

Purpose plan for delivering the BBC public purpose: Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

BBC Trust definition of purpose remit

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

Purpose priorities

The BBC Trust, after public consultation, has divided this remit into five specific priorities:

- 1 Establish a leading reputation for creative and innovative programming.
- 2 Ensure enrichment for all audiences by covering a wide range of cultural activities.
- 3 Encourage active participation in cultural activities.
- 4 Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content.
- 5 Foster creativity and nurture and support UK talent across a wide range of genres.

Purpose performance

Overall, the BBC's performance in the delivery of this purpose is strong. Audiences have a generally high perception of the quality of its creative content across the genres, from drama to sport, from entertainment to comedy and factual.

However, the BBC faces some challenges in continuing to fulfil this purpose:

- Audiences will increasingly expect the BBC to provide its content on a range of platforms, in ways which they find most convenient to use, including on demand.
- Expanding choice means that audiences have higher expectations and look to the BBC for excellent, engaging content that is relevant to them. The BBC must innovate and adapt in order to continue to meet these expectations.
- The BBC has a central role to play in maintaining the strength of the UK's creative industries in an increasingly global media market.

In addition, the BBC Trust's Purpose Remit Survey identified a gap between audience expectations and their perceptions of the BBC's performance regarding the following statements:

- The BBC has lots of fresh and new ideas (priority 1).
- The BBC has a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining programmes and content (priority 4).

In relation to priority 1, the Trust's research showed that audiences do not want a radical change in direction from the BBC, but they are keen for an increase in the amount of fresh and new ideas and for greater prominence to be given to particularly original and distinctive programming.

In relation to priority 4, the gap was more marked among low approvers of the BBC and ethnic minority audiences.

BBC management's response to purpose gaps

Going forward, the BBC will build on existing strengths while addressing perceptions of gaps and future-proofing the delivery of the purpose, by reprioritising some areas of investment. Plans include:

- Placing more emphasis on the commissioning of distinctive, high-quality and innovative content drawing on new ideas of real creative and editorial ambition.

- Prioritising investment in drama, comedy and entertainment on television, in particular on BBC One. These genres are vital to reaching lower approvers while still delivering value to heartland audiences.
- Investing in knowledge-building content online and children's and teens' content across platforms.
- Reducing overall television output by approximately 10% to free up resources to invest in quality content.
- Focusing peak viewing hours on high-quality work from all genres.
- Providing more opportunities for audiences to find accessible quality content and use it in ways most convenient to them, in particular through investment in on-demand services such as BBC iPlayer.
- Investing more in bbc.co.uk, future-proofing the online portfolio as audience expectations of the medium change and underpinning its reputation for innovation and quality, especially among audiences who use broadcast services less.
- A commitment to diverse British talent, both established and new, from across the UK. The BBC will give them platforms to express themselves and provide a place to develop their skills and careers.

More detail on the practical manifestation of these plans is given below.

Delivering the purpose priorities

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

BBC Trust: "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."

The BBC will demonstrate its commitment to innovation in different ways across its services. It will invest in distinctive content which displays new and original ideas, across all genres and platforms and seeks to reflect the diversity of UK communities. Particular priorities include:

- **Drama** – Popular drama on BBC One will explore new ideas and approaches. BBC Two will feature more authored pieces. BBC Three will support new and emerging talent. Radio 4 will provide significant support for new writing from both emerging and established talent.
- **New approaches and formats** – Factual programming on BBC Two will explore new ways of approaching serious subjects which can appeal more to mainstream audiences and will be given prominence in peak time. BBC Four will build on its distinctive approach to more niche or intellectual subject matter. A closer relationship between the two services will give more visibility and impact to factual output.
- **Entertainment** – New ideas and talent will be a focus for investment across a range of services, especially BBC One and BBC Three.
- **Risk taking** – The BBC will take risks with diverse new, young talent and new ideas, giving them room to develop, breathe and, where appropriate, fail in lower-risk environments. BBC Three will be important here, particularly in comedy, as well as the BBC's music-based radio stations in developing new presenters.
- **Teens** – The BBC will develop a new, genuinely multi-platform offer for the teenage audience, including television programmes in music and drama, music programmes on radio and online entertainment and drama formats.
- **bbc.co.uk** – New forms of accessible non-linear content will be developed, such as new narrative forms, entertainment formats and knowledge-building content.

- **New technologies** – Developments such as the HD TV service and new camera technologies will be exploited to enhance the quality and impact of programming. Enhancing perceptions of sport output will be a particular priority.

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

BBC Trust: “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.”

The BBC will continue to cover a wide range of cultural and sporting events, reflecting and helping shape the rich cultural life of the UK. The aim will be to appeal to a broad audience, by covering popular subjects as well as niche or minority interests.

- **Arts** output – particularly on BBC Two, BBC Four, Radio 3 and Radio 4, but also on other networks including BBC One – will aim to reflect and support the UK’s diverse artistic community, while helping to build and broaden audiences’ knowledge and enjoyment of the range of visual and performing arts.
- **Music** output will cover a diverse range of genres, including forms indigenous to the UK, such as folk and brass, and new music, both contemporary and classical. The BBC will aim to give context to this output – both in programmes and in online resources – to help audiences appreciate what they hear. 6 Music in particular will enable people to explore music from the past.
- **Live music** is valued by audiences, and across its portfolio the BBC will broadcast a wide range of live music events, including festivals, concerts and studio sessions. Radio 1 and Radio 2 will hold their own live music events and Radio 3 will provide a platform for the BBC Performing Groups.
- **Film** – Building on its significant role in the UK film industry, the BBC will increase investment in original film production. It will also aim to bring recent British films to a wider audience. Through its partnership with the UK Film Council it will support film and film-making in the UK.
- **Sport** will remain key to the output of BBC One, Radio 5 Live and 5 Live Sports Extra, as well as other mixed-genre channels. A broad range of sports will be featured, including the biggest events in the international calendar, major UK sports and niche and local sports with a loyal following. Output will be supported by independent quality journalism and expert analysis. bbc.co.uk will offer on-demand access to a greater choice of sports output than is available on linear television, particularly minority sports, while providing a platform for fans to engage in debate about their teams and passions.
- **London 2012** will be one of the biggest events the BBC has covered in its history. It is a unique opportunity to bring together sport, culture and the whole of our national experience across the UK. It will also help cement many minority sports in the national consciousness, provide an opportunity to raise significantly the profile of disability sports and celebrate the diversity of the nation’s sporting talent. As the first international event in 100% digital Britain, the BBC will employ all the platforms at its disposal to make it a truly memorable moment in people’s lives and one that is fully accessible to all UK audiences.

3 Encourage active participation in cultural activities

BBC Trust: “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.”

Viewers, listeners and users are increasingly moving towards a more active relationship with the media that they consume, often enabled by digital technology. BBC programmes and websites can both motivate people to participate in or interact with the content, and encourage them to attend or take part in events or activities. Ways in which the BBC will seek to exploit this include:

- Continued use of its **music and arts** output to encourage the audience to attend music performances and festivals, as well as to take part and express their own creativity.
- Through **bbc.co.uk**, which has particular value in enabling people to explore passions and interests, and to create and share their own content. The BBC will provide the space for this, together with the information, tools and support creative that people (such as young film-makers) need to achieve their ambitions.
- For its youngest viewers, **CBeebies** content will stimulate an interest in a range of subjects – from art and cookery to rhythm and music – and provide back-up content on its website to further encourage and inspire them.
- Through coverage of **sports**, the BBC will encourage audiences to take part and improve their skills in their chosen interest.

4 Provide a wide range of enjoyable and entertaining content

BBC Trust: “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.”

Providing content which entertains and engages a broad audience is key to the delivery of all the BBC’s purposes. The BBC plans to address this priority by continuing to offer a wider range of UK produced content across its services and platforms than any other UK broadcaster.

The BBC is committed to improving its understanding of how disabled audiences use different media and to exploring their perceptions of BBC service delivery mechanisms.

Going forward, particular priorities are:

- **Television drama**, underpinning the reputation of the BBC and reaching out to a broad audience. BBC One in particular will invest in a unique range of drama, from long-running and new, contemporary series to period adaptation, single films and event serials. Drama on BBC Two, BBC Three and BBC Four will complement this with a combination of series and single dramas, often featuring a more authored and thoughtful approach.
- **High-quality entertainment**, from popular Saturday night shows on BBC One to new formats on BBC Two or BBC Three and shows on Radio 1 and Radio 2. These too ensure wide reach, while attracting some low approvers or under-served audiences in particular.
- **New comedy**, where the BBC will seek to build on its role as the only substantial investor in the UK broadcasting industry. Comedy will continue to feature on all the television services, as well as on Radio 4, Radio 2 and BBC 7, with new platforms also playing a role, in particular in providing new talent with places to experiment.
- **Factual** programming which adopts new approaches to bring knowledge-building content to a broad audience.

On radio, music programming will continue to provide a valuable source of entertainment for audiences, while Radio 4 will offer a wide range of drama including plays, serials and adaptations and regular readings of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Radio 3 will continue to broadcast original, innovative drama productions and BBC 7 will bring audiences speech-based entertainment from the BBC archives.

The BBC will seek to use **bbc.co.uk** as a platform to explore new approaches to entertainment, including new narrative formats, often in ways that could appeal to audiences that do not typically look to television for their entertainment.

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

BBC Trust: “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.”

The BBC will aim to be a platform for UK talent, from the best known and best loved to the new and emerging. The BBC should be an attractive place where diversity is valued and talent want to come to work, with a focus on innovation, quality and creativity.

As the market and audiences for talent become increasingly global, the BBC's role as a supporter of UK talent – both in-house and outside the BBC – will become increasingly important.

The BBC will:

- Provide opportunities on BBC One and BBC Two for a diverse range of **successful UK talents** to shine – including writers, directors, musicians, researchers, comedians and technicians.
- Provide opportunities for **new and emerging talent** on services such as BBC Three and BBC Four. BBC Three will play an especially important role in showcasing new comedy writers and performers.
- Allow **established presenters** to explore their creativity on Radio 1 and Radio 2, and new presenting talent to develop their skills on stations such as 1Xtra and 6 Music.
- Provide outlets for **new UK artists** to have their music heard on radio.
- Invest significantly in the commissioning of **new drama and comedy** on Radio 4 and **new music** on Radio 3.
- Ensure that different services work together **across platforms** to develop new talent and provide challenging opportunities for those more established.
- Sustain a vibrant **in-house production** base, providing a market-leading training ground as well as a place where the best of British talent can develop their careers and ideas across a range of genres, services and platforms.
- Work with **independent producers**, investing in and supporting the UK's creative capital, providing platforms and outlets for high-quality talent and ideas.
- Commission content from across the **whole UK**, ensuring a meritocratic commissioning process to support the development of talent from a diverse range of backgrounds and deliver the best ideas for the audience.