



How to promote Media Literacy: Consultation on recommendations for online platforms, broadcasters and services

1.1 Introduction

The BBC welcomes Ofcom's consultation on promoting media literacy. We agree that empowering audiences to critically engage with digital content and navigate online environments safely is essential for a healthy information ecosystem.

We note that many of the BBC's current activities fall within the plan of action that Ofcom proposes. For more than 100 years the BBC has been a trusted source of information and continues to be the most trusted news brand in the UK, even in a media landscape that is facing growing challenges from disinformation and AI. Guided by our Mission and Public Purposes, we are committed to providing impartial news and information that helps people understand and engage with the world around them, while supporting learning for audiences of all ages. These principles sit at the heart of our media literacy offer, and as Ofcom noted in its Annual Report on the BBC, the BBC has a key role in promoting media literacy, amid rising misinformation and fast-changing digital platforms.¹

We support Ofcom's call for collaboration across regulated online services, broadcasters, streaming platforms, and emerging technologies such as generative AI. As a Public Service Broadcaster, the BBC recognises the responsibility that comes with shaping how audiences engage with the world. Coordinated efforts between public service broadcasters, platforms, regulators, and industry partners will be vital to ensure audiences have the skills and confidence to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

We are committed to promoting media literacy and will continue to deliver a wide range of projects across the organisation to support this goal, some examples of which are outlined below.

We are happy to discuss these in more detail with Ofcom if helpful, including how these may map across Ofcom's recommendations in detail.

1.2 The BBC's Role In Promoting Media Literacy

Ofcom has highlighted that, in an era of declining trust and fragmented audiences, it is more important than ever for the BBC to maintain and strengthen its trusted relationship with audiences wherever they access content. This reinforces the BBC's

¹ Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC. Link:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/tv-radio-and-on-demand/bbc/bbc-annual-report/2025/ofcoms-annual-report-on-the-bbc-2024-25.pdf?v=408417>

unique responsibility to deliver accurate, impartial, and reliable news – supported by continued investment in media literacy.²

Importantly, the BBC delivers many of recommendations outlined in Ofcom’s consultation through our Mission to inform, educate and entertain. Our trusted news services, educational content, considered entertainment programming and outreach initiatives equip children, young people, and the wider public with the skills to navigate misinformation, disinformation, and emerging risks such as generative AI.

Ofcom’s Annual Report on the BBC confirms the impact of this work: 83% of UK adults use BBC services weekly, and younger audiences (16–24) consistently rate BBC News highly for trustworthiness (67%, ahead of ITV at 58% and Sky at 55%). Audiences remain positive about BBC news and current affairs, with seven in ten regular users saying BBC services help them understand world events and rate BBC content highly for accuracy across TV, radio, and online.³

This commitment extends beyond news into other genres. Ofcom noted that BBC content contributes to audience understanding of complex issues – a core aspect of media literacy. In respect of our education provision, services like BBC Bitesize supports media literacy: Bitesize reaches 3.1m primary (66%) and 3.9m secondary (80%) school children, with 66% of teachers using Bitesize weekly. In 2024/25, Bitesize averaged 1.65m weekly unique visitors, up 7% year-on-year, and we pushed Bitesize through campaigns on social platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, and through podcasts on BBC Sounds.

We also entertain audiences and, through this, we embed media literacy themes into our content, making learning accessible and engaging. For example, *EastEnders* featured a storyline exposing online scams, while Jamie Johnson addressed safe digital behaviour.⁴ Around Safer Internet Day, *Horrible Histories* created videos on historical rumours to illustrate fake news risks, showing how drama and children’s content can reinforce digital awareness.⁵

This approach reflects the BBC’s broader ambition to produce content that is innovative and challenging. Ofcom research found that 53% of viewers rated BBC TV highly for offering new perspectives, and 75% of UK adults said BBC TV programmes helped them learn something new (vs. 60% for non-BBC TV). Similarly, 74% of adults said BBC Radio helped them learn something new (vs. 53% for non-BBC radio).⁶

² Ofcom’s Annual Report on the BBC. Link: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/tv-radio-and-on-demand/bbc/bbc-annual-report/2025/ofcoms-annual-report-on-the-bbc-2024-25.pdf?v=408417>

³ Ofcom’s Annual Report on the BBC.

⁴ Watch on iPlayer: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0011f1m/jamie-johnson-series-6-5-claim-to-fame>

⁵ Watch on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=001PN237vjk>

⁶ Pulse by GfK, 16+, 2024/25

Every year, we set out our plans for content and campaigns across our services in the BBC Annual Plan and report on our own performance through the Annual Report and Accounts and Delivering Our Mission and Purposes reports. Alongside this, we maintain ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the UK and globally to advance media literacy and strengthen audience confidence in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Below, we provide additional information about where we are promoting media literacy through our services.

While the BBC plays a unique role, the challenges of misinformation and emerging technologies cannot be solved by any single organisation. Coordinated action across broadcasters, platforms, and regulators will be essential to ensure audiences have consistent, trusted tools and resources.

1.2.1 Providing trusted and impartial news

The BBC remains committed to pursuing truth with no agenda, delivering trusted regional, national, and international news across the UK and globally. In 2024/25, 74% of UK adults used BBC News weekly⁷, continuing to rely on us for impartial and accurate coverage. Additionally, when asked to pick the one provider that does most to offer fact-checked, accurate reporting and content that people can trust, 45% of UK adults picked the BBC – more than six times higher than the next nearest provider.

Despite this, there are growing challenges in the news sector across providers. Trusted journalism is the bedrock of democracy, yet overall trust in news is declining, particularly on digital platforms. To help improve this, BBC News launched BBC Verify in 2023, a specialist team of forensic journalists and experts dedicated to fact-checking, verifying content, countering disinformation, analysing data, and explaining complex stories with transparency in the pursuit of truth. BBC Verify provides impartial, accurate information and transparency in reporting, helping audiences understand complex issues such as AI, deepfakes and misinformation

In its second full year since launch, we have seen growth in awareness and usage of BBC Verify. 38% of UK adults said they had heard of BBC Verify in May 2025, significantly up on a year prior and well ahead of competitors. Between May 2024 and April 2025, 2 million unique visitors came to BBC Verify online content on average each week, an increase of +50% on the previous year. We will continue support the audience in accessing trustworthy information by debunking disinformation, often investigating the networks behind it.

Our outreach efforts extend beyond digital platforms with BBC Verify on Tour. Run by BBC Academy Live in partnership with BBC Verify,⁸ Verify on Tour brings hands-on workshops and live sessions to schools, colleges, and universities across the UK, aimed

⁷ Compass by Ipsos UK. 16+.

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/live/verify/>

at helping young people critically engage with digital media and combat misinformation.⁹

1.2.2 *Recognising the growth of AI in this digital age*

As AI transforms the media landscape, the BBC is committed to helping audiences navigate this with confidence.

Over the past year, we've launched UK-wide campaigns to educate the public on AI and its uses. We believe generative AI can deliver real value when used transparently, but understanding its limitations is crucial. To explore this, we commissioned research into how AI assistants like ChatGPT and Copilot handle BBC content. The findings revealed major shortcomings – over half of responses contained serious errors, including factual inaccuracies and misquotations – raising concerns about misinformation and the blurring of fact and opinion.¹⁰

Alongside this, the BBC runs a broad media literacy programme relevant to AI literacy. Regular blogs explain our AI work and its implications¹¹, while partnerships build audience confidence and critical thinking. For example, BBC Ideas and The Open University are creating animations for older adults new to AI, highlighting practical benefits and risks like bias and scams. Four full-length films will appear on BBC Ideas and YouTube, with shorter versions for platforms such as Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and TikTok to reach wider audiences.¹² This complements other efforts, including advice on *Morning Live* and BBC Verify's events teaching media literacy skills to young people.

Looking ahead, the BBC has exciting plans on literacy in an AI world, and would be happy to brief Ofcom on the specifics. Addressing these risks requires a collective response. Industry-wide standards, shared best practice, and joint educational initiatives will help audiences navigate AI-driven content confidently.

In addition, it is important that the BBC itself is committed to using AI responsibly. Our Responsible AI (RAI) team ensures all AI use aligns with the core BBC values and legal obligations by fostering a culture of responsible practice. This work is built on three pillars: Governance and Risk, which defines and embeds policies to manage AI risk; Engagement, which provides staff with guidance and training to use AI ethically and transparently; and Evaluation, which informs decisions through BBC-specific data on high-risk tools and use cases.

⁹ <https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/more/news/university-news/2025/bbc-verify-fake-news-sunderland-university/>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2025/new-ebu-research-ai-assistants-news-content>

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2025/articles/bbc-to-launch-new-generative-ai-pilots-to-support-news-production>

¹² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/videos/clylq0egwxyo>

1.2.3 Delivering education for all

BBC education content plays a central role in building media literacy by providing interactive resources that develop critical thinking and early digital skills. Standout initiatives such as the *Other Side of the Story* campaign complement careers support and educational programming across Children's and Factual & Learning content, helping audiences of all ages critically engage with media.

This impact is reflected in feedback from students and teachers. Among under-16 users, 83% say it helps them understand their studies better, and 72% of secondary school users report it helps them achieve better grades. Parents also recognise this value, with 58% believing the BBC effectively supports children's and teenagers' learning.¹³

The importance of these efforts is reinforced by the Government's Curriculum and Assessment Review, which highlights media literacy as essential for equipping young people to critically appraise and engage with media in all its forms.¹⁴ We share this view and recognise the strong links between media literacy and digital literacy, particularly in tackling misinformation and disinformation online. Additional support is needed to give young people the skills to meet future challenges, and the BBC is committed to playing its part.

One example of our work is *The Other Side of the Story*, a joint BBC Bitesize and BBC News initiative aimed at 12-16 year-olds, especially those from underserved communities. It helps young people develop critical thinking and navigate the online world responsibly, addressing misinformation, bias, and echo chambers through short-form social content and in-person workshops across the UK.¹⁵ Each piece includes clear learning outcomes – such as distinguishing fact from opinion, spotting bias, and understanding media manipulation – reinforcing the BBC's commitment to impartiality and empowering young audiences to make informed choices. Evaluations of our workshops show 96% of students feel more able to recognise fake news, 93% have a better understanding of bias, and 80% are more likely to question content they see and share online.

Upcoming projects like *Solve the Story* will expand this work through a mass participation campaign, free for all schools, offering practical skills such as reverse image search, spotting bot accounts, and avoiding scams. Partnerships with organisations like Cineworld and BBC Verify will further amplify reach and credibility.

Beyond young audiences, the BBC also offers initiatives that help all age groups critically engage with digital media. For example, *Scam Safe Week* provides practical advice on

¹³ BBC Delivering Our Mission and Public Purposes Report. Link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/documents/domapp-2024-25.pdf>

¹⁴ Available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690b96bbc22e4ed8b051854d/Curriculum_and_Assessment_Review_final_report_-_Building_a_world-class_curriculum_for_all.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/groups/c0rx3447znyt>

spotting scams through content across TV, radio, BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds, and online platforms. Interactive tools like the Scam Safe Quiz, resources such as the A-Z of Scams, and expert-led roadshows with *Morning Live* give audiences clear guidance and direct access to fraud prevention advice. Curated collections on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds further explore scams and fraud tactics, combining education, real-life stories, and interactive engagement to empower audiences to make informed choices online.¹⁶

1.2.4 Partnerships and campaigns across the UK

The BBC invests in educational programming, campaigns, and partnerships with schools and community organisations across the UK to promote media literacy and raise awareness across a range of topics including misinformation, AI and online scams. Our Nations teams deliver locally tailored initiatives to reach underserved communities and equip audiences with critical thinking skills. Here are some examples:

Northern Ireland

BBC Northern Ireland promotes media literacy through national curriculum aligned resources and outreach. BBC Bitesize supports learners aged 4–16 with guides on misinformation, fake news, and ethics, while interactive tools help students and caregivers navigate digital environments safely. Beyond online resources, BBC NI delivers impactful programmes like *The Other Side of the Story*, which teaches students to spot misinformation through journalist-led workshops. Additional initiatives such as *Two Minute Masterpiece*¹⁷, *Blast NI*¹⁸, *Two Minute Tales*¹⁹, and *BBC Young Reporter*²⁰ foster creativity and give young people hands-on experience in news production.

Scotland

BBC Scotland promotes media literacy through *The LAB* and *The Social Connects*. *The LAB* delivers workshops across Scotland, including underserved areas, teaching pupils to research, fact-check, script, and film content, with themes like spotting scams and online safety. These sessions build technical skills and critical thinking, supported by online content and school feedback.²¹ *The Social Connects* embeds digital media production training in college courses, equipping students with editorial standards, production skills, and employability. Students create videos for potential BBC publication and take part in expert-led masterclasses, with the programme evolving to cover emerging topics such as AI.²²

¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/articles/scam-safe-week-everything-you-need-to-know>

¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07nmnpsn>

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0085rr2/clips>

¹⁹ www.bbc.co.uk/twominutetale

²⁰ www.bbc.co.uk/teach/young-reporter

²¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00kl3tf>

²² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5KK47D4mdwdF0syY49jQh9n/the-social-connects>

Wales

To support the continued development and implementation of this in schools, the BBC is producing a series of Welsh and English language live-action films for Bitesize, launching in late 2025 or early 2026. Aimed primarily at 11–14 year-olds, these films use young actors and robots to explore key DCF themes such as evaluating information from multiple sources, critically assessing media using data and computational thinking, and creating digital content. By focusing on digital citizenship, collaboration, and data literacy, the films aim to equip learners with the skills to navigate and engage with digital media confidently and critically.

1.2.5 Transparency through inclusive design

The BBC is committed to inclusive design so audiences can trust and critically assess content. We champion industry standards for content credentials, an accessible way to disseminate accuracy through media content. For example, using the C2PA standard and its consumer-facing implementation, Content Credentials, we attach secure provenance data to all media formats – evidencing who created it, how and when it was made, and whether AI was involved. These tools help audiences evaluate content confidently. We also work with industry partners to promote adoption of the standard across platforms and publish research on the value of content credentials.²³ We believe adoption of provenance standards must be industry-wide to be effective. Collective action will help audiences trust content across platforms, not just within BBC services.

In addition to this the BBC offers a wide range of accessibility services and resources to ensure its content and platforms are inclusive for all users. These include subtitles, signing, and audio description across TV and online content; dedicated accessibility features on BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds, and CBeebies; and guidance for parents of children with special needs. It also provides technical standards and tools for accessible design, such as the BBC Global Experience Language (GEL), alongside editorial and production guidelines. Additionally, the BBC invests in training through its Academy, supports neurodiversity and disability inclusion in the workplace, and promotes diversity through initiatives like BBC Ability and CAPE, while linking to external assistive technology resources for broader support.²⁴

We also cater our services to better suit audience interest, for example, BBC iPlayer applies inclusive design principles by offering personalisation features that make content discovery easier and more relevant for diverse audiences. Users benefit from tailored recommendations, curated collections, and improved search functionality, helping them find programmes that match their interests and needs. For the BBC, it is not just about showing popular or entertaining content but also ‘good’ content e.g. educational, informative, and distinctive content alongside entertainment. We are happy to share more information about how these systems work for BBC audiences.

²³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rdnewslabs/news/does-provenance-build-trust>

²⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/>

Accessibility is central to this design, with features such as clear navigation, colour contrast compliance, and screen reader compatibility ensuring usability for all audiences.

1.2.6 Digital Inclusion

As audiences shift from broadcast to IP (Internet Protocol) viewing, the BBC sees IPTV as a key driver for digital inclusion, offering a pathway for first-time connectivity and broader social benefits. The BBC Digital Transition team is working to ensure this move supports media literacy by advocating for inclusive design and simplified interfaces for low-digital-skilled users, including a “radically simple” TV UI.²⁵ We also believe greater prominence of public service media content on IP-first platforms can ensure audiences are able to access trustworthy information in an increasingly algorithm-driven environment. These efforts align with Ofcom’s media literacy framework by tackling usability barriers and promoting transparency in digital services.

Externally, we also support production teams across the UK with digital guidance and are a founding member of *The Connection Project*, a national coalition aimed at helping everyone thrive in a digital society. Looking ahead, we plan to broaden our definition of digital exclusion to include audiences who are online but lack access to trusted public service content, reinforcing the BBC’s role in safeguarding informed engagement in the digital age.

1.3 BBC Response to Ofcom’s Consultation Questions

1.3.1 Question 1: Is it clear which types of organisations the 10 proposed recommendations are aimed at? Please provide reasons and evidence to support your answer.

Yes, it is clear.

1.3.2 Question 2: Do you have any comments on whether they should apply to all organisations, including those of different sizes and operating models? Please provide reasons and evidence to support your answer.

Yes, where proportionate. Ofcom rightly notes that the recommendations are non-mandatory and should be applied in a way that reflects the size and reach of each organisation. Larger organisations should lead by example, while smaller services should adopt scaled actions. For instance, embedding inclusive design and transparency is achievable for all providers, but extensive evaluation frameworks may be more feasible for larger organisations.

²⁵ [The Socioeconomic Impact of Digital Transition](#)

1.3.3 Question 3: Do you have any comments on the proposed recommendations? Please provide comments in particular on their effectiveness, applicability or risks. Please provide evidence to support your answer.

The recommendations broadly align with our remit as a Public Service Broadcaster to inform, educate and entertain.

We support Recommendation 7, which applies specifically to PSBs, and recommends broadcasting and streaming services create and/or promote programming or educational content that helps people to understand, interpret and assess the credibility of information. As noted in our response above, in many ways our work demonstrates how this and other recommendations might apply in practice, and we will continue to push this further - evolving as the media landscape changes.

We strongly support embedding media literacy by design and promoting inclusive access.

The BBC is committed to transparency and will consider how best to evaluate and report on media literacy activities in line with Ofcom's expectations. Clear and proportionate evaluation frameworks will help ensure progress is measured effectively.

1.3.4 Question 4: Are there any other additional recommendations you think we should consider? If so, please provide evidence to support your comment.

Ofcom may consider how to support best practice for displaying PSM content. As services transition to IP delivery, ensuring universal access to trusted content will be critical for audiences. Ofcom should continue to support audiences in finding trusted PSB content as consumption habits evolve. This may be the case especially regarding news content, covering areas such as attribution, prominence, content integrity, links back to original sources, and data sharing with publishers.

We recommend referencing media provenance standards, such as the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA), within regulatory guidance to encourage adoption across the information ecosystem.

As Ofcom note, there are particular risks in the use of generative AI, which BBC research shows often misquote or misrepresent BBC content. The BBC, working with the EBU, has carried out research in this area and put forward some specific proposals to begin to address these issues, primarily aimed at industry and AI developers.²⁶ Ofcom should consider mechanisms that encourage joint initiatives and shared frameworks, as coordinated approaches will deliver greater impact than isolated efforts.

²⁶ See in particular the foreword in the recent report <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/documents/news-integrity-in-ai-assistants-report.pdf>

1.3.5 Question 5: Do you have any examples or suggestions of ways of encouraging services to adopt these recommendations?

As noted in the Curriculum and Assessment review, media literacy must be recognised as a core skill for young people, reinforcing its importance alongside literacy and numeracy. It is important that industry supports this priority through adoption and Ofcom's recommendations are a positive start.

1.3.6 Question 6: Do you have any comments on our impact assessment, rights assessment, equality impact assessment and Welsh language assessment? Please provide evidence in support your answer.

Nothing further to add.