



# Spring Commissioning Round 2026

## FACTUAL

Programmes for transmission April 2027-March 2028

### PICOS:

Spring 2026 | Timeline A | Factual One-Offs & Comedy

Spring 2026 | Timeline B | Factual Series

Spring 2026 | Timeline C | Factual Narrative Series, Arts & Drama



# CONTENTS

<b>SECTION A: RADIO 4</b> .....	3
<b>SECTION B: OVERVIEW OF TIMETABLES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b> .....	6
<b>SECTION C: THE FACTUAL ROUNDS</b> .....	7
<b>FACTUAL ONE OFFS</b> .....	12
Timeline A   Timetable and opportunities .....	12
<b>FACTUAL SERIES</b> .....	16
Timeline B   Timetable and opportunities .....	16
<b>FACTUAL NARRATIVE SERIES</b> .....	21
Timeline C   Timetable and opportunities .....	22
<b>SECTION D: COMMISSIONING PROCESS</b> .....	30



## SECTION A: RADIO 4

Welcome to the Radio 4 Commissioning Round Briefs for 2027/28.

It's been another excellent year on Radio 4.

As you will know, we launched the biggest schedule change for a quarter of a century, introducing a series of new strands and podcasts, in 2024. The last year has seen those programmes bed in and become a welcome part of the refreshed schedule, alongside another terrific year of commissioned programming.

The History Podcast went from strength to strength: Invisible Hands, The Second Map, Half-Life, The Fort and The House at Number 48 were just some of the brilliant series that told gripping stories and garnered big followings as a result.

The van Tulleken twins got out their prescription pads to tackle some of the most thorny health questions in their new podcast, What's Up Docs? And Naomi Alderman has chalked up 25 fascinating short features telling the story of the world's most interesting minds in Human Intelligence.

Other notable series include What Happened to Counter Culture? with Stewart Lee, the extraordinary Anatomy of a Cancellation, Katherine Rundell's gorgeous evocations of endangered species in A Carnival of Animals and Rory Stewart's exploration of heroes in The Long History of Heroism.

In December we celebrated all things Austen with dramas, factual series and features marking the writer's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. Central Intelligence returned updating the story of the CIA with a glittering cast including Kim Cattrall, Ed Harris and Johnny Flynn. And, for the third year running, a Radio 4 drama – Sleaze – picked up the prize for Best European Audio Fiction at the Prix Europa Awards.

On Friday nights The Naked Week replaced The Now Show, giving satire a new surprising journalistic twist and Strong Message Here, with Armando Iannucci, took on the job of decoding the week's political language.

The Reith Lectures were delivered by historian Rutger Bregman, who urged the millions listening around the globe to take hopeful lessons from history and summon their moral courage to make the world a better place.

Despite an increasingly competitive speech market, our linear audience held steady and our podcast listening grew significantly year on year, with Radio 4 podcasts and programmes being responsible, once again, for a record number of downloads (and occupying the majority of the top ten on demand slots on BBC Sounds).

The year ahead presents us with new challenges. Donald Trump is tearing up the post-war political consensus, Iran is imploding and Reform are topping the polls in the UK. May will



see important elections across England, Scotland and Wales. Graduate employment is running worryingly low and AI is causing both excitement and consternation as it continues to disrupt everyday human activity.

Then there is the continued rise of what Hannah Arendt calls “Defactualisation”. The challenge of explaining the truth to our audiences as competing perspectives, “hallucinating” AI and politically-driven disinformation swirl around us. I think Radio 4 has a duty to step into the fray and try its best to explain what is really going on - as it did in programmes like Anatomy of a Cancellation.

So we have to be fearless with our journalism, making good on our duty to explain and contextualise the complex world around us as well as chart where we might be heading.

It also means we have a responsibility to provide the companionship and escape that we all need to maintain our sanity in the face of an often grim news landscape; we have to provide our audience with hope.

Drama, comedy and entertainment become even more vital for our audience. These genres can provide much needed relief and they can also be brilliant and surprising ways to engage listeners on difficult or complex subjects, entertaining them whilst simultaneously informing and educating.

All of this needs to come wrapped up in world-class storytelling, with world-class performers, presenters, actors and contributors. If the Reithian mission for Radio 4 is reassuringly constant, the manner in which we capture people’s imaginations and draw them into our world should be constantly evolving.

Always remember, in everything we do, we have a responsibility to reflect the whole of the UK and the rich, varied and changing lives of the people living here. We must be a broad church, giving voice to experiences, viewpoints and perspectives that come from all corners of the country. Please look to feature issues and viewpoints from all points on the social, political and geographic compass, even those views that might not necessarily chime with your own.

Radio 4 is the biggest speech station in the world. We commission nearly 8,000 new programmes and podcasts every year, chosen from the many offers submitted to our commissioners. This is alongside having editorial oversight of all the regular news sequences, programmes and strands that sit in the schedule and on BBC Sounds.

One of our responsibilities is to ensure that all of this sits together in a coherent, complementary schedule for the audience. So it’s always worth listening carefully to the live network schedule and to the podcasts we commission in BBC Sounds to see what new and existing strands and podcasts the ideas you pitch might sit alongside.



I promise that we will do our best to make the decision-making process as smooth and efficient as we can. In return, we ask that you read these guidelines carefully and take the advice contained within seriously.

None of us know what comes next in this turbulent world but one thing is certain: brilliant, risk taking, ambitious, original ideas, with talented people attached, wrapped up in clever treatment, will always be sought out and devoured by our audience.

Thank you

Mohit

**Mohit Bakaya**  
**Controller, BBC Radio 4 & Radio 4 Extra**  
**Director, BBC Speech Audio**



## SECTION B: OVERVIEW OF TIMETABLES & OPPORTUNITIES

Important: to speed up this process, we have created different timelines for different slots. Please read this document carefully and ensure you follow the correct deadlines, as summarised below.

### FACTUAL ONE OFFS

#### 28' Illuminated, 57' Archive on 4

- Deadline – short proposals: Weds 25 Feb 12 noon
- Short proposal results: w/c 09 March
- Pitching meetings: between w/c 13 March & 07 April
- **NB Full proposals will not be required for the 28' Illuminated brief (47210)**
- Deadline - full proposals (where required): Weds 08 April 12 noon
- Results: **Mid May**

### FACTUAL SERIES

#### 42' Documentary Series, 14' Series

- Deadline – short proposals: Weds 25 Feb 12 noon
- Short proposal results: w/c 09 March
- Pitching meetings: between w/c 13 March & 14 April
- Deadline - full proposals: Weds 15 April 12 noon
- Results: **Early June**

### FACTUAL NARRATIVE SERIES

#### The History Podcast, Shadow World, Intrigue

- Deadline – short proposals: Weds 04 March 12 noon
- Short proposal results: w/c 23 March
- Pitching meetings: between w/c 27 March & 12 May
- Deadline - full proposals: Weds 13 May 12 noon
- Results: **Late July**



## SECTION C: THE FACTUAL ROUNDS

**Daniel Clarke, Factual Commissioning Editor – Storytelling**

**Hugh Levinson, Factual Commissioning Editor – Reactive**

Our factual output at Radio 4 is unparalleled in its range and quality and reaches millions of listeners in the UK, both on air and on podcast platforms. In the last year alone, programmes you have made for us have won a swathe of major factual audio awards including at the Rose D’Or, the Prix Europa, the ARIAS, The Association for International Broadcasting, and the British Podcast Awards, where narrative series won gold in the History, Factual and Current Affairs categories. Your work is getting attention in the U.S., too: our feed, *The History Podcast*, only established in 2024, was picked by the New Yorker magazine as one of its top ten podcasts of 2025.

This recognition is a testament to the world-class work that you are making for us, fulfilling our mission to combine rigorous journalism with the most compelling storytelling in programmes that help our audiences understand, engage and delight in the world around them. Audio that tells stories that matter - stories that make us think profoundly about life beyond our direct experience.

What you do has never been more important. In a turbulent world, our values, rooted in rigour, trust, and impartiality, remain unchanged. We continue to be one of the biggest sponsors of original long form journalism on earth, with the resources to put behind time-consuming, shoe-leather reporting – reporting that, in many cases, forces real-world change. We will back you to dive into the most contested and challenging subjects. And we believe that the impartial space we offer gives us a unique advantage, because in this era of partisanship, BBC Radio 4 opens doors, and remains a place that can be trusted by every party to tell complex stories in a way that is fair to all.

Every year we learn from you. The best programmes that you produce for us make us think differently. They open new editorial and creative possibilities and cast fresh light on many aspects of the world. Over the past year, documentaries like *Nobody to Call* and *The Memory Catcher*, alongside narrative series like *The Fort*, *Half-Life*, *Invisible Hands*, *The Grave Robbers* and *Anatomy of a Cancellation* have shown us important and unexpected things. Because, as well as being gripping and absorbing, they have each, in some way, done something different. And this, above all else, is what we are looking for now: journalistic and creative approaches that take real risks, tackle subjects others won’t, push the boundaries of the form, do something new. This is how to create programmes that will make change happen and blow the minds of our listeners; programmes that, as soon as we hear the first edit, we rush to tell our friends and colleagues: ‘you’ve got to hear this’.

As Nick Fraser, the founding editor of Storyville has written, ‘there’s no conflict between the desire for accuracy and the spirit of illumination’. Getting to the truth is not a merely investigative pursuit. Storytelling crafted so carefully that it touches people with universal truths, engages the imagination, and resonates emotionally, is equally important.



This is why in this round we would like you to think as hard about *how* you tell stories as about *what* the story is. One of the main reasons we turn down ideas is when they appear to be straightforward retellings of existing stories - sometimes clearly adapted from existing written articles. Another is when a proposal is “about” a subject - a tour of the waterfront, rather than a specific course through it. Of course, our factual output must have substance, meaning and purpose. But it's vital this is conveyed through storytelling that compels us to listen, and which has a distinctively clear and engaging structure. So please think imaginatively, creatively and laterally about the approach to the story you want to tell.

Some of the best work we commission adapts formats or approaches used in other media, or in fiction – and there’s much scope to experiment and to push the boundaries in this regard. The best of these treatments are often simple in conception, yet compelling, and they make the resulting product stand out. For example, the use of the film *Rashomon* to structure *Anatomy of a Cancellation*, or the way *The Big Ask* demonstrated the importance of questioning through a script consisting entirely of questions.

And that’s our big ask: for stories that expand our minds, engage our hearts and create lasting memories, told in fresh and utterly compelling ways.

## **PRESENTERS**

Should your offer come with a presenter attached? That depends. If the idea originates with the presenter: yes (and we want ideas that spring from a presenter’s expertise or passion, especially with narrative series). If the idea can only be told with that presenter: yes. Otherwise, especially at Stage 1, it’s more useful for the idea to come either a) with no suggested presenter, or b) with a suggestion for a presenter, without locking that person in definitively.

## **DEVELOPMENT + ACCESS**

We want to avoid as much unnecessary development as possible and have already taken steps to minimise the work we ask you to do pre-commission by scrapping the full proposal stage for single 28’ Illuminated documentaries (brief No 47210).

Bigger projects with significant budgets – especially narrative podcasts - do sometimes need pre-commission development beyond what is possible within the commissioning round. If we’re interested in your idea, we may be able to fund this development – although we only have the resources to do this in a limited number of cases.

One way to make it easier for us to make a fast decision is to have confirmed access to key assets (unique audio or other material, key contributors) and/or confirmed presenting talent at full proposal stage.

The more you can bring us, the easier it is for us to decide within the timeframe of the commissioning round.



## SLOTS

Some ideas proposed for one slot might also be suitable for another – for example, a series proposal might also work as a single episode of Archive on 4. Commissioning editors will compare notes and we may suggest moving an idea to a different brief.

This year we will commission into the 37' Investigations slot (47028) on an ad hoc basis throughout the year, in the same way we commission the reactive documentaries for the Currently slot (47209) i.e. via an initial email to Hugh Levinson.

## Which briefs are open in this round?

	Commissioning Brief name	Brief no
One offs (Timeline A)	28' Illuminated	47210
	57' Archive on 4	47088
Series (Timeline B)	42' Documentary Series	47195
	14' Series	47006
Narrative podcast series (Timeline C)	The History Podcast (multi-part narrative series)	47192
	Shadow World (multi-part narrative series)	47191
	Intrigue (multi-part narrative series)	47190

**NB: These briefs are not capped.**



## **FAQS APPLYING TO ALL FACTUAL BRIEFS IN THIS COMMISSIONING ROUND**

### **What's the first thing to do?**

For narrative podcast ideas: write a short proposal of up to 500 words and submit into the appropriate brief.

For all other projects: write a short proposal of up to 300 words and submit into the appropriate brief.

### **How should we write short proposals?**

We read thousands of proposals. So it's a good idea to grab us in the first line. What we need to know is:

- Subject – what's the story?
- Relevance – why does it matter?
- Treatment – how are you going to tell it?
- Voice – who will we hear (and why them)?
- Access – is there a specific person – or specific documents or archive – that you have access to?

### **What happens next?**

We will read your proposal – and if we want to know more, we will shortlist it. You'll then be given the opportunity to come and pitch it to us. For most slots, after discussing the idea with you, we'll ask you to write a more detailed 'full proposal'. And if that persuades us, we will commission your idea.

### **How should we write full proposals?**

If we like your idea and you're invited to write a full proposal, you've hit on territory we agree is worth exploring and you have convinced us your approach could work. What we really need to know next is this:

- Have you addressed any questions we've raised in our discussions?
- Treatment - in detail. What will we hear?
- Who is the voice of this programme and are they attached?
- Who is the programme for and why do you think they want or need it?



- Can you deliver what you're promising (be ambitious - but realistic)?
- Can you confirm key production personnel (a commission might be conditional on their involvement)?

### **What more are we looking for?**

- Bring us original, compelling factual stories - things that have happened or are happening - as well as clever analysis or new thinking.
- Challenge the audience's worldview; ask questions no one else is asking and from a wide range of political viewpoints. This is more important than ever.
- Inform our audience with clarity, without sacrificing rigour.
- Find the people at the heart of the story you want to tell so you can hear from them, not just about them.
- Help us represent the whole of the UK
- Be the first to explain fascinating new trends to our audience.
- Build bridges between people, find solutions, create understanding and empathy.
- Hold the powerful to account – taking a broad view of where power lies.
- Take risks with storytelling as well as subject matter. We want to be surprised by what we hear and learn.
- Avoid ideas which would fit neatly into our regular Radio 4 programmes - because if they do fit there, that's where they should be.



## FACTUAL ONE OFFS

### Timeline A | Timetable and opportunities

Stage	Dates	Activities
Round opens	w/c 19 January	Publish commissioning briefs and open round in PiCoS.
Presentations by the Director of Speech and Commissioning Editors	<b>GLASGOW:</b> Mon 02 Feb <b>SALFORD:</b> Tues 03 Feb <b>CARDIFF:</b> Weds 04 Feb <b>LONDON:</b> Fri 06 Feb	The commissioning team brief programme-makers. A recording of one of the presentations will be available online soon after the event.
1. Short proposal	<b>Weds 25 Feb 12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for short proposals in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted. If you have questions you need answered before submitting short proposals, send them to the commissioning co-ordinator well before the deadline.
	w/c 09 March	Commissioners shortlist proposals and notify producers of outcomes. Full proposals requested from those proceeding to next stage.
2. Full proposal	Between 13 March & 07 April	Opportunity to discuss shortlisted short proposals (by phone, Teams or in person, availability allowing) prior to submitting full proposals.
	<b>Weds 08 April 12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for full proposals (where required) in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted.
3. Conditional commission	Mid May	Results released. Commissions, subject to contract. Editorial specifications and price agreed.



<b>Commissioning Brief name: 28' Illuminated</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47210</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline A   Factual One Offs &amp; Comedy</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	28'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Sun 19:15
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£10,950

## Editorial Opportunity

*Illuminated* has emerged as the UK's showcase for the art of the single audio feature. It has been recognised as such by prize judges, with *A Georgian Polyphonic Feast* winning the Prix Europa and *The Ballad of Scout and the Alcohol Tag* nabbing the Rose D'Or, among other awards. This is a place for stories which are best told in sound, which take us on journeys into unexplored worlds. A place which favours experience over analysis: where we can hear, touch, taste and feel, as well as think.

The subjects and treatment need to be distinctive and engaging. And by treatment, we are looking for specific and individual angles of attack to the subject. So, for example, rather than being a generic feature about how to ask better questions, *The Big Ask* consisted of 28 minutes made up entirely of questions. Or rather than interviewing people about what they do at Yuletide, *A Very British Christmas* consisted entirely of voice notes recorded by people on Christmas Day. Characterful, textured writing as heard in episodes like *Into the West* and *The Metaphor Consultant* can drive features, as can gorgeous sound palettes and audio treatments. Yet they must also retain mass appeal, so it is crucial that they have a clear and compelling narrative and purpose. While *Illuminated* can surprise listeners, it should never be obscure or contrary for its own sake.

Many offers revolve around intensely personal experiences, and these can make for powerful episodes, such as *Scattering, In Pieces* and *CS Lewis, the Evacuee and the Wardrobe*. However, the slot needs variety, and we want offers that take us into unexpected territory – like the experience of women who have knives thrown at them for a living in *Target Girls* and the squelchy science of *You've Got Worms*. Fun, wit and humour are very welcome – as heard in episodes like *Peanuts at 75* and *Lost in Lullabies*. So: bring us something different and unexpected. Surprise us. Illuminate us.



Typically we will commission single episodes, although we will consider series offers if there is a compelling reason to do so. When considering an offer for the slot we may request a short audio sample to give a flavour of what the final programme will deliver.

Some further examples which display the range of approaches include: *The Organ Symphony*, *All Under One Magnetosphere*, *Thirty Eulogies*, *Hearing Aids*, *Bass Notes* and *Problems with Julia Masli*.

**We will commission on the basis of a short proposal in PiCoS, followed by a conversation.**

<b>Commissioning Brief name: 57' Archive on 4</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47088</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline A   Factual One Offs &amp; Comedy</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	57'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Sat 20.00
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£10,610

## Editorial Opportunity

This is the longest documentary slot on the network and often the most wonderful. More minutes, more joy. However, the duration of 57' requires a particularly strong editorial approach, based around powerful and compelling narrative or a highly distinctive production structure.

A strong authorial voice can be crucial in leading us through the hour – for example the brilliant scripting of *A Ghost Story for Christmas* or *Taxi Driver at 50: New York Then and Now*. Audio archive material should be central to the story or argument, not merely window dressing. Unique archive, cleverly deployed can be the engine of compelling episodes – like the remarkable recordings of Kenneth Williams reading gospel stories in *Kenneth Williams: Said the Actor to the Bishop*, the audio notes of *The Mandy Rice-Davies Tapes* or the interview at the heart of *Paris with Marianne*. The slot can accommodate a huge range of subjects and editorial approaches, and one of its pleasures is the variety and surprise it brings on its Saturday evening origination.



One classic approach is when Archive on 4 helps us rethink the past and convey its relevance to the issues and controversies that define our world today – in episodes like *Out of this World: 25 Years of the ISS*, *Exposing Hiroshima*, *Trouble Staying Still: ADHD's Identity Crisis*, *Up In Smoke* and the magnificent *A People's History of Gaza*. Episodes like *Ronald vs Donald* apply a fresh thesis to the past and reinterpret its significance for today. The slot can bring us stories from the past that have fallen from public memory such as *Philadelphia's Forgotten Bomb* or *Exposing Hiroshima*. The choice of presenter can be crucial, especially when they have a strong personal connection to the story (rather than just saying “I've long been fascinated by ...”). Compelling examples include *The Battle of the Drina*, *Do You Speak English?* and *A Child of Rover*.

The choice of subjects is extremely wide and we don't always have to go back decades to find them – for instance *Liz Truss's Big Gamble* was instant history, made just a few weeks after the collapse of her government. That episode also garnered headlines and it's worth bringing ambition to the slot – for example in *One Last Chance to See* which was tied to the 20-part *A Carnival of Animals* series, or *Jodrell Bank at 80* which linked an episode with a series of live performances at the site.

Plus this is a great place to give listeners a sumptuous treat. To have fun. As in episodes like *Prisoners, Saints and Persuaders: The World of ITC*, *How the Muppet Show Began in Britain* and *Into the Sharkiverse*.

## Further guidance for full proposals

- Proposals should set out clearly how the idea justifies a 57' origination, with a clear sense that there are enough layers to the story, and the twists and turns to keep listeners engaged until the end.
- The authority, charisma, energy and scripting skills of the presenter are often vital. Please indicate in your full proposal whether your presenter is confirmed or indicative, and whether they have been involved in developing the idea. We are looking for amazing broadcasters, starry names or people with a particular relationship to the archive material.
- This is not a place for pure nostalgia or an hour of just telling the audience how great someone or something was. Straight biography or celebration will eventually fall flat.
- If you are submitting an anniversary-pegged proposal, tell us how you might introduce surprise, reframe the subject or challenge expectations.
- Please tell us about details of ownership and availability of rights for key archive material. If you haven't made enquiries, that's useful to know too. For entire or complete programmes (where we would normally expect to take a licence to broadcast), details of availability of broadcast rights, ownership and price per broadcast must be provided.



## FACTUAL SERIES

### Timeline B | Timetable and opportunities

Stage	Dates	Activities
Round opens	w/c 19 January	Publish commissioning briefs and open round in PiCoS.
Presentations by the Director of Speech and Commissioning Editors	<b>GLASGOW:</b> Mon 02 Feb <b>SALFORD:</b> Tues 03 Feb <b>CARDIFF:</b> Weds 04 Feb <b>LONDON:</b> Fri 06 Feb	The commissioning team brief programme-makers. A recording of one of the presentations will be available online soon after the event.
1. Short proposal	<b>Weds 25 Feb 12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for short proposals in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted.  If you have questions you need answered before submitting short proposals, send them to the commissioning co-ordinator well before the deadline.
	w/c 09 March	Commissioners shortlist proposals and notify producers of outcomes. Full proposals requested from those proceeding to next stage.
2. Full proposal	Between 13 March & 14 April	Opportunity to discuss shortlisted short proposals (by phone, Teams or in person, availability allowing) prior to submitting full proposals.
	<b>Weds 15 April 12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for full proposals in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted.
3. Conditional commission	Early June	Results released. Commissions, subject to contract. Editorial specifications and price agreed.

<b>Commissioning Brief name: 42' Documentary Series</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47195</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline B   Factual Series</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	42' (usually 3 x 42')
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Mon 11.00
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£9,660

## Editorial Opportunity

This is the slot for documentary series, usually in three parts, which uncover in compelling detail important trends, forces and ideas shaping the world, along with big journalistic statements about Britain and beyond. The series we commission here must all hit a timely and relevant issue with the power to change the conversation or achieve a depth or impact that no single documentary could deliver.

Most 42' documentary series that we commission for next year will sit within our podcast feed *Understand*, and we are looking to ramp up our ambition and impact in this feed.

Every year, whilst we get lots of ideas in this slot that explore interesting subject areas, we get too many 'tour of the waterfront' proposals, and not enough that have a distinctive take, or audio storytelling approach, or a clearly defined treatment that suits the three-part structure. A successful commission will need all three.

Whatever you're exploring, we need to know how: like we did with the award-winning series *County Lines*, which combined a very personal connection to the subject being explored with a creative use of sound, or *The Second Map*, which drew on a unique archive alongside exclusive new interviews, or *The Great Influencer Experiment*, which explored the reality of making a living in the creator economy by setting a challenge for its key contributors.

Don't be afraid to take complex, abstract subjects and unpack them for our listeners. One of the best things you can do with the scale of this slot is to use it to make a sinuous and well-articulated argument about a timely subject that hasn't yet been explored in this way. An outstanding recent example was *What Happened to Progress?* Another approach is to find someone with profile and expertise, who has a thesis that is detailed and interesting enough to be set out at length, and to give them the space to do it (e.g. Rory Stewart's *The Long History of ...*).



We also love it when you find an original and playful lens on a subject that is at the frontiers of knowledge (like *Writing the Universe*, or *Bacteria: The Tiny Giants*).

Your presenter is usually central. Can you build your idea around someone with established appeal? Or bring us a brilliant new voice – from an unexpected place - who you think should be given the chance to present something of this scope, and take our journalism to a new audience?

**Further guidance:**

- Big and bold doesn't mean that the scope of the programme itself needs to be huge. Often taking a narrow slice of something - or a specific story - as a starting point is more illuminating than trying to tell the complete history of a big subject.
- Think ambitiously and carefully about your presenter. Are they a great broadcaster? Why are they the best person to help us understand the idea you're exploring? Who will they appeal to? Will they cut through beyond the broadcast slot?
- The best of these series will be surprising and counter-intuitive. They might take a subject that wouldn't conventionally be seen as 'important,' and show us why it is, or challenge the way listeners see the world.
- Not everything on Radio 4 must tackle geopolitics or social ills. You might choose to focus on more subtle or positive forces at work in the world.



<b>Commissioning Brief name: 14' Series</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47006</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline B   Factual Series</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	14'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Mon-Fri 13.45
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£4,250

## Editorial Opportunity

This is our combined brief for 14' series at both five and ten (or more) parts. Most will run at 13:45 on Radio 4, stripped across the week Mon-Fri.

We're looking for different things in a 5 x 14' series to what we are looking for in a 14' series of ten parts or more, so please read this brief carefully.

If you are pitching a narrative series, even at 14' episode durations, please submit it into one of the narrative briefs – see below in the FACTUAL NARRATIVE SERIES section of this document.

## 5 x 14' Series

We commission 5 x 14' series in every factual genre – and we treasure them as a key part of the Radio 4 schedule. But every commission must have a reason to be told across five short parts.

This is a unique, high-profile place in the schedule to explore a wide range of subjects and to innovate in terms of treatment. Every series must explore something interesting and relevant, and bring quality and precision of thought and observation, but it should also shine like a string of polished jewels: this is a slot for highly crafted, creative, playful programme making.

Your idea might be driven by a character-led approach (eg *Forgiveness: Stories from the Front Line*), or framed through a clever, lateral treatment (*Looking for No Man's Land*). It will almost certainly be predicated on a timely insight that it's essential for us to understand (*The Autism Curve*). It might tell five stories, one per episode (*Dementia: Unexpected Stories*)



*of the Mind*), or split its topic into five distinct chapters (*Mary Bourke: Who Cares?*). Some of the best series in this slot have a subject that itself naturally divides into five distinct parts (e.g. *One Direction*). And we will always commission some 14' series that contain a collection of episodes that will happily stand-alone (e.g. *Prime Ministers' Props*).

Not every 14' series will have a presenter, but the vast majority will, and who they are is key. Can you build your idea around someone with established appeal? Or bring us a brilliant new voice from an unexpected place; someone you think should be given the chance to present something of this scope?

We're not looking to commission returning formats in this round. Rhian Roberts, our Podcast Commissioner, leads on formats, so please pitch those to her in the usual way. You can find details of how to pitch to Rhian on our [website](#).

## 10 x 14'

For series of **10 x 14'** parts or more in this brief, we are looking for landmark work.

Series that seek to make a defining statement on a subject or to illuminate, in depth, an issue of great relevance and interest to our audience, in a treatment that will work brilliantly across ten or more 14' episodes. Series that have the potential to shape perceptions about Radio 4, and the wider BBC.

'Landmark' should never mean old-fashioned. *Human Intelligence*, for example, combined a major key idea (to chart the thinkers who shaped our world) with a very contemporary and sophisticated writer/presenter (Naomi Alderman), to create a series that found a fresh and lively way into a very old subject. And we are looking for work that will smash it in the podcast world as well as on the radio: *Uncharted with Hannah Fry*, which unpacked the world of maths and statistics through surprising stories, was a Sounds hit, and a Number 1 podcast in the Apple chart, as well as working brilliantly on Radio 4.

As well as formatted approaches, this can be the place for detailed, forensic, journalistic examinations of subjects that sit at the heart of national life – told with drama and care. *Derailed: The Story of HS2* is an outstanding recent example.

Above all, we are looking for truly definitive series here - up to 50 episodes in scale, or more - if you can find the right idea. Series that are triggered by a unique insight, and that have broad, ambitious horizons. Series which attempt to do something definitive, and new, but in a modern way.

Remember - we are looking for series in every factual genre: from history and current affairs through science to religion. The world is riven with change and turmoil, and there is so much that needs illuminating, in so many different subject areas. What is out there that we haven't yet explored in depth?



## FACTUAL NARRATIVE SERIES

Thanks to your hard work, we have made excellent progress in 2025 in building our narrative feeds, with an outstanding pipeline of podcast serials in ***The History Podcast***, ***Shadow World***, and ***Intrigue***. We will continue to commission directly into our narrative umbrella feeds this year.

As well as having a podcast release within one of these umbrella feeds, each series will run in either a prominent 14' or 28' slot on Radio 4.

Full briefs for each feed are below, but if there's one thing we want you to think about for this round it is the following: how can you take us into unexpected worlds – worlds that would be surprising to explore in this form - and put the audience inside your characters' experience in a way that truly takes us inside who they are, and why they act the way they do, in the situations they are in? We want to capture the broadest set of perspectives, and the biggest range of human experience, in the most raw and palpable ways.

We are leaving durations and episode numbers flexible at short proposal stage, and will work with you during the commissioning process on whether your series best suits the 14' or 28' episode duration, and how many episodes it should be. Please note your desired shape in your short proposal and we will take it into account.

One important point: whilst these umbrellas are key to our strategy as a network, and we think that between them they cover a lot of territory, you shouldn't be restricted by them.

We still have the scope to commission narrative series as standalone podcasts like *The Gift*, *Things Fell Apart* or *The Coming Storm*.

So: if – having read the briefs below - you have a brilliant idea that doesn't fit neatly within an umbrella, just put it into the brief you think is the closest and we will be sure to read it. If we love it, we will find a way to do it.

The slot price here is a guide; in certain circumstances, additional funding can be found for projects that have outstanding editorial ambition, significant talent costs, and/or commercial potential.



## Timeline C | Timetable and opportunities

Stage	Dates	Activities
Round opens	w/c 19 January	Publish commissioning briefs and open round in PiCoS.
Presentations by the Director of Speech and Commissioning Editors	<b>GLASGOW:</b> Mon 02 Feb <b>SALFORD:</b> Tues 03 Feb <b>CARDIFF:</b> Weds 04 Feb <b>LONDON:</b> Fri 06 Feb	The commissioning team brief programme-makers. A recording of one of the presentations will be available online soon after the event.
1. Short proposal	<b>Weds 04 March</b> <b>12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for short proposals in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted. If you have questions you need answered before submitting short proposals, send them to the commissioning co-ordinator well before the deadline.
	w/c 23 March	Commissioners shortlist proposals and notify producers of outcomes. Full proposals requested from those proceeding to next stage.
2. Full proposal	Between 27 March & 12 May	Opportunity to discuss shortlisted short proposals (by phone, Teams or in person, availability allowing) prior to submitting full proposals.
	<b>Weds 13 May</b> <b>12 noon</b>	<b>Deadline for full proposals in PiCoS.</b> Late submissions cannot be accepted.
3. Conditional commission	Late July	Results released. Commissions, subject to contract. Editorial specifications and price agreed.



<b>Commissioning Brief name: The History Podcast</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47192</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline C   Factual Narrative Series, Arts &amp; Drama</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	14' or 28'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Mon-Fri at 13:45 or Weds 09.30
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£5,080 for 14' eps - 12,180-£15,230 for 28' eps

## Editorial Opportunity

**The History Podcast** is the home of story-driven modern history serials, with the tagline: history in close-up, through the people who were there.

2025 was an outstanding year for the feed – the year it became established as a ‘go-to podcast’ (Patricia Nicol, The Times) for lovers of immersive, thought-provoking, gripping modern history. The feed won Gold at the British Podcast Awards, for *The Brighton Bomb*, and was chosen as one of the New Yorker magazine’s top ten podcasts of 2025, for a string of brilliantly told historical stories, from *Invisible Hands* with David Dimbleby, through to *The Fort*, to *Half-Life* and *The House at Number 48*, the biggest History Podcast Sounds launch to date.

The Radio 4 audience has an insatiable appetite for history, and this is a feed we have huge ambitions for. We know that there is much more scope to tell historical stories from the recent past in an immersive, beautifully crafted, uncompromisingly narrative fashion, and in this round, we are determined to find serials that open up new aspects of our recent past, and further push the boundaries of what is possible in terms of narrative audio storytelling.

This umbrella is defined by modern history told beat by beat in the room where it happened. Every series we consider must combine a chapter from recent history that is still fascinating today, with first person testimony from the protagonists in the story (either from fresh interviews or archive), and a tightly plotted narrative that you can’t turn away from, episode to episode. And whilst the stories will always be close focus, each one needs to illuminate a bigger set of historical forces that are important to understand now. How does the passing of time allow even well known historical chapters to be re-assessed or explored from a new perspective?



Most series in this feed will be narrated by a presenter who brings humanity, sophistication and distinctive authorship to the story they're telling, though we have also had success with stories told purely through the characters themselves. Simple retellings of big events won't normally be enough: you need to have a take on the story you want to tell.

If your idea has these ingredients, there is scope for variety. So far, series that have worked well have included:

- Stories that are 'time-boxed' - which take place over a specific period that can be re-told in full, and with thrillingly immersive detail. Examples include *The Fort*, which told the story of what happened to a group of British soldiers over the course of just one day, on their mission to try and capture a Taliban fort, and *The Brighton Bomb*, which told the story of the 1984 IRA plot to try and kill Margaret Thatcher, from inception through to execution.
- Series that lead the listener on a very personal exploration of, say, a family story or mystery that then illuminates a much bigger chapter of history. Examples include *The House at Number 48*, which detailed Antony Easton's search for his family's missing millions, taken from them by the Nazis, and *Half-Life*, in which the writer Joe Dunthorne took us into his family's mysterious past, involving the manufacture of chemical weapons, and ultimately illuminating an overlooked chapter from Turkish history.
- Series that find a character-driven way into a story that charts the history of an idea, or of a distinctive social or political change. *Invisible Hands* is one example - managing to chart the history of the free-market revolution - a story that took place over decades and was far from an obvious candidate for narrative treatment - in a way that was gripping and entertaining from start to finish. Note that in this case, presenter David Dimbleby was able to place himself at many of the key moments within the story, honouring the 'history told through the people who were there' rubric of the feed.
- Both *The Brighton Bomb*, praised by The Times for 'meticulous storytelling', where 'known events unfold like a thriller', and *Half-Life*, praised by critics as a 'riveting, profoundly rewarding listen', were highly authored, and we want to do more with distinctive authorship in this feed. Who out there has the right writerly skills to tell us a great factual story, with twists, turns, emotional highs and lows, and the sophistication of a great novel?
- At the other end of the spectrum, we are also very interested in developing the approach taken in *The Fort* - immersing listeners in a story without any mediation at all, so that we are put directly inside the minds of our characters in a way that does justice to their extraordinary experiences.



We're interested in exploring how biography might work within this feed – and are looking for crowd-pleasers as well as more demanding pieces. What is our version of *The Lucan Obsession* for 2027?

One important point: these umbrellas allow us to be flexible when it comes to the number of episodes per series. Some could be told over as few as three or four episodes; others over ten or more. Whatever suits your story.

Please also see the **Development and Access** section in the main introduction as it is relevant to this brief.



<b>Commissioning Brief name: Shadow World</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47191</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline C   Factual Narrative Series, Arts &amp; Drama</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	14' or 28'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Mon-Fri at 13:45 or Weds 09.30
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£5,080 for 14' eps - 12,180-£15,230 for 28' eps

## Editorial Opportunity

**Shadow World** is the home of original narrative serials that reveal something surprising and significant about the UK today. It has fast become established as the place for outstanding, critically acclaimed work that combines journalistic rigour with gripping, character-driven storytelling, and was named as one of *The Times*' podcasts of 2025. We are now looking for stories that can build on its success and take it to the next level in terms of impact and scale.

So far, serials in this feed have been genuinely investigative, like *The Grave Robbers* – which was a wholly original story that Sue Mitchell and team brought onto the national stage in a way that made an immediate difference. They have given us a window into a scandal at one of our national institutions, in *Thief at the British Museum*, told – as *The Times* put it, like ‘something from the golden age of crime fiction’ with ‘a marvellous central character.’

They have taken us deep into hidden worlds, like *The Smuggler*, about a former British soldier who became an international people smuggler. Or, like *Anatomy of a Cancellation*, they have anatomised a matter of great public contention with fairness, journalistic rigour and compelling, sensitive storytelling, in a way that made a material impact, too. As the critic James Marriott put it, *Anatomy* holds its subject ‘diamond-like up to the light and inspects almost every conceivable glint and refraction.’

This last series is an emblem for one thing we want to do more of: tackle contested and ethically complex subjects that others won't, in ways that hear from all sides, are meticulously reported, and beautifully told. But there is a huge amount of scope for all kinds of stories in this feed, and we don't want to be restricted to the conventional criminal territory that makes up so much of the investigative journalism out there. What will you bring us next?



Every series in this feed will need to be made by teams and presenters with the right journalistic and storytelling experience, and we will need to be sure of this ahead of commission.

Further pointers:

- Each series in **Shadow World** should be driven by rigorous original journalism, digging up secrets about the UK that people don't want us to know, exposing wrongdoing, or anatomising scandal, whilst taking us into a hidden world we need to understand, and revealing unknown truths about that world. Most will be contemporary, but investigations that go back into history can work here too.
- Your story could be criminal, or political, or cultural, in theme - or something else entirely. We encourage you to think broadly and imaginatively about subject matter. Stories stand out to us when they are not about a murder, or a sexual abuse scandal. We don't want every series in this feed to be grim. And there are so many different worlds to get into.
- Each series will need to be built around direct access to the characters and materials that take listeners straight to the heart of the story you're telling. We will need to know what you have access to ahead of commission and will want to discuss this in the pitch.
- Whilst we're looking for some original investigations, unique access to a single key protagonist, carefully structured storytelling and a great presenter can transform a subject that has already been comprehensively reported into a bingeable listen which reveals fascinating things about Britain: e.g. *Thief at the British Museum* or *The People vs McDonald's*.
- Each series should be about a subject of great relevance to our audience, with characters we can identify with, or who fascinate us. Could what your story is uncovering happen to you, or someone you know?
- Whose eyes are we seeing your story through, what do they bring to it, and how do they make us see your subject afresh? Presenter is completely key.

One important point: these umbrellas allow us to be flexible when it comes to the number of episodes per series. Some could be told over as few as three or four episodes; others over ten or more. Whatever suits your story.

Please also see the **Development and Access** section in the main introduction as it is relevant to this brief.



<b>Commissioning Brief name: Intrigue</b>	
<b>Commissioning Brief no: 47190</b>	
<b>Commissioning Round: Spring 2026   Timeline C   Factual Narrative Series, Arts &amp; Drama</b>	
<b>Duration (inc. announcements)</b>	14' or 28'
<b>Schedule slot</b>	Mon-Fri at 13:45 or Weds 09.30
<b>Transmission period</b>	April 2027 - March 2028
<b>Guide price per episode</b>	£5,080 for 14' eps - £12,180-£15,230 for 28' eps

## Editorial Opportunity

**Intrigue** is our umbrella feed for dramatic true stories and investigations that reveal how the world really works.

Critics have called serials in this feed: ‘jaw dropping’, ‘gripping’, ‘bingeable’, ‘thrilling’ – and these are the qualities that every new **Intrigue** commission must have. Each series should also seek to have real world impact.

*To Catch a Scorpion*, the investigation with which we relaunched **Intrigue** in 2024, was emblematic of many of the qualities we are looking for today – it made international news, influenced the arrest of a prominent people smuggler, and went on to win both The Prix Europa and The Prix Italia for best investigation, along with a Gold at the British Podcast Awards.

The clarity of the series mission, the authenticity and journalistic experience of the presenters, and the ‘in the moment’ recordings which allowed listeners to be alongside them as the drama unfolded, are all illustrations of the kinds of ingredients that make a series in **Intrigue** stand out.

In **Intrigue** we are always looking for our next major investigation, and these investigations need to be multi-layered, and often international in scope. They’ll need to be made by teams and presenters with the right journalistic and storytelling experience, and we will need to be sure of this ahead of commission.

But as our tagline makes clear - not everything we commission into this feed needs to be genuinely investigative. We are also looking for dramatic true stories that show how the world really works. This is deliberately broad – and **Intrigue** can house intelligent true crime



such as *Word of God*, alongside extraordinary true stories like the feed's original hit, *Tunnel 29*.

Think about the title: above all, we are looking for stories that are intriguing, and mysterious, and which elicit feelings of curiosity, excitement and fascination – whilst taking us into an aspect of the world that we don't know much about and need to understand.

We are more interested in windows into espionage, organised crime, politics, business, conspiracy and the geopolitical and technological forces shaping the world than in murders and scams - though of course there may be murders and scams within these worlds that form the spine of your story. Above all, we are looking for stories that have real salience in the world now – that take us into the social, geopolitical and technological shifts we are living through.

Not everything here needs to be dark, or to have conventionally 'high stakes'. Surprise us!

Further pointers:

- Each series of **Intrigue** is likely to have a mystery at its heart that you are trying to uncover – whether it's a character you're pursuing or trying to understand, a mysterious arrival, disappearance or death, a set of shadowy forces that have conspired to make something happen, a series of strange events that you're trying to make sense of, or a hidden world that you're trying to penetrate in order to get to the truth.
- A key purpose of every **Intrigue** is for listeners to come away with a better understanding of the bigger ideas that your story helps to illuminate - whether that's people smuggling (*To Catch a Scorpion*), or the shady world of looted antiquities (*Word of God*). The central narrative mission should be set compellingly within the history and context of the story you're telling.
- Each series will need to be built around direct access to characters and materials that take listeners straight to the heart of the story you're telling. We will need to know what you have access to ahead of a commission and will want to discuss this in the pitch.
- Whose eyes are we seeing your story through, what do they bring to it, and how do they make us see your subject afresh? Presenter is completely key.

One important point: these umbrellas allow us to be flexible when it comes to the number of episodes per series. Some could be told over as few as three or four episodes; others over ten or more. Whatever suits your story.

Please also see the **Development and Access** section in the main introduction as it is relevant to this brief.



## SECTION D: COMMISSIONING PROCESS

The BBC reserves the right at any time prior to award of a commission, and without incurring any liability to the affected suppliers, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw any briefs, or annul the commissioning process, rejecting all proposals.

### PiCoS

All proposals must be submitted via PiCoS. If you experience any issues with PiCoS, please contact [PiCoS.support@bbc.co.uk](mailto:PiCoS.support@bbc.co.uk).

To sign into PiCoS (<https://picos.tools.bbc.co.uk>) you will need a BBC Login account set up against the supplier you are pitching on behalf of. If you don't already have a BBC Login account or you are unable to access [PiCoS](#) with your existing BBC Login account, please [raise a request](#). You can find more information and a video of how to pitch ideas at the [PiCoS for Suppliers site](#). If your supplier has not yet registered for PiCoS please review the [eligibility requirements](#) and submit a [supplier registration form](#).

**Please ensure you have access to PiCoS well in advance of submitting your proposal.**

Everything in this commissioning round is open to competition. There is no formal eligibility questionnaire. If you are registered on the BBC supplier database it is assumed that you satisfy the basic eligibility requirements.

We invite proposals from all BBC departments and from registered independent companies who can demonstrate considerable experience in radio/audio or TV production at both producer and executive producer level. We are also eager to welcome new production talent into the world of Radio 4. If a producer has not made programmes for us before, please include their track record in the 'Production Experience' section in PiCoS.

### Short proposal stage

All Short Proposals must be submitted by the Short Proposal deadline, with no exceptions, and **following the guidance below**. Please do build in contingency. If you need any support to navigate through the site, you will find step by step guides with screenshots on the Supplier Academy page <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/picos-suppliers/#helpcards>.

### Guidance for submitting Short Proposals

**Round** Spring 2026 | **Timeline A** | **Factual One Offs & Comedy**, Spring 2026 | **Timeline B** | **Factual Series** or Spring 2026 | **Timeline C** | **Factual Narrative Series, Arts & Drama**

**Brief** Enter each proposal under one brief only. If we consider it suitable for another slot, we will transfer it.



**Eligibility/Production experience** Please enter N/A in this box unless the producer or the executive producer is new to Radio 4. If they are new to us, please provide their production credits and experience.

**Proposal Title** Please use Title Case. It is fine to use w/t for working titles. Once an idea has been submitted into PiCoS, please do not change the title, at any stage (pre or post commission) without discussing this with the commissioner first.

**Short proposal** This is where you sell your idea. **Max 300 words** for one offs and series. **Max 500 words** for narrative podcasts. (Only the first 300 or 500 words will be read).

**Duration per episode** Please enter the duration as stated in the commissioning brief

**Number of episodes** Please enter your intended number of episodes

**Co-production** We welcome proposals from suppliers who wish to group together in a partnership. Please submit each joint proposal once only.

**Additional Information/Supporting media** Please do not submit any supporting media at Short Proposal stage. **IT WILL NOT BE READ. We will only request supporting media, where required, at Full Proposal stage.**

If you submit a proposal in error, or you decide that you no longer wish to proceed with an idea, please **withdraw the proposal** in PiCoS.

## Evaluation

Short proposals will be evaluated by the commissioning team who will shortlist the ones they wish to see as full proposals. We will release results in PiCoS. Proposals will show as **'Rejected'** or **'Awaiting full proposal'**. We regret that we cannot give feedback on rejected short proposals. At any stage of the process, we may come back to you to seek more information. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.

## Pitch meetings

If your idea is shortlisted, you will be invited to discuss it with the Commissioning Editor - or, if applicable, the Commissioning Exec – before submitting a full proposal. This will be in person, on the phone or on Teams, depending on genre and availability. **We will not discuss ideas that have not already been submitted as short proposals.**

## Full proposal stage

Full Proposals for all proposals 'Awaiting full proposal' must be submitted by the Full Proposal deadline, with no exceptions, and following the guidance below. Please do build in contingency. If you need any support to navigate through the site, you will find step by step guides with screenshots on the Supplier Academy page <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/picos-suppliers/#helpcards>.



## Guidance for submitting Full Proposals

NB: If you no longer wish to proceed with an idea, please **withdraw the proposal** in PiCoS.

**Commissioning Brief** If the Commissioning Editor asks you to submit your Full Proposal under a different brief, please copy the proposal, submit it under the new brief, then withdraw your original proposal.

**Full proposal** This is where you sell your idea. **Max 1200 words** (only the first 1200 words will be read). Please open your Full Proposal with a **50 word summary** of your idea. Think of this as a fledgling Radio Times billing. Please note that, beyond the standard metadata and possible clip requirements, we do not require any extra digital deliverables to be offered for these commissions. The digital commissioning editor will look at the slate of commissions and assess the potential for any additional digital content, and whether it merits additional funding.

**Contributors** Enter any intended writer/abridger/performer/presenter, etc. here. You do not have to secure talent agreement before submitting an offer, but please let us know, in the Full Proposal field, the degree to which named talent has expressed an interest in the project or has intellectual ownership of it.

**Delivery Date** For full proposals, we need a **realistic/accurate earliest possible delivery date**, linked to anniversary/event where relevant. This information is important and will be used when scheduling a commissioned programme.

**Production budget / Proposed price per episode** If you leave this blank, it will default to guide price. Please enter your forecast price if you expect it to be under or over the guide price.

**Additional Information/Supporting media** The Commissioning Editor will advise if they need any additional supporting media (such as published books, audio or scripts) to accompany your full proposal.

## Evaluation

We will evaluate all full proposals against the editorial brief and commission those which most successfully fulfil the brief. Commissioning decisions will be communicated in PiCoS. Brief feedback for rejected proposals will be given there. At any stage of the process, we may request more information. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.



## Conditional commission awarded

Confirmation of all commissions is conditional on the issues listed below.

**Feedback** There will be important information included in the feedback field in PiCoS which will not be communicated through other means so it is vital that you take time to read this and share with colleagues.

**Price** Each conditional commission will be accompanied by a price based on what you have added to your final offer and judged as value for money by the commissioning, finance and business teams. If you wish to challenge the offer made, a detailed budget will be requested and evaluated by our finance and business teams with the aim of reaching agreement. Conditional acceptance may be withdrawn if agreement is not reached within a reasonable period. Radio 4 is not responsible for any costs incurred prior to full agreement.

**Rights** Radio 4 requires programmes to be contracted under the [Audio Terms of Trade](#). This will vary only in exceptional circumstances. Proposals with co-production funding will be welcomed.

**Schedule and delivery dates** We are unlikely to issue precise transmission dates for programmes not pegged to a particular anniversary or season but will give the calendar quarter in which we intend to place them. Precise delivery dates will be confirmed well before the start of each calendar quarter. We will use your given delivery dates to schedule commissioned programmes, but there will be instances where we would want programmes earlier. If you cannot deliver to meet the given transmission quarter, notify Richard Culver (Head of Planning & Scheduling) [richard.culver@bbc.co.uk](mailto:richard.culver@bbc.co.uk) and Elaine Boyd (Scheduling Manager) [elaine.boyd@bbc.co.uk](mailto:elaine.boyd@bbc.co.uk) within 14 days of results publication.

**Editorial** A conditional acceptance might have specific editorial conditions attached to it, e.g. that a particular presenter or actor is available. Fulfilment of them must be confirmed before the commission is finalised and before you start work. If they turn out to be unavailable we may accept a substitute but this must be agreed with the commissioning team.

**Compliance and BBC Editorial Guidelines** You will be required to deliver programmes in line with BBC Editorial Guidelines and be able to adapt to changing BBC editorial and business needs during the period of the commission. Proposals not complying with the requirements of this brief may be rejected by Radio 4, whose decision will be final.

**Delivery** Too many programmes go unsung because programme descriptions and audio are not delivered in time to hit our press and promotion deadlines. Late submissions also put pressure on our small Scheduling Team. If your programmes are commissioned these **must** be delivered by the deadlines we give you.



## Notes on Generative Artificial Intelligence

The BBC has issued [Information and Guiding Principles](#) to ensure the responsible use of Generative AI technology in BBC programmes. Is there (or might there be) any proposed use of Generative AI in the production and delivery of the programme which may require transparency in order to comply with the BBC's Principles and Guidance? If yes, please discuss with your commissioning editor at pitch stage and include details in your full proposal.

## Notes on 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 should be woven into the editorial – either implicitly or explicitly. 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](#).

If you have any questions about this commissioning brief, contact the Commissioning Co-ordinator:

Jacqueline Clarke [jacqueline.clarke@bbc.co.uk](mailto:jacqueline.clarke@bbc.co.uk)

