

Radio 4

Part I: Key characteristics of the service

1. Remit

The remit of Radio 4 is to be a mixed speech service, offering in-depth news and current affairs and a wide range of other speech output including drama, readings, comedy, factual and magazine programmes.

The service should appeal to listeners seeking intelligent programmes in many genres which inform, educate and entertain.

2. Scope of the Licence

Radio 4 should be available every day for general reception in the UK on FM, Long Wave, Medium Wave in some parts of the UK, DAB digital radio and digital television platforms and it may be simulcast on the internet.

The service may offer its programmes streamed on-demand for a limited period after broadcast.¹ It may also offer broadcast radio content for download for an unlimited period of time after broadcast, although this must not include unabridged readings of published works nor full track commercial music nor classical music (even if recorded by the BBC),² and other interactive station and programme-related content via bbc.co.uk. Broadcast audio programmes may be visually enhanced.³

3. Service budget

Radio 4 has a service budget of £76.7 million in 2007/08.

This may be adjusted annually for Retail Price Inflation. 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.

¹ Radio 4 currently offers a limited amount of mainly speech content on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast. Any expansion of the scope of this requires the approval of the BBC Trust.

² Download of classical music in the form of incidental music or signature tunes is permitted

³ This may include video related to output created for BBC broadcast, but should not include the commercial purchase of unrelated video rights.

4. Overview of aims and objectives

Radio 4 programmes should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and it should nurture UK talent.

Radio 4 should deliver its remit by providing in-depth news and current affairs, strongly supported by a wide range of other speech programmes including politics, religion and ethics, history, science, documentaries, arts, literature, drama and readings, sports (subject to rights ownership) and comedy.

Accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs should form the core of the output with a mix of daily news programmes and hourly news bulletins, investigative journalism, documentaries and debates, covering a very wide range of domestic and international issues. Domestic coverage should reflect the diversity of the UK.

The service should take risks and invest in original content rarely found elsewhere. There should be a strong emphasis on original drama, readings and innovative comedy from new and established talent. The station should occasionally schedule special projects and seasons that explore particular themes or mark significant events or anniversaries.

It should make use of its availability on Long Wave to split the schedule at times, providing live coverage of major events, religious services, reports from Parliament, or sporting fixtures on one frequency while continuing to offer the main schedule on the other.

Radio 4 should make its high quality content available on digital platforms and promote DAB and other digital technologies to its audiences.

The broadcast output should be supported by a complementary online service, including some use of visual enhancements, and listeners should be encouraged to interact and communicate with the station. Radio 4 should use new technology to ensure its audiences have the maximum opportunity to access programmes as and when they want.

Radio 4 should contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission some output from outside the M25 area and from independent producers.

Part II: Contribution to public value

5. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes⁴

5.1 Sustaining citizenship

Radio 4 should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience, through in-depth, accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs output which should seek to enable listeners to participate more actively, critically and constructively in the democratic life of the UK. Extensive context should be provided, and leading figures from all areas of British life should be challenged over their policies and actions. At least once a week there should be live debates that include public participation. Investigative journalism should aim to uncover injustices, expose issues of concern and ask searching questions of those in positions of responsibility.

Radio 4 should provide daily reports of Parliamentary proceedings when Parliament is sitting. During local and general elections, it should provide impartial, rigorous and substantial analysis of the political parties' campaigns and issues of interest to listeners.

The schedule should offer regular coverage of subjects such as consumer affairs, education, health, business, law, farming and disability.

Conditions

Radio 4 should:

- Broadcast at least 2,500 hours of news and current affairs programmes each year

5.2 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

Radio 4 should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience. It should commission a significant amount of its programming from a range of suppliers.

The schedule should offer a wide range of drama including plays, serials and adaptations. Some writers commissioned should be new to radio. There should be regular readings of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Exploration of literature and the arts should be a regular feature of the station.

Radio 4 should be the home of BBC radio comedy and make significant investment in developing new writing and performing talent and new comedy programmes.

⁴ When Purpose Remits have been adopted by the BBC Trust in 2007, this Service Licence will set out how this service will contribute to the promotion of relevant priorities set out in Purpose Remits.

Conditions

Radio 4 should:

- Broadcast at least 730 hours of original drama and readings each year
- Ensure that at least of 25% of new *Afternoon Plays* will be first or second commissions from writers new to radio
- Broadcast at least 180 hours of original comedy each year
- Contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission at least 10% of eligible hours of output from independent producers

5.3 Promoting education and learning

Radio 4 should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by providing informal learning opportunities across a wide range of subjects.

It should seek to deepen and broaden listeners' understanding through specialist programmes on subjects such as politics, business, law, finance, health, education, food and farming, international affairs, religion, ethics, travel and gardening. There should be regular exploration of the sciences, including natural history and medicine. History should be explored through biographical programmes, longer narrative series and one-off features and documentaries.

Radio 4 should support pan-BBC social action and educational campaigns where appropriate. It should also seek partnerships with organisations outside the BBC to extend the reach and impact of the station's education and learning output.

Conditions

Radio 4 should:

- Broadcast at least 200 hours of original documentaries each year

5.4 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities

Radio 4 should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience. Its journalism should reflect the diversity of the UK. Through its documentaries and features, Radio 4 should explore ethnic, cultural and religious groups within the UK, enabling the wider community to understand their customs, convictions and concerns. The station should also provide worship, celebration and in-depth reporting of religious affairs across all the major faiths. Radio 4 should provide live coverage of significant state events, enabling people across the UK to share a sense of unity.

Radio 4 should facilitate and support the growth of communities of interest around its output and enable them to interact with programmes and with each other online.

Its news and consumer programmes should cover stories of relevance to people with disabilities and there should be a weekly programme dedicated to issues for the blind and visually impaired.

Radio 4 should contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to ensure that at least one third of relevant expenditure⁵ is incurred outside the M25 area each year. Each week the schedule will include programmes from one or more of the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It should also commission output from independent companies based throughout the UK.

Conditions

Radio 4 should:

- Broadcast at least 200 hours of original religious programming each year

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

Radio 4 should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by bringing the world to the UK through extensive and wide-ranging coverage of international issues and events in its journalism and other factual output. Both regularly scheduled and one-off programmes should be used to explore international issues in considerable depth.

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".

Radio 4 should contribute to the promotion of this purpose in a variety of ways which are described in this Service Licence.

⁵ This includes expenditure on first-run originated programming, but does not include expenditure on news or sport output

6. Annexes to this Licence

6.1 Annex I – Performance assessment

The performance of Radio 4 will be assessed by the Trust using the framework described in Annex I. Radio 4'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 Radio 4 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.

7. Operation of this 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 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.⁶ It will use the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of Radio 4.

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 Agreement⁷: 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: Radio 4 should contribute towards the maintenance of combined BBC weekly reach⁸ at over 90% by aiming to maintain its own *weekly reach*.

It should contribute towards on-demand consumption of content. This will be measured by weekly reach of non-DRM audio downloads over the internet.

Quality: audience *approval* of Radio 4 and perceptions of it as *high quality* and *innovative*. Also, the proportion of *originated programmes* across all hours.⁹

Impact: audience perceptions of Radio 4 as *informative*, *engaging* and *challenging*.

Value for money: Radio 4's *cost per listener hour*.

⁶ Charter, article 24 (c)

⁷ Agreement, clause 14

⁸ For all BBC services

⁹ Including repeats