



Response to Ofcom's provisional determination on BBC Scotland Channel

BBC Consultation response

3 June 2024

Consultation response

The BBC welcomes the opportunity to respond to Ofcom's consultation on its provisional determination on revising the news quota for the BBC Scotland Channel.

In March we set out our proposals to evolve BBC Scotland's news and current affairs offer to best serve audiences in Scotland. As part of these plans, we proposed replacing BBC Scotland Channel's current 9pm hour-long news programme, *The Nine*, with a new flagship 30-minute news programme at 7pm on weekdays. In line with *The Nine*'s audience feedback, this programme would be more innovative, shorter, sharper and earlier, and would also showcase the breadth of stories across Scotland.

We considered that the new 30-minute news programme would give audiences a greater opportunity to consume news the way they wish. It would also ensure that we covered stories that mattered to Scottish audiences and that we offered audiences more opportunities to see themselves reflected in our news coverage, especially for communities in Scotland which are currently underserved. Furthermore, we concluded that the adverse market impact would be insignificant as news programmes broadcast simultaneously do not focus on Scottish news and have different audience demographics.

There are a few points for clarification:

- Although we were anticipating an autumn UK general election when forming these news and current affairs proposals for BBC Scotland, the timing of the election does not change our plans.
- The new 7pm news programme on the BBC Scotland Channel and *Reporting Scotland* on BBC One Scotland will differ. *Reporting Scotland* will continue to be a national news programme broadcast at 6.30pm consisting mostly of reports and analysis from specialist correspondents, and reports on the biggest Scottish news stories. Whereas the new 7pm programme will have a more informal tone showcasing people at the heart of local stories across Scotland through self-authored pieces and interviews, and offer a global lens when stories abroad have a strong resonance with Scottish audiences. Both programmes will have wide-ranging audiences, however *Reporting Scotland*'s audience tends to skew towards the ABC1 demographic and the new programme's will likely skew to the C2DE demographic (similar to *The Nine* currently). Our rationale for the different editorial of the new programme is to enable us to connect better to different audiences.
- As with all our services and programmes we will monitor the performance of the new 30-minute news programme. This will include overall viewing figures and performance with different demographic and target audience groups.

We welcome Ofcom's thorough and considered provisional determination. We agree that the BBC Scotland Channel will continue to fulfil our Mission and promote our Public Purposes with regard to our news provision. We welcome Ofcom's clear acknowledgement that the BBC needs to evolve and innovate to deliver for audiences in light of their changing habits, particularly given our tight financial budgets.