

## BBC Four

### **Part I: Key characteristics of the service**

#### **1. Remit**

The remit of BBC Four is to be a mixed-genre television channel for all adults offering an ambitious range of innovative, high quality output that is intellectually and culturally enriching. Its focus should be on the provision of factual and arts programming.

#### **2. Scope of this Licence**

BBC Four should be available from 19.00hrs - 04.00hrs every day. It should be transmitted free to air for general reception in the UK as a live broadcast on digital television and it may be simulcast on fixed and mobile internet protocol networks.

It may also offer its broadcast content on fixed and mobile internet protocol networks or via other platforms<sup>1</sup> for seven days after it has been broadcast. On the same platforms, it may allow users retrospectively or prospectively via pre-booking to download multiple episodes of first-run series (known as 'series stacking')<sup>2</sup> until a date no later than seven days after the last episode in the relevant series. The aggregate volume of such "series stacked" content must represent no more than 15% of all television content offered on-demand. On the internet, it may give users 30 days after downloading the content to access it for the first time and may allow users to repeatedly consume downloaded content for up to seven days after first access.

It should offer programme-related content on [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk).<sup>3</sup> Some programmes should have interactive television features available on digital platforms.

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<sup>1</sup> Provision by particular providers over certain platforms has been specifically approved by the Trust in its On-Demand public value test of April 2007. Content may also in future be syndicated to other providers and platforms over the internet, in accordance with the Trust's Syndication Policy for BBC on-demand content.

<sup>2</sup> The Trust's guidelines for which programmes may be included in series stacking are those where the series has a distinct run, with a beginning and an end and a clear 'narrative arc' or those with exceptionally high impact. These should cover a broad range of programmes, in terms of genre and appeal.

<sup>3</sup> This includes the offer of some news and current affairs output on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast. Any expansion of this offering will require the approval of the BBC Trust.

### **3. Service budget**

BBC Four has an annual service budget of £53.3 million.

Any planned or actual change in annual expenditure on the service of more than 10% in real value requires approval from the BBC Trust and may entail variation of this Service Licence. This parameter of change is set to allow variations in spending which arise from regular, cyclical factors such as spending on major sports events, a reasonable level of operational flexibility (e.g. programme scheduling) and changes in accounting policy. Allowing for these factors, the Trust may judge that planned or actual change in annual expenditure of less than 10% should require its approval if the implications of this are significant for the character of the service or its market.

### **4. Overview of aims and objectives**

BBC Four programmes should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and it should nurture UK talent.

BBC Four should deliver its remit through a broad range of culturally enriching and innovative programming including philosophy and ideas, science and nature, business, politics, social issues, history, art, performance, music, film, media and news – in particular global news and current affairs. Within the defined scope of the service, it should stimulate, support and reflect the diversity of cultural activity in the UK.

BBC Four should offer a news and current affairs programme covering UK and international stories in peaktime on weeknights. It should offer the best international and foreign language feature films, programming and documentaries.

The channel should offer a significant proportion of originally commissioned, UK originated programming, nurture new presenting talent and experiment with new comedy. It should frequently provide factual and arts programming that complements output on BBC Two, by adding greater depth and context. The channel should not develop at the expense of music and arts programmes on BBC One and BBC Two.

BBC Four should place an emphasis on interactivity as a means to deliver its diverse and in-depth content to those who might not otherwise seek it out. It should encourage people to enter the digital world by offering unique and high quality content not available to analogue viewers.

BBC Four is committed to commissioning output from outside the M25 area and from independent suppliers, in accord with the BBC's statutory commitments<sup>4</sup> and the operation of the BBC's In-house Guarantee and Window of Creative Competition.

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<sup>4</sup> All statutory commitments are set out in Annex II of this licence

## **Part II: Contribution to public value**

### **5. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes**

#### **5.1 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence**

BBC Four should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience. It should commission programmes from a diverse range of suppliers across a wide mix of genres and contribute to the BBC's statutory commitments to independent producers, and producers outside London. The channel should build relationships with new independent suppliers who may then go on to win commissions from BBC Two or BBC One. It should aim to bring on new presenter talent and to experiment with new comedy that aims to be literate and intelligent.

Within the defined scope of the service, it should stimulate, support and reflect the diversity of cultural activity in the UK. It should offer a diverse musical agenda with a commitment to classical and specialist music of many kinds and a world music agenda which reflects the multicultural tastes of UK audiences.

Drama should occasionally feature on the channel, with authored singles or short series and it should widen the choice of film available on television, particularly world cinema. Its documentaries should explore new forms of storytelling and its arts and cultural coverage should have a wide range, including painting, architecture, photography, literature and ideas.

#### **Conditions**

BBC Four should:

- Broadcast at least 100 hours of new arts and music programmes each year<sup>5</sup>

#### **5.2 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK**

BBC Four should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by bringing the world to the UK.

It should offer a secure home for the best international and foreign language feature films, programming and documentaries. In documentary, BBC Four should contribute to the BBC's ambition to co-produce or acquire the best programming from around the world by frequently broadcasting new documentaries from around the world.

As part of the channel's commitment to cinema it should acquire first run and classic international and foreign language feature films, help to support their distribution and

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<sup>5</sup> This output includes acquisitions

appreciation in the UK and should provide context and review on screen and online. Foreign language output should regularly be subtitled, including in peaktime, to allow people from around the world to be heard in their own voices.

BBC Four's nightly news and regular current affairs programming should demonstrate a distinctively international perspective. Within its own commissions, BBC Four should include UK perspectives on international culture and life.

### Conditions

BBC Four should:

- Premiere<sup>6</sup> at least 20 new international film titles each year

### 5.3 Promoting education and learning

BBC Four should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by offering a broad range of factual programming.

The majority of programmes on BBC Four should be factual and should aim to build viewers' knowledge by offering greater context and depth than any other BBC channel and by using leaders in their field to describe and explain their areas of expertise.

BBC Four should feature an ambitious range of subject matter, including science, business, social issues, ideas, politics and global affairs. Within this range it may give different emphasis to genres in different seasons, examining issues of particular depth or complexity, including global and minority cultural perspectives.

It should work closely with BBC Two, in particular in factual and arts output. For example, between the two channels there will sometimes be complementary programming during thematic seasons or alongside landmark output. They will also show a range of pre-planned cross-channel repeats designed to increase the reach and impact of its programmes with the audience.

BBC Four should also create space in peaktime to do things that mainstream channels find difficult, such as exploring a single theme in great detail, offering a forum for debate and opinion, and broadcasting subtitled foreign-language output or programming of a long duration.

### Conditions

BBC Four should:

- Broadcast at least 110 hours of new factual programmes each year<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Defined as first showing in UK on digital TV channel

<sup>7</sup> This output includes acquisitions

#### **5.4 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities**

BBC Four should play its part in supporting this purpose amongst its audience. Within its defined remit, the channel should stimulate, support and reflect the diversity of the UK. It should record and broadcast performance from the nations and regions, including key festivals around the UK and should also create occasions that bring people together and allow them to express local culture. It will also cover issues of faith, spirituality and ethics.

BBC Four should help to create and sustain communities of interest by enabling online exchange of ideas and opinions stimulated by its output.

BBC Four should support the BBC's statutory commitment to commission a range of output from outside the M25.<sup>8</sup>

#### **5.5 Sustaining citizenship and civil society**

BBC Four should play its part in supporting this purpose amongst its audience through its provision of impartial, accurate and independent news and current affairs.

BBC Four should offer an in-depth news and current affairs programme in peaktime on weeknights, that significantly broadens the BBC's television news provision by focussing on an international news agenda and appealing to those who are interested in global news and current affairs.

#### **5.6 Emerging communications**

The BBC's sixth public purpose is defined in the Charter as "in promoting its other purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television".

BBC Four should contribute to the promotion of this purpose in a variety of ways which are described in this Service Licence.

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<sup>8</sup> All statutory commitments are set out in Annex II of this licence

## **6. Annexes to this Licence**

### **6.1 Annex I – Performance assessment**

The performance of BBC Four will be assessed by the Trust using the framework described in Annex I. BBC Four's compliance with any Conditions, as described in section 5, will also be measured on an annual basis and reported in the Annual Report and Accounts.

The BBC Trust will expect BBC Four to comply with the commitments described in sections 4 and 5 of the Service Licence. The BBC Trust will monitor compliance with these commitments retrospectively as part of its periodic service reviews and/or on an exceptional basis if there is evidence or allegation of non-compliance.

### **6.2. Annex II - Statutory commitments**

Details of statutory quotas and other obligations to be fulfilled by BBC Four, in conjunction with other BBC services, are set out in Annex II.

## **7. Operation of this Service Licence by the BBC Trust**

For details of how the BBC Trust operates this Service Licence, please see the Service Licence Operating Framework. This is available from [www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust) or upon request from the BBC Trust Unit.

## **Annex I: Performance measurement framework**

### **Introduction**

The BBC Trust has the function of assessing the performance of the Executive Board in delivering the BBC's services and activities and holding the Executive Board to account for its performance.<sup>9</sup> It will use the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Four.

The framework is based around the four drivers of public value: Reach, Quality, Impact and Value for money and it includes measurement of the five content characteristics, as described in the BBC Agreement<sup>10</sup>: high quality, challenging, original, innovative and engaging.

The Trust can amend this framework without this constituting formal variation to this Service Licence.

### **Performance measurement framework**

**Reach:** BBC Four should contribute towards the maintenance of combined BBC weekly reach<sup>11</sup> at over 90% by aiming to increase its own *weekly reach*.

It should contribute towards on-demand consumption of content. This will be measured by reference to:

- seven-day television catch-up over the internet – weekly reach amongst all television households;
- simulcast television over the internet – weekly reach amongst all television households;
- seven-day television catch-up over cable – weekly reach amongst all television households.

In addition, its overall reach should include estimated on-demand usage.

**Quality:** audience *approval* of BBC Four and perceptions of it as *high quality* and *innovative*. Also, the proportion of *originated programmes* across all hours.<sup>12</sup>

**Impact:** licence fee payer *awareness* of BBC Four and audience perceptions of BBC Four as *engaging* and *challenging*.

**Value for money:** BBC Four's *cost per viewer hour*.

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<sup>9</sup> Charter, article 24 (c)

<sup>10</sup> Agreement, clause 14

<sup>11</sup> For all BBC services

<sup>12</sup> Including repeats

## **Annex II: Statutory commitments**

In addition to the conditions and commitments described in this Service Licence, BBC Four has, or contributes to the fulfilment of, a number of statutory commitments each calendar year. The exact level of each annual commitment is published by the BBC in its Statement of Programme Policy each year.

- A minimum percentage of all hours, and peaktime hours must be originations (original productions include all BBC-commissioned programming, excluding repeats of programming first shown on another BBC public service channel)
- A minimum percentage of relevant programme production budgets, representing a percentage of hours of productions by volume, must be spent outside the M25
- To maintain the current broad range of programmes produced outside the M25, and broad range of different production centres used across the UK.
- A minimum percentage of qualifying hours to be provided by independent producers
- A minimum percentage of qualifying hours to have subtitling, signing and audio description television access services