

Current affairs: PSB Content Analysis

1 July – 31 December 2005

Stephanie Peat
28 March 2006

The Communications Act 2003

- News programmes and current affairs programmes should account for an appropriate proportion of the schedule
- The programmes included in the service are of high quality and deal with both national and international matters
- Programmes are scheduled in what appears to OFCOM to be an appropriate manner between peak viewing times and other times

Purposes and Characteristics of Public Service Broadcasting

- Informing ourselves and others and increasing our understanding of the world through news, information and analysis of current events and ideas
- Through programming that is: high quality, original, innovative, challenging

The Content Analysis (Network and Non-Network)

- 1 July to 31 December 2005
- Analysis of the majority of network and non network current affairs output on the terrestrial broadcasters
- Quantitative data based on the annual returns provided by the broadcasters and by non network broadcasters as a special request
- Additional data provided by the content analysis (including data on the scheduling, range of formats and range of subject matter)
- Audience data provided by BARB

First run Current Affairs (all hours)

First Run Current Affairs (all hours)



- Drop in BBC2 current affairs output in 2004 due to some output being reclassified as news

- Steady increase in the amount of current affairs on BBC1 and ITV1

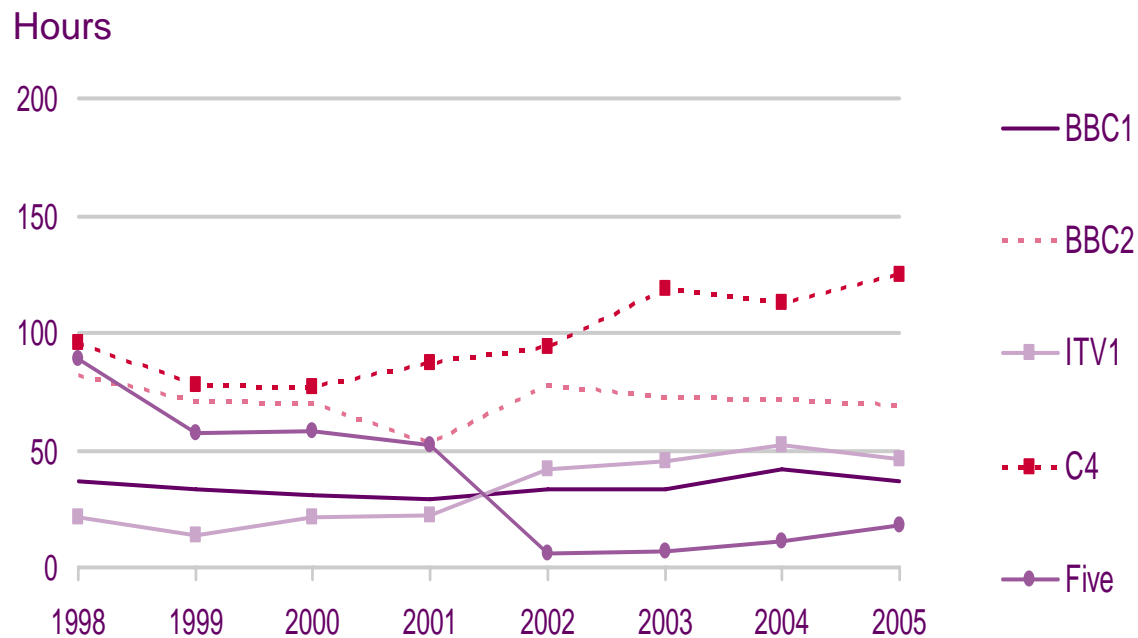
- Since 2001 current affairs output has remained relatively stable on Channel 4 and Five

- GMTV also broadcasts an 52 hours of current affairs per year

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

First run Current Affairs (Peak time)

First Run Current Affairs (peak hours)



Current Affairs in Peak

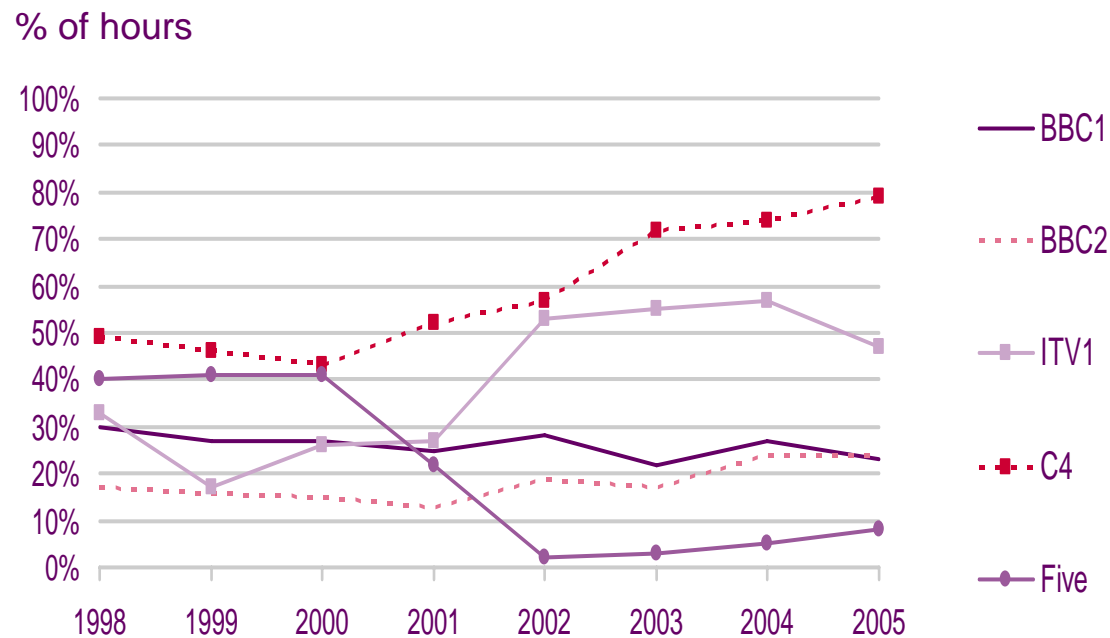
- Increase in current affairs in peak on Channel 4 over last five years. 125 hours in 2005 compared to 77 hours in 2000

- Since 2002 Tonight with Trevor McDonald has been broadcast twice a week in peak

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

First run Current Affairs (% in peak)

% of total current affairs output broadcast in peak



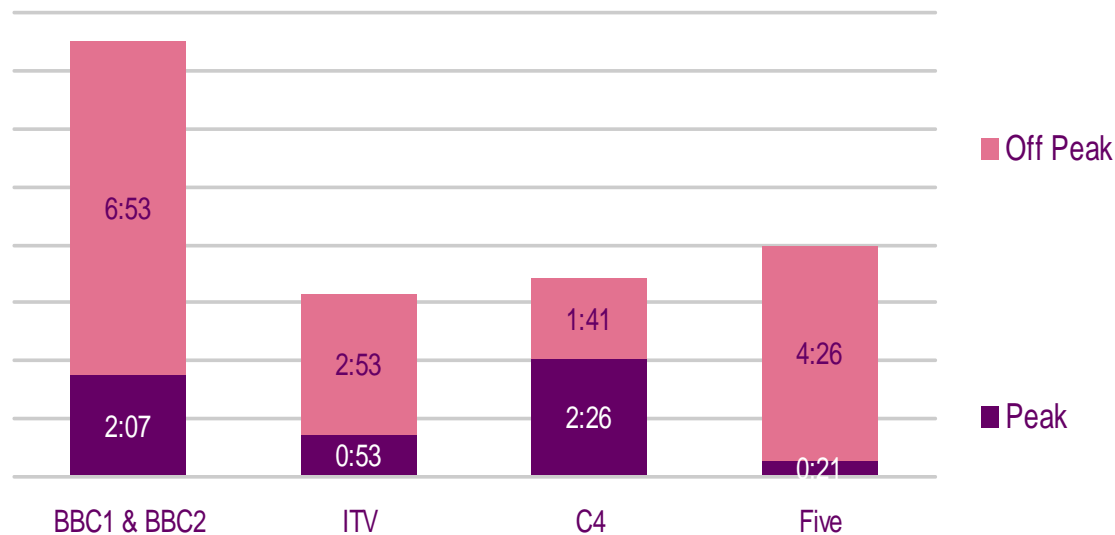
- Proportion of output played in peak has remained relatively steady on the BBC

- In 2005 79% of Channel 4's current affairs programming was broadcast in peak time

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

Current Affairs Weekly Averages

Weekly average hours (2005)



Current Affairs network quotas

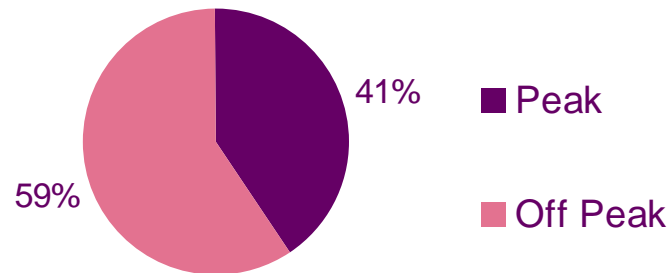
- 7 hours per week across BBC One and Two (2 hours in peak)
- 2.5 hours on ITV1 (40 mins in peak)
- 4 hours on Channel 4 (1.5 hours in peak)
- 2.5 hours on Five (12 mins in peak)

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

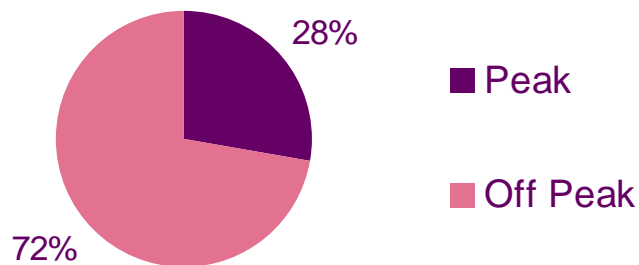
Current Affairs Output 1 July to 31 December 2005

Ratio of New Current Affairs Output In Peak

Current Affairs (excluding all news programming)



Current Affairs (including relevant news programming)

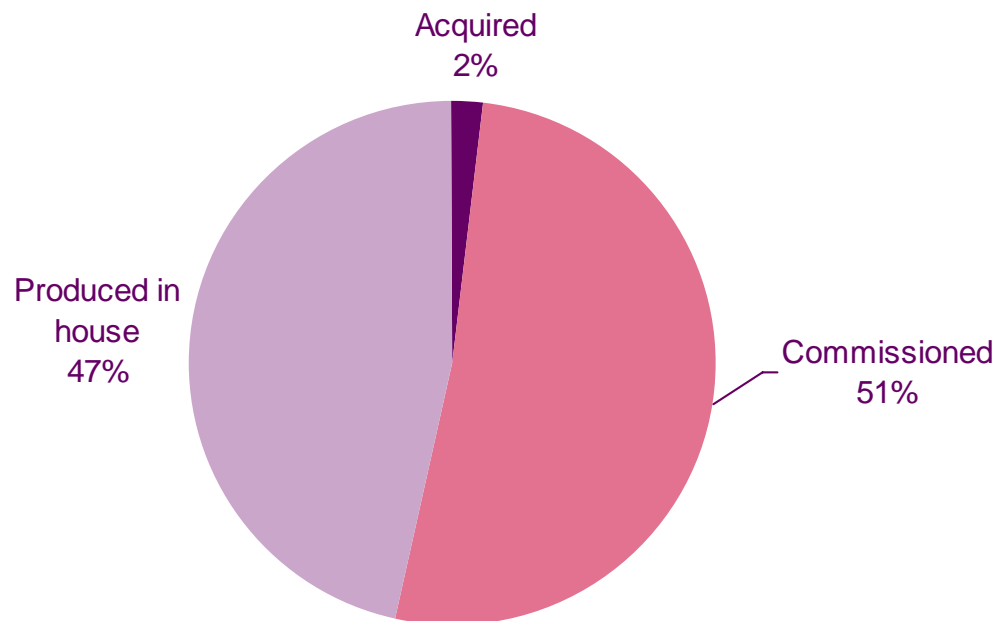


- Across the PSBs 41% of current affairs programming in the last six months was transmitted in peak. (The first chart does not include Newsnight or The Daily Politics and Sunday AM which are classified by the BBC as News)
- With the inclusion of these strands in the second chart the proportion of current affairs broadcast in peak drops to 28%

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

Source of PSB Current Affairs 1 July to 31 December 2005

Programme source (%)

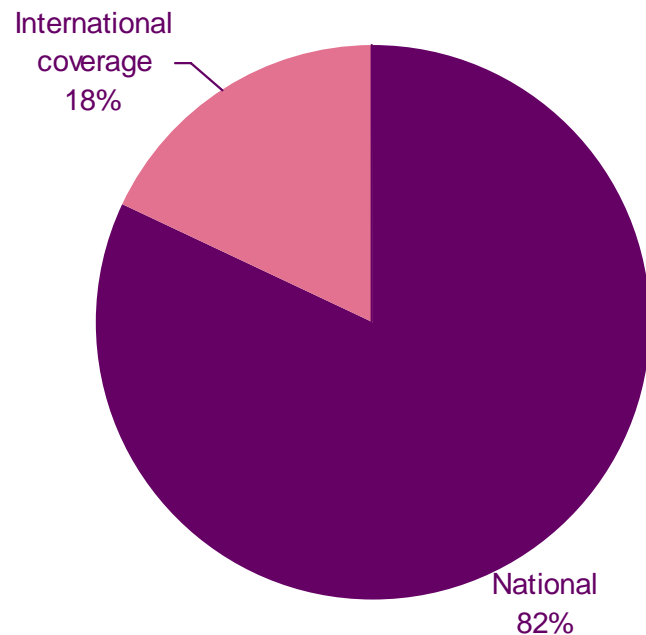


- Current Affairs output 'taken together' across the PSBs is fairly evenly split between commissioned programmes and programmes produced by the broadcaster
- Only a small proportion of current affairs programming is acquired

Source : Ofcom – data provided by Broadcasters

International Current Affairs 1 July to 3 December 2005

Programmes classified as 'international' current affairs (%)

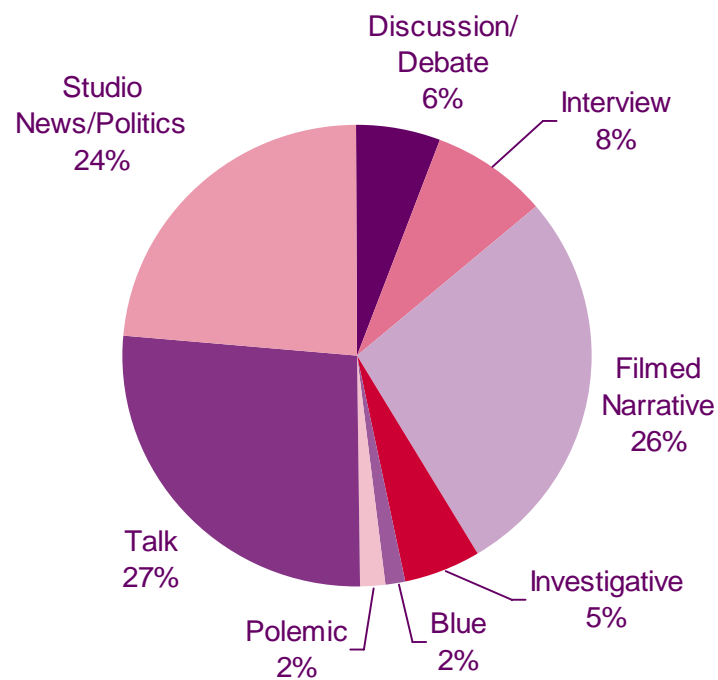


- Most international coverage was on BBC2 and Channel 4
- The main current affairs series also featured programmes on international issues
- Singles or current affairs specials included: **The Cult of the Suicide Bomber** and **Children of Beslan**
- Programmes on Al Qaeda and Iraq dominated output

Source : Ofcom Content Analysis

Range of Formats 1 July to 31 December 2005

Programme format (%)









Source : Ofcom Content Analysis

- Filmed ‘narrative’ current affairs accounted for just over a quarter of all current affairs programmes
- 24% of the output was “Studio News/Politics”
- The 27% of output defined as ‘talk’ mainly comprised **The Wright Stuff**
- Discussion/Debate and Interview programmes combined made up 14% of the output
- Investigative programmes only comprised a small percentage of programming
- Polemical programmes (2% of output) included episodes of **Dispatches** and the Five series **Don’t Get Me Started**

Current Affairs Range of Formats – Sample Week

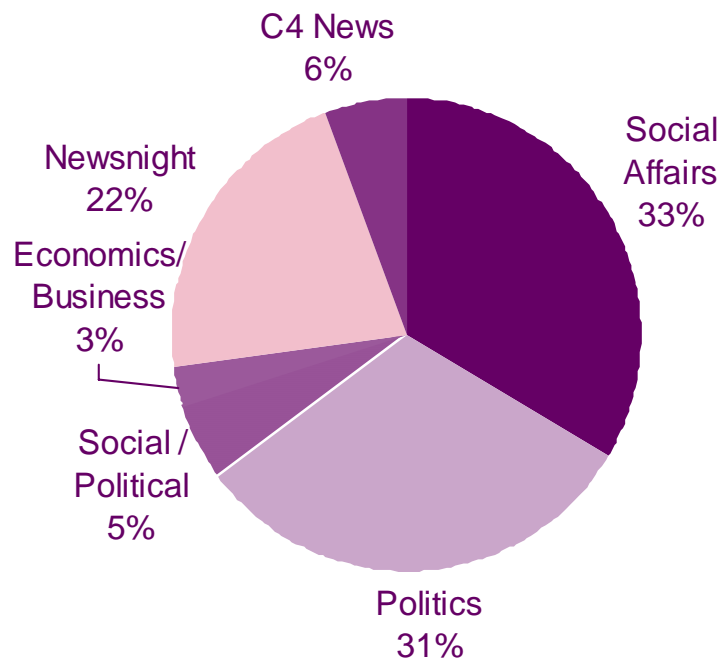
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							The Sunday Programme
Morning	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff		Sunday AM
Lunchtime	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show		Jonathan Dimpleby
Afternoon							
Peak	Real Story Tonight With Trevor McDonald			This World	Tonight With Trevor McDonald	Morgan and Platell	
	Dispatches	Inside Wandsworth Prison					
Post Peak	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight		Panorama
				Question Time			
				This Week			

Formats

-  Narrative
-  Talk
-  Discussion/Debate
-  Interview
-  Studio News/Politics
-  Investigative

Range of subject matter 1 July to 31 December 2005

Programme topic (%)



- Series including **The Daily Politics** and **Sunday AM** comprised a significant proportion of Politics programmes
- Social Affairs included programmes on a wide variety of topics including: London bombings, bird flu, ASBOS, pensions, licensing laws and 'overseas surgery'
- Institutions covered over the six months included– the Post Office, NHS, schools, the Church of England and the Royal Family
- Business/Economic programmes made up a small proportion of the output

Source : Ofcom Current Affairs Analysis

Current Affairs Range of Topics – Sample Week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							The Sunday Programme
Morning	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff	The Wright Stuff		Sunday AM
Lunchtime	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show	The Politics Show		Jonathan Dimbleby
Afternoon							
Peak	Real Story Tonight With Trevor McDonald			This World	Tonight With Trevor McDonald	Morgan and Platell	
	Dispatches						
Post Peak	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight	Newsnight		Panorama
				Question Time This Week			

Topics

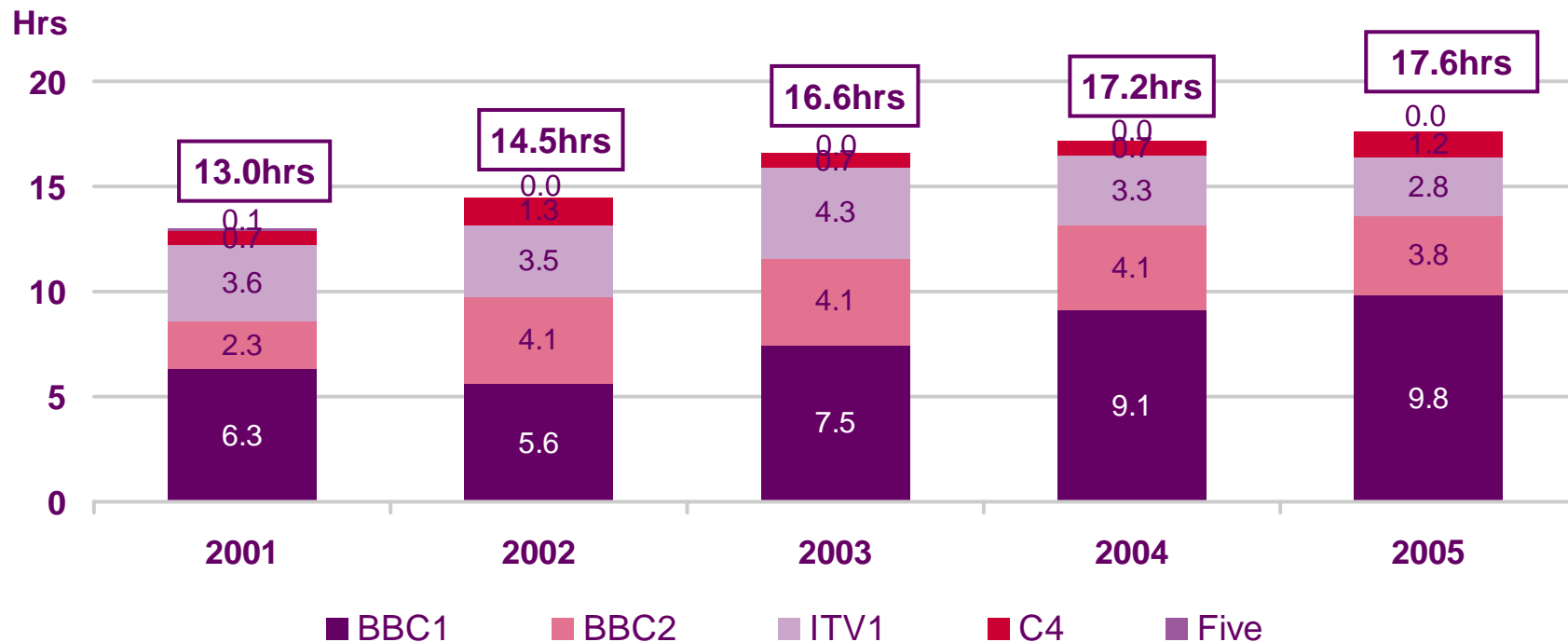
-  International
-  Social Affairs
-  Politics
-  Politics/Social Affairs
-  Economics/ Business

Current Affairs (Peak time) – Example Week (November 2005)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
1800-1830						Unreported World		 International
1830-1900								 Social Affairs
1900-1930					The Money Programme			 Politics
1930-2000	Real Story with Fiona Bruce							 Economics/ Business
2000-2030	Tonight With Trevor McDonald				Tonight With Trevor McDonald			
2030-2100			The Day The Bombs Came	This World	Bird Flu What You Need to Know			
2100-2130			The Day The Bombs Came					
2130-2200								
2200-2230							Panorama	

Total viewing to PSB Current Affairs has increased since 2001

Total yearly hrs viewed of PSB Current Affairs (Political/Economical/Social)

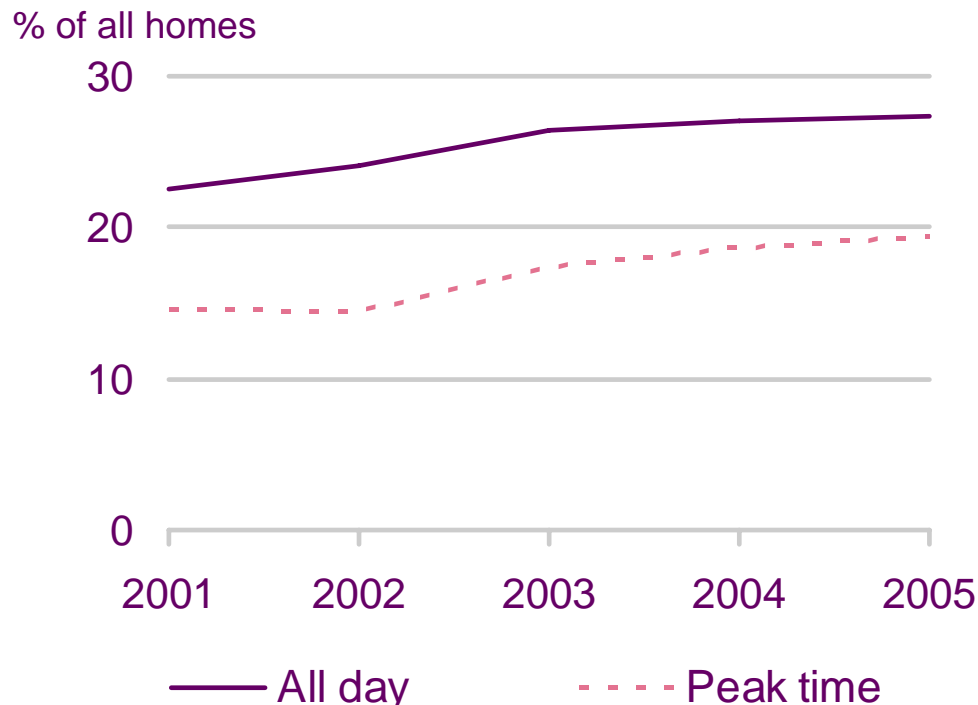


Source: BARB, Network, All hrs, Mon-Sun, Total hrs, individuals

Note : Five output **The Wright Stuff** classified by BARB as entertainment and **MacIntyre's Big Sting** as Documentary

Reach of Current Affairs has increased, in all time and peak

Weekly average reach of PSB Current Affairs Programmes

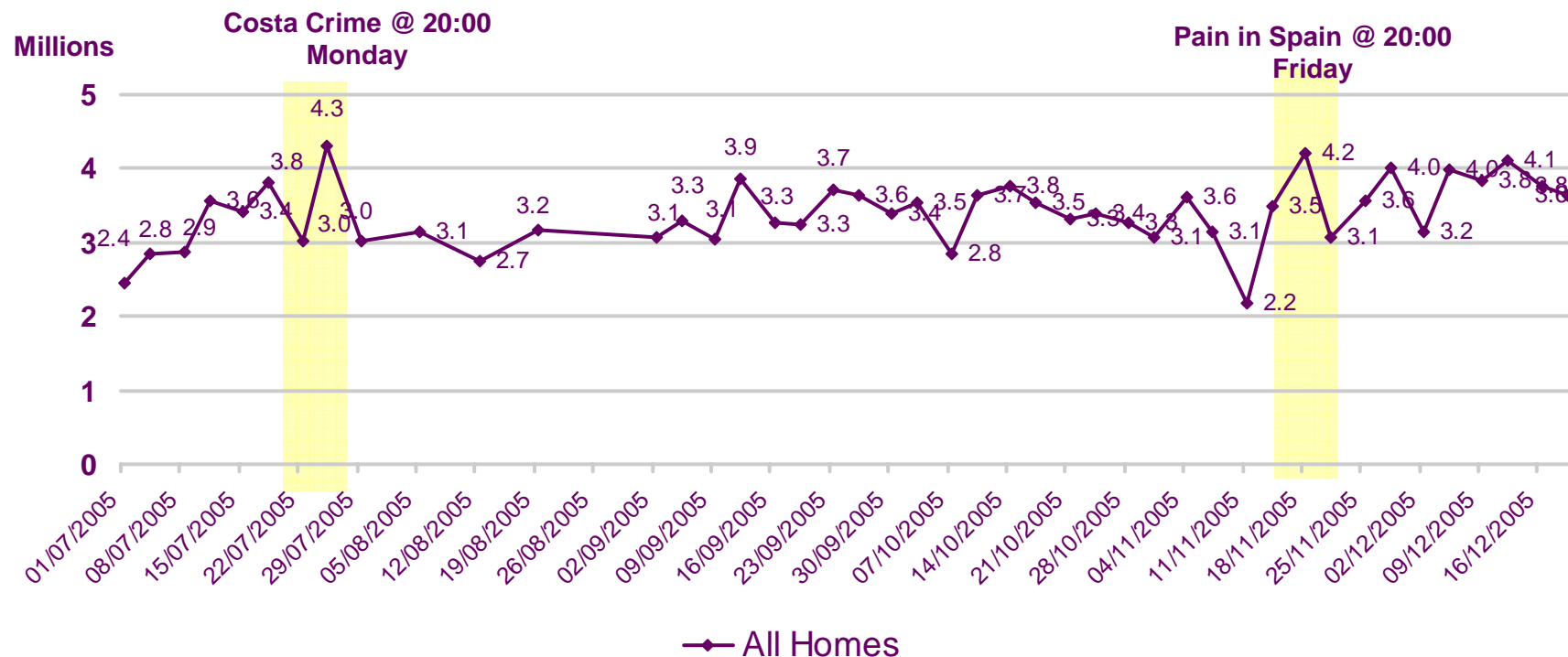


Source: BARB

- Average reach (all day) has increased gradually
- Peak Time reach has also increased slightly

Tonight with Trevor McDonald (1 July – 31 December 2005)

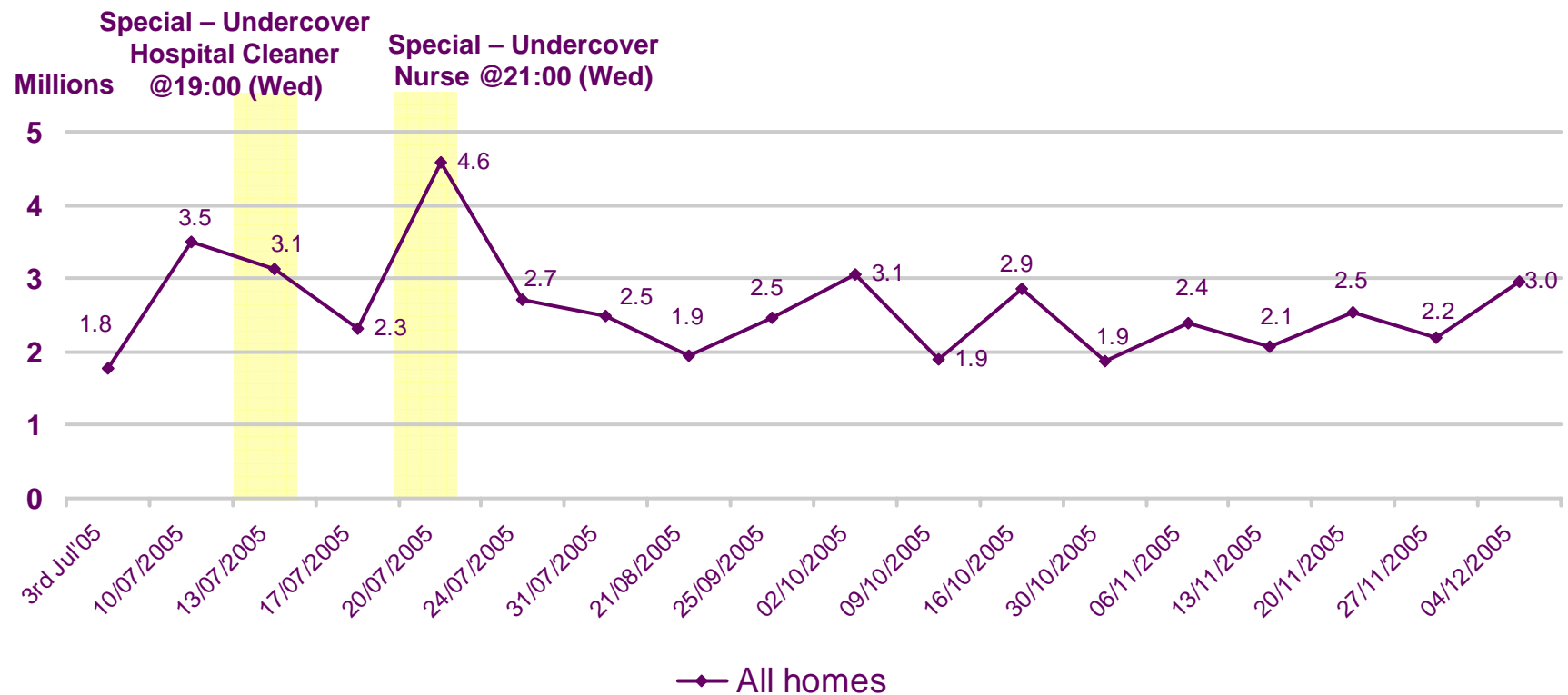
Average audience size (millions) (Monday/Friday @20:00)



Source: BARB, Jul-Dec 2005, Individuals

Panorama (1 July – 31 December 2005)

Average audience size (millions) (Sundays @22:20)



Source: BARB, Jul-Dec 2005, Individuals

Dispatches (1 July – 31 December 2005)

Average audience size (millions) (Monday @20:00 / Thursday @21:00)



Source: BARB, Jul-Dec 2005, Individuals

Current Affairs in the Nations and Regions

Katy Boulton
28 March 2006

Formal requirements for non network current affairs

ITV

- English regions
26 minutes per week
- Wales **47 minutes** per week
- Scotland **33 minutes** per week shared between Scottish and Grampian
- Northern Ireland
26 minutes per week

BBC

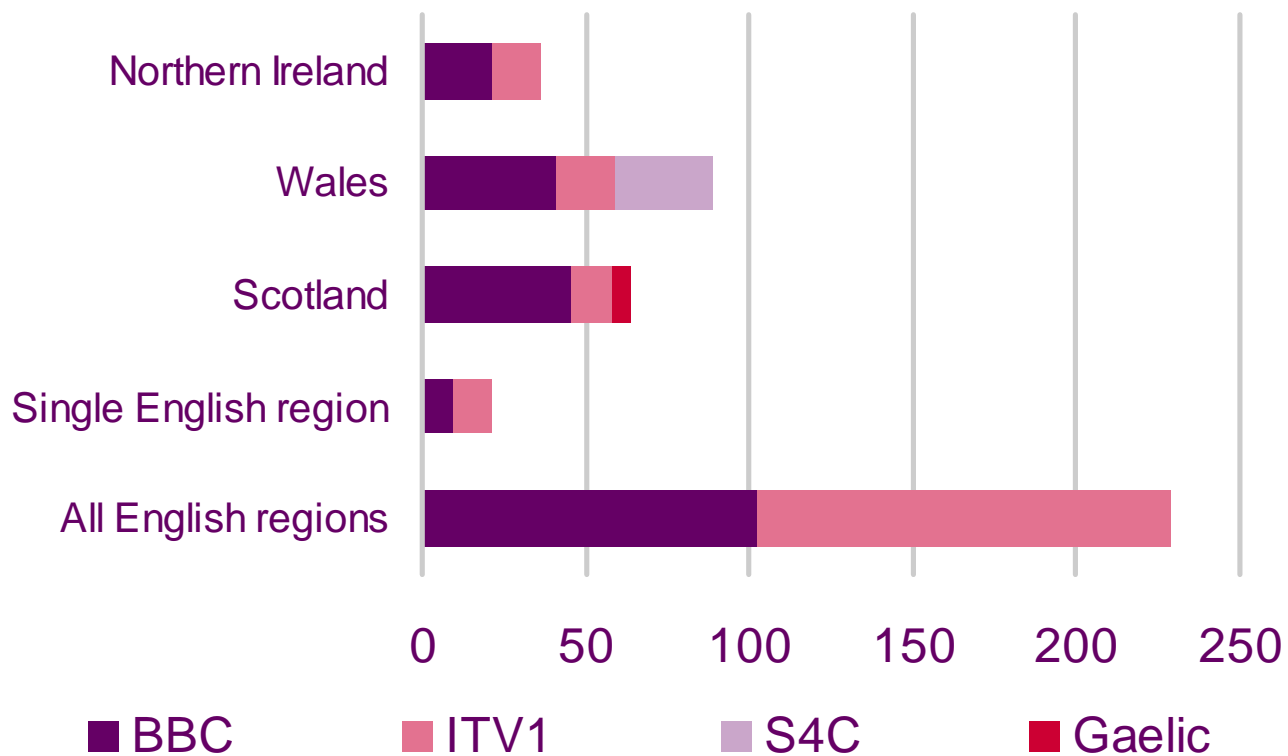
- No non network genre quotas except for regional news
- But a requirement for nations and regions programming to represent a range of genres

S4C

- **30 hours** per year in peak (c.35 minutes per week)
- **60 hours** per year in total

Volume of non network current affairs

Hours of non network current affairs output



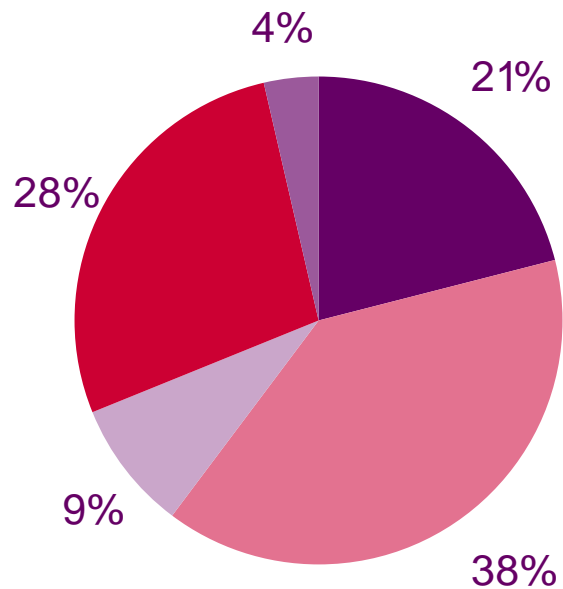
- Higher level of output in the Nations than in each of the English regions
- BBC the largest provider in the Nations
- ITV the largest provider in the English regions

Source : Ofcom output audit

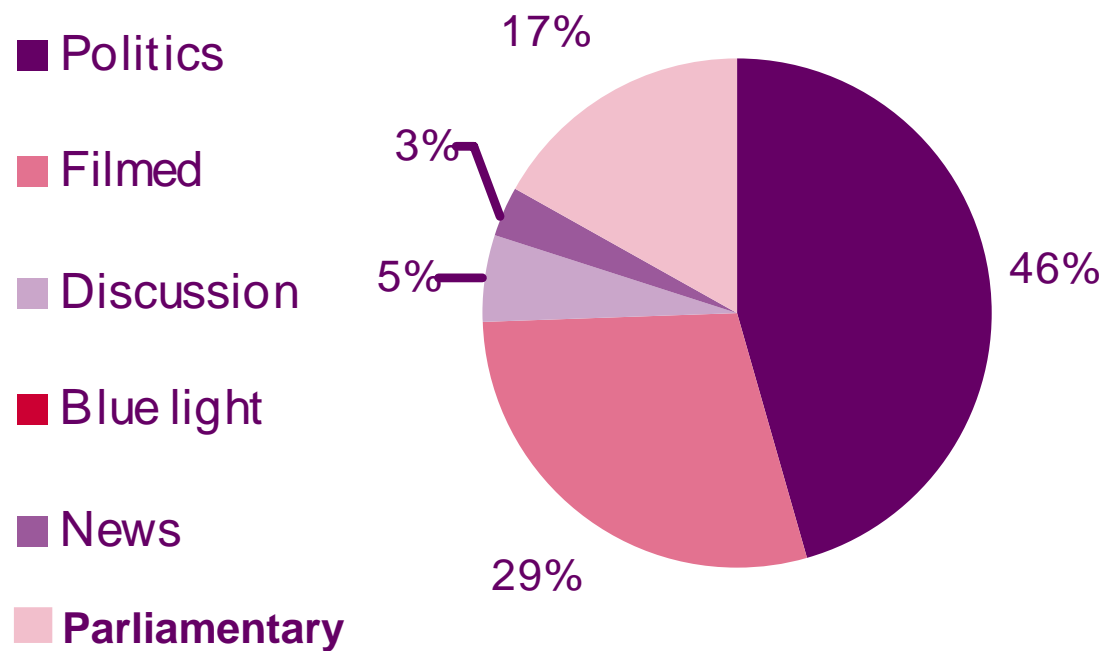
Note – some Gaelic output funded by the Gaelic Media Service

Range of non network current affairs

English regions



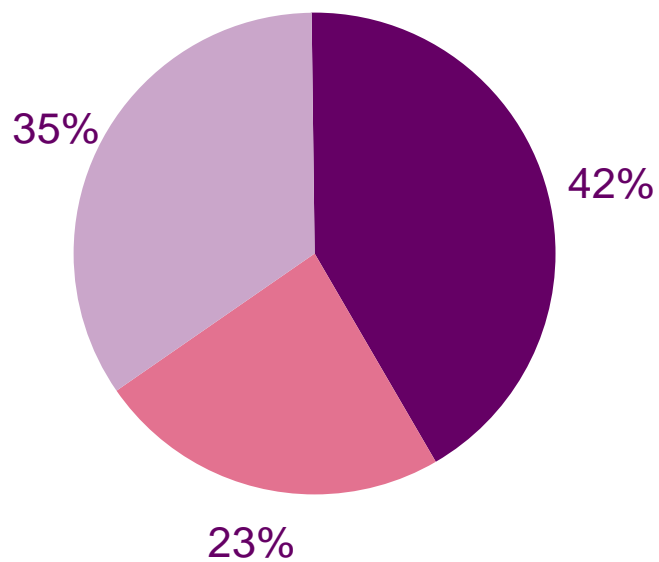
Nations



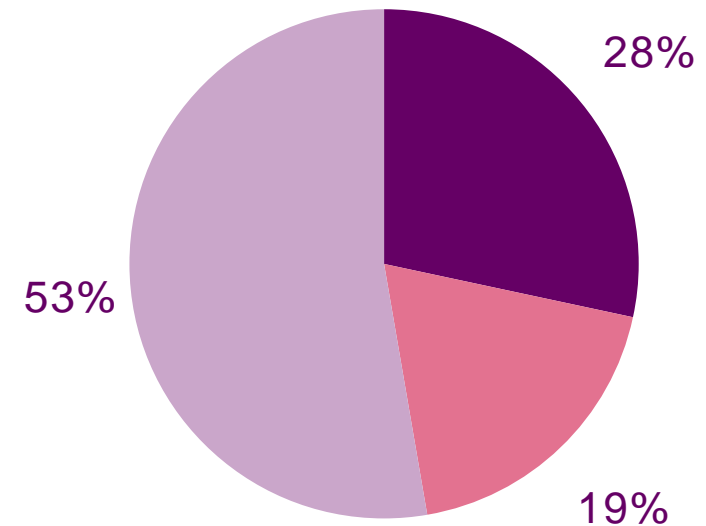
Source : Ofcom output audit

Scheduling of non network current affairs

English regions



Nations



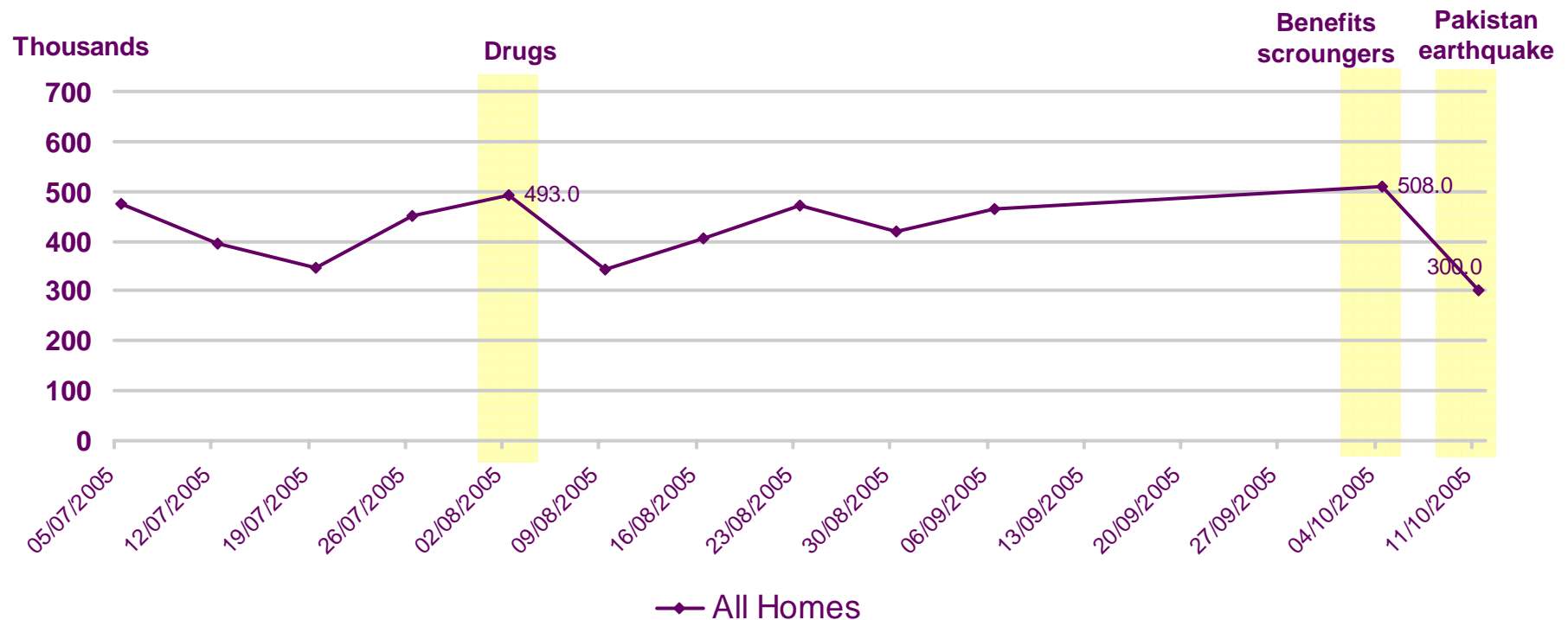
Source : Ofcom output audit

Schedule – illustrative

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Daytime		BBC - Welsh Assembly/ Scottish Parl	BBC - Welsh Assembly/ Scottish Parl				Lunchtime politics - BBC ITV & S4C
1900 - 1930			Frontline Scotland – BBC	Cunntas – Gaelic – BBC Scotland	Politics Scotland - BBC		
1930 - 2000	Inside Out – BBC English regions	ITV English/ Welsh flagship strands		Hearts and Minds – BBC NI/ Day in Life - UTV			
2000 – 2030	Insight – UTV						
2030 - 2100	Ffermio – S4C	Taro 9 – S4C	S4C – Y Byd ar Bedwar				
2230 - 2300		Spotlight – BBC Northern Ireland		Dragon’s Eye – BBC Wales			
2300 - 2330				ITV regions - blue light/ STV - Politics Now			

Central Extra – ITV Central – discussion format with filmed inserts

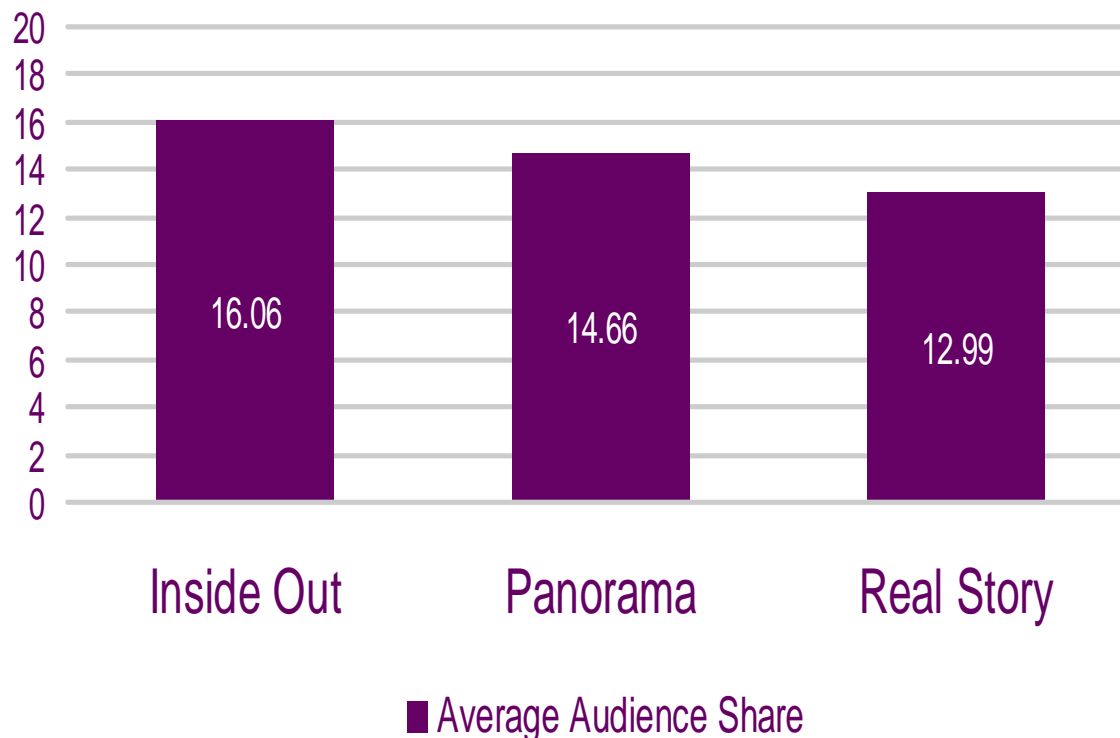
Average audience size by episode (Tuesdays at 19:30)



Source: BARB, Jul-Dec 2005, Individuals

BBC's regional series *Inside Out* compares favourably with network current affairs for audience share

Average audience share in available homes (%)



- *Inside Out* is broadcast in the English regions on BBC1 on Mondays at 19:30
- Average audience share for *Inside Out* is higher than average ratings for network current affairs (albeit in different slots)

Source: BARB, Jul-Dec 2005, Individuals