

# Being accountable and responsible

## Overview

The Governors are responsible for holding BBC management to account and, as trustees of the public interest, they work to understand the needs and concerns of licence payers so that they can take them into account when questioning management about the quality of BBC services. Governors' accountability activities in 2003/2004 have included launching and facilitating independent research to learn from licence payers what they think about aspects of BBC services (see pages 14 and 21), continuing to work with BBC advisory bodies, and reviewing the BBC's processes for handling complaints.

The Governors also take seriously the BBC's responsibility to be a good corporate citizen – it is one of the ways that the BBC delivers public value. Initiatives here range from charitable fundraising to measures to reduce the BBC's negative impact on the environment. The BBC now submits itself to external verification of its progress in these areas and this year's results are reported in this section.

### Public consultation on the future of the BBC

The BBC actively consulted the public and opinion-formers on its future in the context of the Charter Review process launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in December 2003.

The DCMS set out eight key questions about the BBC's role and structure. They included: "What do you value about the BBC?", "How should we pay for the BBC?" and "How should the BBC be governed and regulated?" The DCMS solicited responses through leaflets, websites and public meetings.

The BBC both promoted this consultation and commissioned its own audience research using focus groups and survey work. The BBC also undertook research among active users of BBC services on the internet and local radio. A questionnaire placed on the [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) homepage drew 3,200 responses. A series of 32 local radio phone-in programmes was mounted across the country.

In February 2004, the BBC sponsored a Westminster Media Forum seminar on the future of the BBC, attended by broadcasting industry figures, regulators and policy makers. In March 2004 an edition of *Panorama* debated the future of the BBC.

The findings from all these consultative exercises mounted by the BBC have been passed to the DCMS to help inform their deliberations. Some of the findings are set out below.



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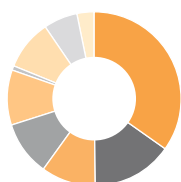
**1 Held to account**  
Panorama special: What's the point of the BBC?

**2 Listening in**  
BBC Governor Ranjit Sondhi listening to audiences in Birmingham

**£9.67**  
the cost of the licence fee per month in 2003/2004

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

**Average monthly licence fee spend**



■ BBC One	£3.37
■ BBC Two	£1.45
■ Digital television channels	£0.98
■ Transmission and collection costs	£0.98
■ BBC Radio 1, 2, 3, 4 and Five Live	£0.99
■ Digital radio stations	£0.08
■ Nations & English Regions television	£0.90
■ Local radio	£0.61
■ bbc.co.uk	£0.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9.67</b>

Note: Programme related costs such as marketing, and all overheads have been fully apportioned against channels/networks to show the total cost of BBC output

On the question of what people valued about the BBC, the views expressed were on the whole positive. In particular, people valued the quality of BBC programming – ‘quality’ being defined both as setting high standards and as representing a high standard of impartiality and independence of news reporting. The genres most often applauded were news and current affairs, and other factual programming such as documentaries and natural history programming. Entertainment was also mentioned by many, although some examples were criticised as too populist.

Many people thought the BBC presented sport in the best manner and without the interruption of commercials – but there was regret that the BBC had lost some prime sporting events on television. There was a perceived lack of comedy on television, compounded by repeats of older series – although, when prompted, people could think of new BBC comedies that were good, current and relevant.

On the question of how the BBC should be funded, the majority thought the licence fee was an important and acceptable funding tool which offered value for money – but there was a group who were vociferous in their dislike of the licence fee which they saw as a compulsory tax.

On the question of how the BBC should be regulated, the general public had little awareness of the BBC’s present structure. In the discussions with industry figures the main concern was what was seen as the difficulties surrounding the role of the Governors. Their tasks were seen as being split in a way that made it more difficult for them to operate efficiently.

**BBC advisory bodies, Broadcasting Councils and the English National Forum**

The BBC draws on a network of more than 500 licence payers around the UK for advice on programmes and services. Broadcasting Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland represent the interests of people in the nations. In England, Regional Advisory Councils advise the Governors through the English National Forum (ENF) and are informed in their turn by a network of Local Advisory Councils.

The Councils’ most important task is to advise the Governors on programme and service objectives for BBC Nations & Regions and to monitor, through a process of regular review, the extent to which the BBC delivers them. Overall, they felt that significant progress had been made against the year’s objectives. There were, however, a number of key issues of concern.

The Broadcasting Council for Scotland noted that the review of BBC Scotland’s news journalism had raised two key issues: audiences had an appetite for more localised news services and there was a need to explore new ways of engaging audiences in political issues. However, although a sizeable minority wanted an integrated early evening news programme for Scotland (the ‘Scottish Six’) there was not sufficient support to change the existing schedule. The loss of the television rights for Scottish Premier League (SPL) football was of concern as football coverage helped to drive approval among viewers. BBC Scotland should capitalise on coverage of non-SPL games and look to provide programming appealing to the same demographic group. Council also raised issues about

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### All Together Now

All Together Now is a community media project based in Leeds. It teaches people in one of Britain's most socially-deprived and diverse areas how to make radio, video and online pages. It gives them skills, but also builds confidence by allowing them to decide what is important, and to showcase the things they want to celebrate.

Their work goes out on BBC Radio Leeds, *Look North*, and the Leeds *Where I Live* website, capturing personal stories that journalists would find it hard to get to by traditional means. The project allows contributors to find a voice beyond their own community – and it helps to build trust between local people and the BBC.

The project is a partnership between the BBC, Education Leeds, Leeds City Council and Arts Council England, Yorkshire. Since March 2003 more than 100 adults have been producing material for All Together Now. Local schools, including parents, are involved too. In the longer term it is hoped to create a media centre in a newly built academy to act as a centre of excellence from which the concept can be developed in other areas of the country.

the portrayal of Scotland and the Scottish people in network programming.

Portrayal was a matter of concern for all Councils. It was felt that network commissioning was still too London-focused, resulting in programmes that did not fully reflect the diversity of life in the nations and English regions. The Broadcasting Council for Northern Ireland, in particular, noted a significant reduction in network commissions and expressed concern.

The Broadcasting Council for Northern Ireland also felt that the growing demand for increased language coverage for Irish and Ulster Scots would be a key issue for the BBC in Northern Ireland during the coming year. Council also highlighted the low coverage of both Digital Audio Broadcasting, for radio, and Freeview, for television. As a result the Governors have asked management to pursue the implications of extending digital coverage in Northern Ireland.

The Broadcasting Council for Wales noted the success of two ongoing strategies. The strategy of fewer but stronger brands had resulted in the strengthening of programmes and services. The community strategy had proved to be a very successful way of working closely with audiences throughout Wales and had led to a real feeling of ownership and involvement for licence payers. There were, however, concerns about the loss of some sports rights.

The ENF noted that, in addition to expressing concerns about the level of network production around the English regions, there was demand for more regional non-news television output. This would enable the BBC to engage with a wider local and regional audience than at present and to ensure that life in the English regions was accurately represented. The ENF also suggested that the current accountability framework in the English regions could be put to better use by network programme makers and commissioners. As a result, the Governors have asked management to raise awareness among commissioners and controllers of the role of the Broadcasting Councils and the ENF.

The ENF was pleased to note that their concerns of last year about local government coverage had led to the BBC carrying out a full scale review. In March 2004 the results were presented to the Governors who approved a programme of improved training for BBC journalists covering local government, as well as measures to strengthen relations with local councils. The Governors also approved a follow-up study to explore and improve coverage of local unelected bodies or quangos.

The views of the Broadcasting Councils and the ENF are published in more detail in the Annual Reviews of BBC Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the English Regions. These are available at [bbc.co.uk/annualreport](http://bbc.co.uk/annualreport).



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**1 All Together Now**  
The Leeds-based project teaching local people media skills

**2 BBC World Service Trust**  
Jihan El Alayly explores the concerns of families in Iraq

### Central Religious Advisory Committee

The Central Religious Advisory Committee advises the BBC on religious broadcasting policy and programmes.

This year the Committee praised radio for the range, quality and vitality of its religious programming. BBC Radio 4's *Beyond Belief* was particularly commended for the intelligence of its approach and its commitment to diversity not only between faiths but within them. The Committee also noted with appreciation the range of high quality religious programming on BBC Radio 2 and BBC World Service.

On television the picture was more mixed. The Committee found much good programming, with observational documentaries, such as *When the God Squad Came to Town*, praised for their presentation of religious themes and subjects in an accessible and engaging way. There was concern however at what the Committee perceived to be a lack of understanding of religious faith on the part of some programme makers. There was a widespread view, for instance, that *Noah's Ark* had proceeded on the incorrect assumption that most Christians hold a literal belief in the flood story and that such false assumptions are too frequently in evidence.

The Committee raised other concerns such as the late and variable scheduling of religious programming on television and is yet to be convinced that the correct balance has been struck between the commitment to regular, continuing series

and one-off documentaries. The Committee will keep these questions under review over the coming year while also reviewing its own role and workings with a view to playing a more proactive, supporting role for programme makers.

As outlined in the review of BBC One (pages 25 to 26) the Governors will be undertaking work in the coming year to assess the effectiveness of the religion strategy they approved in 2002.

### BBC World Service and Global News Consultative Group

The Governors' World Service and Global News Consultative Group provides the Governors with an independent external assessment of the range and quality of BBC World Service output.

#### Editorial standards in the context of the Iraq war

In 2003/2004 the Group decided to assess the continuing quality and integrity of BBC World Service editorial control and processes, at a time of extraordinary world events which polarised opinion in the UK and internationally. The Group also wished to assess the reliability, balance, objectivity and impartiality of the BBC's programmes in time of war, including comparison with competitors.

Having considered a range of sources and evidence, it is confident that the editorial process in World Service and Global News is robust, and that content is under constant scrutiny.

After listening retrospectively to a selection of programmes on the English and Arabic radio networks and watching the BBC World television channel during 2003, it concludes that the BBC's coverage, in relation to the Iraq war and Middle East affairs, is impartial.

It is pleased to note that an independent assessment by specialists, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), supports the view that the BBC's output to the Middle East is accurate, balanced and objective. It is also pleased to note positive results from a specially commissioned focus group study conducted in the Middle East, which indicate that the BBC's output is rated highly in the Arab world for trust, reliability, objectivity and impartiality.

#### Review of language service output

The Consultative Group also reviewed output in English, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech and Serbian.

It is satisfied that all BBC World Service output reviewed this year attracted high scores from independent assessors for authority and accuracy. While there is room for improvement in certain aspects, such as style and audibility, the overall picture is reassuringly positive.

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### The Community Channel

The Community Channel is a not-for-profit digital television station owned by the Media Trust, a charity that helps all charities to communicate better. The BBC has developed a strategic relationship with The Community Channel.

BBC support takes various forms. One is the free supply of archive material – for example, the channel has rebroadcast programmes made by the BBC World Service Trust about HIV/Aids and about leprosy.

There have been a number of training initiatives. BBC Training & Development, in partnership with The Community Channel and the University of Westminster, made a documentary about the Charity Times Awards. A plan is being developed to allow BBC trainees to help community projects – for example, by helping charities create content for The Community Channel.

The BBC allows The Community Channel access to three hours a day of its Freeview multiplex to enable the channel to be seen in digital terrestrial television homes.

BBC Broadcast, which has a commercial arrangement to play out the channel, is developing CSR initiatives including subtitling support and on-air promotions production.

### Responding to complaints

The Governors' Programme Complaints Committee (GPCC) is responsible for ensuring that complaints are properly handled by the BBC.

In June 2003, GPCC agreed with management the terms of reference for an external audit of BBC complaints-handling processes by the Office for Public Management. The outcomes were reported to the GPCC in September and when Mark Byford was appointed Deputy Director-General in December he was asked to take this work forward. Proposals for change were accepted by the Governors in June 2004 and are now being implemented. They are designed to make the system easy to access, clear, speedy, fair and independent. We will report on the outcomes next year.

In this Annual Report we are reporting on the system in place in 2003/2004. During this period, BBC Information was a key avenue for people wishing to lodge a complaint. The service operates round the clock and can be contacted by telephone, email or letter. In 2003/2004 it received approximately 2.5 million contacts in total, of which 8% were complaints. A daily log, published on the BBC intranet site, enabled programme makers to discover what the audience said about their work. Digests of the information were also circulated to management and Governors.

Where people believed there had been a serious breach of the BBC Producers' Guidelines, they could make their case to the Programme Complaints Unit (PCU). The PCU investigated complaints impartially and recommended appropriate redress.

In 2003/2004, the PCU dealt with 1,640 complaints (1,596 in 2002/2003) concerning 875 items. Of these, 389 individual complaints were wholly or partially upheld concerning 102 items – 11.6% of the total number of items investigated. Upheld findings were published quarterly, together with a note of the action taken in each case.

In 2003/2004 there was a serious deterioration in the response time for dealing with complaints by the PCU. Only 35.5% of complaints were answered within the target times (20 days, or 35 days for more complex cases) compared with 49.5% in 2002/2003. This deterioration reflected the continuing impact of the email complaint facility – this was introduced in 2002 and led to a doubling of the number of complaints.

The GPCC undertook its third annual review of BBC complaints handling processes in April 2004, assessing the operations of BBC Information and the PCU against best practice criteria. It concluded that BBC Information provided an excellent service to audiences. The Committee noted that the PCU fulfilled a key role in investigating serious complaints, but that urgent action was needed to improve PCU response times.

The GPCC also considered appeals from people who had made a serious editorial complaint to BBC management and were not satisfied with the response.

The Committee considered 27 appeals this year, and upheld 11 in full or in part. It received quarterly complaint reporting from management, and maintained its



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**1 Learn for Real**  
New media workshop, a community mentoring project in London

**2 Blue Peter**  
The 2003 *Blue Peter* appeal raised money for Mencap

**2.5**  
million people contacted  
BBC Information last year

**£30m**  
raised by Children in Need

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

active oversight of the BBC's strategic approach to complaints handling.

The Programme Complaints Unit also liaised with Ofcom (and previously with the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC)) on complaints about BBC programmes. In the year to 31 March 2004, the BSC/Ofcom upheld 12 complaints of unfair treatment or unwarranted infringement of privacy, in whole or in part. In the same period, the BSC/Ofcom partly or wholly upheld standards complaints about 25 broadcast items. The BBC complied with all statutory directions given by the BSC/Ofcom.

#### Corporate social responsibility

The BBC sets out to deliver public value primarily through its programmes and services. But the BBC also extends its public value through activities that reach out directly into society through a commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

For the BBC, CSR means acting in the public interest to strengthen and enrich communities across the UK and through international charitable action. It means behaving with integrity and ethical consistency towards its own staff, audiences and suppliers, and towards the communities in which the BBC operates, to maintain their faith in the BBC as a trusted creative institution.

Business in the Community, the organisation that works to improve the positive impact of business in society, publishes a CSR index each year. In 2004 the BBC's score was 87% (71% in 2003) placing it 42nd in the top 100 UK companies for CSR. Public expectations of the BBC are rightly very high in this area and in 2003, the BBC set

up a dedicated CSR centre to lead and coordinate activity. Later this year, it will publish the BBC's first full CSR report.

That report will give a comprehensive picture. The emerging themes so far from the BBC's CSR activities in 2003/2004 are as follows.

#### BBC charitable appeals

BBC broadcast appeals are an important public service which enable a wide range of charities to raise money – and awareness of their work. The BBC tracks public attitudes to major fundraising appeals and 86% of respondents say broadcast appeals are a good way of raising money and 76% expressed high levels of trust in the BBC to ensure that the money raised is wisely spent.

The BBC Governors are advised on broadcast appeals by the Appeals Advisory Committee (AAC), 12 specialist external advisers representing a broad range of interests across the charitable field. Stuart Etherington (Chair of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations) was appointed Chair in July 2003.

The AAC provides advice on the BBC appeals policy and has undertaken a strategic review of broadcast appeals that will report to the Governors in the autumn. The AAC also assists the Governors with their oversight of major fundraising projects such as BBC Children in Need, and on the allocation of the BBC Radio 4 and BBC One *Lifeline* appeals. Last year the weekly BBC Radio 4 appeal raised more than £970,000 and the monthly *Lifeline* on BBC One raised more than £204,000.

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### Media on the Park

Media on the Park is a partnership between BBC South and the community of Leigh Park near Havant in Hampshire. The area is acutely deprived and the community has little confidence in the media.

Park Community School is a local school that until recently was failing academically. The school was awarded official Arts Status in 2003, and used part of the funding this generated to plan a Broadcast Media Suite for use by schools in the area and the wider community.

The school approached BBC South for technical advice. BBC South responded with much more. They arranged for BBC Technology to equip the suite at cost; they placed two radio producers in the school and they offered support and airtime for the project.

Benefits for the children range from increased oral and literacy skills to increased motivation and confidence. And there are benefits for the BBC too. Staff have got to know this section of their audience better – sometimes having their views of what makes relevant news challenged along the way. And the perception of the BBC is slowly changing too – gradually it is coming to be seen as more accessible and trustworthy.

In November 2003 BBC Children in Need raised more than £15million on the night – and more than £30million in total. This is the highest amount ever raised, and will be distributed in grants to help children across the UK. In the same month, *Blue Peter* launched its Get Together Appeal with Mencap, and has raised £530,000 so far.

### BBC Fame Academy bursaries

The talent show *Fame Academy* raised £2.7million through phone votes and record sales. The money has been used to set up the BBC *Fame Academy* bursaries to support young musical talent. Five young musicians have each been awarded grants of £37,500 towards their musical education and hundreds of grants have been made to school children to help them buy instruments or musical equipment.

### BBC World Service Trust

The BBC World Service Trust, the BBC's international development charity, aims to promote development through innovative use of the media in the developing world. It is a registered charity, not paid for by the BBC, and raises funds from governments, international agencies and other partner organisations. In 2003/2004 a record £10.2million was raised.

Trust projects include building capacity of local and national media, providing training in media skills, and developing health and educational campaigns in many of the world's poorest countries.

The Trust now has 400 staff working on projects in 23 countries in partnership with NGOs, broadcasters and governments.

### Connecting with Communities

Connecting with Communities was launched in October 2003 to promote and facilitate volunteering opportunities for BBC staff. The BBC is partnered with 30 national charitable organisations who offer more than 200 types of volunteering experiences across a range of sectors including education, the arts, disability and diversity. During the first six months more than 400 staff registered their interest.

### BBC payroll giving

Payroll giving enables employees to make charitable donations straight from their salary. In the course of 2003/2004 an initiative was launched to increase take-up and as a result, payroll giving more than doubled to 9% of staff. Their contributions total more than £500,000 annually, which puts the BBC among the top 25 payroll givers.

### Community partnerships

The BBC operates a number of community partnerships, actively seeking out opportunities to join with other local organisations to improve conditions in the communities in which they operate. Three case studies are set out in the boxes in this section.

### Open Centres and BBC buses

The first BBC Open Centre was launched in 2001 in Blackburn to strengthen and extend BBC Radio Lancashire's connection with its local audience by offering opportunities to learn about the media, acquire IT skills and become involved in community broadcasting. The project was very successful and there are now similar centres in Stoke, Sheffield and Liverpool. BBC Wales also has four community studios which carry out a similar role.



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**1 BBC buses**  
Providing IT and media training in the community

**2 Children in Need**  
Pudsey and friends turn out in Belfast

A BBC bus was also piloted in 2001 to take the local radio station out on the road, to put listeners on air, and again to create opportunities for media and IT training. It proved a success and there are now buses operating in Lancashire, Humberside, Sheffield, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Cleveland, Newcastle, Manchester, Cumbria, Merseyside, Devon and York. Buses for BBC Wales and BBC Northern Ireland were launched in 2003.

The Open Centres and the BBC buses are wholly dependent on partnerships to provide expertise, funds and resources which the BBC does not have on its own. The projects were established with Blackburn with Darwen Council as the primary Open Centre partner and Lancashire County Council as the primary partner on the bus project, together with a number of local arts organisations, job centres and business link organisations as secondary partners. This model has been followed in each of the subsequent projects.

The success of the initiative can be measured in various ways. The target set for enrolment on basic IT training at the Blackburn Open Centre for the first year – 600 people – was exceeded inside six months. The centre is also attracting a notably younger and more ethnically diverse audience than the local radio station's average listenership, bringing potential new audiences onto the BBC's websites and airwaves.

#### The BBC and the environment

The BBC acts to ensure that it complies with environmental legislation, but it has a responsibility to go further than this – to reduce its environmental impacts and to manage its business risks. A comprehensive review of the legislation has been undertaken, taking into account new legislation in the areas of waste and energy. The BBC's management systems are being strengthened to ensure proper responsibilities and risks are identified and procedures put in place.

The BBC has had a corporate environmental policy in place since 2001, supported by a system of performance monitoring and targets for waste, greenhouse gas emissions, energy, transport and sustainable buildings. Environmental performance is benchmarked against leading UK companies and media companies. The Business in the Environment Index places the BBC 2nd in the media and entertainment sector, and 77th overall in comparison with 176 of the FTSE350 leading companies.

During 2003 the BBC collected more than 520 tonnes of paper in London and Scotland for recycling.

The BBC aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per broadcast hour by 8% between 2002 and 2010. The reduction in greenhouse gases (measured as carbon dioxide CO<sub>2</sub>) is being achieved through buying green electricity, implementing energy efficiency schemes, switching to low emission vehicles, and through on-site power generation using a combined heat and power (CHP) scheme.

The proportion of 'green' electricity used by the BBC has now reached 88%. The electricity comes from renewable sources such as hydroelectric power stations, wind farms and gas from landfill sites based in the UK.

The BBC has a range of schemes to promote energy-efficient business travel and help reduce road congestion and associated pollution. The BBC has set targets with its London suppliers to convert 40% of the business cab fleet to alternative/dual fuel such as LPG, LPG-diesel and electric.

Performance data on greenhouse gas emissions and waste recycling will be published in the CSR report in the autumn.

Sustainability is a key priority in the BBC's programme of building and refurbishment. The Media Village, the BBC's major new development in White City, London, has been awarded an 'excellent' environmental rating under the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). This measures the environmental impact associated with buildings, assessed against performance criteria such as energy efficiency, transport emissions and ecological impact.