

2 Television and audio-visual content

2.1 Recent developments in Northern Ireland

Digital switchover in Northern Ireland

Television viewers in Northern Ireland receive their television signal through a mixture of digital and analogue transmission platforms.

Northern Ireland will be among the last of the UK regions to make the digital switchover (DSO), when the terrestrial analogue signal is switched off on 24 October 2012. On this date all of the transmitters in Northern Ireland will switch to transmitting digital terrestrial television. DSO will have no effect on existing cable (e.g. Virgin Media) and satellite (e.g. Sky or Freesat) users. The switch will give those viewers not already on digital a much wider range of channels than they have access to on analogue-only services.

Digital UK, the body responsible for raising awareness about digital switchover, launched its programme in Northern Ireland in October 2011. An extensive marketing campaign began in April 2012, which will accelerate as the switchover date approaches. BBC Northern Ireland and UTV will also play a key part in highlighting what viewers should do during the switchover process.

Republic of Ireland channel availability after DSO

There are two extra dimensions of digital switchover in Northern Ireland that do not exist elsewhere. The first of these is that Northern Ireland has a land border with the Republic of Ireland, which is also going through the DSO process. The second is an agreement which will see RTÉ channels and TG4 broadcast on local transmitters for the first time.

DSO in the Republic and Northern Ireland is scheduled to take place on the same day. Currently, many viewers in Northern Ireland who receive their television through a rooftop aerial are able to watch analogue channels from the Republic of Ireland through what is termed 'spillover' (i.e. signals transmitted in the Republic but capable of reception in Northern Ireland). This will continue to be the case after DSO in the Republic, assuming that viewers have a digitally-enabled television or set-top box.

In addition to this, viewers who do not currently receive RTÉ or TG4 because they live some distance from the border and a Republic of Ireland-based transmitter (and don't have Sky or Virgin Media) will for the first time be able to receive these channels.

The agreement between the British and Irish governments will see RTÉ 1 and 2 broadcast from several transmitters in Northern Ireland while Irish language station TG4, which has been broadcasting on analogue from the Divis transmitter since 2005, is to have its broadcast footprint expanded. The effect of this will be to give these three channels near-universal coverage across Northern Ireland for the first time.

Local TV

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced in December that Belfast will be in the first batch of 21 new local TV licences to be advertised across the UK. The coverage of the Belfast licence will extend to Greater Belfast and include Lisburn.

These new licenses were advertised in May 2012, with the first licence expected to be awarded by the end of the year. The first local services are likely to start broadcasting in

autumn 2013. A further 24 areas including Derry / Londonderry and Limavady have been identified for a future round of licensing.

Local TV will be broadcast on Freeview and have a high position in the electronic programme guide (EPG). BSkyB and Virgin have committed to offering apps or the use of the yellow button on their interactive menu to broadcast the services.

Ulster Scots programming³

The Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) opened for the receipt of applications in February 2011. The fund provides finance for the production of film, television or other moving image projects relating to the Ulster Scots heritage, culture and language in Northern Ireland. Awards were made in 2011/12 for 18 hours of production.

The USBF, in conjunction with BBC Northern Ireland, has set a high editorial bar for Ulster-Scots programming, hoping that some of the programming will be re-broadcast on BBC Four. The targets have been revised for 2012/13 to take account of the new focus on landmark content.

Targets for 2012/13 include:

- Deliver 12 additional hours of Ulster-Scots programming in a range of genres, focusing on landmark content.
- Broadcast 90% of the USBF-funded programming within six months of delivery.
- Reach an initial audience of 40,000 people in Northern Ireland.

2.2 Digital television take-up in Northern Ireland

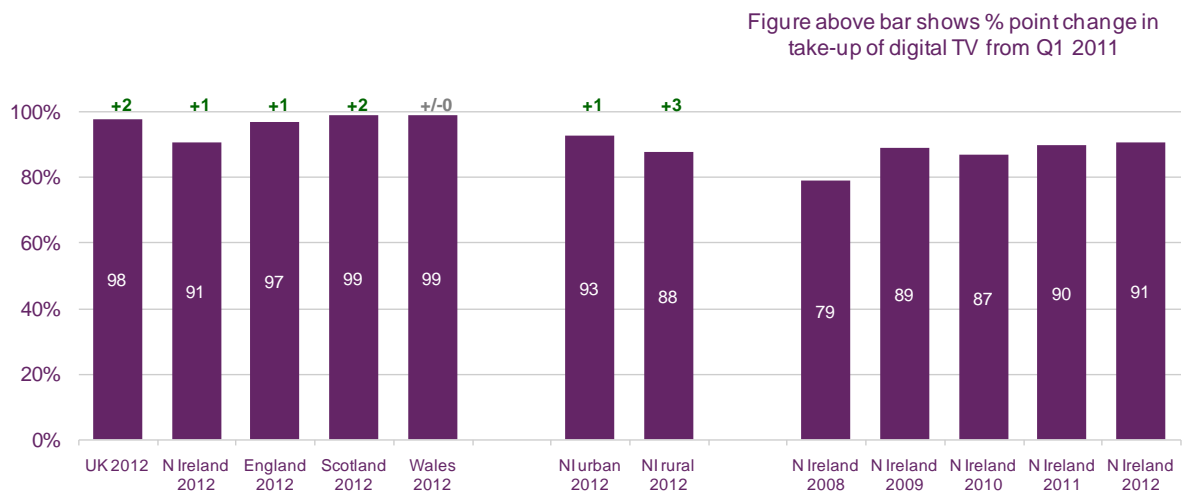
Digital television take-up remains stable in Northern Ireland

Ahead of digital switchover in October 2012, just over nine in ten homes with a TV in Northern Ireland have a digital television service. This is lower than the UK average (98%), but Northern Ireland is the only UK nation where digital switchover is yet to begin (it has been completed in Scotland and Wales).

Consumers in Northern Ireland who are aged 55+ and in DE socio-economic groups are less likely to have converted to digital television at home. Take-up is higher in urban (93%) than in rural areas (88%).

³ Northern Ireland Screen (<http://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/>)

Figure 2.1 Digital television take-up in Northern Ireland



Source: Ofcom research, Quarter 1 2012

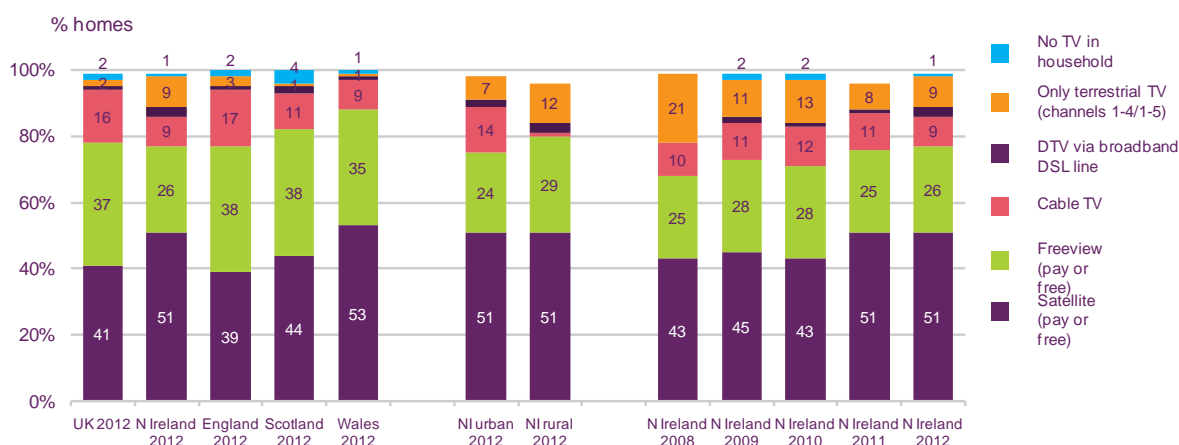
Base: All adults aged 16+ with a TV in household (n = 3713 UK, 502 Northern Ireland, 2214 England, 489 Scotland, 508 Wales, 253 Northern Ireland urban, 249 Northern Ireland rural, 626 Northern Ireland 2008, 640 Northern Ireland 2009, 746 Northern Ireland 2010, 509 Northern Ireland 2011, 502 Northern Ireland 2012)

Satellite remains the most popular TV platform in Northern Ireland

The mix of platforms used to view television is little changed since 2011 in Northern Ireland. The increase in satellite TV penetration (including pay and free services) seen last year has been maintained, with take-up of these services stable at 51% - significantly higher than the UK average (41%). Related to this, Northern Ireland continues to have the highest proportion of TV households with pay TV, at 63%, compared to the UK average of 58%.

Take-up of cable services varies widely depending on location; take-up in urban centres is 14% and in line with the UK average, while in rural areas 3% of homes have a cable TV service, due to the lower availability of the infrastructure. Northern Ireland has the highest take-up of digital TV via a broadband DSL line (i.e. *BT Vision*) at 3% (UK average 1%).

Figure 2.2 Main set TV share in Northern Ireland, by platform



Source: Ofcom research, Quarter 1 2012

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3772 UK, 508 Northern Ireland, 2251 England, 500 Scotland, 513 Wales, 255 Northern Ireland urban, 253 Northern Ireland rural, 629 Northern Ireland 2008, 652 Northern Ireland 2009, 761 Northern Ireland 2010, 511 Northern Ireland 2011, 508 Northern Ireland 2012)

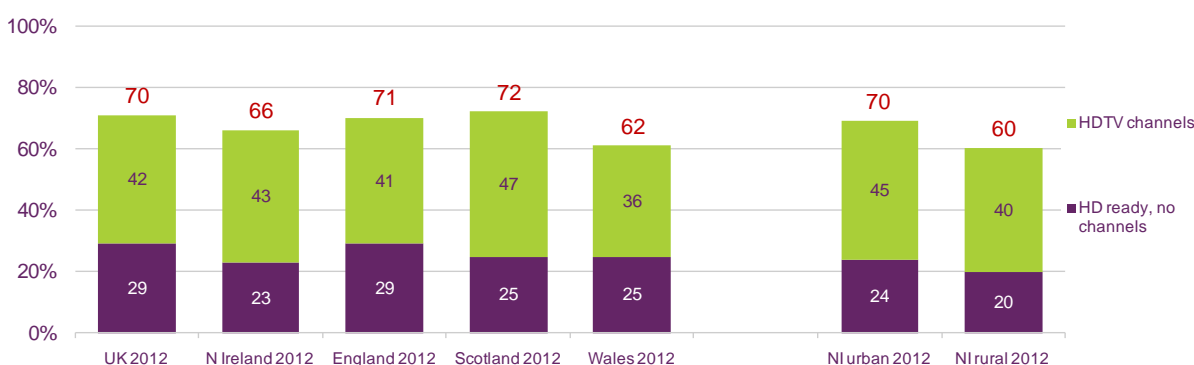
2.3 Ownership of high definition and smart TVs

Two-thirds of those with an HD-ready TV have access to HD channels

Across all the UK nations, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of homes with HD-ready TVs and those claiming to have access to HDTV channels. Northern Ireland saw HDTV access rise from 32% of households in Q1 2011 to 43% in Q1 2012, in line with the UK average (42%). A further 23% have an HD-ready TV.

Take-up of HDTV services is higher in urban (45%) than in rural (40%) areas in Northern Ireland.

Figure 2.3 Proportion of homes with HD-ready TV sets and HDTV



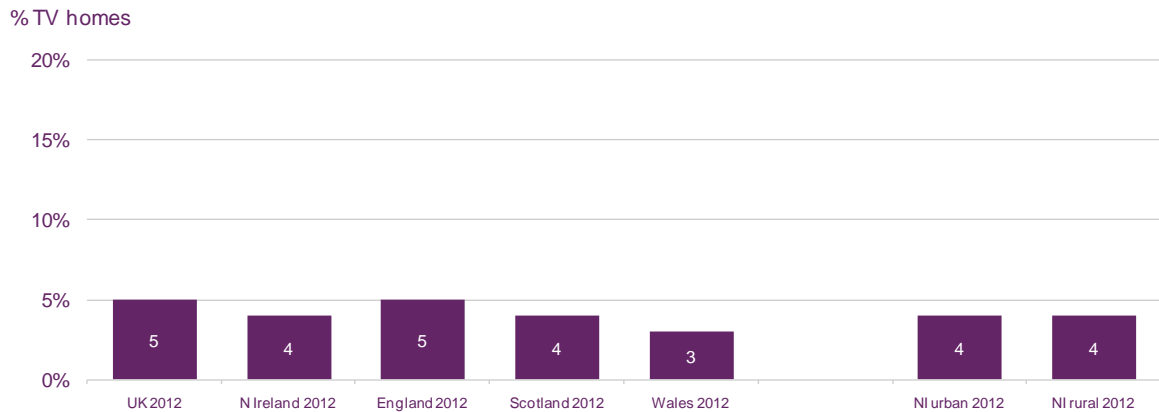
Source: Ofcom research, Quarter 1 2012

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3772 UK, 508 Northern Ireland, 2251 England, 500 Scotland, 513 Wales, 255 Northern Ireland urban, 253 Northern Ireland rural)

Take-up of smart (internet-enabled) TVs on a par with UK average

A small proportion (4%) of homes in Northern Ireland claim to have purchased a smart TV with an integrated internet connection (Figure 2.4). Smart TV ownership in Northern Ireland is at a similar level to the UK average (5%).

Figure 2.4 Take-up of smart TVs



Source: Ofcom research, Quarter 1 2012

Base: All adults aged 16+ with a TV in household (n = 3713 UK, 502 Northern Ireland, 2214 England, 489 Scotland, 508 Wales, 253 Northern Ireland urban, 249 Northern Ireland rural)

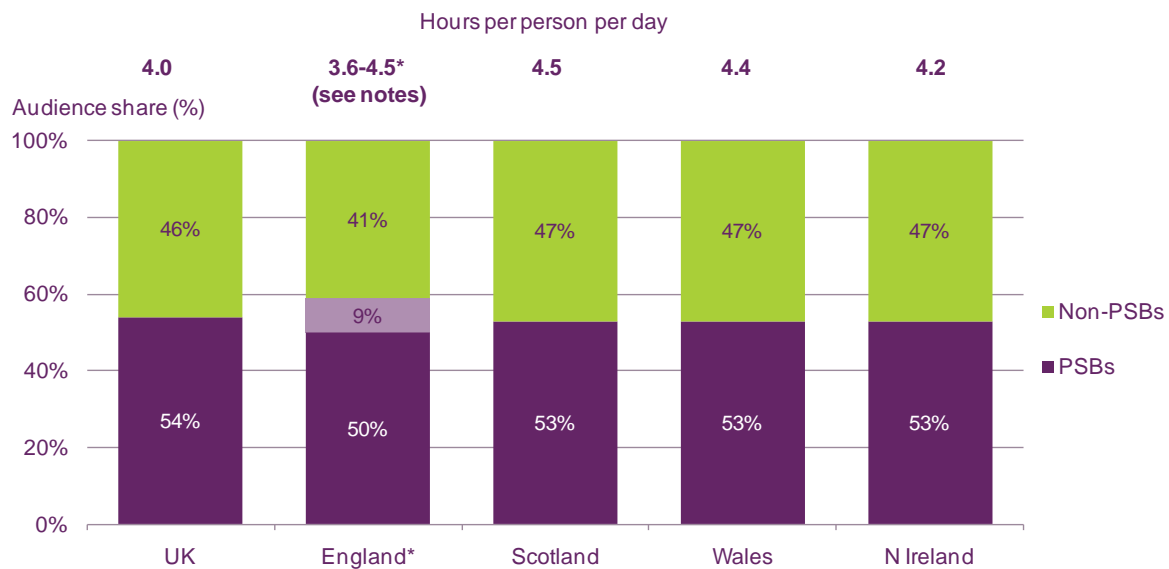
QH18. Are any of your TV sets "Smart TVs"? These are new types of TV that are connected to the internet and can stream video directly onto your television screen, without the need for a computer, set-top box or games console.

2.4 Broadcast television viewing

People in Northern Ireland spend 4.2 hours per day watching TV

In 2011, people in Northern Ireland spent 4.2 hours per day watching television, slightly higher than the UK average of 4.0 hours. Figure 2.5 also shows the split in viewing between the main five PSB channels and other channels.

Figure 2.5 Average hours of daily TV viewing by nation, 2011

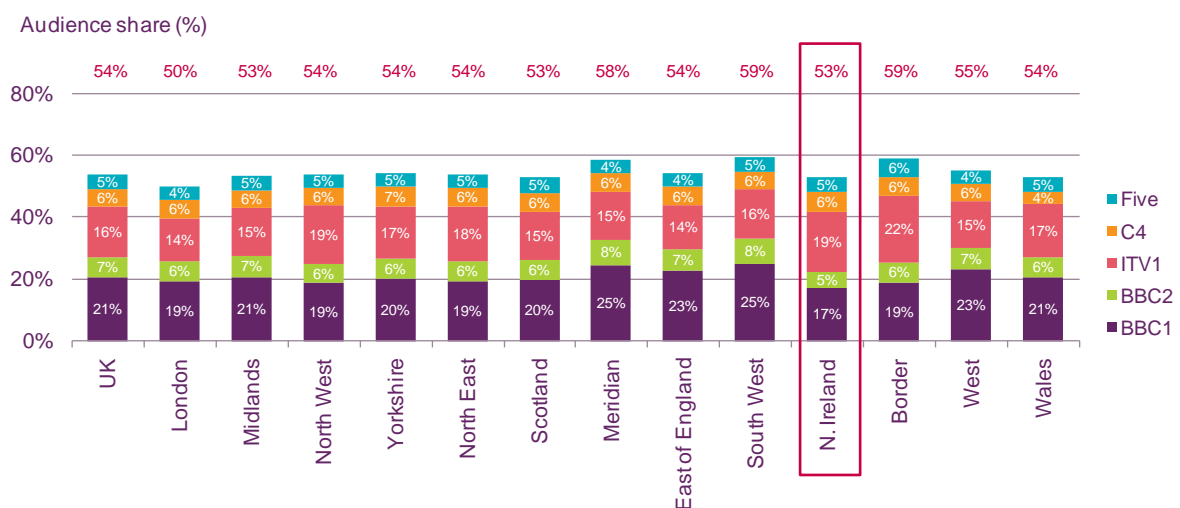


Source: TV = BARB. Based on all individuals (aged 4+). PSBs = BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, C4, Five.
 *Note: It is not possible to provide a single figure for England so instead PSB share is described as a range, reflecting the regions with the highest (North East – 59%) and lowest (West – 50%) figures respectively.

Over half (53%) of all viewing in Northern Ireland is to the five main PSB channels

In 2011, the five main PSB channels accounted for a combined 53% share of total TV viewing in Northern Ireland, comparable to that in the other nations and to their average share across the UK (54%).

Figure 2.6 Share of the five main PSB channels, all homes: 2011

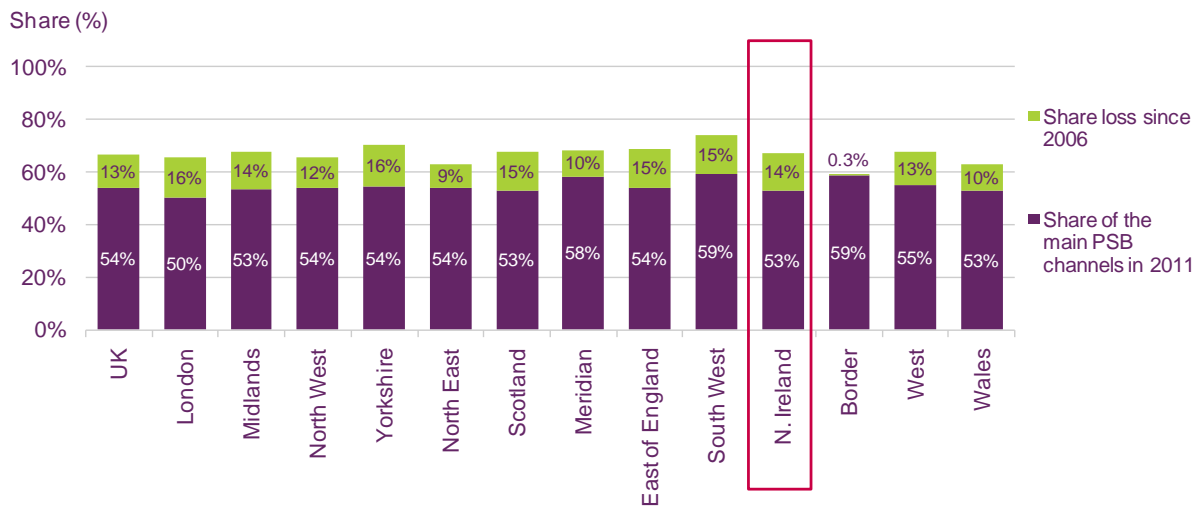


Source: BARB, all individuals (4+)

Between 2006 and 2011, the combined channel share of the five main PSB channels declined by 14 percentage points, falling to 53% in 2011, similar to the UK average decline

From 2006 to 2011, there was a 14pp reduction in the combined share of the five main PSB channels in Northern Ireland (falling to 53% in 2011), marginally more than the average decrease across the UK (13pp).

Figure 2.7 Reduction in combined share of the five main PSB channels, all homes: 2006 and 2011



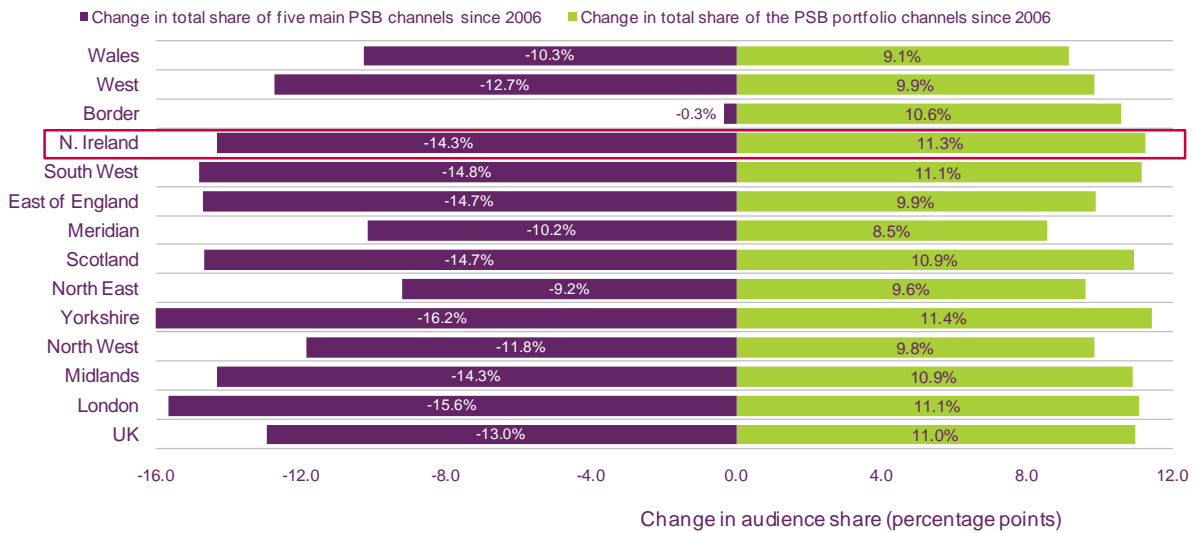
Source: BARB, all individuals (4+)

Note: In 2010 a new BARB panel was introduced, including the re-defining of boundaries. Therefore, pre- and post-panel change data should be compared with caution.

The PSB channels total combined share (including digital channels) decreased by 3.0pp between 2006 and 2011, compared to the UK average net loss of 2.0pp

From 2006 to 2011, the five main PSB channels experienced a 14.3pp decrease in their combined share of total TV viewing in Northern Ireland, compared to the UK average decrease of 13.0pp. Among viewers in Northern Ireland, the PSBs' portfolio channels enjoyed an 11.3pp increase in viewing share (UK average 11.0pp), resulting in a net loss overall of 3.0pp in their total combined channel share (UK average net loss 2.0pp).

Figure 2.8 Net change in the audience share of the five main PSB channels and their portfolio channels, all homes: 2006 - 2011



Source: BARB, all individuals (4+)

Notes: i) 'PSB portfolio channels' includes all the main PSBs' multichannel channels (except for the five terrestrial channels).

ii) In 2010 a new BARB panel was introduced, including the re-defining of boundaries. Therefore, pre- and post-panel change data should be compared with caution.

UTV's early evening news bulletin performed relatively strongly, attracting an average 34% share

Across 2011, BBC Northern Ireland's early evening regional news bulletin attracted an average 26% share of TV viewing in Northern Ireland. UTV's counterpart bulletin continued to attract a comparatively higher share (34%) – nearly double Channel 3's UK average (18%) and significantly higher than achieved in any of the other nations.

Figure 2.9 BBC One and ITV1/ STV/ UTV/ ITV Wales early evening nations news bulletin shares, all homes: 2011



Source: BARB, all individuals(4+)

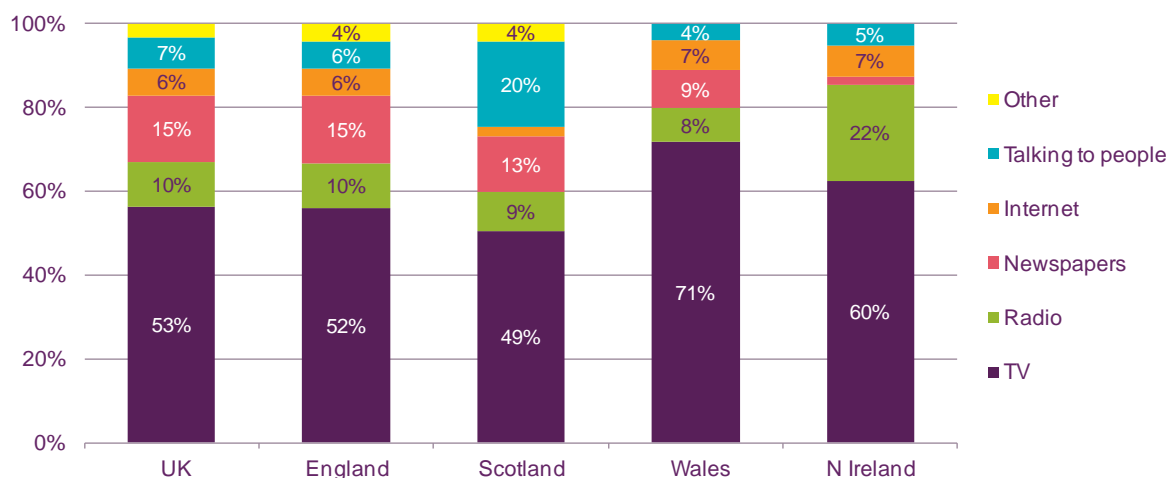
Note: Based on regional news programmes, start time 17:55-18:35, 10mins+ duration, BBC One and ITV1, weekdays

Adults in Northern Ireland are most likely to state TV as their 'main source' of local news and nations' news

In 2011, 60% of adults in Northern Ireland stated TV as their main source of local news, higher than the UK average of 53% and the second highest of all the nations, behind Wales at 71%. Radio was the second most-mentioned, at 22%, significantly higher than the UK average of 15% and among adults in the other nations. Conversely, newspapers were mentioned by only 2% of adults in Northern Ireland, much lower than the UK average of 15% and of that in the other nations.

Figure 2.10 Main sources of local news for each nation

'Can you tell me what, if anything, is your main source of news about what is going on in your own local area'



Source: Ofcom media tracker 2011.

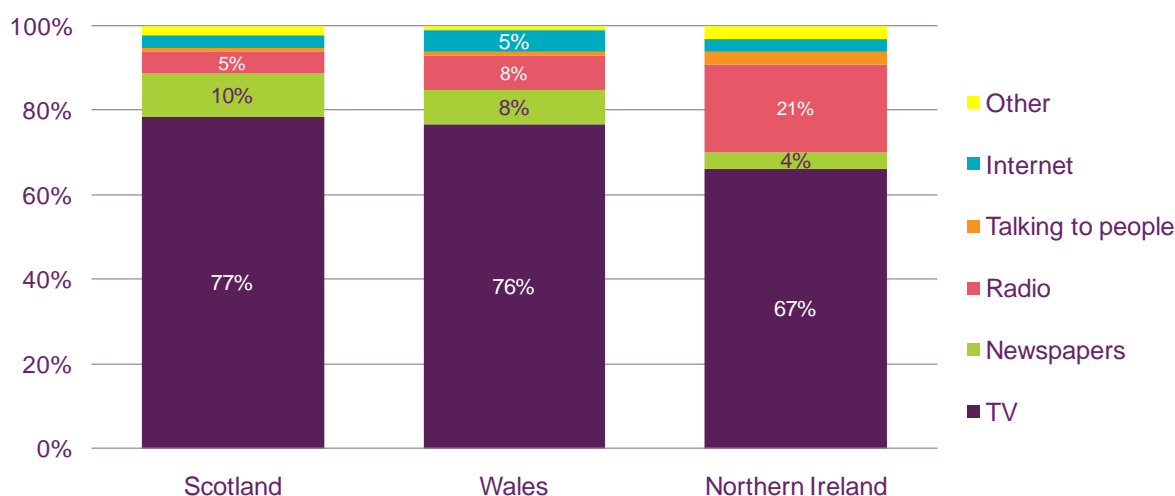
Base: All adults; England (1,369); Scotland (172); Wales (107); Northern Ireland (106).

Only responses ≥ 4% labelled

In 2011, television was the most-mentioned main source for nations' news among adults in Northern Ireland, considerably lower than in Scotland (77%) and Wales (76%). Conversely, just over one-fifth of adults (21%) stated radio as their main source; significantly higher than in Wales (8%) and Scotland (5%).

Figure 2.11 Main sources of nations' news for each nation

'Can you tell me what, if anything, is your *main* source of news about what is going on in [Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland]?'



Source: Ofcom media tracker 2011.

Base: All adults in Scotland (172); Wales (107); Northern Ireland (106).

Only responses ≥ 4% labelled

2.5 TV programming for viewers in Northern Ireland

The following section outlines spend and hours of programming for viewers in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the English regions provided by the BBC and UTV/STV/ITV. The figures exclude Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. For information on Irish language programming by the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF), see section 2.7.

Programme definitions

First-run originations - Programmes commissioned by or for a licensed public service channel with a view to their first showing on television in the United Kingdom in the reference year.

First-run acquisitions - A ready-made programme bought by a broadcaster from another rights holder and broadcast for the first time in the UK during the reference year.

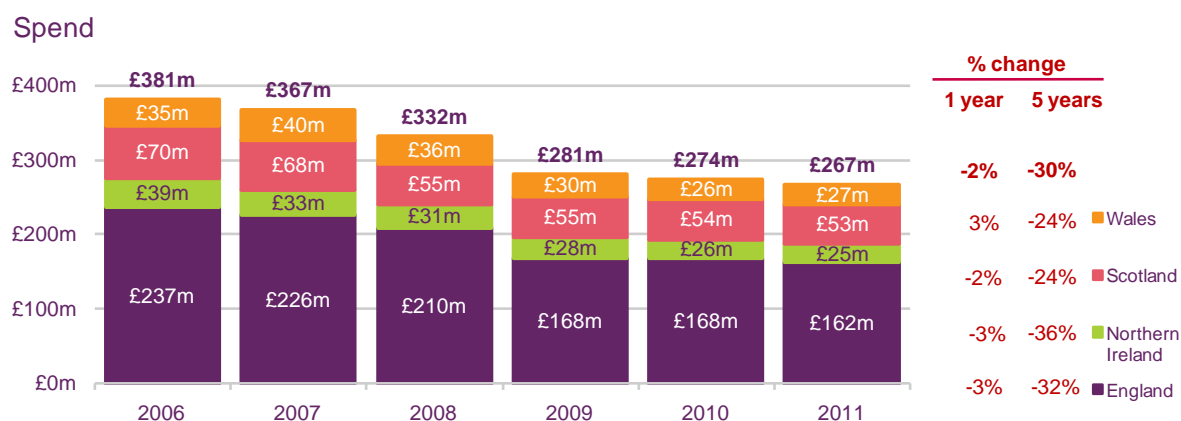
Repeats - All programmes not meeting one of the two definitions above.

Spend on first-run originated programming down by 36% since 2006 in Northern Ireland

£267m was spent by the BBC and ITV/STV/UTV on producing first-run originated programmes specifically for viewers in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the English regions in 2011, down by £7m (or 2%) from 2010 and down by 30% since 2006.

Spend on nations' programmes for viewers in Northern Ireland was down by 36% since 2006, giving Northern Ireland the largest relative decrease across the nations over a five-year period. Year-on-year figures show a 3% decline, which is roughly in line with the UK figure (down 2% year on year).

Figure 2.12 Spend on first-run originated nations' and regions' output by the BBC/ITV/STV/UTV



Source: Broadcasters. All figures expressed in 2011 prices.

Note: Spend data for first-run originations only. Spend excludes Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. This does not account for spend on BBC ALBA or BBC spend on S4C output. For information on Irish language programming by the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF), please see Figure 2.19.

Northern Ireland total spend on current affairs is down by 36% since 2006 – the largest decrease across the four nations

Turning to total spend on programming for viewers in Northern Ireland, over the five-year period, spend for current affairs programming decreased by 36%, compared to the UK average decline of 26% over the same period.

By genre, the steepest proportional decline in spending over one year in Northern Ireland was also in current affairs, down by 23%.

Figure 2.13 Change in total spend on nations' and regions' output, by genre and nation: 2006 - 2011

	UK		England		N. Ireland		Scotland		Wales	
	1yr (%)	5yr (%)	1yr (%)	5yr (%)	1yr (%)	5yr (%)	1yr (%)	5yr (%)	1yr (%)	5yr (%)
Current Affairs	-13%	-26%	-13%	-31%	-23%	-36%	-8%	5%	-13%	-26%
News	-3%	-22%	-4%	-23%	-4%	-25%	-3%	-20%	2%	-3%
Non-news/non-current affairs	2%	-43%	-16%	-88%	2%	-42%	2%	-27%	7%	-35%
Total Spend in 2011	£272m		£165m		£25m		£55m		£27m	

	UK		England		N. Ireland		Scotland		Wales	
	1yr	5yr	1yr	5yr	1yr	5yr	1yr	5yr	1yr	5yr
Change in Spend	-3%	-29%	-5%	-30%	-3%	-36%	-1%	-23%	3%	-24%

Source: Broadcasters. All figures expressed in 2011 prices.

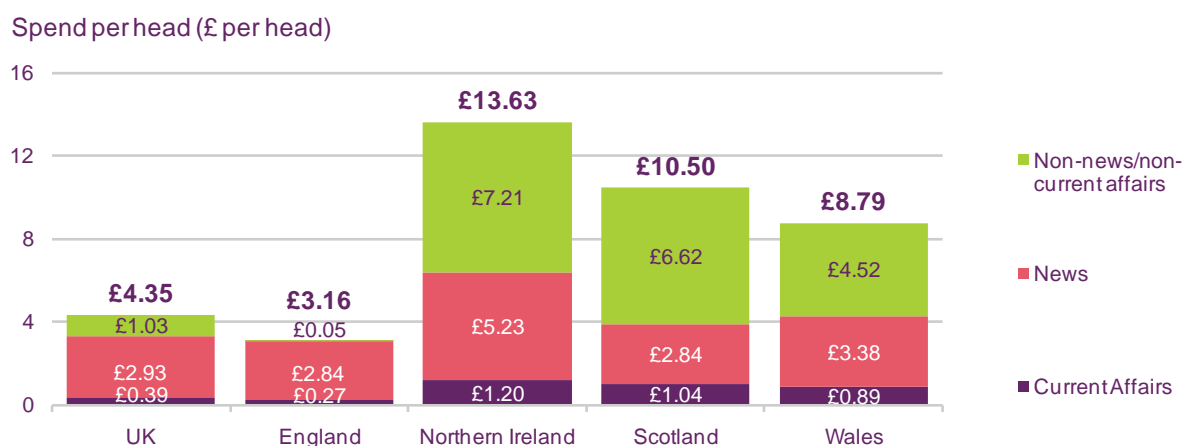
Note: Spend excludes Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. This does not account for spend on BBC ALBA or BBC spend on S4C output.

Northern Ireland has highest spend per head on nations' and regions' output in 2011

Expenditure per head of population on nations' and regions' output was highest in Northern Ireland at £13.63 (£14.2 per head in 2010) compared to the UK average of £4.35, and reflecting the fact that Northern Ireland has the smallest population of all the nations in the UK.

At £7.21, non-news/non-current affairs accounts for the majority of spend per head in Northern Ireland.

Figure 2.14 Total spend per head by the BBC/ITV1/STV/UTV on nations/regions output



Source: PSB returns. Spend excludes Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. This does not account for spend on BBC ALBA or BBC spend on S4C output.

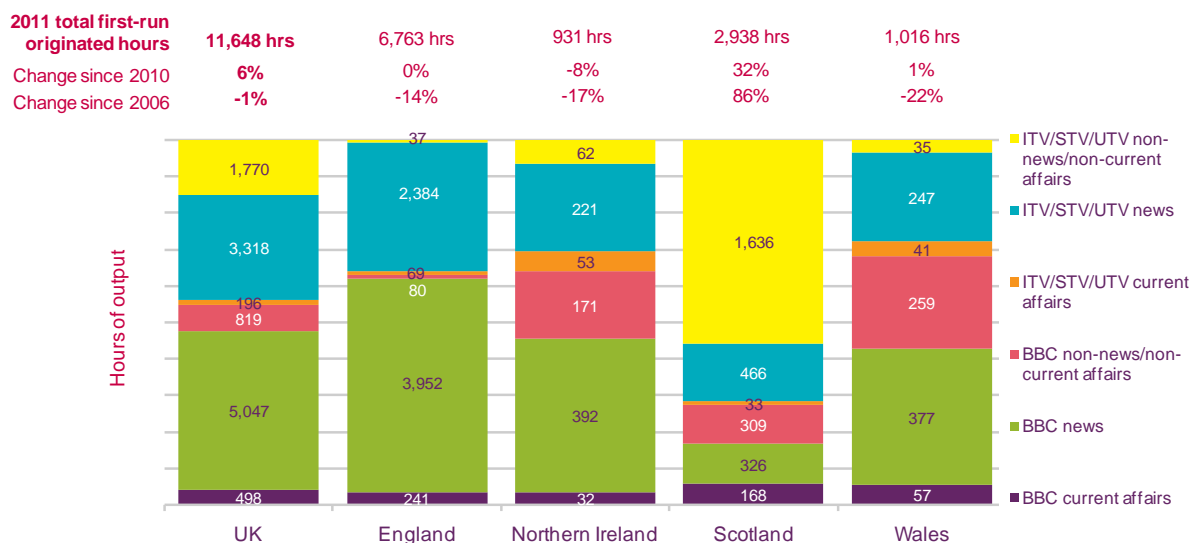
The number of first-run originated hours for viewers in Northern Ireland decreased by 17% between 2006 and 2011

The BBC and ITV1/STV/UTV produced a total of 11,648 hours of first-run originated content for the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2011, up 6% (or 651 hours) from 2010, and showing minimal change since 2006 (down 1%).

The number of first-run originated hours produced specifically for viewers in Northern Ireland saw a 17% decrease from 2006 (down by 187 hours). Over a one-year period, the number of first-run hours decreased by 8%, compared to the UK-wide average increase of 6%.

Note: UTV output for current affairs in Northern Ireland increased by 13% to 53 hours in 2011, boosted by coverage of the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections.

Figure 2.15 Hours of first-run originated nations/regions output, by genre and broadcaster: 2011



Source: PSB returns

Note: Hours data for first-run originations only. Hours excludes Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. This does not include total hours for BBC ALBA or BBC hours on S4C output.

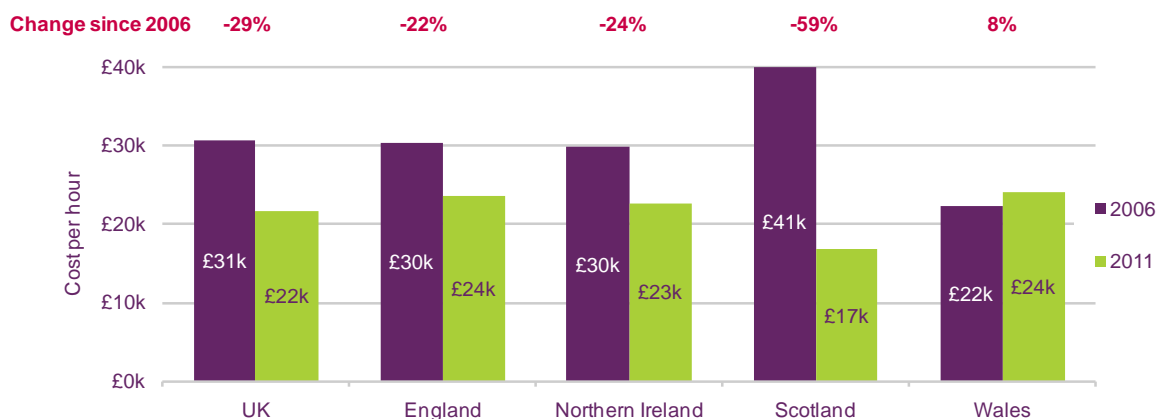
Cost per hour of nations' output decreased 24% year on year in Northern Ireland

Analysing the cost of making programmes for the nations, cost per hour calculations show that England, Northern Ireland and Scotland produced programmes more cost-effectively in 2011 than in 2006.

Over the five-year period, cost per hour decreased by 24% in Northern Ireland, compared to the UK average reduction of 29%.

However, Northern Ireland's average cost per hour increased by 2% year on year, from £22,000 per hour in 2010 to £23,000 per hour in 2011.

Figure 2.16 Cost per hour – total nations/regions output, by nation



Source: Broadcasters. All figures expressed in 2011 prices.

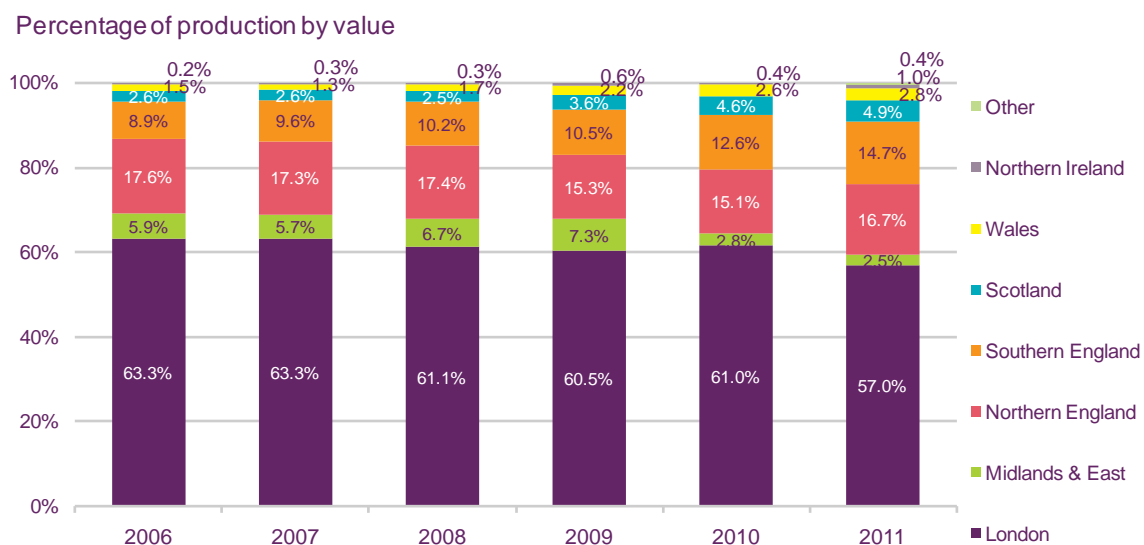
Note: Spend excludes Gaelic and Welsh language programming but includes some spend on Irish language programming by the BBC. This does not include hours or spend on BBC ALBA or BBC hours and spend on S4C output.

2.6 PSB television quota compliance

Figure 2.17 illustrates the distribution of spend on qualifying originated network content in 2011 by the five main PSB channels. Fifty-seven per cent of qualifying expenditure was devoted to productions made within the M25 - down from 61% in 2010. A further 16.7% of first-run spending was captured by producers based in the North of England and 14.7% in Southern England.

In Northern Ireland, originated programming increased from 0.4% of total spending on first-runs to 1%. In Scotland, originated programming accounted for 4.9% of expenditure on network programming, up from 4.6% in 2010. In Wales, the figure rose from 2.6% to 2.8% in 2011.

Figure 2.17 Expenditure on network out-of-London production: 2006-2011



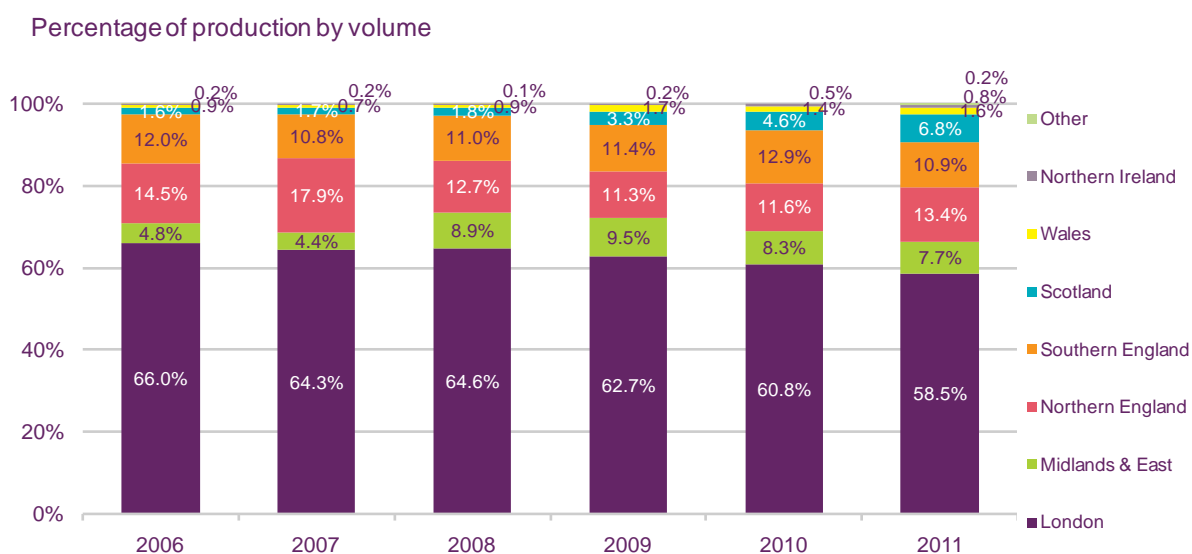
Source: Ofcom/broadcasters.

Note: A new category labelled 'other' on the chart has been created for regional productions from London producers which do not meet both 70% of spend and 50% of talent in any one particular macro region. See http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/guidance/programme-guidance/reg_prod/ on the Ofcom website for further details.

In terms of volume, 58.5% of originated network programmes in 2011 were produced within the M25, down from 60.8% in 2010. A further 13.4% was produced in Northern England, 10.9% in Southern England and 7.7% in the Midlands and East.

Producers in Scotland delivered 6.8% of all hours in 2011, up from 4.6% in 2010, while the comparable figure for Wales was 1.6% (up from 1.4% in 2010). First-run hours produced in Northern Ireland increased to 0.8% in 2011 (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18 Volume of network out-of-London production, 2006-2011



Source: Ofcom/broadcasters.

Note: A new category 'Other' has been created for regional productions from London producers which do not meet both 70% of spend and 50% of talent in any one particular macro region. See http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/guidance/programme-guidance/reg_prod/ on the Ofcom website for further details.

2.7 Irish-language programming

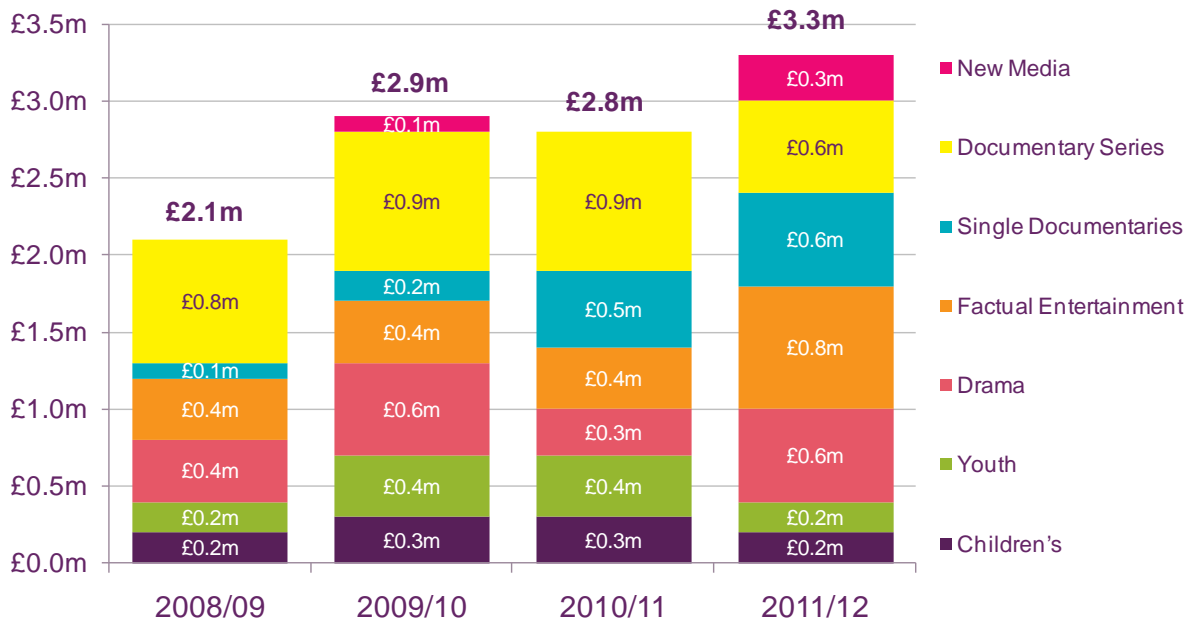
Spend by the ILBF on Irish-language programming is up 18% year on year

The Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) was set up with two aims: to fund Irish-language content of high quality and to foster the Irish-speaking independent production sector in Northern Ireland.

The fund finances a minimum of 60 hours of Irish-language content per year, which is broadcast on BBC Northern Ireland, TG4 & RTÉ. The ILBF also provides funding for a range of training initiatives for Irish speakers wishing to work, or already working, in the production sector in Northern Ireland.

ILBF spend on factual entertainment, drama and new media saw the most notable year-on-year increases, while spend on documentary series and youth programming fell.

Figure 2.19 Spend by the ILBF on Irish-language programming



Source: ILBF. Includes all programmes.