

FINALISING PURPOSE REMITS: AN EXPLANATORY NOTE

Introduction

1. Purpose Remits are a key feature of the new governance system introduced by BBC's 2006 Royal Charter. They set out the priorities the BBC Trust has set for the BBC and how the Trust will measure the BBC's performance in delivering them.
2. The Trust is required by the Charter and Agreement to publish a Purpose Remit for each of the six Public Purposes of the BBC before the end of 2007. The Agreement also requires the Trust to consult publicly in developing and reviewing Purpose Remits.
3. The Trust published draft Purpose Remits in January 2007 and, following public consultation, this document sets out the Trust's explanations for the key changes it has made to the Remits since the earlier drafts. The relevant extracts from the Remits, with the actual changes marked, are attached to this document.
4. The Public Purposes of the BBC are as follows:
 - sustaining citizenship and civil society
 - promoting education and learning
 - stimulating creativity and cultural excellence
 - representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities
 - bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK
 - 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.
5. Each Purpose Remit, now in final form and published on the website, contains the following elements:
 - A brief statement outlining the BBC's role in promoting the Purpose
 - The priorities identified by the Trust in consultation with licence fee payers summarised in one page, with more detail or explanation provided in the Annexes.
 - Annex I, which provides details of how the Trust will measure the BBC's performance in delivering the priorities and promoting the Purposes. The set of high-level, mainly quantitative measures is based on licence-fee payer research and will be measured annually. It is likely that the Trust will wish to supplement this with qualitative and deliberative research.
 - Annex II, which provides background information on the Purpose Remit, including the requirements of the Charter and Agreement, the Trust's understanding of the market context in which the BBC is operating and its role within it, and evidence of licence fee payer expectations of the BBC in delivering this purpose. Annex II also sets out the priorities identified by the Trust in more detail than the summary at the front of each Remit.

How the BBC Trust has responded to the public consultation

6. The Trust consulted on Purpose Remits between 16 January and 10 April 2007. A summary is available at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/consult/purpose_remits/responses/summary.pdf

7. The consultation drew a large and varied response from individual licence fee payers and organisations. There were 280 responses in total: four from the BBC Trust's Audience Councils, 20 from external organisations and 256 from individuals. As part of the consultation, the Trust also ran:
 - a survey of 4,500 licence fee payers which asked respondents to give their views on the importance they attached to each of the draft Purpose priorities and on the BBC's current performance in delivering them
 - a qualitative study of the views of 30 opinion formers on the draft priorities.
8. In developing the final wording of Purpose Remits the Trust has also taken into account the broader market context for the delivery of the purposes.
9. In considering these various sources, The Trust has carefully listened to the views of licence fee payers to ensure that Purpose Remits set appropriate priorities for the BBC and that the Trust will be able to measure the Executive's performance in delivering them. In re-drafting the Remits the Trust has considered: the interests of licence fee payers; the need to preserve the independence of the BBC; the need to ensure high standards of openness and transparency; and the impact the BBC's activities have on the wider market.
10. The Charter and Agreement set out certain objectives that the Trust must seek to ensure are achieved by the BBC through the Purpose Remits and factors that the Trust must take into account, amongst other things, when considering how this should be done. These objectives and factors have been reproduced in the Annexes to this document, where relevant.
11. Many of the changes made are at a detailed level, aiming to achieve greater precision and clarity or more closely to reflect the objectives set for the BBC by the Charter and Agreement. A number of the changes however are more substantive and the remainder of this explanatory note outlines the reasons for these.

Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society

12. This Remit elicited a very strong response with many individuals and organisations arguing that the focus of the Remit – primarily on news and current affairs – missed certain aspects of modern citizenship. As can be seen in Annex I to this document, the focus of the draft priorities reflected the requirements of the Charter and Agreement. However, the Trust acknowledges the need to take account of other relevant matters, such as the wider context here. The Trust's view is that the Remits should be considered as a whole and not read in isolation. In that sense, the BBC's role in promoting citizenship is addressed not just in priority 3 of this Purpose ('Encourage conversation and debate about news, current affairs and topical issues'), but across other Purposes as well, and taken as a whole, the Remits adequately convey the BBC's role in this area. For example, priority 2 of Promoting Education and Learning ('Engage audiences in activities targeted to achieve specific outcomes that benefit society') and priorities 3 and 4 of Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities ('Bring people together for shared experiences'; 'Encourage interest in, and conversation about

local communities’). The Remits now signal the cross-cutting nature of citizenship within a footnote to the summary priorities.

13. The need for the Trust to have regard for ‘sustaining citizenship through enrichment of the public realm’ is a Charter and Agreement requirement under this Purpose. As part of the consultation it was noted that the BBC’s contribution to enrichment of the public realm was not explicitly referred to within the priorities. However, it was addressed within Annex II to the draft Remit, with the BBC’s role described as that of providing accurate information to fuel public debate and forums to enable it. The Trust considers that this is adequately covered within the existing priorities, specifically 2 and 3 of Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society (‘Engage a wide audience in news, current affairs and other topical Issues’ and ‘Encourage conversation and debate about news, current affairs and topical issues’).
14. In terms of the BBC’s Journalism, the Trust has decided to focus this priority more explicitly on the quality and independence of the BBC’s journalism output rather than ‘maintaining and growing its reputation’ as the BBC’s reputation will be an outcome of high quality journalism. In light of responses and the market context - where there is more choice of providers for audiences and increased competition among news providers which has put pressure on quality and depth of provision - the Trust has also made it clear that BBC Journalism should provide a range and depth of analysis not widely available from other providers.
15. There was a general concern over the accuracy and effectiveness of the BBC’s reporting of the work of devolved governments and institutions. This is supported by the Trust’s own audience research and the Trust commissioned in November 2007 an impartiality review of the BBC’s network news and factual coverage of the four UK nations. The Trust believes that the Remit itself adequately dealt with this issue since it sets the BBC the task of reporting the work of the national parliaments and assemblies with a particular need for the work of the devolved structures to be accurately reflected in UK-wide news output. Within Annex II, The Trust has taken this opportunity to clarify that the BBC’s political content should include coverage of national and local elections, which are key parts of the UK’s political system.
16. The Trust’s definition of media literacy, and indeed its inclusion within this Purpose, was raised by some respondents. The Trust considers that media literacy - the ability of audiences to access, understand and interact with different types of media - is an essential tool of modern citizenship and is increasingly central to the population’s ability to participate in society.
17. However, the Trust acknowledges that media literacy cuts across other Purposes and has decided to clarify this by signposting it within a footnote to the priority. The specific priorities that reflect the BBC’s role in media literacy are priority 3 of the Education and Learning purpose (‘Promote and support formal educational goals for children and teenagers and support adult education, especially related to essential skills development’); and a number of the priorities under the Emerging Communications remits (‘Support Digital UK’s communications activity to build awareness of, and readiness for, digital switchover’; ‘Work in partnership with other organisations to help all audiences understand and adopt emerging communications technologies and services’; ‘Support the Government’s targeted help scheme to help the most vulnerable during digital switchover’).

18. The Trust has strengthened the priority to clarify that the BBC's media literacy output should: cover all media and not just IT; help audiences engage critically with the media; and, help people to understand about legal and illegal consumption of content.

Promoting Education and Learning

19. Some respondents expressed concern that the priority regarding the BBC's informal learning provision was insufficient to make BBC output stretching, and that requirements were being set too low. The draft Remit included a specific requirement for content to be challenging and made it clear that challenging material should not be sacrificed for entertainment and wide audience appeal. The Trust considers that this meets the concerns raised and that the priority wording strikes the right balance between challenge and broad appeal. It is also clear that many licence fee payers learn best from content which does not have learning as its primary purpose. The Trust accepts the concern that this provides only a broad definition of what actually constitutes learning and may present challenges when measuring the BBC's performance in delivering this priority. The Trust will use the Executive's plans in response to these Remits as a guide to which services and genres make the primary contributions to informal learning, and those which are secondary.
20. The Trust has also amended the priority to specify the need for the BBC to make content that is accessible so that it can be easily reached and understood by learners.
21. The Trust has re-worded the priority which requires the BBC to promote and support formal learning. The original wording was drafted prior to the suspension of BBC jam, which was specifically listed as one of the BBC's services under the Charter and Agreement. Since the draft Remits were published, the Trust has suspended BBC jam and asked BBC management to prepare a fresh proposal. The re-worded priority sets the Trust's broad expectations for the BBC's formal learning provision in the light of these developments.

Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence

22. In line with several consultation responses, the Trust has amended the priority concerning the BBC's coverage of cultural activities to include the need for: sports provision, particularly of minority sports; a film strategy; and live orchestral performance as well as broadcast output. The Trust considers that these additions will support the BBC's objective to enrich the cultural life of the UK and nurture creative talent.
23. The fourth priority of this Remit concerns the BBC's need to provide enjoyable and entertaining content and received a range of responses. Some argued that entertainment was not reflected adequately across the Purposes, while one organisation objected on the basis that entertainment should not be pursued as a Public Purpose in itself. There was a particular concern that the BBC could simply use this priority as a rationale to provide content which did not deliver Public Purposes but which instead purely focused on entertainment.
24. On balance, the Trust has retained the original wording on the basis that the Remit makes it clear that the provision of entertainment is only one of five stated ways in which the BBC aims to achieve this Purpose and that 'entertainment' has a wider meaning than 'amusement' and is linked to content demonstrating creative excellence. The Trust considers therefore that the Purpose Remit will not result in the BBC

focussing on entertainment at the expense of other objectives as this would be a direct contradiction of the Purposes and a clear departure from the other priorities identified in the Purpose Remit itself.

25. The Trust has decided to re-word the fifth priority of this Remit. A few organisations argued that the original wording, to ‘support the creative economy of the UK’, was an excessive burden for the BBC, and that the priority should be focussed more on developing talent rather than generating economic benefit. Responses also queried the BBC’s role within this Remit in employing the best talent. The Trust has decided to re-shape this priority to focus it primarily on nurturing talent across the audio-visual industries, as this better reflects the Charter and Agreement objectives. The Trust is of the view however that this does not preclude the BBC from employing the best talent where this is appropriate to delivering the Purposes.

Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities

26. The Trust has added a new priority to this Remit to clarify the need for the BBC to address the Charter and Agreement objective for the BBC to provide a range of content, including original content at local, regional and national level.
27. Some organisations and individuals proposed changes to the wording of the priority which requires the BBC to reflect the different religious and other beliefs in the UK. For example, some felt the priority did not adequately reflect non-religious beliefs. The Trust considers that the inclusion of the wording ‘other beliefs’ in the draft Remit adequately incorporated non-religious belief systems. Other responses argued that the priority should include specific reference to reflecting religious practices and forms of worship. These requirements are not part of the Charter and Agreement and the Trust does not consider that adding the extra detail would improve or enhance the general sense of this priority that the BBC should give people opportunities to understand and examine their own beliefs.
28. The Trust has amended the wording concerned with the BBC’s minority language provision to reflect that the Charter and Agreement is concerned with minority language provision rather than specifically those minority languages which are indigenous. The Trust has also decided to remove references to specific languages included in the draft Remit, which were included in the draft for illustration purposes only rather than being an exhaustive list, to avoid implications that the Trust has in any way pre-judged which languages it thinks appropriate for the BBC to provide.

Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

29. In line with a consultation response and the priority concerning the provision of journalism in the Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society Purpose, the Trust has amended the international news broadcasting priority to put the focus on the quality of the BBC’s international news output rather than sustaining and growing its reputation as the BBC’s reputation will be an outcome of high quality journalism.
30. In terms of bringing the world to the UK, the Trust has strengthened the priorities to note that coverage should serve all audiences and ensure a breadth of perspective. The Trust has also clarified that it expects the BBC to bring ‘high-quality’ international creative output to all its audiences.

31. Some organisations argued that an additional priority for BBC output to reflect the diversity of UK culture to international audiences should be included. However this is not a requirement of the Charter and Agreement. It is worth noting that the delivery of any such priority would fall largely on the BBC's commercial subsidiary, BBC Worldwide, which is required to fit with, rather than actively promote and deliver, the Purposes.

Emerging Communications

32. There was a wide variation of responses to the first priority which concerns the importance of the different platforms on which the BBC operates. Some questioned whether the BBC should be taking a leading role in developing, or merely keeping abreast of, new technologies. The Trust notes that audience research carried out for recent Public Value Tests indicates licence fee payers expect the BBC to at least keep pace with key technological developments and that the BBC has a clear role in helping deliver to the public the benefits of emerging communications technologies. On the basis of its understanding of key market and technological trends and developments, the Trust appreciates the strategic importance of using new communications technologies for the future provision of public service content. The Trust considers the provision of engaging digital content is a key means of achieving this.
33. Some responses suggested that the priority should make it clear that the BBC should develop its services in ways which do not foreclose markets. The Trust is of the view, based on audience research from recent Public Value Tests that the BBC should continue to innovate in this area, but notes that this is particularly applicable in areas the market may find less attractive. The Trust is also content that the Public Value Test provides a robust mechanism to assess the market impact of new proposals.
34. Some organisations questioned the BBC's target to extend coverage of Digital Audio Broadcasting from 85% to 90%, as this would still leave some areas without coverage. Another organisation wanted a commitment to DAB audio quality. The Trust is committed to the principle of universality and considers the increased coverage the BBC is planning as an important step towards this. However, the planned 5% increase in coverage has significant cost implications and the Trust is mindful of the need to balance cost effectiveness with the principle of universality. For this reason, the Trust does not consider that insisting on further planned extension of coverage is appropriate at this stage.
35. The Trust has decided to move the draft priority 'to ensure analogue television services are available until digital switchover' into Part 2.2 (the BBC role) of this Remit, on the grounds that analogue TV services should be seen as a basic requirement of the BBC rather than a specific priority set by the Trust. Indeed, this is a responsibility incumbent on the BBC under Clauses 35 and 36 of the Agreement.
36. The priority to 'support the Government's targeted help scheme to help the most vulnerable during digital switchover' has been updated to reflect the status of the help scheme now the details have been finalised with the Government.

The measurement framework

37. While there was broad satisfaction that the measurement framework designed by the Trust was based around audience perceptions of BBC performance, some responses

expressed a concern that this was not sufficient to judge performance against the priorities.

38. In drafting the Remits, the key considerations in the design of the measurement framework were that it should be manageable and based around audience perceptions. The Trust considers that it is important to retain these characteristics, and will subject priorities within the Purpose Remits to an annual process of measurement, review and reporting. However where data indicates the need for further analysis, the Trust will, where appropriate, commission programmes of qualitative and deliberative work to supplement the core set of quantitative data.

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Sustaining citizenship and civil society

You can trust the BBC to provide high-quality news, current affairs and factual programming that keeps you informed, and supports debate, about important issues and political developments in an engaging way. You can look to the BBC for help in using and understanding different kinds of media.¹

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What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

- 1. Provide independent journalism of the highest quality**
BBC journalism should be independent, accurate and impartial – providing news and current affairs of relevance, range and depth which audiences trust. BBC Journalism should offer a range and depth of analysis not widely available from other UK providers.
- 2. Engage a wide audience in news, current affairs and other topical issues.**
The BBC should provide news and current affairs that interests and informs people of all backgrounds, ages and levels of knowledge, enabling them to engage with the major issues of today.
- 3. Encourage conversation and debate about news, current affairs and topical issues.**
BBC news and current affairs should inform conversation and debate among friends, family and wider groups through forums for debate such as phone-ins and online discussion areas.
- 4. Build greater understanding of the parliamentary process and political institutions governing the UK.**
The BBC should help all its audiences understand how the UK is governed at a European, national, regional and local level.
- 5. Enable audiences to access, understand and interact with different types of media.**
The BBC should help people become ‘media-literate’ – giving them the confidence to make full use of all media including information technologies. The BBC will help its audiences engage critically with media – to find what they are looking for from trustworthy sources, to understand what it is about, to form an opinion about it and, where necessary, to respond to and interact with it.²

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¹ The BBC’s contribution to the promotion and sustainment of citizenship is not exclusive to this Purpose, and will be achieved through its other Purposes, particularly Promoting Education and Learning and Representing the UK, its Nations, Regions and Communities.

² The BBC’s contribution to media literacy is not exclusive to this priority, and is covered within some of its other Purposes, particularly Promoting Education and Learning and Emerging Communications.

Promoting education and learning

You can look to the BBC to help everyone in the UK to learn. An important role for the BBC is to support formal education in schools and colleges. In addition, the BBC will offer engaging ways for everyone in the UK to build their knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

1. Stimulate informal learning across a full range of subjects and issues for all audiences.

The BBC should enable people to learn about many different topics in ways they will find accessible, entertaining and challenging.

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2. Engage audiences in activities targeted to achieve specific outcomes that benefit society.

The BBC should engage audiences in output that brings benefits to the UK as a whole. Such output might, for example, promote healthier living, or encourage an active interest in the UK's history, heritage and environment.

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3. Promote and support formal educational goals for children and teenagers and support adult education, especially related to essential skills development.

The BBC should maintain its key role of providing formal educational output for everyone in the UK, including skills for learning, work and life. The BBC should provide a safe environment for learning, especially for children.

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Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

You can expect the BBC to offer the best examples of creative work that engage and delight audiences, break new ground, and encourage interest in cultural, creative and sporting activities.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

1. Provide output that is distinctive and creative on all its platforms.

BBC output should be distinctive. The BBC should regularly include output that breaks new ground, develops fresh approaches, sets trends, and takes creative risks, from drama and comedy to entertainment and sport. It should do this across all the platforms on which it operates.

2. Ensure enrichment for all audiences by covering a wide range of cultural activities.

The BBC should offer its audiences the best examples of many kinds of creative activity from urban music to opera, from ballroom dancing to football, always striving to expand horizons and encourage audiences into unfamiliar territory, including minority sports.

3. Encourage active participation in cultural activities.

The BBC's programming should stimulate people to take part in a wide range of cultural and sporting events and activities. Partnerships with other organisations will often help in achieving this.

4. Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content.

Entertainment should remain a key priority for the BBC. BBC output should entertain, in the sense of engaging, absorbing, challenging or delighting audiences in ways that demonstrate creative excellence.

5. Foster creativity and nurture and support UK talent across a wide range of genres.

The BBC should nurture UK talent by introducing new production, writing and on-air talent to audiences. The BBC should also aim to bring the best talent to its audiences from across the UK's creative community.

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Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities

You can rely on the BBC to reflect the many communities that exist in the UK. These communities may be based on geography, on faith, on language, or on a shared interest such as sport. You can expect the BBC to stimulate debate within and between the communities of the UK, and to encourage people to get involved with their local communities.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

1. **Represent the different nations, regions and communities to the rest of the UK.**

Across the range of its network output, the BBC should portray and celebrate the range of cultures and communities across the UK at national, regional and local level.

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2. **Cater for the different nations, regions and communities of the UK.**
The BBC should provide a range of output, including original content, designed to meet the needs of the nations, regions and communities of the UK.

3. **Bring people together for shared experiences.**

The BBC should broadcast individual programmes that bring together a very wide range of people – for example, great state occasions, important national sports events and high-quality entertainment.

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4. **Encourage interest in, and conversation about local communities.**

The BBC should provide engaging output that gives an accurate picture of the many communities that make up the UK and that informs understanding and stimulates discussion about their concerns. The BBC should provide forums in which these communities can debate among themselves and with other UK communities.

5. **Reflect the different religious and other beliefs in the UK.**

The BBC should give people opportunities to understand the beliefs of others, and to examine their own beliefs critically.

6. **Provide output in, minority languages.**

In its output, the BBC should support the UK's indigenous languages where appropriate. It may also provide output in other languages used by licence fee payers in appropriate contexts.

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Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

You can rely on the BBC to provide internationally-respected news services to audiences around the world and you can expect the BBC to keep you in touch with what is going on in the world, giving you an insight into the way people live in other countries.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

1. Build a global understanding of international issues:

- (a) **Provide international news broadcasting of the highest quality.**
The BBC's journalism for international audiences should share the same values as its journalism for UK audiences: accuracy, impartiality and independence. International audiences should value BBC news and current affairs for providing reliable and unbiased information of relevance, range and depth.

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- (b) **Enable individuals to participate in the global debate on significant international issues.**
The BBC should inform conversation and debate, providing forums where its international audiences can debate issues they find important.

2. Enhance UK audiences' awareness and understanding of international issues.

The BBC should provide high quality coverage of global issues in its news and current affairs and other output for the UK. **Coverage should serve all audiences and ensure a breadth of perspective.**
The BBC should offer a high-quality service of international media monitoring.

3. Broaden UK audiences' experience of and exposure to different cultures from around the world.

The BBC should provide output that increases **all** UK audiences' knowledge of other societies from around the world and their concerns. The BBC should also bring to its UK audiences **high-quality** international music, film, arts and other creative work.

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Emerging communications

You can expect the BBC to help everyone in the UK to get the best out of emerging media technologies now and in the future.

What the BBC will do to achieve this Purpose

1. Make engaging digital content and services available on a wide range of digital platforms and devices.

The BBC will offer interesting and enjoyable programmes and services that can be received through many different devices such as digital television, digital radio, mobile phones and the internet.

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2. Work with the industry to deliver a UK-wide network of digital television.

The BBC should work closely with other key parts of the UK digital industry to offer digital television through DTT¹, DSat² and cable³.

3. Increase coverage of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB).

The BBC should increase the number of transmitters to extend DAB coverage to at least 90% of the UK outdoor population.

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4. Support Digital UK's communications activity to build awareness of, and readiness for, digital switchover.

The BBC should work with Digital UK to ensure that all UK television viewers know about switchover and have the opportunity to prepare for it.

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<#>Ensure that analogue television services are available to audiences in analogue form until digital switchover is completed on a regional basis.¶

The BBC should support audiences who choose to stay with analogue services until switchover. Wherever possible the content of BBC One and BBC Two should be the same whether broadcast on digital or analogue ¶

5. Work in partnership with other organisations to help all audiences understand and adopt emerging communications technologies and services.

The BBC should work with other UK bodies to end the 'digital divide' between those who enjoy the benefits of digital technologies and those outside that group.

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6. Support the Government's targeted help scheme to help the most vulnerable during digital switchover.

During digital switchover some vulnerable groups will need help to buy and install new equipment. The BBC should help deliver the Government support scheme for these groups.

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¹ DTT – Digital Terrestrial Television (Freeview; Top Up TV)

² DSat –Digital Satellite (BSkyB, Freesat)

³ Cable (Virgin Media, Home Choice)

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