Assistant Producer			£0.00
Production Manager			£0.00
Total:			£0.00
Overheads @			%
Production fees @			%
Grand Total – ex VAT			£0.00

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
<p>Editorial proposal and capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit of editorial proposal to overall Stream Strategy and Music Policy • Demonstrable specialist music knowledge and industry contacts • Depth of knowledge of alternative music across all genres starting from the 1980s • Format and structure of the programme • Proposed production team's track record in producing recent, relevant and compliant music programmes of high quality • Ability to contribute to the network's key editorial processes and creative moments across the year • Ability to work collaboratively with other production teams and suppliers • How your proposal will support the BBC ambition to achieve Net Zero by 2050 <p><u>Other Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to support delivery of BBC Radio's vision and objectives • Ability to innovate and evolve programme in line with changing audience habits • Plans for engaging young audiences via social media and interactive content • Experience of creating genuine 'appointment to listen' features and content • Ability to manage and develop high profile on-air talent • Ability to identify and book suitable artists where relevant • Ability to innovate across digital platforms as approved by Network/Platform commissioners 	65%
<p>Strategies to evolve listener engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to new diverse audiences (music, speech content, digital) • Diversity of ideas and people (on-air and off-air) • Ideas for contributions to 50:50 strategy • Digital innovation (achievable within your proposed price) 	20%
<p>Value for Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial plan – including budget showing production and overheads. • Price per episode • Efficiency of production process • Acceptance of key contract terms (includes compliance with all applicable UK law) 	5%
<p>Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production risk (ability to produce shows of large scale and volume with a consistent and experienced production team) • Business continuity • BBC reputational risk • Ability to comply with all relevant UK legislation and BBC policies (not limited to editorial policies) • Conflict of interest 	10%

APPENDIX 3: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity & Inclusion

We want BBC Radio & Music to be the best organisation in the audio sector to work with and for - with an inclusive culture, diverse teams and representative programmes. That's why, across radio and television, we are prioritising £80m annually of our commissioning budget on commissions that meet our criteria for diverse and inclusive content.

Programmes must meet two of the three criteria to count towards the commitment:

- Diverse stories and portrayal on-air: Representing all audiences around the UK
- Diverse Production Leadership: Influential roles off-screen or off-air involved in shaping and making programmes for the BBC
- Diverse Company Leadership: Senior roles involved in shaping and leading production companies making programmes for the BBC

There will be opportunities throughout the commissioning process to discuss how programme-makers and suppliers are meeting the criteria. This will not affect whether or not your commission is accepted, and our commissioning teams will be on hand if you need any further support or advice. It is important to note that this commitment is not a commissioning criteria, but rather a way for us to invest a proportion of our existing commissioning budget to increase representation both on and off air.

The full definitions supporting each priority can be found [here](#) and some FAQs [here](#).