

Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC 2025-2026

Published 19 November 2026

Welsh version available

Contents

Section

Overview 3
Performance against the Public Purposes 7
Protecting fair and effective competition 48
Content Standards 55

Annexes

Annexes 1-4 are available here.

Overview

Under the BBC Royal Charter and Agreement, the BBC is required to meet its Mission, to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate, and entertain. To achieve this, it must deliver its Public Purposes set by Parliament.

The Charter and Agreement set out the different roles and duties of the BBC and Ofcom. The BBC Board is responsible for governance of the BBC, its editorial policy, ensuring that it delivers its remit, and for setting the strategic and creative direction of the organisation. Ofcom is responsible for holding the BBC to account on behalf of audiences and we do this in three ways: overseeing the BBC's performance in delivering its Mission and Public Purposes; protecting fair and effective competition; and regulating content standards in BBC programming. Every year, as required by the BBC Charter, we publish a report on the BBC's performance in these areas, and how we have carried out our role.

In this ninth Annual Report on the BBC, drawing on extensive audience research, industry data and stakeholder engagement, we have assessed how the BBC has delivered its remit over the 2025/26 financial year to 31 March 2026.

The BBC's performance in 2025/26 – in brief

Despite very significant funding pressures and the vastly changing media landscape, the BBC continues to perform strongly in delivering for audiences. It has remained popular, with 80% of UK adults saying they use BBC services weekly in 2025/26 compared to 83% last year, and with BBC content accounting for 18% of all in-home video viewing, broadly stable on last year.

Delivery against the Public Purposes

Public Purpose 1: To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them. The BBC remains the UK's leading news provider - 77% of adults use BBC services for news each month and it has established a significant presence on third-party platforms. Trust and accuracy remain key strengths of BBC news, though, in line with other public service broadcasters (PSBs), the audience's ratings of these have declined, and perceptions of impartiality are lower.

Public Purpose 2: To support learning for people of all ages. The BBC remains the biggest and one of the only providers of UK originated children's content – the environment remains challenging, but the BBC continues to evolve and adapt in how it reaches children – this year overall reach of CBBC and CBeebies was broadly stable. Its provision of formal learning through Bitesize remains highly valued – 86% of users say they find it helpful.

Public Purpose 3: To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services. Although spend has fallen, the BBC continues to produce a large amount of original output. Most audiences rate the BBC highly for providing 'a wide range of different types of programmes and content' (63%) and providing 'high quality and creative programmes and content' (62%), although ratings remain lower among audiences in socio-economic groups D and E, and 16-24s.

Public Purpose 4: To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the UK nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the UK. The BBC continues to invest across the whole UK and work with a diverse range of producers. It remains widely used in each of the nations and regions, but perceptions of how it 'reflects the lives of people like me'

remain rated lower than statements related to other public purposes. As the BBC continues to focus on 'high-impact' representation and portrayal programming, there are potential tensions between this focus and continuing to serve local audiences.

Competition: As a large, publicly-funded organisation, the BBC can have a significant impact on competition, both positive and negative. While we will continue to assess BBC changes on a case-by-case basis, our latest review of market evidence indicates that, despite the continued audience shift online, if the BBC were to propose changes to its linear services, such changes may still be more likely to have a significant impact on competition than those on BBC iPlayer or BBC Sounds.

Standards: There was a substantial rise in the number of complaints made to the BBC in 2025/26, likely to be linked to several high-profile editorial issues over the period. Despite this, the number of BBC related complaints made to Ofcom fell compared with the previous year. Ofcom launched two investigations into BBC content during 2025/26 and found it in breach against the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a War Zone.* Given the seriousness of the breach, Ofcom directed the BBC to broadcast a summary of its findings.

This year's report comes at a crucial time. The process to renew the BBC's Charter is underway, with the Government's White Paper setting out its preferred direction for the BBC's future, including its funding arrangements, expected in the coming months. The Corporation is also under new leadership, following the appointment in spring of Matt Brittin as Director-General, and is implementing plans to make very substantial savings, including through reductions in its workforce and commissioning spend, in response to significant financial pressures. At the same time, it is developing a new strategy to reach all audiences, reflecting the continued shift in audience viewing away from tradition linear broadcast services and towards online services. Together, these developments mean the BBC is reshaping the way it delivers for audiences, requiring it to prioritise investment and make careful choices about what content is commissioned, how it is distributed and how it is discovered.

The BBC is significantly changing its approach to go where audiences are

We have previously said that the BBC and the other public service broadcasters face significant challenges reaching audiences on third-party platforms, given the vast quantity and range of content they provide, and that the broadcasters needed to work much harder to create content that these audiences might seek out. This year has seen a substantial shift in the BBC's approach and is a real opportunity for the BBC – we are pleased to see it is starting to have an impact. For example, BBC content on YouTube saw a 21% increase in UK video views in the past year and, in January 2026, it announced a new strategic partnership with YouTube, increasing its investment in original content specifically designed for the platform.

We agree with the BBC that it will be important for it to continue to reach and engage with audiences across all platforms. This change in approach has clear potential to reach audiences who are currently less likely to use BBC services.

News is vital to the BBC's mission

Our evidence shows that BBC news remains highly used and widely valued. Like other PSBs and news organisations, it is operating in a challenging environment, with audience behaviours changing and trust in news and institutions declining. The BBC continues to perform well despite these challenges.

The provision of local, national and international news is central to the BBC's public service role. It remains the most used news provider in the UK; its 77% monthly reach extends to 80% when BBC news seen on third-party platforms is included. Large audiences continue to come to the BBC across

its wide range of news output, including on TV, radio and online. It has accelerated its digital-first news strategy which is helping attract online audiences, including on YouTube and social media platforms – for example, 43% of 16-24s say they have come across BBC news content on social media.

Audiences continue to value BBC news. This year, for the first time, we have looked at perceptions of BBC news users across all platforms, reflecting how audiences now consume news. 65% of BBC audiences rate it highly for accuracy and 63% for trustworthiness, with the BBC's local news also remaining highly valued. Relative to trust and accuracy, audience perceptions of BBC impartiality are lower, with 54% of BBC audiences rating it highly.

The BBC's own data provides a picture of changes over time, with declines across all three measures among all adults (i.e. not just BBC users). Between 2021/22 and 2025/26, the proportion who think the BBC is effective at providing news and current affairs that is accurate has fallen from 63% to 56%, trustworthiness from 63% to 55%, and impartiality from 51% to 45%. However, these trends are not out of step with the sector. Our research of viewers of TV news also shows that other PSBs have seen similar declines, and their perception scores for impartiality are also lower than their scores for accuracy and trust.

On the basis of complaints received from audiences, the BBC has a good record of complying with broadcasting rules intended to ensure that programming is duly accurate and impartial. However, in recent years there have been a number of serious editorial failures at the BBC. As the BBC itself recognises, it is vital that it acknowledges when mistakes happen and is fully accountable and transparent in responding. Last year we said it was critical that the BBC identifies and addresses issues promptly and transparently.

Our evidence in this report and accompanying review into Trust in BBC news, shows that amidst growing concerns around mis- and disinformation, audiences value news providers that can offer clear, accurate and objective coverage, helping them navigate a complex and often contested information environment and make informed judgements about the issues that affect them. The BBC is uniquely placed to provide this role, and securing and maintaining trust will be important both to the BBC's future relevance and its ability to fulfil this wider public service role.

In line with its wider strategy, growing its presence on social media and video sharing platforms should facilitate ways for the BBC to innovate with new formats and ways of reporting at a local, national and international level that connect with a wider range of audiences.

The BBC has shifted its focus towards 'high-impact' content, but audiences continue to rate it less well for representation and portrayal

The BBC must deliver for all audiences, across the whole of the UK. This means providing a range and breadth of content that engages all audience groups.

In recent years the BBC has shifted its commissioning focus towards delivering 'high-impact' content that tells local stories and represents local cultures in a way that resonates with audiences across the UK. This can help develop shared understandings as well as bring people together and deliver public value at scale. Popular titles such as *Blue Lights* and *This City is Ours* demonstrate the broad appeal of content which is clearly rooted in local areas and has been successful in bringing audiences across the UK together.

Another way to deliver representation and portrayal is through locally relevant stories, voices and perspectives. These remain important for making connections and building trust with local audiences. We recognise that, in a financially constrained environment, the BBC has to make choices about where it focuses its resources. However, changes it has made have not yet helped shift

perceptions of how well the BBC represents and portrays all audiences, which remain some of the lowest rated areas of delivery by audiences. The BBC's local and nations' services/output on radio and online also play an important role here.

In previous reports we have said the BBC must develop a coherent strategy for how it appeals to 'DE' audiences as reach and perceptions of the BBC have been consistently lower for these audiences too. This year we have seen some signs of increasing appeal among DE audiences, but perceptions remain lower.

The BBC's approach to making its online content easily discoverable is improving

The BBC makes a breadth of content not delivered by other broadcasters. However, in an online and on-demand environment, where traditional programme schedules no longer dictate viewing and listening habits, it is important that audiences can still encounter public service content that might interest them and which they might not otherwise come across. We therefore require the BBC to ensure that certain types of content are made easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds - news and current affairs, nations and regions, informal learning and a range of original UK content.

We asked the BBC for evidence to show how it had made this content easily discoverable. While any assessment does not lend itself to a single metric, the BBC has set out a range of measures and approaches it takes in aiding discoverability, for example, placing content in 'New & Trending' and 'Hero' spaces and using editorially curated local or nations rails on BBC Sounds. The evidence has shown how the BBC is making a breadth of content available on its homepages, including in area attracting the highest levels of traffic. But we are less clear about how audiences find and discover content which is further down its homepages and whether this is as easily discoverable; we will be exploring this further with the BBC.

The BBC plans to make significant savings

In a challenging financial environment, with pressures on licence fee income, rising costs and changing audience behaviours, the BBC has said it must make savings of £500m by 2028. In June 2026, the BBC announced changes to its content and news divisions, including a reduction in originated programming and the expected closure of around 250 posts in its Nations division. In October it announced plans to close BBC Three, BBC Scotland and Radio 4 Extra as linear broadcast services, as well as the closure of around 100 posts in its news division.

We do not underestimate the significance of these planned changes. The impact will extend beyond the BBC's workforce, with audiences, producers and the wider creative sector likely to be affected – in particular given that the BBC's spend acts as an accelerator for growth in the wider sector. We have written to the BBC requesting a consolidated account of how the BBC intends to deliver the initial £200 million of savings, the basis for those decisions and an assessment on the expected impact on audiences. We said this is particularly important in relation to content and services that contribute to distinctiveness, including news and programming that enables the BBC to connect with all audiences across the UK. We are engaging with stakeholders and are aware of concerns about the impact of the cuts. We will consider what the proposals mean for audiences and for the BBC's regulatory obligations and expect the BBC to explain how it will continue to deliver for those audience groups likely to be most affected.

Performance against the Public Purposes

In the sections that follow, we set out how the BBC has delivered against Public Purposes 1-4 during the reporting period of April 2025 to March 2026. We also cover how the BBC has delivered for audiences in each of the four nations.

In summary, the BBC's Public Purposes, as set out in Article 6 of the Royal Charter, are:

Public Purpose 1: To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them.

Public Purpose 2: To support learning for people of all ages.

Public Purpose 3: To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services.

Public Purpose 4: To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom.

Public Purpose 5: To reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world.[1]

How we assess the BBC's performance

Our Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) sets out our approach to the monitoring and assessment of the BBC's performance in promoting its Public Purposes and fulfilling its Mission. It comprises four performance measures (Availability, Consumption, Impact and Contextual factors) and a set of principles to which we have regard in applying them.

Our interactive performance report provides a wealth of data beyond which is found in this written report, allowing users to further examine evidence relating to each of the Public Purposes.

In Annex 2 we provide a summary of the data sources we have used for each performance measure in our assessment and guidance on how to access and navigate this data in our interactive performance report. Alongside the data, we talk to a wide range of stakeholders, including other broadcasters and producers throughout the year to contribute to our understanding of the BBC's performance.

Compliance against Operating Licence conditions

Alongside our broader performance assessment, we consider the BBC's compliance against the specific requirements set out in the Operating Licence. In 2025/26, the BBC met all of its Public Purpose requirements. This year, following a complaint related to the BBC's compliance in 2024/25 with its Operating Licence condition for hours of original, locally-made programming on BBC Local Radio, we sought further information from the BBC and identified concerns about the accuracy of its compliance reporting. The BBC subsequently informed us that it had not met the condition for six

[1] Note: The BBC's fifth Public Purpose, to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world, is outside Ofcom's regulatory role. It lies with the BBC to set the licence for the BBC World Service (Clause 34 of the Agreement).

stations. We have written to the BBC setting out our concerns. Our overall assessment of the BBC's compliance with the Operating Licence is provided in Annex 1.

We also note that in 2025/26 we made some changes to the BBC's Operating Licence following public consultation. These related to: shared programming on BBC Local Radio; hours of news and current affairs programming on BBC Radio Foyle and BBC Asian Network; hours of current affairs programming on BBC One and BBC Two; and a reporting requirement related to hours of sports covered on BBC Radio 5 Live. Our assessment of compliance for 2025/26 considers the BBC's performance against the amended conditions.

Discoverability

Ensuring BBC content is easily discoverable is increasingly important.

As audiences increasingly access BBC content through online services such as BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds, they must be able to find and discover it easily; it is not enough for important content simply to be available. The Operating Licence therefore requires the BBC to ensure that certain types of content are made easily discoverable on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds, namely news and current affairs content; informal learning content; a range of original UK content, and certain nations and regions content.[2] The BBC is also required to report its plans for making this content easily discoverable, and how it has delivered against these plans. We discuss this below.

In our previous Annual Reports, we noted the BBC has been developing its approach to discoverability and we recognise that any assessment of its approach does not lend itself to a single metric. This year we sought information from the BBC to better understand the practical steps it is taking to meet its discoverability requirements and the impact this might be having on the layout of BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds and on audience journeys. We asked the BBC what it considers to be 'high-traffic'[3] or 'easily discoverable' areas on its services, as well as for evidence to demonstrate its approach to discoverability, and how it measures its effectiveness.[4]

The BBC has taken a range of measures to aid discoverability

The BBC noted the importance of considering the context of how audiences typically use and navigate BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds. On BBC iPlayer, it said it treats the entire homepage as a high-traffic area, with the top homepage rails attracting the highest levels of traffic. On BBC Sounds, it said the high-traffic areas include the Hero space, and other homepage rails. However, the BBC cautioned that simply placing content in high-traffic areas should not be considered synonymous with discoverability. Rather it said it considers evidence from audience behaviour, product analytics and editorial assessment in determining whether audiences can - and are - easily discovering, selecting and consuming content through a range of routes across BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds.

News and current affairs

The BBC noted it takes a range of measures to aid the discovery of its news and current affairs content including:

- On BBC iPlayer, it promotes live the most recent editions of *BBC Breakfast* and the *News at One*, *Six* and *Ten* as well current affairs titles such as *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* within

[2] It is also required to make informal learning content and certain nations and regions content easily discoverable on BBC Online. BBC Operating Licence, conditions 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.3, 3.2.4, 4.39, 4.45, 4.54 and 4.62.
[3] 'High-traffic areas' is a term we use in relation to PSB players or 'internet programme services' (IPS). It refers to an area of the IPS which is viewed and/or accessed by a significant volume of people when they use the IPS.
[4] We issued a formal information notice related to discoverability which it responded to in September 2026.

the ‘New & Trending’ section of BBC iPlayer. It also includes breaking-news streams when relevant, with major elections and significant news events appearing in the ‘Hero’ space.

- The News rail appears for all users on the BBC iPlayer homepage, and audiences can also access news via the News category and BBC News channel pages in the navigation bar.
- On BBC Sounds, it says news content can be found through several routes, including the Live Dial at the top of the homepage, the Latest News Playlist and the News category. There is also a dedicated Live News stream, a curated feed of live news audio from across the BBC.[5]

A range of original content

The BBC explains that its original UK releases are promoted across the BBC iPlayer homepage through a combination of broad editorial promotion and personalised discovery. It says that new content is ‘boosted’ in recommendations and genre categories and curated collections rails are used to help audiences discover new content on the home page. It also uses personalised mechanisms such as ‘If You Liked’ and ‘More Like This’ to help audiences discover content beyond the most recent or widely promoted releases. On BBC Sounds it says that discovery follows a similar pattern to that on BBC iPlayer, for example with ‘Recommended For You’ rails, and a “newness” boost within recommendations.

Informal learning content

In last year’s report we highlighted that an increase in hours of informal learning content on BBC iPlayer did not appear to have translated into an increase in audience reach, and that there may be scope for the BBC to make this content more discoverable.[6]

The BBC says that audiences can discover informal learning content through genre rails, category tabs and the Recommended For You rail on BBC iPlayer, alongside curated collections and promotions around themes such as *Wild About Nature*, *Scam Safe Week* and *Black History Month*. To improve discoverability on BBC Sounds, the BBC said it has introduced and improved speech playlists in genres such as history and comedy. It says relevant learning and factual content is included in the personalised ‘Discover Podcasts’ rail, as well as curated in the ‘Editor’s Picks’ rail.[7]

Nations and regions content

The BBC reported a range of measures related to nations and regions content, including:

- On BBC iPlayer, mechanisms to prominently serve nations-specific titles for audiences in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and commonly including nations’ content within wider UK-wide homepage promotion.
- On BBC Sounds, an editorially curated local or nations rail, for example *From Greater Manchester* and *From Wales*, features on the homepage based on a user’s location. It also highlights its BBC local brand ‘Need to Know’ which it says is easily discoverable, and tells listeners the key things they need to know about a major news story in the area.[8]

[5] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.8, 13 & 152 and BBC response to discoverability RFI, September 2026. It also says that Current affairs podcasts, including *Newscast* and *Political Thinking*, are promoted through editorially curated areas such as Latest News Playlist and Editor’s Picks, alongside personalised recommendations.
[6] Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC, 2024/25, p.25. The BBC provides content that supports adults’ informal learning across its platforms, including factual content across a range of genres such as history, religion, science, arts and music.
[7] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.33-35, 87-88 and BBC response to discoverability RFI, September 2026
[8] BBC response to discoverability RFI, September 2026

The BBC has provided some data to demonstrate the impact

We asked the BBC to provide data on the impact of its measures to support content discovery: it gave us data related to the four categories of content set out above, including how much of each type of content was featured on the homepages and/or in 'easily discoverable' areas, and how many audiences had 'seen' the content. 'Seen' in this context means that it had appeared on a users' screen – it does not necessarily mean that they clicked on or watched/listened to it.

While the data does not tell the whole story, it gives an insight into where content is placed and how easy it might be for audiences to discover. For example, while 85% of content on BBC iPlayer is original UK content, this only makes up 76% of content in the high-traffic spaces, meaning that acquisitions are proportionally more likely to feature. 99% of audiences 'saw' this content in an average week. News and Current affairs only accounts for 11% of content on the BBC iPlayer high traffic spaces, and although it accounted for 26% across the homepage overall, 44% of audiences 'saw'[9] this content in an average week.[10]

While news and current affairs content only accounted for around 4% of content on the BBC Sounds homepage, 62% of audiences 'saw' at least one piece of this content each week.[11]

Audience perceptions of discovering new content are positive but there could be scope to do more

68% of audiences rated BBC iPlayer as 'good' for ease of discovering new content; broadly in line with services from the other PSBs.[12] We recognise that the approach taken to supporting discoverability is an evolving area, shaped by changes in technology and audience behaviours. This is why we have a taken a flexible, outcome-based approach to setting our discoverability requirements.

The BBC editorially curates some prominent rails on BBC iPlayer, while others are personalised related to audience behaviours. Against a backdrop of increasing expectations of personalised content, we recognise that there is some tension between greater personalisation of its online services (to increase engagement) and ensuring audiences are exposed to a breadth of content. However, we are clear that the BBC must ensure that personalisation complements, rather than displaces, broader content discovery. In some cases, we will want to see further evidence from the BBC that its discoverability measures are proving effective in achieving their intended aims. For example, given the provision of news is central to the BBC's mission, we will further explore with the BBC how audiences encounter news content on BBC iPlayer.

---

[9] As above, this means it appeared on a users' screen – it does not necessarily mean that they clicked on or watched/ listened to it.

[10] Informal learning content accounted for 28% of titles on BBC iPlayer in high traffic spaces and 32% across the homepage overall; 77% of users 'saw' this content. Nations and regions content accounted for 9% of titles in high traffic spaces and 8% across the homepage overall, 'seen' by 53%. BBC response to discoverability RFI, September 2026. Informal learning content on BBC iPlayer includes factual titles (excluding factual entertainment), and children's titles (excluding children's acquisitions). Nations and regions content excludes nation's portrayal titles such as *Shetland* and *Blue Lights.*

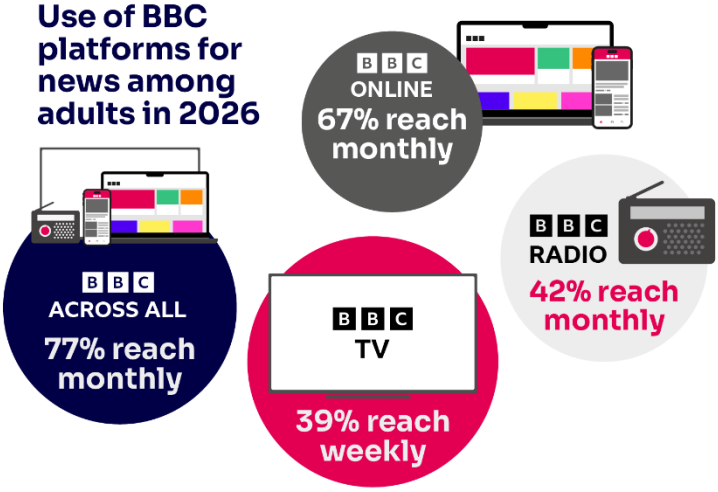
[11] Informal learning content accounted for 53% of content on the BBC Sounds homepage; 27% of users 'saw' this content. Nations and regions content accounted for 39%, 'seen' by 28%. BBC response to discoverability RFI, September 2026. Informal learning content on BBC Sounds includes factual and children's titles.

[12] Ofcom VoD Survey 2026. 'Ease of discovering new content': ITVX (61%), Channel 4 streaming (64%) and Channel 5 streaming (57%). Note that audience ratings reported as 'good' includes all participants indicating 'good' or 'very good' for the performance of this attribute.

PUBLIC PURPOSE 1

To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them

Use of BBC platforms for news among adults in 2026



Network news and current affairs output

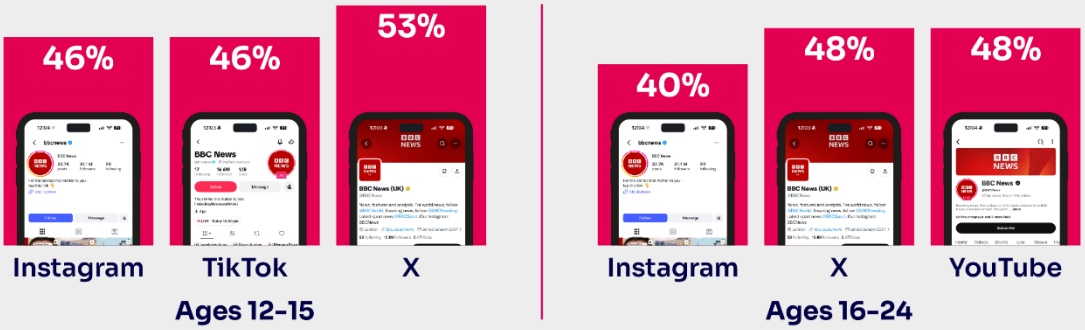
17,365 first-run originated hours

▲ 5% YoY

£279m spend

▼ 10% YoY

% of social media users indicating they have seen BBC news on the platform



Trust in BBC news on and off platforms among 16+



Sources: Barb-as-viewed, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home, age 16+ (3+ consecutive minutes average weekly reach) for national and international news, live, recorded playback and BVoD; Ipsos Iris, Online Audience Measurement Service, internet users aged 15+, March 2026; Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026; Ofcom Children's News Consumption Survey 2026; Ofcom analysis of BBC data. On/off platform refers to news seen or heard on the BBC's own platforms such as TV channels, radio stations or the website/app, while off platform refers to BBC news seen or heard on non-BBC owned platforms such as on social media.

Public Purpose 1 performance in 2025/26

- **The BBC remains the UK's leading news provider**, used by 77% of adults each month and maintaining strong visibility with younger audiences, despite increasingly fragmented news consumption.
- **The BBC's digital-first strategy is gaining traction,** with growth in online news consumed across its own services and third-party platforms. Viewing of news and current affairs on BBC iPlayer was up by 35% in 2025/26 and BBC news online reached 67% of adults in June 2026, up six percentage points year on year.
- The BBC continues to deliver **substantial levels of original news and current affairs output**, with more than 17,000 hours of first-run content on TV and BBC iPlayer, and a wide range of content on BBC Radio, BBC Sounds and BBC online.
- **Trust and accuracy remain key strengths of BBC news,** though, in line with other PSBs, audience ratings of these have declined, and perceptions of impartiality are lower.

Our assessment

News is at the heart of the BBC's mission: it remains the UK's leading news provider

BBC news plays a central role in the health of UK democracy and society and is at the heart of the BBC's public service role. Through its local, regional, national and international news, the BBC must provide duly impartial, accurate and high-quality journalism that informs audiences, supports civic debate and helps hold institutions to account. The way audiences access news continues to change and, in this evolving environment, the BBC's ability to ensure its journalism is easy to find, continues to reach audiences, and maintains audience trust has never been more important.

Amidst the constantly evolving environment, the BBC continues to reach large audiences with news and current affairs output across a range of platforms. Across its own services, BBC news is used by 77% of adults each month, rising to 80% when reported use of BBC news content on social media and video-sharing platforms is included.[13]

As consumption habits change, the BBC's television and radio news still attract large audiences

Although reach to BBC news on traditional television has continued to decline,[14] large audiences still come to the BBC for a range of news and current affairs programmes across its broadcast and online video and audio services. For example, the BBC's *News at Six* is watched by 16.8% of adults on average each week, while its regional 6:30pm bulletin is watched by 16% of adults,[15] showing the value audiences place on local news. An average of 5.6 million people listened to BBC Radio 4's

[13] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026: Television (65%), radio (34%), BBC iPlayer (32%), the BBC News website and app (28%), and social media, where 32% of adults report seeing BBC news content each month.
[14] Average weekly reach of BBC news on TV fell from 50% of those 16+ in 2022 to 39% in 2025. Barb as-viewed, adults age 16+. TV sets and other Wi-Fi connected devices in the home. News genre: national/international. Reach criteria 3+ consecutive minutes. Live, recorded playback and BVoD.
[15] Barb as-viewed adults age 16+, TV sets and other Wi-Fi connected devices in the home. Reach criteria 3+ consecutive minutes. Live, recorded playback and BVoD.

flagship *Today* programme each week, while an average of 3.2 million people listened to BBC Radio 5 Live programmes across daytime Monday-Fridays each week.[16]

Audiences of all ages are increasingly turning to online services and in many cases, this will complement their viewing and listening on TV and radio. While BBC television news (via broadcast or BBC iPlayer) remains a mainstay for older audiences, reaching 81% of those aged 75 and over, a sizeable 58% of 16-24-year-olds also watch it. Use of BBC radio for news is relatively consistent across age groups, ranging from 33% for 16-24-year-olds to 43% for those aged 75 and over. Our research also shows that 20% of 16-24-year-olds and 16% of those aged 75+ reported using the BBC News website or app, compared with 27% among all adults. For BBC News on social media, 43% of 16-24s said they encountered its news this way, compared to only 5% of those aged 75 and over.[17]

The BBC has accelerated its digital-first news strategy which appears to be helping attract online audiences

The BBC has been investing in its social media and digital services through expanding live and breaking news coverage, producing more explanatory and short-form video and releasing selected current affairs content such as *Panorama* earlier on BBC iPlayer. It has also been developing video podcasts and other digital-first formats such as *Diddy on Trial* and interactive *Your Voice* live streams, as well as strengthening its presence on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.[18] The BBC says it has placed greater emphasis on investigative and in-depth journalism that aims to have a high-impact through reaching large audiences and/or generating public debate on BBC iPlayer, BBC InDepth online and BBC Verify.[19]

These developments are likely to have helped increase overall use of the BBC's online news services. In 2025/26, weekly active news accounts increased across BBC iPlayer, BBC News online and BBC Sounds: On BBC Sounds, 1.7 million weekly active accounts accessed news content, a 3% increase on the previous year,[20] with viewing to news on BBC iPlayer up by 35%.[21] BBC news online, across its app and website, reached 67% of people aged 15 and over in June 2026, up six percentage points year on year.[22]

The BBC has also built substantial audiences on third-party platforms. BBC news remains the most widely followed individual news provider across major social media services and has recorded strong growth on YouTube and TikTok. On TikTok, it has almost 15 million followers worldwide, with nearly a third of viewers aged 18 to 24 underlining its importance to the BBC in reaching young audiences.[23]

These developments have enabled the BBC to maintain its strong reach among younger audiences for news

This presence is helping the BBC reach young people and children. BBC News is the most recalled news provider among 16-24-year-olds who access news through platforms including YouTube,

---

[16] RAJAR Q1 2026, 12-month weighting. *Today* broadcast Mon-Fri 06:00-09:00.
[17] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026.
[18] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.6-10 and 17. BBC Annual Plan 2025/26, p3. See also: BBC News channel launches on YouTube
[19] BBC RFI response, 2025/26.
[20] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.12.
[21] Barb as-viewed, viewing minutes per person to national and international news across TV sets and other Wi-Fi connected devices in the home among adults 16+. Whenever Ofcom analysis of Barb viewing data refers to BBC iPlayer viewing, this includes all BBC content watched on-demand including non-linear programming, as well as viewing of BBC content via other services like Sky Go/On-demand and Virgin Media Catch-up.
[22] Ipsos Iris Online Audience Measurement Service. Note, the figures for Ipsos Iris include passive measurement and so are higher than reported use captured in our News Consumption Survey.
[23] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.18-19.

Instagram, TikTok and X.[24] Research also indicates that younger users value its online news for being concise and easy to consume through social media posts, app notifications and short-form video. Among 12-15-year-olds, the BBC remains the most widely used publisher-led news source, supported by high levels of trust, with four in five saying they trust BBC news. [25]

Viewing of current affairs has fallen, but it continues to make an impact

Although reach of current affairs across TV and BBC iPlayer fell this year, it is still watched by 4.8 million people each week.[26] Within this, BBC iPlayer viewing is increasing, but not sufficiently to offset linear declines.[27] Individual programmes continue to attract substantial audiences, for example, *Panorama: Undercover in the Police* drew an audience of 3.2 million viewers, its highest-performing episode since 2023, illustrating that the BBC can deliver demonstrable public impact through its investigations.[28] The BBC also highlighted the strong performance of particular strands, including *The Big Cases*, among underserved audiences.[29]

The BBC has maintained substantial output while reducing spend and changing provision

This year the BBC produced 17,365 hours of first-run originated news and current affairs TV output, the highest level on record and a 5% increase on 2024's level. This accounted for 78% of first-run originated output across all genres.[30] Current affairs output this year included a new weekly programme from the World Service, *Global Eye*, that launched on BBC Two.[31] The BBC says that a more joined-up approach is leading to greater impact of its output.[32] The amount of regional and nations' news fell slightly while current affairs in the nations and regions increased – these changes were driven by changes in Scotland. See Public Purpose 4 and the nations pages for further information.

However, the BBC is delivering this increased output with lower expenditure. Spend on news and current affairs TV programming (across the network and nations and regions) fell by 10% year on year, from £310.5m in 2024 to £279.4m in 2025, the lowest level over this Charter period. This was largely driven by a decline in regional spend.[33]

While the BBC is spending less, it is currently maintaining, and in some areas increasing, original output, but the announcement of future budget cuts may make this more difficult to achieve

---

[24] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026: For audiences aged 16-24, BBC News is the most recalled news provider among those accessing news via YouTube (48%), X (48%), Instagram (40%), Facebook (33%) and TikTok (38%).
[25] Ofcom Children's News Consumption Survey 2026: 50% of 12–15-year-olds report using BBC News through any source, including on social media, 35% reported using any direct BBC News source in the last month and 33% reported accessing BBC News through social media. 80% of 12-15-year-olds who saw or heard news on the BBC said they trusted it.
[26] BBC RFI response, 2025/26.
[27] Barb as viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home Wifi, live, recorded playback and BVoD. Against this backdrop, we revised the network current affairs quota on BBC One and BBC Two to reflect evolving viewing habits and the growing role of BBC iPlayer. These changes took effect from December 2025; we will report further in next year's Annual Report.
[28] BBC RFI response, 2025/26. For example, with its *Undercover* investigation into the culture within the Metropolitan Police and with *The Dark Side of Married at First Sight* investigation leading to a number of actions.
[29] BBC RFI response, 2025/26.
[30] Ofcom analysis of BBC data. Growth was driven largely by news, with first-run originated network news output increasing by 874 hours (6%) and representing 79% of all BBC network TV news output, while first-run originated current affairs output declined by 9% and repeats increased. Total network TV news and current affairs output remained broadly stable in 2025 at 22,746 hours, compared with 22,692 hours in 2024.
[31] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.22.
[32] BBC RFI response, 2025/26. The BBC also cites *The Big Cases*' strong performance among underserved audiences.
[33] With most of the reduction in spend coming from regional TV current affairs (-26%) and regional TV news (-21%). Network TV news and current affairs spend decreased by 1%. Ofcom analysis of BBC data.

without affecting the scale or nature of provision. The BBC is also expected to announce further cuts in January 2027, and says it plans to review its current affairs output as part of wider efforts to improve efficiency and deliver further savings.[34] We will continue to engage with the BBC as it develops these plans.

In July 2025, we approved reductions to the news and current affairs quotas for BBC Asian Network and BBC Radio Foyle. The BBC Asian Network change was intended to support greater investment in distinctive content for younger audiences. This year the station exceeded its revised quota, delivering 710 hours of news and current affairs output against a requirement of 675 hours.[35] While weekly reach fell by 5% to 540,000, listening hours increased, from 5.1 to 5.8 hours per week per listener.[36] For BBC Radio Foyle, while RAJAR data is unavailable, the BBC's data shows that listening to its *North West Today* programme on BBC Sounds increased by 3% year on year.[37]

The BBC continues to play an important role in local news

Trusted and high-quality local news supports local democracy and community engagement, and the BBC continues to play an important role in this respect; its local news provision remains widely used and well-regarded. A third of people use the BBC website or app for local news, while 30% watch BBC One regional news bulletins, and the BBC's local and nations' radio services are listened to by 11% of adults for local news each week.[38] 80% of those who listen to their local or national BBC Radio station are satisfied with it.[39] The BBC's role is becoming increasingly important as the decline of independent local news providers creates gaps in local coverage and research highlights that audiences continue to value reliable local news that meets their needs.

Access to trusted sources of news is increasingly important as trust comes under pressure

Audiences value news providers that offer accurate reporting, clear context and objective coverage of different perspectives, helping them navigate a fragmented information environment and make informed judgements about the issues that affect them. With its scale and reach, the BBC is particularly well-placed to meet this need.

Last year we committed to further work to examine the factors shaping audience perceptions of trust that are affecting the BBC. As part of this we have also looked more broadly at what is driving trust in other news organisations nationally and internationally.[40]

Our BBC Trust review found that, while developments in the digital information environment, including the growing influence of platforms and AI, have implications for trust, declining trust in BBC news, and across PSB providers more generally, reflects a broader combination of structural, behavioural and reputational factors. Over the past decade, increased audience choice and competition from alternative news providers have fundamentally altered the domestic and global news markets. At the same time, changing patterns of news consumption have reshaped how

---

[34] BBC Annual Plan 2026/27, p.14. The BBC review will look at commissioning arrangements for current affairs output and internal structures to reduce duplication and ensure resources are aligned with changing audience needs. BBC RFI response, 2025/26.
[35] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.12, p.139.
[36] RAJAR Q1 2026 and Q1 2025 on a 12-month weighting. Adults aged 15+.
[37] BBC DoMaPP, 2025/26, p.112.
[38] Ofcom Local Media Survey2026.
[39] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Listeners to BBC Local Radio, Radio Scotland, Radio nan Gàidheal, Radio Wales, Radio Cymru/Cymru 2, Radio Ulster and Radio Foyle rating it 7 or more for satisfaction.
[40] Ofcom News Consumption in the UK 2026, p.24 - Our research highlights that trust in news services delivered on third-party platforms is lower than when content is accessed directly from the provider's platform.

audiences engage with news. Editorial controversies and perceived shortcomings have also affected perceptions of news providers. Together, these factors have contributed to a more challenging environment for maintaining audience trust.

Alongside this, growing concerns more generally about mis- and disinformation and the increasing volume of AI-generated content have made it more challenging for audiences to assess the reliability of information, reinforcing the importance of access to trusted news sources.

Trust and accuracy remain relative strengths of the BBC's news, but perceptions have weakened

Our evidence shows that BBC News remains both widely used and highly valued. Like other public service broadcasters and news outlets, it faces significant challenges from shifting audience habits and declining trust in institutions. For example, Reuters data shows that the proportion of people who say they 'trust most news most of the time' has declined from 51% in 2015 to 30% in 2026.[41] Despite these challenges, the BBC continues to perform strongly and trust and accuracy remain relative strengths of BBC news: 65% of BBC audiences rate it highly for accuracy, 63% for trustworthiness. Relative to trust and accuracy, audience perceptions of BBC impartiality are lower, with 54% of BBC audiences rating it highly.[42] BBC local news remains highly trusted, including its coverage of local elections,[43] and in its Annual Report, the BBC includes research that shows that UK adults rank it top among media providers in the UK for offering fact checked, accurate reporting and content that people can trust.[44]

Perceptions of trust in news differ by age, socio-economic group and depending on where audiences consume the content they watch and listen to. Trust tends to be stronger among older audiences than younger audiences and is generally higher when BBC news is accessed through the BBC's services than when it is encountered in the context of social media and other third-party platforms. For example, perceptions of trust increase to 67% when only content on the BBC's own platforms is considered, but is lower, at 51% for BBC news 'off platform' (i.e. on social media or VSPs). This pattern is not unique to the BBC, with ITV and Channel 4 also receiving lower trust ratings for news on social media than on television.[45]

The BBC's own data shows that ratings for trust, accuracy and impartiality have declined since 2021/22. Among all adults (i.e. not just BBC users), between 2021/22 and 2025/26, the proportion who think the BBC is effective at providing accurate news and current affairs fell from 63% to 56%, trustworthiness from 63% to 55%, and impartiality from 51% to 45%.[46] Our research of viewers of TV news shows similar trends evident across the other PSBs, and with impartiality consistently attracting lower scores than trust and accuracy.[47]

---

[41] Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2026, p.71.
[42] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026. Note that throughout this chapter, a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale. This year we updated our News Consumption Survey to better capture overall perceptions of BBC News across platforms. While we can still analyse perceptions by platform, we are reporting overall BBC News perceptions for the first time.
[43] Ofcom's Local Election Survey 2026 - In England, 80% of those using a BBC regional radio stations for local council election news in May 2026 rated it highly for trustworthiness, 73% for UK-wide BBC radio stations and 73% for BBC news online accessed through the website or app. Note that a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale.
[44] BBC Annual Report and Account 2025/26, p.26.
[45] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026.
[46] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 p.26.
[47] Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026.

While impartiality remains a fundamental expectation of BBC news, audience perceptions are shaped by a range of factors. As well as the accuracy of individual reports, they are influenced by perceptions of story selection and omissions, the range of perspectives represented and audiences' own values and expectations, which are also shaped by the wider media environment. The challenge is therefore to deliver both duly impartial journalism and to make the editorial judgments underpinning it clear and credible to different audiences.[48]

On the basis of complaints received from audiences, the BBC has a good record of complying with broadcasting rules intended to ensure that programming is duly accurate and impartial. However, in recent years there have been a number of serious editorial failures at the BBC. The BBC recognises that this has damaged audience confidence, and it has taken action to strengthen editorial standards and accountability.[49] [50] If perceptions continue to weaken, this could create longer-term reputational challenges and affect the BBC's ability to fulfil its role. We consider these challenges, and the BBC's response to them, in greater detail in our BBC Trust Review.

The BBC is taking action by being more responsive to audience needs

To promote increased transparency and engagement with audiences, the BBC has placed greater emphasis on journalism that is more explanatory and audience-led.[51] Initiatives such as *Your Voice* and *Your Voice, Your BBC News*, aim to give audiences more opportunities to shape editorial priorities and ask questions directly.[52] They are intended to support trust by making BBC journalism more responsive to audience concerns and clearer about how stories are selected, reported and explained. It is helping audiences navigate misinformation and disinformation through expansion of BBC Verify to make its verification processes more visible, and help audiences identify false, misleading and AI-generated content.[53] These measures should help BBC Verify establish itself further as an important resource for audiences; a quarter of UK adults have said they have used a fact checker website or tool at least once, and over a fifth claimed to have used BBC Verify at least once.

The BBC has continued to invest in media literacy initiatives for children and young people, including activity designed to strengthen news literacy and verification skills.[54] In our recent media literacy recommendations, we emphasised the importance of evaluating and demonstrating the impact of such activities.

[48] BBC Trust Review
[49] BBC Annual Report and Account 2025/26, p.20- the *Panorama* edit of President Trump's speech and breaches of editorial guidelines relating to *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone* were recognised as incidents that damaged perceptions of trust and impartiality.
[50] BBC Annual Report and Account 2025/26, p.118 – Editorial Standards Committee Report.
[51] This includes increased focus on investigative and in-depth journalism on BBC iPlayer, *BBC InDepth*, *BBC Verify* and live explainers. BBC RFI response, 2025/26.
[52] BBC Annual Plan 2025/26, p20. In 2025/26, BBC News used *Your Voice* livestreams to answer audience questions on issues ranging from voting and renters' rights to everyday consumer concerns, helping to create greater interaction between journalists and audiences. BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.6.
[53] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.20.
[54] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.20-21 - *Other Side of the Story*, which helps 11 to 16-year-olds identify misinformation and reached around 77,000 weekly users in 2025/26, an increase of more than 60% year on year. It has also delivered school-based initiatives, including workshops, the *AI or Real* livestream and *Solve the Story*.

PUBLIC PURPOSE 2

To support learning for people of all ages

Weekly audience reach of Bitesize

BBC BITESIZE

1.58m visitors | ▼ 1.65m in 2024/25



Teachers that have used or plan to use BBC Teach

BBC TEACH

Primary teachers	Secondary teachers
79%	72%

Ratings of Bitesize

86% of users, aged 4-16 say:

"BBC Bitesize is helpful"

Overall weekly cross-platform reach of the BBC amongst 3-16s: 76%

Weekly reach of CBeebies and CBBC

	Age 4-6	Age 4-15
BBC CBeebies	30%	12%

	Age 7-12	Age 4-15
BBC CBBC	8%	7%

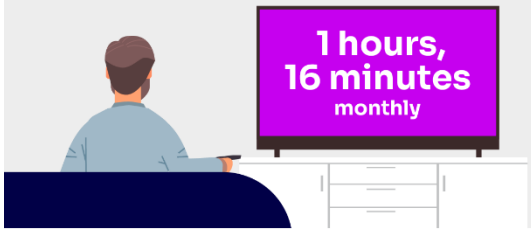
Children's ratings of the BBC

75% of children aged 8-16 and parents of children aged 3-7 agree that the BBC provides programmes and content that helps them learn

79% of viewers of CBeebies agree that Cbeebies programmes teach them about the world

74% of viewers of CBBC agree that CBBC programmes teach them about the world

Average adult viewing to informal learning content on BBC channels in 2026



58%

of adults say that the BBC provides:

"Programmes and content that help and encourage people to learn about new things well"

BBC Partnerships

356 partnerships ▼ 370 in 2024/25

Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; Barb-as-viewed across TV channels and on-demand, TV sets and other Wifi connected devices in the home. Adults age 16+ for informal learning. Average weekly reach for children: 3+ minutes; BBC supplied data - Piano Analytics; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/6; Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26; BBC DoMaPP; BBC supplied data - DJS Research Student and Teacher tracker (Summer 2025 and Autumn 2025).

Public Purpose 2 performance in 2025/26

- **BBC Bitesize remains highly valued,** used by 46% of 4-16 year-olds, with 86% of users finding it helpful, though both use and perceptions are lower among children in 'DE' households.
- **The BBC has maintained the reach of its children's services, while growing audiences online**. 30% of children aged 0-6 watch CBeebies each week and 8% of 7-12s watch CBBC. The BBC is making progress with its plans to engage children on the platforms where they are increasingly spending their time.
- **The BBC continues to provide a broad range of informal learning content**, with the majority (58%) of UK adults agreeing that the BBC provides programmes and content that help and encourage people to learn about new things.

Our assessment

Children's formal learning

Bitesize remains highly valued by children who use it

The BBC serves children of all ages providing content to support their formal learning through BBC Bitesize for students. In 2025/26 it was used by an average of 1.58 million unique visitors per week. While this was down slightly from 1.65 million in 2024/25, the number of visitors has been broadly stable since 2022/23.[55] Our research shows that 46% of children aged 4-16 use Bitesize for schoolwork or homework, and among those who do, 86% say they find it helpful and 79% that it is interesting.[56] When asked the about different types of sites/apps, education websites, such as BBC Bitesize, are seen as the most trustworthy, with 60% of children saying that all or most of the information they see on these sites or apps is 'true'.[57]

There are some differences in usage and perceptions of Bitesize by demographic – while older children are slightly more likely to use it, younger children are more likely to say they would miss it if it were no longer available.[58] Reach remains higher among children from ABC1 socio-economic households compared with C2DE (51% vs. 40%) and those who do use it rate it highly – 90% children from AB households, and 80% from DE households, said it is helpful for schoolwork or homework.[59]

Bitesize for Teachers continues to support teachers and is well-used

The BBC continues to support teachers through BBC Bitesize for Teachers,[60] which reached an average of 157.5k visitors weekly in 2025/26.[61] 93% of primary and 91% of secondary teachers said

[55] BBC supplied data (Piano Analytics). Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC 2024/25.
[56] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[57] Ofcom Children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes report 2026. Children aged 8-17 were asked the following question: Do you use apps or sites for schoolwork or homework – like BBC Bitesize or apps or sites suggested by your teachers? If you do, do you believe that all of the information you see on these apps or sites is true, most of it is true, or just some of it is true?
[58] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. 46% of 8–11-year-olds say they use Bitesize and 72% would miss it if it were no longer available. This compares to 52% use and 60% 'would miss' among 12-16s.
[59] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Note that throughout this chapter, a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale.
[60] Note that in the BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 the BBC reported the unique visitors figure for 'BBC Education' as BBC Bitesize for Students has been combined with BBC Bitesize for Teachers
[61] BBC supplied data (Piano Analytics).

they were aware of the service, and the proportion who had used, or planned to use it that term rose across both groups to 79% and 72% respectively (up from 71% and 61% last year). This represents a marked increase over the Charter period as a whole, up from 26% of primary and 27% of secondary teachers who had planned to use the service in 2018/19.[62] As use of BBC Bitesize resources by teachers rises, it is likely to support the learning of many children. It also plays a role in media literacy, which, as set out above in Public Purpose 1, the BBC is continuing to invest in for children and young people.

The BBC continues to evolve its formal learning offer

The BBC says that in 2025 it 'improved the content available on the Bitesize website, making it simpler for students and teachers to find relevant content' and began work to upgrade the Bitesize app. By exam season 2025, it had more than 525 exam-board-specific GCSE video playlists available, with playbacks up 28% year on year. It has also sought to better reach secondary-age audiences with content on YouTube, WhatsApp and TikTok, and has worked with BBC News to co-host TikTok Live streams before some key GCSE exams.[63] It also has plans to expand Bitesize for A-level learners and teachers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In its 2026/27 Annual Plan, the BBC said Bitesize will continue to evolve, particularly in response to rapid technology changes across the education sector and it has recently announced changes to help teachers access Bitesize in classrooms.[64]

Engaging children with BBC services and output

The BBC has maintained the reach CBBC and CBeebies, while growing audiences online

At a time when investment in children's content by the wider broadcasting sector is in decline, the BBC continues to provide the most extensive range of children's content in the UK, through its dedicated children's services, CBBC and CBeebies, BBC iPlayer and increasingly via third-party platforms. Its provision plays a critical role in delivering both formal and informal learning to young audiences.

Last year we highlighted that, as the BBC modernises its children's offer, early signs show its efforts seemed to be having a measurable impact.[65] This year the positive signs continue, but the environment remains challenging: overall reach remained broadly steady, with CBBC watched by 8% of 7-12 year olds each week, and CBeebies by 30% of children aged 0-6. Within this there was continued growth to viewing on BBC iPlayer coupled with declines in viewing to the children's broadcast channels.[66]

Animations and educational programming continue to perform well, for example *Bluey* remained the most watched title on CBeebies, while *Horrible Science* was the most-watched title on CBBC in

[62] BBC supplied data – DJS Research Student and Teacher Tracker 2019/20-2025/26; YouGov Student and Teacher Tracker 2018/19.
[63] BBC, DoMaPP 2025/26, p.22, 26-27.
[64] BBC, Annual Plan 2026/27, p.46.
[65] Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC, 2024/25, p.22-23.
[66] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Among children aged 7-12 CBBC linear reach (live+recorded playback) has fallen 3pp since 2023, while BVoD has increased 1pp, meaning CBBC's overall reach (live, recorded playback & BVoD) has remained stable at 8%. Among Housepersons with children 0-3 & those children aged 4-6 linear reach (live+recorded playback) to CBeebies has fallen 5pp since 2023, while BVoD has increased 1pp, leading to CBeebies' overall reach remaining broadly stable (30% vs 32%). Reach criteria: 3+ consecutive minutes.

2025/26. *Horrible Histories* and *Operation Ouch!* ranked among the channel's top titles[67] and the first production from the BBC Ignite animation programme, *Duck and Frog*, debuted in February this year.[68]

Perceptions of BBC output for children remain high – 81% of CBeebies viewers agree that its 'programmes are educational', 79% say that they 'teach them about the world', and 78% say that they 'love' CBeebies programmes. For CBBC, the equivalent ratings are 77%, 74% and 72% respectively. Older children, children from C2DE households and disabled children are however typically less likely to rate the channels highly,[69] with older children also less likely to watch.[70] 41% of children aged 3-16 say they watch *Newsround* or use the BBC *Newsround* website at least weekly, whilst 59% report ever using or watching it. Among 8-16s who ever use or watch *Newsround*, it is widely seen as informative, educational and interesting.[71]

Aligning with our recommendations in Transmission Critical to go where audiences are, the BBC is making significant shifts in engaging with children on third-party platforms. As part of its strategic partnership with YouTube, the BBC is launching new children's channels and aiming to build targeted communities for children and young adults in the UK and is also making *Newsround* bulletins and Bitesize content available on YouTube.[72] In 2024, the BBC launched an entertainment hub for children on Roblox, *Wonder Chase*, which has to date accumulated 2.4 million visits within the UK.[73] In 2025, the BBC supplemented this with Bitesize's first educational experience on Roblox, *Planet Planners*, which the BBC reported had accumulated 1.6 million visits in 2025/26. In June 2025 it launched CBeebies Parenting, an offer aimed at parents of children from birth to school age.[74]

In addition to its children's output, BBC services more broadly continue to reach a large number of children

Assessing the delivery of Public Purpose 2 requires consideration not only of content specifically commissioned for children's services but also the broader range of BBC content that reaches and benefits children, which they might also be watching or listening to with their families.

The BBC remains the most watched broadcaster among children, watched by 44% of 4-15 year olds each week.[75] Overall reach of the BBC remains high, as 76% of children aged 3-16 report using the BBC across BBC TV/iPlayer, BBC Radio/Sounds or online each week.[76] Titles which proved highly popular with children over the past year include the natural history series *Kingdom*, which ranked among the top 10 BBC series for viewing among children, *The Traitors* (totalling 1.0m 4-15s for the season 4 finale) and *Gladiators* (totalling 1.3m 4-15s for the season 3 premiere).[77]

---

[67] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Live + recorded playback and BVoD. Highest-performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole year for children 4-15. The broadcaster figures include live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD.
[68] BBC Annual Report and Accounts, p.35. Launched in 2021, the BBC Ignite initiative is designed to uncover the UK's next standout animation. Selected creators receive funding and support to co-develop their ideas in partnership with the BBC.
[69] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[70] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Live, recorded playback and BVoD.
[71] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. 80% of 8-15s who use *Newsround* said it teaches them about the world, 78% say it is useful and informative, 77% say it is interesting, and 76% say they learn a lot from Newsround.
[72] BBC Annual Plan 2026/27, p.15 & 17,
[73] BBC supplied data, up to October 2026.
[74] BBC, DoMaPP 2025/26, p.23-24, 27.
[75] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Live + recorded playback and BVoD. Reach criteria: 3+ consecutive minutes.
[76] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[77] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. All viewing includes live + recorded playback and BVoD. Based on highest performing episode, from launch until the end of March 2026. Ranking based on BBC originating series titles and excludes TV movies, sport, and special events.

Reach to the BBC, including on BBC iPlayer, remains higher among younger children (aged 4-6) compared with older age groups, with 38% of children aged 4-6 watching BBC iPlayer weekly compared with 29% of 7-12s. BBC iPlayer was watched by 30% of 4–15-year-olds, up by 6 percentage points since 2022, and ranking ahead of other PSB streaming services for this age group by some distance.[78] Our research also shows that 21% of children 3-16 use BBC Sounds each week.[79]

Adults' informal learning

The BBC continues to provide a broad range of informal learning content on a range of platforms

The BBC supports learning for people of all ages across its range of content as well as though specific genres such as history, religion, science, arts & music, current affairs, documentaries and factual entertainment. We collectively define these genres as contributing to 'informal learning', noting that audiences can of course be informed and learn new things across a much wider range of output.

The BBC continues to provide a large amount of informal learning content across both traditional linear services, as well as online through BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds and the BBC website. On TV, the amount of first-run originated informal learning output increased slightly this year to 657 hours, although it remains down in the longer term. Total informal learning TV output (including repeats and acquisitions) fell by 124 hours to 4,701.[80] It has grown its informal learning catalogue on BBC iPlayer, with over 8,600 hours available in 2025, up by 35% since 2021.[81] On BBC Radio and BBC Sounds, the BBC says it delivered 1,978 hours of documentary and informative speech content, of which 1,125 hours were first-run.[82] Informal learning content is also available on the BBC website and reached 21% of online adults in March 2026, an increase from 17% in March 2025.[83]

This year 18% of adults watched some informal learning content on BBC TV services and BBC iPlayer in an average week, in line with 2024. Within this, linear viewing declined slightly from 16% in 2024 to 15% in 2025, while BBC iPlayer viewing increased slightly, up from 3% in 2024 to 4% in 2025.[84] According to Ofcom's Podcast Survey, BBC Sounds is the second most used service for listening to podcasts, with 45% of podcast listeners using the service.[85]

Audiences value the BBC's informal learning offer

58% of UK adults rate the BBC highly for providing programmes and content that helps and encourages people to learn new things,[86] while BBC data shows that 84% of weekly BBC iPlayer users rate it as effective in helping the BBC deliver the learning purpose.[87] BBC Radio and Sounds listeners also rate its informal learning content highly: 72% of BBC Radio and 83% of BBC Sounds listeners rate

[78] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Reach criteria: 3+ minutes. ITVX 14%, Channel 4 8% and Channel 5 3%.
[79] Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[80] Ofcom analysis of BBC data
[81] Ofcom analysis of Ampere Analysis data, accessed November 2026
[82] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.79.
[83] Ipsos iris Online Audience Measurement Service, March 2025 / March 2026, age: 15+, UK internet users. Categories included in the analysis: BBC News - Science and Environment; BBC News – Business; BBC News – Technology; BBC News - Family & Education
[84] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes.
[85] Ofcom Podcast Survey 2026. Spotify had the highest reported reach, at 49%.
[86] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[87] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.215

the BBC highly for providing 'content that has helped me learn about new things I wouldn't otherwise be able to'.[88]

Partnerships

Cultural partnerships continue to play an important role

The BBC partners with a range of different organisations such as universities, charities, community groups and other media organisations to help deliver its Public Purposes. In 2025/26, it worked with 356 organisations (down slightly from 370 in 2024/25). Of these, the BBC said, 187 (53%) of supported the delivery of Public Purpose 2. Partnerships play an important role in supporting the delivery of this Public Purpose, such as by helping to deliver educational content and connecting audiences with relevant services and information.[89]

We reported last year that the BBC's approach to managing and monitoring partnerships appeared to be well embedded within the organisation.[90] Through the Charter Review process, DCMS is considering options to encourage the BBC to deliver more through collaboration and partnerships.[91]

[88] Ofcom Audio Survey 2026.
[89] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.36
[90] Ofcom BBC Annual Report on the BBC 2024/25, p.26
[91] DCMS BBC Royal Charter Review Green Paper and Public Consultation, December 2025, p.47

PUBLIC PURPOSE 3

To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services

ORIGINALITY

First-run UK originated hours and spend on network TV

45% hours

92% spend

BBC network TV spend on at-risk programmes

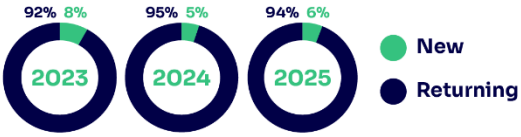
20.8% on at-risk genres

18.7% in 2024

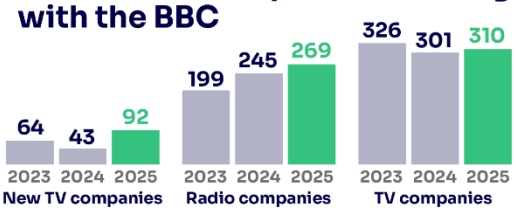
Average monthly adult viewing to at-risk genres: **2 hours, 20 minutes**

INNOVATION

Hours of BBC new and returning TV originations



Production companies working with the BBC



AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS

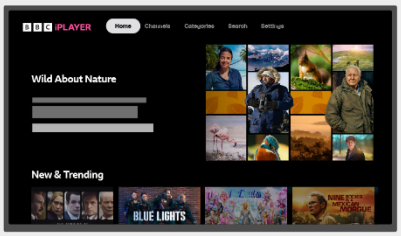
Ratings of the BBC's distinctiveness amongst adults

62% said the BBC provides high quality and creative content

63% said the BBC provides content made for UK audiences

63% said the BBC provides a wide range of different types of programmes and content

Positive ratings of BBC iPlayer



74% said iPlayer provides a good range of content

68% said iPlayer makes it easy to discover new content

Positive ratings of BBC Sounds & BBC Radio

79% rate BBC Sounds positively for high quality and creative content

70% rate BBC Radio positively for high quality and creative content

61% rate BBC Sounds positively for introducing me to new music or artists

54% rate BBC Radio positively for introducing me to new music or artists

78% rate BBC Sounds positively for the range of content available

72% rate BBC Radio positively for the range of content available



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; BBC Commissioning Supply Report; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26; Ofcom Audio Survey 2026; Ofcom Video-on-Demand Survey 2026; Barb-as-viewed, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home, age 16+ for at risk genres (excluding children's), live, recorded playback and BVoD.

Public Purpose 3 performance in 2025/26

- **The BBC provides a broad range of output across TV, radio and online**. The BBC's TV channels and BBC iPlayer continue to provide a broader genre mix than other channels and VoD providers. Its radio and BBC Sounds output spans mainstream and specialist music and a wide range of speech content.
- **The BBC continues to produce a large amount of original output but spend is down**. The BBC produced more hours of first-run UK-originated TV content in 2025 compared to 2024, while total spend was down 11% in real terms.
- **Audience perceptions of BBC programmes and content remain broadly positive.** The majority of adults rate the BBC highly for providing 'high quality and creative programmes and content' (62%), although ratings are generally lower among DE audiences and 16-24s.
- **The BBC continues to account for a sizeable proportion of viewing.** BBC TV and BBC iPlayer accounted for 18% of all in-home video viewing in 2025, broadly stable year on year.
- **The BBC is changing its approach to reaching audiences by putting more content where audiences are**. Views of BBC content on third-party platforms, including YouTube and TikTok, grew in 2025/26.

The five pillars of distinctiveness

Distinctiveness is not just a measure of how the BBC compares to others, but of the unique value it offers to audiences. It sits at the heart of what we expect the BBC to do. We consider the following key factors (the five pillars of distinctiveness) against the performance measurement framework:

- The quality of the BBC's output;
- The amount of original output produced in the UK;
- The mix of genres and output;
- The range of audiences it serves; and
- The level of risk-taking and innovation.

Distinctiveness does not mean that every BBC programme needs to be different to those from other providers. Our assessment considers the BBC as a whole and across its services against these pillars.

Our assessment

Quality of output

Audience perceptions of quality of the BBC remain high

At a time of increased choice and competition, it is testament to the BBC's continued delivery for audiences that in 2025/26, 62% of adults rated it highly for providing high quality and creative programmes and content.[92] While the BBC continues to compare well with other providers for perceptions of quality, others such as Netflix are also rated highly.[93] We said last year that, in line with perceptions of the BBC more widely, there remained some key differences by demographic

[92] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Note that throughout this chapter, a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale.
[93] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker supplementary survey 2025/26.

group. This remains the case: those in AB households are more likely to rate the BBC highly, while perceptions remain lower among those in DE households and younger (16-24) audiences.[94]

Better meeting the needs of DE audiences has been a longstanding issue for the BBC, which we've previously highlighted.[95] In its latest DoMaPP, the BBC says that commissioning high-impact programmes that appeal to the broadest audience is the best way for the BBC to continue to serve DE audiences. It also sets out actions it is taking following an independent thematic review of portrayal and representation in BBC content, which we discuss under Public Purpose 4.

There are some positive signs that engagement with the BBC among DE audiences is improving. Compared with 2022/23, BBC viewing among DE audiences increased by 4% despite a decline in overall viewing. A range of BBC programmes this year attracted large DE audiences, including *The Celebrity Traitors*, *Strictly Come Dancing* and *Call the Midwife*, while titles such as *EastEnders* and *Casualty* over-indexed among DE audiences.[96]

This improvement has been supported by stronger engagement with BBC iPlayer, which has seen average weekly reach among DE audiences increase from 23% in 2022/23 to 29% in 2025/26.[97] When looking at specific content viewed by these audiences across all broadcaster video-on-demand (BVoD) services, there has been an increase in the number of BBC titles watched.[98] DE audiences are also discovering content on BBC iPlayer that particularly appeals to them compared to other audiences, such as *Eastenders* spin-offs (e.g. *Eastenders Revealed*) and *Waterloo Road*. As we set out in the Overview, in the context of significant cuts to come, we expect the BBC to explain how it will continue to deliver for those audience groups likely to be most affected.

Engagement with 16–24-year-olds on BBC iPlayer has also seen some improvement. Average weekly reach has seen a modest increase for this audience,[99] while BBC iPlayer continues to attract the largest audience in this age-group of any BVoD service. 34 of the top 50 BVoD titles watched over the past year were on BBC iPlayer and included comedy (e.g. *This Country*), drama (e.g. *The Night Manager*) and factual (e.g. *Louis Theroux*).[100]

Original output produced in the UK

The BBC continues to produce a large amount of original output. Its overall content spend has reduced

Producing a broad range of UK-originated output is a key marker of distinctiveness for the BBC – it sets it apart from other providers and helps the BBC serve audiences across the whole of the UK. For example, the BBC provided 49,005 hours of output in 2025 across its broadcast TV channels, of which 22,135 hours (45%) were first-run originations, a 3% increase from the previous year. The

[94] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. 70% of those in AB households rate the BBC highly for 'high quality and creative content' compared to 55% in DE households, and 54% of 16-24s rate highly compared to 62% overall.
[95] Ofcom BBC Annual Report on the BBC, 2024/25, p.7 & 29
[96] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi among DE adults. Live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD. The index shows whether a programme is more or less popular among DE adults than among adults overall, taking population size for each into account.
[97] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. BVoD only. Reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes.
[98] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi among DE adults. BVoD viewing only.
[99] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Reach criteria 3+ consecutive minutes.. 19% in 2022/23 to 21.2% in 2025/26
[100] Barb as-viewed, TV sets and other Wifi connected devices in the home. Highest-performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole period.

number of new TV series rose to 176 titles in 2025, up from 158 the previous year, with the number of hours accounted for by these titles accounted growing, from 389 to 453.[101]

Overall, on TV there were increases in the amount of UK-originated Entertainment & Comedy, Factual & Learning and News & Current Affairs with declines in Sport, Film & Drama and Children's. However some of these falls in TV hours are happening as the BBC is delivering more content online, where audiences are, consistent with its strategy to deliver e.g. more children's content on YouTube.

Total spend on TV output was down year-on-year by 8% in nominal terms to £1.59bn in 2025, driven primarily by reduced spend on sport following the 2024 Olympics and Men's European Football Championship in 2024. Adjusting for inflation, total TV spend was down by 11% in real terms, meaning the BBC produced more TV output with less spend.[102] Across its radio services and on BBC Sounds, it produces a wide range of original audio content. On BBC Sounds across 2025/26, 34% of on-demand content was classified as 'factual', 24% as 'news', 22% as 'entertainment' or 'music', 10% as sport and 7% under comedy/religion & ethics/learning/drama categories.[103] In 2025 the spent £400m on original radio content and total spend under its 'listen' category increased from £537m to £553.[104]

When asked about the BBC's output, audience perceptions remain high: 63% rate it highly for both providing 'programmes and content made for UK audiences' as well as a 'wide range of different types of programmes and content'.[105]

The BBC reduced spend on acquisitions with hours remaining stable, although children's acquisitions increased this year

We have previously stated that we would be concerned if acquisitions were to play too large a role in the BBC's output. This year the volume of first-run acquisitions on TV was relatively stable at 739 hours (+1% versus 2024), equivalent to 1.5% of total TV output. Spend on acquisitions was down 6%.[106] The BBC has stated that acquisitions will continue to make up a small proportion of its spend and hours, both on TV and BBC iPlayer, and is increasingly focusing on acquiring British and global series while reducing the proportion of acquisitions constituted by US boxsets.[107] The BBC also says that some titles may be acquired to help attract underserved audiences to the BBC and to introduce them to BBC commissioned programmes.[108]

On children's specifically, first-run TV acquisitions increased by 48 hours, and although they remain a small proportion of total children's output (1.7%), they accounted for 31% of first-run children's hours in 2025, up from 24% last year and the highest level on record.[109] The BBC reports that its acquired children's content was higher than predicted due to better-than-expected availability of

[101] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[102] Ofcom analysis of BBC data. Network figures exclude nations and regions content. Hours are based on slot times (i.e. as listed in programme guides, and including promotional material and trailers). See our interactive report for further detail.
[103] BBC supplied data.
[104] BBC, BBC Commissioning Report 2025/26, p.2; BBC Annual Report 2025/26, p.62.
[105] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[106] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[107] BBC Annual Plan 2026/27, p.61.
[108] BBC DoMaPP, p.156.
[109] Ofcom analysis of BBC data

high-quality content at competitive prices which it says helps to maintain its broad appeal.[110] It has previously reported that animated acquisitions have contributed to the growth of BBC iPlayer.[111]

Mix of genres and output

The BBC provides a wide range of content on TV and BBC iPlayer

The BBC's provision of a wide range of genres is a key part of its remit. The BBC's TV channels continue to offer a broader genre mix than other PSB or commercial channels,[112] and BBC iPlayer provides a wider genre mix than other BVoD and SVoD providers.[113]

Audiences continue to value this, with 63% of UK adults rating the BBC highly for providing 'a wide range of different types of programmes and content' and 60% of children aged 3-16 agreeing that the BBC provides a 'wide range of programmes they enjoy'.[114] Perceptions however remain lower among younger audiences (56% of 16-24s rate it highly vs. 70% of adults aged 75+), and DE audiences (56% rate it highly vs. 71% among AB audiences).[115] Among online adults, the BBC comes second to Netflix in terms of which service they associate with offering a wide range of different types of content. This is particularly the case for young online audiences: 32% of 16-24s said the BBC offers a wide range of different types of content compared to 57% that said the same for Netflix.[116]

The BBC is an important provider of genres which are 'at-risk'

At-risk genres are those which are generally less-well provided across the market and include arts, children's, comedy, music, religion, and specialist factual content – the BBC plays an important role in their provision across its services.[117] Traditionally the BBC has delivered much of its at-risk genre content on traditional TV channels and whilst provision on TV remains important, the BBC is increasingly delivering this important content online.

On TV, at-risk genres made up 48% of the total hours of programming on BBC TV channels in 2025, more than the other PSB channels and in line with 2024 (49%).[118] On BBC iPlayer, 34% of the total hours available in 2025 were in at-risk genres, more than ITVX (22%), Channel 4 streaming (17%) and My5 (28%). Half of this content – 17% of total hours on BBC iPlayer – was children's content.[119]

The BBC's provision of first-run UK originated at-risk output on TV and BBC iPlayer remained relatively stable in 2025 at 1,196 hours, a 2% decrease from 2024. Larger proportional declines in comedy (down 17% to 84 hours) and music (down 10% to 190 hours) were marginally offset by a 5% increase in specialist factual programming (to 409 hours). The amount of acquired at-risk content increased by 13% to 331 hours in 2025, with decreases in arts (down 50% to 11) and specialist

[110] The BBC reports that, of the 8,801 hours of children's programming broadcast on TV, 69% were BBC commissions with 2,776 hours being acquisitions. The proportion on iPlayer was higher with 71% of hours being BBC commissions and 1,892 hours of acquisitions. BBC DoMaPP 2025/26 p.51.
[111] BBC supplied data, September 2025. (As reported in Ofcom's Annual Report 2024/25 p.23).
[112] Ofcom analysis of broadcaster data.
[113] Ofcom analysis of Ampere Analysis data, accessed October 2026. Subscription video-on-demand (SVoD): On-demand/streaming services that are only available on a paid-subscription basis. E.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime Video.
[114] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26 and Ofcom Children's Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[115] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[116] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker supplementary survey 2025/26. Overall, 57% of online adults associate Netflix with offering a wide range of different types of content compared to 45% for the BBC.
[117] The BBC Framework Agreement identifies these genres as underprovided or in decline across public service broadcasting.
[118] Ofcom analysis of broadcaster data.
[119] Ofcom analysis of Ampere Analysis data, accessed October 2026.

factual (down 19% to 88) outweighed by increases in children's (up 46% to 152) and music, which more than doubled from 13 to 34 hours in 2025 – its highest level since 2021.[120]

Viewing to at-risk genres (excluding children's) marginally increased in 2025, to 2 hours and 20 mins per person per month. This rise was driven by an overall increase in on-demand viewing, which was up by 14% from 2024 to 49 minutes per person per month in 2025. Specialist factual remains the most watched at-risk genre on linear channels, whilst comedy continues to be the most viewed on-demand genre. Linear viewing of at-risk genres is decreasing year-on-year however, the decline in 2025 (5%) was much less marked than the 20% decrease in 2024. [121]

The BBC now has 13 UK-wide radio stations offering a mix of mainstream and specialist music genres, as well as a variety of speech content spanning genres including factual content, news, drama, comedy, sport, religion and learning.

Audiences rate the BBC's audio offering highly for its range of content and introducing them to new music and artists

The BBC continues to provide a wide range of content on BBC Sounds. There were 446k hours of on-demand audio content across 11 genres available on BBC Sounds in 2025/26.[122] 72% of BBC Sounds users and 78% of BBC Radio listeners rate the BBC's audio offering highly for 'delivering a wide range of programmes and content'.[123] The majority of BBC Sounds users (71%) also rate it highly for 'enabl[ing] me to discover new music or artists' and 'enab[ling] me to discover new content' (80%).[124]

In September 2025 the BBC launched three new radio stations on DAB+ and BBC Sounds: Radio 1 Anthems, Radio 1 Dance and Radio 3 Unwind. The BBC notes that these services have been successful in bringing in new listeners to the Radio 1 and Radio 3 brands.[125] It subsequently launched an online-only extension to its 6 Music brand, BBC Radio 6 Music Indie Forever, in July 2026.

New and live music continues to play an important role in making the BBC's offering distinctive

New music is a key part of BBC radio's distinctiveness, and the BBC has Operating Licence conditions related to new, UK, live and specialist music. As part of our performance assessment, we look at the number of different music tracks, the average repeat rate of music tracks and the proportion of new music played on BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 2 and a selection of relevant commercial comparator stations.[126]

In 2025/26, BBC Radio 1 played fewer different music tracks compared to 2024/25 but this was still two to three times higher than commercial comparator stations. The number of different tracks played on BBC Radio 2 remained broadly stable. 51% of tracks played on BBC Radio 1 and 25% on

[120] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[121] Barb as-viewed on TV sets and other devices using the home's WiFi network, adults 16+. The broadcaster figures include live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD.
[122] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[123] Ofcom Audio Survey 2026.
[124] Positive ratings on both attributes increased from last year, by 5pp and 3pp respectively. Ofcom Audio Survey 2026.
[125] BBC, DoMaPP p.66. RAJAR data for these stations were first published in May and relate to listening between October 2025 and March 2026. As of June 2026, Radio 1 Anthems had an average weekly audience of 584k listeners, Radio 1 Dance 615k and Radio 3 Unwind 408k, and all three stations grew their audience from the previous quarter.
[126] The analysis is based on playlist data from 3 sample weeks across the financial year. It is separate to how we consider compliance against the BBC's Operating Licence conditions, which looks solely at BBC performance using a larger dataset.

BBC Radio 2 were classified as new music in 2025/26,[127] higher than their commercial comparator stations.[128] We said last year that we would engage with the BBC as the proportion of new music on Radio 1 had declined.[129] We have discussed this with the BBC and note that it says its new music levels have declined slightly over the last few years as the music industry and the music chart continues to evolve, but it has taken steps to ensure it continues to meet its quotas.[130]

Live music and events also make important contributions to the BBC's distinctive offering. In 2025/26, the BBC broadcast 210 live music sessions on BBC Radio 1, including the *Live Lounge*, *Piano Lounge* sessions and recordings at its Maida Vale studios. BBC Radio 2 broadcast 76 hours of live or newly recorded music, including performances and events such as *Radio 2 in the Park*, *Piano Room* sessions and *Radio 2 In Concert*. This year 52% of BBC Radio 3's music output was live or specially recorded.[131]

Range of audiences

The BBC continues to be used by a wide range of audiences

80% of UK adults report using at least one of the BBC's services each week across TV, radio, BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds and its websites and apps.[132] The BBC has a duty to serve all audiences and it needs to ensure it finds ways to reach audiences where they are consuming their content. BBC reach remains particularly strong among older audiences (used by 89% of 65-74s and 92% of those aged 75+ each week), AB audiences (89%) and households with children (86%).[133] Further demographics are shown below:

Figure 1: Weekly reach across BBC services and demographic groups (excluding content on third-party platforms)

	Adults 16+	16-34	35-54	55+	AB adults	DE adults	Minority ethnic adults	White adults
Any BBC	80%	73%	79%	87%	89%	74%	77%	81%
BBC TV (inc. iPlayer)	61%	33%	57%	84%	62%	59%	37%	61%
BBC Audio	52%	53%	48%	54%	65%	39%	53%	52%
BBC Online (monthly reach)	77%	65%	80%	85%	82%	72%	75%	77%

Sources: Any BBC- Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26, adults aged 16+; BBC TV (inc. iPlayer)- Barb as-viewed, 2025 calendar year. Reach criteria for BBC TV and BBC iPlayer 15+ consecutive minutes. BBC TV includes live, recorded

[127] These figures are in line with the BBC's estimates: it estimates an average of 51% new music in daytime on Radio 1 and 24% on Radio 2 in 2025/26. BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.67.
[128] Comparator stations we have used for BBC Radio 1 are Capital and Kiss; for BBC Radio 2: Heart and Magic. In January 2026 we amended our previous report to say that to say that the proportion of new music on Radio 1 was broadly in line with commercial comparator stations in 2024/25. We have subsequently identified an error in our calculations, which has been corrected in the latest interactive report, and shows that the proportion of new music on Radio 1 in 2024/25 remained higher than commercial comparator stations.
[129] Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC 2024/25, p.30-31.
[130] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.67.
[131] 30 sessions were broadcast on Radio 1's *New Music Show*, 27 on *Future Artists*, 11 on *Future Pop*, and 10 on *Radio 1's Rock Show*. BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.75-76.
[132] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.
[133] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Percentage of parents of an under 16.

playback from linear channels and BBC iPlayer/other measured BBC on-demand; BBC Audio- Ofcom Audio Survey 2026, includes radio stations and Sounds, adults aged 16+; BBC Apps/Sites- Ipsos, Ipsos iris audience measurement service, figures represent monthly reach in March 2026 as direct comparison with weekly reach figures not possible, UK internet users aged 15+, excludes BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds sites and apps. '16-34' audience is 15-34 for BBC apps/sites (monthly reach).

Live sport and appointment viewing: bringing people together sets the BBC apart

Live sporting events and appointment viewing such as *The Traitors* are among the most-watched in the UK and remain an important way for the BBC to reach large audiences. Last year *The Celebrity Traitors* finale was the most-watched episode on BBC TV channels by adults while the first episode of *The Celebrity Traitors* season 1 was the most-watched programme on BBC iPlayer, reaching audiences across all ages. BBC titles accounted for 26 of the top 50 most-watched programme titles across linear TV, BVoD and SVoD services in 2025/26, with these appointment-to-view titles attracting younger audiences. For the over 54s, the majority of the top 50 titles were BBC; no SVoD title made the top 50 for the 75+ age group.[134]

Appointment-to-view programming also brings people back to the BBC. In 2025/26, the top performing titles for activations on BBC iPlayer were predominantly drama, sport and entertainment (*The Celebrity Traitors*, *EastEnders*, *This City is Ours*, *Match of the Day*, The FA Cup*, Bluey*, *Wimbledon Championships*, *Glastonbury*, *The Traitors*, *Winter Olympics 2026*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, *UEFA Women's Euro 2025*).[135]

Risk-taking and innovation

The BBC has significantly changed its approach and is doing more to go where audiences are

The BBC's plans to reach audiences have progressed significantly over the last year, most notably with the announcement of its strategic partnership with YouTube in January 2026. This brings opportunities for the BBC to take risks and innovate with different types of content, as well as finding ways of reaching different audiences with a breadth of content. We will be following up with the BBC on the impact of this and its broader plans.

We are already seeing the impact of the BBC's efforts to engage audiences on third-party platforms, with growth in views of BBC content on YouTube and TikTok and high reach on social media and SVoD services. BBC content on YouTube saw a 21% increase in UK video views in the last year,[136] while global views to BBC content on TikTok increased by 74%.[137] Four in ten adults reported seeing BBC content on social media sites in the past six months, increasing to 61% among 16-24s, 65% among 25-34s and 47% among 35-44s. 18% of adults reported seeing BBC content on Netflix/Amazon/Disney+ in the past six months, rising to 32% among 25-34 year olds.[138]

[134] Barb, as-viewed, adults aged 16+, TV sets only. Highest-performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole year.
[135] Ofcom analysis of BBC proprietary data. Accounts returning to BBC iPlayer after no use for 13 weeks.
[136] Rising from 872 million to 1.05 billion views. BBC supplied data.
[137] Increasing from 8.51 billion in 2024/25 to 14.83 billion in 2025/26. Data provided to Ofcom by the BBC.
[138] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker supplementary survey 2025/26.

The BBC is investing in its online services to grow its reach

The BBC has said growing BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds is a key priority,[139] and since starting as Director General in May 2026, Matt Brittin has outlined the need to invest in its own platforms to better serve audiences, warning that BBC iPlayer had fallen behind other competing platforms.

The number of accounts active on BBC iPlayer remained broadly stable in 2025/26, at 15.4 million, while the average time spent viewing on BBC iPlayer increased by 8 minutes to 89 minutes per week.[140] Weekly reach of BBC iPlayer increased slightly this year to 32%, up from 30% in 2024.[141] And in 2025 the BBC accounted for 18% of all in-home video viewing across devices by all individuals, broadly stable year on year, with BBC iPlayer viewing share increasing by 1pp.[142]

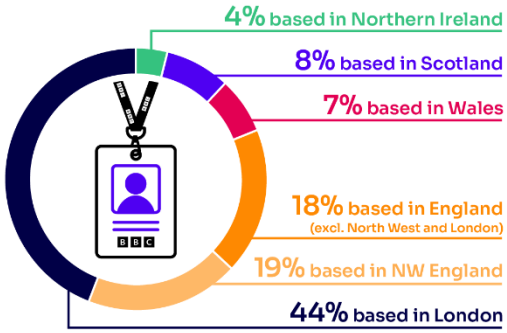
Reach of BBC Sounds remained stable this year, used by 23% of adults.[143] The average number of signed in accounts on BBC Sounds was also broadly stable, at 4.85m in 2025/26 (+1%), with decreases in adults under 55 offset by a 6% increase in the over 55s. There was, however, an increase in the number of plays of content on BBC Sounds to 33.6 million across 2025/26 (+12%).[144] Reach of other BBC websites and apps remained broadly unchanged at 77% of internet users.[145]

[139] BBC, Annual Plan 2025/26, p.23.
[140] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.223 (Sources: Piano Analytics and Barb as viewed. All devices)
[141] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices using the home's WiFi networks, individuals 4+. BBC on demand. Reach criteria 15+ consecutive minutes.
[142] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices using the home's WiFi networks, individuals 4+. The broadcaster figures include live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD.
[143] Ofcom Audio Survey 2026. Reported reach among online respondents aged 16+.
[144] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[145] Ipsos Iris, monthly reach figure in March 2026, UK internet users aged 15+, excludes BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds sites and apps, excludes BBC on third-party platforms.

PUBLIC PURPOSE 4

To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the UK

Spread of the BBC's workforce across the UK



Ratings of the BBC's delivery of Public Purpose 4

Content that reflects the life and culture of communities throughout the UK

60% POSITIVE

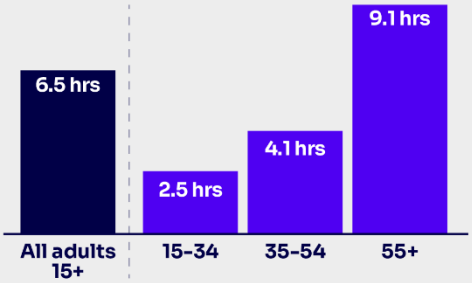
Features the region/nation of the UK I live in

55% POSITIVE

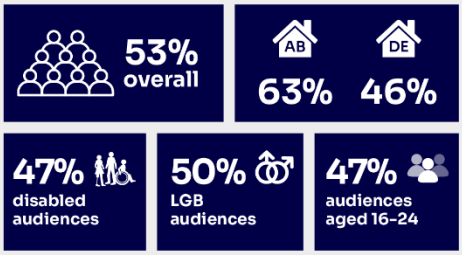
Reflects the lives of people like me

53% POSITIVE

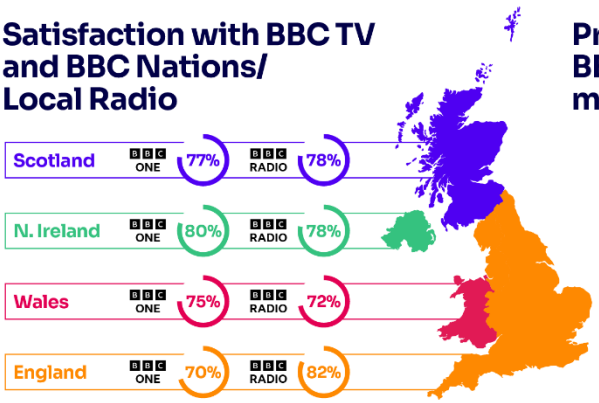
Average weekly hours of listening to local radio



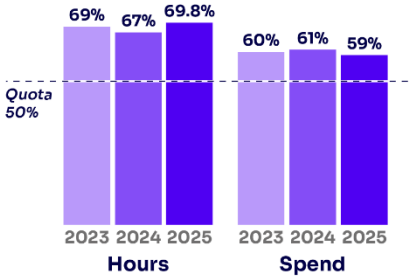
Positive ratings that the BBC 'has programmes and content that reflect the lives of people like me'.



Satisfaction with BBC TV and BBC Nations/ Local Radio



Proportion of qualifying BBC network hours and spend made outside of London



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data supplied in response to Ofcom's EDI /UK public services workforce survey 2026. Aggregated 'visible' employee data for 31 March 2026; Ofcom analysis of BBC data; RAJAR BBC Local Radio Q1 2026 data on a 12-month weight; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. NB. Question on local radio referred to: 'News bulletins on your local BBC radio station' for participants in England and replaced 'local BBC radio station' with BBC Radio Scotland/Ulster/Foyle /Wales or Cymru for participants in each nation respectively.

Public Purpose 4 performance in 2025/26

- **The BBC remains widely used across the whole of the UK,** but perceptions of how it 'reflects the lives of people like me' remain rated lower than other areas, with 53% rating it highly. The BBC says it is taking action following its review of Representation & Portrayal as well as focusing on regional growth.
- **The BBC plays an important role in the creative economy across the UK.** Its Across the UK strategy is supporting regional creative clusters, skills and small independent producers. 400 roles have been relocated outside of London and it has made changes to its commissioning and funding structures.
- **The BBC continues to focus on 'high-impact' representation and portrayal content**, and this has been successful in appealing to a wide range of audiences. However, audience perceptions related to representation and portrayal haven't shifted and there are potential tensions between this focus and continuing to serve audiences with local commissioning.
- **BBC's range of local, regional and national services and output are highly used and valued by audiences.** The BBC remains in the top sources for local news usage. 63% of listeners to BBC local/nations radio say they 'rely on local radio to keep me up to date with local news' and a high majority (82%) of BBC Local Radio listeners are satisfied with it.

This public purpose aims to ensure that the BBC serves audiences well across the UK's nations and regions. Our assessment focuses on: audience representation and portrayal; programming for and in the nations and regions and support for the creative economy; approach to diversity and inclusion in its programming and workforce, and; local services.

As set out in the Overview, the BBC Board is responsible for the BBC's editorial policy and strategic direction. Ofcom does not have a role in scheduling or programming decisions. As part of our monitoring work, we engage with stakeholders across the nations and regions and this helps inform our assessment of the BBC in delivering its mission and public purposes.

In this section, and in the nations pages that follow, we also report on some of the BBC's delivery against its own programming commitments it set out in the Annual Plan for 2025/26. The specific commitments the BBC makes are not enforceable under the Operating Licence, but we include them here as a relevant insight into the BBC's performance. Our assessment of the BBC's reporting against its own commitments in our compliance annex.

Our assessment

The BBC remains widely used across the whole of the UK

The BBC continues to reach the majority of adults in each of the UK's nations and regions, and it is used by 76% in Wales, 78% in Northern Ireland, 81% in England and 80% in Scotland.

Figure 2: Weekly reach across BBC services in the UK and across the nations

	UK	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Any BBC service	80%	81%	78%	80%	76%
BBC TV / BBC iPlayer	57%	57%	58%	55%	62%

	UK	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
BBC Radio / BBC Sounds	52%	52%	55%	49%	61%
BBC Online (monthly reach)	77%	76%	83%	78%	79%

Sources: Any BBC service – Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. BBC TV/ BBC iPlayer - Barb as-viewed 2025 calendar year, individuals aged 4+. Reach criteria for BBC TV/BBC iPlayer 15+ consecutive minutes. BBC TV/BBC iPlayer includes live, recorded playback from linear channels and BBC iPlayer/other measured BBC on-demand; BBC Audio- Ofcom Audio Survey 2026, adults aged 16+, includes radio stations and Sounds, adults aged 16+; BBC Apps/Sites- Ipsos Iris audience measurement service, figures represent monthly reach in March 2026 as direct comparison with weekly figures not possible, UK internet users aged 15+, excludes BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds sites and apps.

Overall favourability of the BBC is broadly stable across the nations (59% of audiences in England and Scotland rate the BBC highly, 61% in Wales and 65% in Northern Ireland). Varying levels of use, engagement and perceptions are of course impacted by a range of factors, including differing demographic makeup.[146] Our interactive data report provides a more detailed breakdown of BBC usage by a range of demographics. See also the Public Purpose 3 chapter for our assessment of the BBC's performance in reaching a range of audiences.

The BBC still needs to make progress in improving perceptions of how its content represents and portrays audiences

The BBC needs to be universal and reach all UK audiences; representing their stories is a key element of that. Improving audience perceptions of how well the BBC represents the life and culture of the UK remains a challenge, and one we have consistently identified in our previous Annual Reports.

This year, over half of audiences rated the BBC highly for 'reflects the lives of people like me' (53%) and 'provides programmes and content that features my region' (55%). However, these ratings remain lower than statements related to the BBC's other Public Purposes. A slightly higher proportion of audiences rate the BBC highly for 'provides programmes and content which feature people from different backgrounds' (60%). As shown below, and with further detail in our interactive data report, there also remain sizeable variations by demographic group, with younger, DE and disabled audiences rating the BBC less highly.

Figure 3: % of each audience group giving a positive rating (7-10) to the BBC across selected attributes

	All adults	16-24	75+	AB	DE	Disabled	Non-disabled	Minority ethnic	White
Reflects the lives of people like me	53%	47%	53%	63%	46%	47%	58%	59%	53%
Features the region/nation I live in	55%	51%	57%	65%	48%	50%	59%	61%	55%

[146] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. For example, 52% of 16-24s rate the BBC highly for overall favourability compared to 67% of those aged 75+. Note that throughout this chapter, a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale.

	All adults	16-24	75+	AB	DE	Disabled	Non-disabled	Minority ethnic	White
Feature people from different backgrounds	60%	51%	64%	68%	54%	56%	63%	60%	60%

Source: Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

The BBC has found similar patterns in its research,[147] so we asked them what action it has taken as a result, including related to representing the life and culture of the UK. It pointed to actions it is taking following its thematic review of portrayal and representation, such as strengthening how the BBC measures the ways in which audiences are portrayed and systematically reviewing content plans to ensure under-represented audiences are reflected authentically. It has also made commitments to creative growth in the West Midlands and North-East. [148] We will be following up with the BBC to understand the impact of its actions and how it can make progress in this area.

The BBC continues to exceed its targets[149] in relation to making its services accessible to disabled audiences. In 2024/25 nearly all broadcast hours were subtitled (99.9% on BBC One and BBC Parliament), its 5% signing requirement was met or exceeded and a voluntary commitment to 20% audio description was met across the board (rising to 65% on BBC Three). On BBC iPlayer, which does not yet have any accessibility obligations,[150] 86% of programmes carried subtitles, 24% audio description, and 15% signing).[151]

As the BBC continues to implement its *Across the UK* strategy, hours and proportion of spend outside of London have grown

The BBC says its *Across the UK* strategy is supporting regional creative clusters, skills and small independent producers; 400 roles have been relocated outside of London and it has made changes to the commissioning and funding structures of regional and national portrayal content. Over half (55%) of public service staff are now based outside of London.[152]

59% of the BBC's qualifying spend on network programming was made outside of London. While this was down just slightly from last year, the absolute level increased, and the share has increased in the longer term, from 54% in 2021, and above the Operating Licence requirement of 50%.[153]

The BBC also continues to meet its requirements for hours of programming made outside of London – in 2025, it achieved 70% of qualifying network hours, up from 67% in 2024. This was driven by a large increase in hours allocated to Scotland, mainly due to international football competitions such as the Women's Euro's and the Men's World Cup Qualifiers.[154] Hours and spend on radio content made outside of London have also increased.[155]

---

[147] We highlighted in our Annual Report on the BBC last year that the BBC's public survey found that only 51% of respondents said it was currently effective in reflecting the people and parts of the UK.
[148] RFI response, 2025/26
[149] Imposed by Ofcom's Television Access Services Code
[150] We have proposed future obligations for BBC iPlayer under a new video On-demand Accessibility Code.
[151] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.193-195
[152] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.50 & 59
[153] Ofcom analysis of BBC data. The BBC highlights that this figure can fluctuate year on year and has been influenced by a rephasing of some major commissions which will now be reported in 2026/27. BBC Annual Report 2025/26, p.50.
[154] Scotland's figure was also boosted by coverage of live snooker, although these had previously been allocated to Wales, so did not contribute to the overall rise. There were also new titles attributed to Scotland, e.g. quiz series *The Inner Circle*.
[155] Ofcom analysis of BBC data. Radio hours grew to 51% in 2025/26, from 47% last year, while radio spend was 49.8%, almost at the BBC's own target of 50%.

In 2025/26 the BBC commissioned 310 producers for TV, and 269 for radio, compared to 301 and 245 in 2024/25. In September 2026 the BBC published an economic impact report which showed that, in 2024/25, 68% of BBC suppliers were based outside of London, and that the BBC had increased its economic footprint outside of London to £3 billion. This figure captures economic activity generated by the BBC through its regional employment, subsequent economic activity generated through its supply chains, and spending by employees of both the BBC and its suppliers.

The BBC continues to focus on 'high-impact' content; there is potential tension between this and building connections with local audiences

The BBC uses 'high-impact' portrayal content as an important way of serving audiences across the UK.[156] In December 2025 the BBC announced further changes to its funding and commissioning structure – it says this will double spend on 'high-impact' content in the nations to over £100m from 2027/28 and accelerate plans to grow the number of commissioners and decision-makers outside of London. Last year it exceeded its commitment for high-impact portrayal content in 2025/26, delivering 621 hours compared with a target of 560 hours. Examples this year included *Blue Lights* and *The City is Ours*.[157]

This shift in focus means that, outside of news and current affairs, the BBC is making less programming specifically for each nation or region (known as 'opt' programming). Since 2021 there has been a decline in first-run originated non-news/non-current affairs 'opts' by around 10% to 922 hours (although hours were broadly stable from 2024 to 2025). Examples of this programming includes titles such as *Saving Lives in Cardiff*, *Born in Belfast: A Hip-Hop Story* and *Highland Cops*.[158]

The high-impact approach has been successful in building large audiences, and bringing representation and portrayal content to audiences across the UK. However, it hasn't yet led to an increase in perceptions of the BBC reflecting audiences' own areas or lives. Building connections with local audiences continues to be important, and the BBC's strategy needs to reflect that. Changes it is making in its commissioning approach may create opportunities to reach local audiences in different ways, including online commissions, and provide new routes for smaller producers and emerging talent.

Among its workforce, working-class representation remains a challenge

It is important that the people making BBC content truly reflect the diversity of the UK - it shapes what audiences see and hear, which stories get told, and how they get told. In 2025 the BBC published its new You Belong diversity, inclusion and belonging strategy – this included updated workforce targets for representation of disabled people alongside those for gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

Women account for 49% of its workforce,[159] and it has made progress in representation of disabled people, increasing from 10% to 13%, among those who provided data, although this remains below the population average of 18%.[160] Representation of people from minority ethnic groups has

[156] This is content that is made or set in a particular locality but is intended to resonate with large audiences, bringing people together and delivering public value at scale.
[157] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.102.
[158] Ofcom analysis of BBC data
[159] Note that it continues to meet its own target for 50% women in the workforce, which includes all staff across the BBC Group, based on data in its Equality Information Report (EIR). See footnote 165 for a fuller explanation of the differences in the datasets.
[160] This was impacted by a change in data collection, to include colleagues who are d/Deaf and neurodivergent. The BBC has reflected this change by increasing its own target, from 12% to 14%.

remained broadly stable, at 19% among those who provided data, and broadly in line with the population average; it remains lower among senior managers (at 13%).[161]

The BBC highlights initiatives such as its EXTEND scheme, which ringfences roles for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent candidates, alongside its commitment to ensure at least £80 million of its existing annual TV and Radio commissioning spend is directed towards productions that meet its creative diversity criteria for on- and off-air representation – last year it delivered more than twice the commitment, with £196m of its content spend. Its updated diversity commissioning code of practice sets out inclusive production principles and strengthened expectations around inclusive casting, crewing, accessibility, diversity, equality and inclusion education, and community engagement.[162]

The BBC highlights how increasing representation of colleagues from a working-class background is now a key area of focus.[163] Based on those who provided data, 26% of staff are from a working-class background, vs. the population average of 39%.[164, 165]

The BBC's local and national services continue to reach a large audience and remain highly valued

The BBC's range of local, regional and national services and output are highly used and valued by audiences.[166] Its regional news and current affairs programmes continue to reach a large audience, although average weekly reach of BBC regional news has fallen in line with broadcast TV viewing: from 30% in 2024 to 27% in 2025, driven by falls in linear TV viewing, while on-demand viewing has increased slightly.[167] 12% of adults listen to the BBC's local and nations' radio services each week, in line with the previous year.[168]

Local news remains highly valued by audiences: 71% of adults say that local news is important to them.[169] Among weekly listeners to BBC local or nations' radio, 63% say that they 'rely on local radio to keep me up to date with local news'.[170] Among listeners to BBC local stations in England specifically, 82% say that they are satisfied with BBC Local Radio in their region.[171]

---

[161] Here and in our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Broadcasting reports, we refer to percentages of those employees whose information was shared with Ofcom, (as opposed to being based on all employees). We refer to this as being based on 'visible' data. This differs from the BBC's reporting in its EIR and its own targets, which are based on total data.

[162] BBC RFI response, 2025/26; BBC Annual Report 2025/26, p35; BBC Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice

[163] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.64

[164] Based on parental occupation. Benchmark data: Social mobility commission - Socio-economic background of the overall UK workforce aged 16+ (May 2021).

[165] BBC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data submitted to Ofcom, 2025/26. The BBC's own data in its Equality Information Report (EIR), shows that based on all staff, 20.7% are from a working-class background, vs. its own target of 25%. The BBC's figures differ from the EDI data for a number of factors, including that the EIR includes a small number of staff with UK contracts who are based outside of the UK, whereas the EDI workforce data includes only UK-based staff. The EIR includes all World Service staff, whereas the EDI workforce data only includes the World Service staff who work on English language content provided on the BBC's UK public services. The EIR reporting is based on 'total workforce data' in contrast to basing it on those who provided the data, which we use here and in our EDI reporting (also referred to as 'visible' data).

[166] Across TV, radio and online they are used by 58% of adults in Northern Ireland, 54% of adults in Scotland, 49% in Wales and 43% in England. BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.52-55

[167] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to home WiFi, adults 16+. Reach criteria: 3+ consecutive minutes to nations/ regions news.

[168] RAJAR Q1 2026. 12-month weighting. This varies by services: BBC Radio Uster/Foyle (25%), BBC Radio Scotland (18%), BBC Radio Wales (15%), BBC Local Radio in England (10%) and BBC Radio Cymru/Cymru 2 (4%).

[169] Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Importance is highest in Northern Ireland (79%), followed by Scotland (76%) and Wales (73%), compared with 70% in England.

[170] IPA TouchPoints Superhub 2026.

[171] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

BBC online, along with regional news bulletins on BBC One, is among the top sources audiences use for local news, used by 33% and 30% of adults respectively, although social media is now the most used, at 36%.[172] And as we set out in our competition chapter, BBC's local online page views have generally increased since 2022, although there was slower growth between the first half of 2025 and the same period in 2026.[173]

The BBC continues to deliver a large volume of regional news and current affairs - changes in hours this year were driven by BBC Scotland changes

In 2025 the BBC broadcast 4,616 hours of first-run originated regional news (down 3% on last year) and 419 hours of regional current affairs (up 10%). In 2024 we approved a change to the BBC's Operating Licence to reduce the amount of news programming on BBC Scotland to enable it to reshape its output to better serve audiences. In line with this, non-network first-run originated news in Scotland fell 21% to 494 hours, but current affairs increased significantly, more than doubling from 59 hours to 133 hours. This included titles such as *Disclosure* and *Scotcast*.[174]

In line with its broader digital-first strategy, the BBC continues to deliver its local and nations/regions news through a multiplatform approach

The BBC says its 39 local multimedia hubs across England, alongside dedicated and locally-focused news from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, provide high-quality and easily discoverable news – it says it ensures relevant local stories are promoted and displayed prominently. The BBC says, for example, that it produced around 82,000 online stories across its 45 'index' areas in England, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.[175] The BBC's Local Value for All strategy aimed to modernise the BBC's local services in England by shifting expenditure from broadcast services to online and multimedia production. More recently, as part of the BBC's wider savings plan, it has proposed to reduce the number of specialist correspondent roles down to two dedicated, multi-platform correspondents in every BBC region. This is alongside its wider savings plan.

The BBC continues to provide a range of minority language output

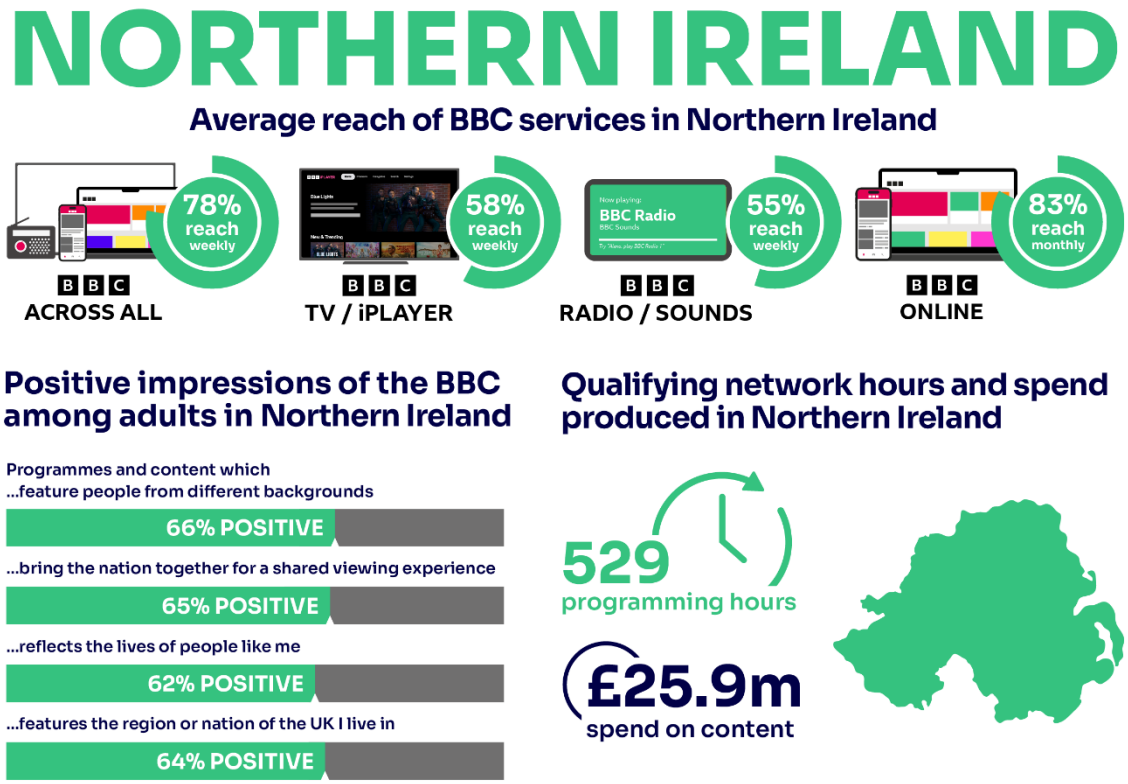
In 2024/25, it delivered 2,614 hours of Gaelic content on BBC ALBA, including 571 first-run hours, although it missed its commitment for first-run Gaelic learning content. The BBC says this was due to a focus on higher-impact genres, increased live sport, and disruption in children's content from supplier changes.[176] This year BBC ALBA and BBC Radio nan Gàidheal reached 43% and 50% respectively of the Gaelic community each week.[177] The BBC delivered 57 hours of Irish and Ulster-Scots content across BBC One and BBC Two Northern Ireland, and around 264 hours of Irish and Ulster-Scots output on Radio Ulster and Radio Foyle.[178]

The BBC in the nations and regions

In the following pages we set out how the BBC has delivered for audiences in each of the four nations, as well as key data points on the BBC's performance. This is distinct from our assessment of the BBC's performance under Public Purpose 4.

---

[172] Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026
[173] BBC RFI Response, 2025/26
[174] Ofcom analysis of BBC data; BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.115.
[175] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.108
[176] It delivered 660 hours, including 23 first-run hours, against its commitments of 700 hours, including 32 first-run hours. BBC DoMaPP 2025/26 p.185.
[177] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, BBC in Scotland.
[178] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.34 & 110.



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; Barb-as-viewed across TV channels and on-demand, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home (15+ minutes reach); Ofcom Audio Survey 2026; Ipsos iris, Online Audience Measurement Service, internet users aged 15+, March 2026, custom selection defined by Ofcom; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

BBC services continued to reach a large majority of adults in Northern Ireland in 2025/26, used by 78%, compared with 79% in 2024/25,[179] while weekly consumption of BBC Northern Ireland content across television, online and radio fell from 64% to 58%.[180]

Hours and spend on non-network TV programming in Northern Ireland increased

First-run originated non-network spend in Northern Ireland rose by 13% to £25.9m, its highest nominal annual level since 2019, driven by non-news and non-current affairs programming. Total non-network television spend was £26.3m, representing 14% of the BBC's non-network spend, compared with 11-12% in recent years.[181] In 2025/26 it delivered 751 hours of programming that represented, portrayed, and served audiences in Northern Ireland, exceeding its Annual Plan commitments by 11%. 550 hours of this were first-run.[182]

The BBC continued to meet its regional production targets in Northern Ireland. Qualifying hours were stable at 3.2%, while qualifying spend fell from 4.0% to 3.2%.[183] In 2025/26 it delivered 48 hours of 'high-impact' content.[184]

[179] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26 and Ofcom BBC Performance Tracker 2024/25. Questions in each survey are comparable but in a different format, comparison should be taken to be indicative.
[180] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.54.
[181] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[182] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.109.
[183] Ofcom analysis of BBC data.
[184] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.102.

Programming made in Northern Ireland performed strongly

Blue Lights was watched by 525,000 adults in Northern Ireland and indexed highly (i.e. audience figures were higher in Northern Ireland compared with the UK overall). 373,000 adults watched *The Celebrity Traitors* and 288,000 watched *The Traitors*. *Confessions of a Killer*, made in Northern Ireland, had an audience of 277,000 adults and indexed highly. Several other locally made programmes also indexed highly, including *BBC Newsline*, *House of the Year*, *The Crime I Can't Forget* and *Kinahan: The True Story of Ireland's Mafia*.[185]

In Northern Ireland, audiences returned to the BBC iPlayer for a variety of music, sport, and factual content. The top performing titles for activations on BBC iPlayer, were *Glastonbury*, *North West 200 Live*, *Kinehan: The True Story of Ireland's Mafia*, *Irish League Football Live*, *GAA Live*, *Blue Lights*, *The Celebrity Traitors* and *The Traitors* among others.[186]

Audience perceptions were positive, but competition for audiences remains challenging

People in Northern Ireland rated the BBC highly for 'the BBC features people from different backgrounds' (66%), and 'provides programmes and content that bring the nation together for a shared viewing experience' (65%). A higher proportion, said that 'the BBC features the nation or region in which they live' (64%), while 62% rated the BBC highly for 'content that reflects the lives of people like them'.[187]

Some BBC-reported perception measures improved this year: for example, 63% of adults in Northern Ireland thought the BBC informs, educates and entertains people in the UK or them personally, compared with 60% in 2024/25; 50% thought it was effective at reflecting people like them, up from 45%.[188]

However, when asked which service they would turn to first, 34% of adults in Northern Ireland selected Netflix and 18% selected any BBC service, a wider gap than for the UK overall.[189]

BBC Radio continued to reach a sizeable audience in Northern Ireland

In 2025/26, 46% of adults listened to BBC Radio in Northern Ireland, while 23% listened to BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle.[190] The BBC said that it continued to inform audiences with the station's news and current affairs programming, including *Good Morning Ulster*, *North West Today*, *Talkback* and *The Nolan Show* and *Evening Extra.* Following a schedule refresh in May 2025, *Evening Extra* is a dedicated news hour each weekday evening focusing on the latest news and breaking stories. It also delivered 264 hours of Irish and Ulster-Scots programming on BBC Radio Ulster/Foyle.[191]

---

[185] Highest performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole year for adults 16+ in Northern Ireland. The index measures how the programme audience size, relative to the population in Northern Ireland, compares with the equivalent audience-to-population ratio across the UK. Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD.

[186] Ofcom analysis of BBC proprietary data. Accounts returning to BBC iPlayer after no use for 13 weeks.

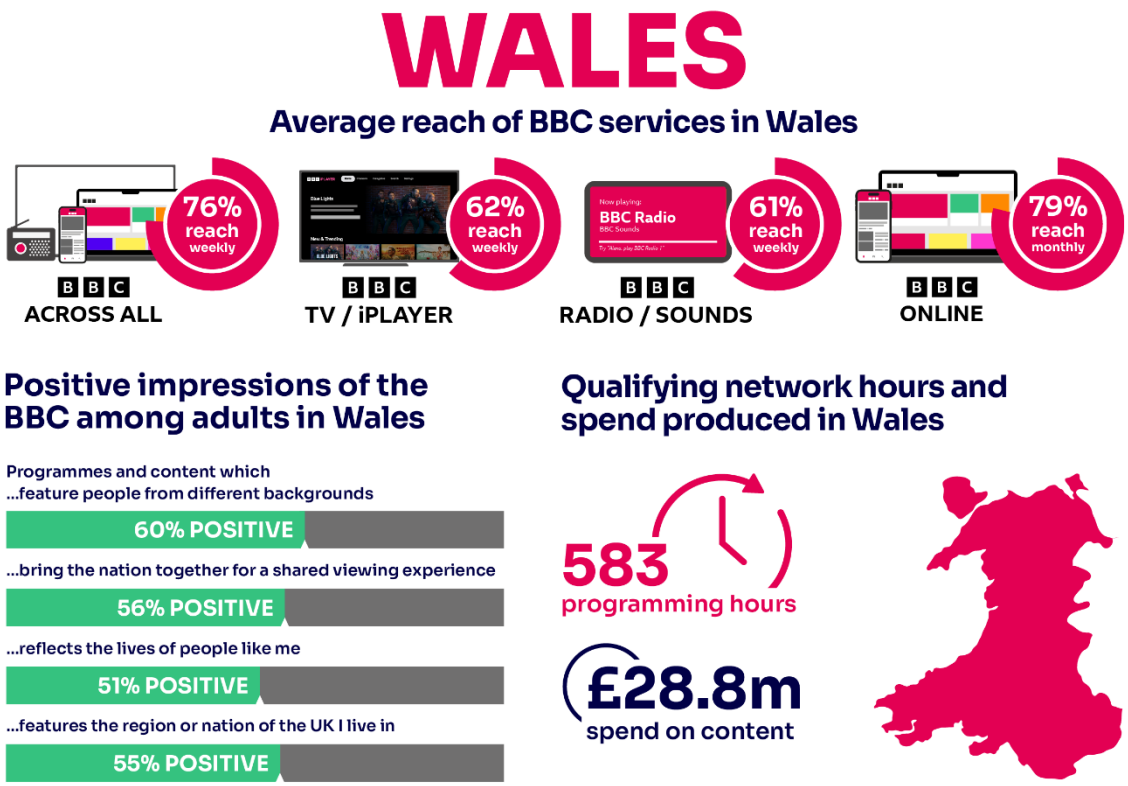
[187] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Note that a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale.

[188] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, The BBC in Northern Ireland.

[189] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker supplementary survey, 2025/26.

[190] RAJAR Q1 2026; 12-month weighting.

[191] BBC DoMaPP, p.112



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; Barb-as-viewed across TV channels and on-demand, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home (15+ minutes reach); Ofcom Audio Survey 2026; Ipsos iris, Online Audience Measurement Service, internet users aged 15+, March 2026, custom selection defined by Ofcom; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

The BBC continued to reach the majority of adults in Wales, used by an average 76% of adults in Wales each week in 2025/26, compared with 78% 2024/25,[192] while weekly consumption of BBC Wales content was 49%, vs. from 51% in 2024/25.[193]

Spend on non-network programming in Wales increased, although there was a reduction in hours

First-run originated non-network spend increased by 8% to £28.8m and total non-network spend increased by 6% to £29.3m, representing 16% of the BBC's non-network expenditure, up from 13% in the previous year and the highest proportion recorded for Wales. The increase was driven mainly by non-news and non-current affairs programming. In contrast, first-run originated non-network output fell by 21 hours to 583 hours, while total non-network output fell by 83 hours to 750 hours. Wales accounted for 8.6% of qualifying network hours, down from 10.7%, but its share of qualifying network spend rose from 8.8% to 9.1%.[194]

The BBC broadcast 736 hours across BBC Wales television channels of programming representing, portraying and serving Wales, 10% above its commitment of around 670 hours. Of these, 566 were first-run, compared with a commitment of around 520 hours. It also delivered 45 hours of high-

[192] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26; Ofcom BBC Performance Tracker 2024/25. Questions from each year are comparable but in a different format so comparison should be taken to be indicative.
[193] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.52.
[194] Ofcom analysis of data.

impact network content portraying Wales, with examples including *The Guest*, *Mr Burton*, *Death Valley* and *Mammoth*.[195]

Drama and factual programmes connected strongly with audiences in Wales

The Celebrity Traitors and *The Traitors* delivered the largest BBC audiences in Wales with the top performing episodes attracting 731k and 608k adults respectively. Drama was also prominent among the most-watched titles, including *Shetland*, *The Night Manager*, *Death Valley* and *Call the Midwife*. Titles that indexed strongly included *Our Lives*, *SOS: Extreme Rescues*, *Mrs Brown's Boys*, *BeddyByes*, *The Crash Detectives* and *Saving Lives in Cardiff*.[196]

Sport, drama and entertainment helped bring audiences in Wales back to BBC iPlayer. The leading titles for BBC iPlayer activations in Wales included *Wimbledon*, *Glastonbury*, *Six Nations Rugby*, *2026 Winter Olympics*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, *The Celebrity Traitors*, *The Guest* and *This City is Ours*.[197]

BBC radio reached a majority of adults in Wales

Overall BBC Radio reached 61% of adults in Wales each week and 79% of adults in Wales said they were satisfied with BBC audio services.[198]

BBC Radio Wales weekly reach fell from 350k (13%), in Q1 2025 to 303k (11%) in Q1 2026, and average listening fell from 8.3 to 7.1 hours per listener per week. Its digital audience fell from 178k to 159k, while digital listening hours fell from 1.29 million to 997k weekly hours. BBC Radio Cymru/Cymru 2, reached 117k people (4%) in Q1 2026, broadly stable compared with 114k in Q1 2025. Average listening hours fell from 9.1 to 8.0 hours per listener per week.[199]

The BBC continued to support Welsh-language learning, and made Welsh content discoverable online

The BBC said that it provided regular podcasts aimed at supporting Welsh learners at different levels in their language journey, and that Radio Cymru again partnered with the National Centre for Welsh Learning on Celebrating Learning Welsh Week. It also continued to develop the Welsh music-led Radio Cymru 2 offer aimed at younger and less fluent Welsh speakers. It said it has made content easily discoverable on the BBC news website through the prominent Wales and Cymru categories and the ability to set your postcode or hometown to receive local news and that BBC Radio Cymru content has been easily discoverable on BBC Sounds, through the 'Local to Me' rail. [200]

Audiences valued representation, although fewer felt reflected personally

People in Wales rated the BBC higher for 'features people from different backgrounds' (60%); than 'brings the nation together through shared viewing experiences' (56%) and it 'features their nation or region' (55%). A smaller proportion rated the BBC highly for 'content that reflects the lives of people like them' (51%).[201]

---

[195] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.102, 121, 188

[196] Highest-performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole year for adults 16+ in Wales. The index measures how the programme audience size, relative to the population in Wales, compares with the equivalent audience-to-population ratio across the UK. Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home. Live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD.

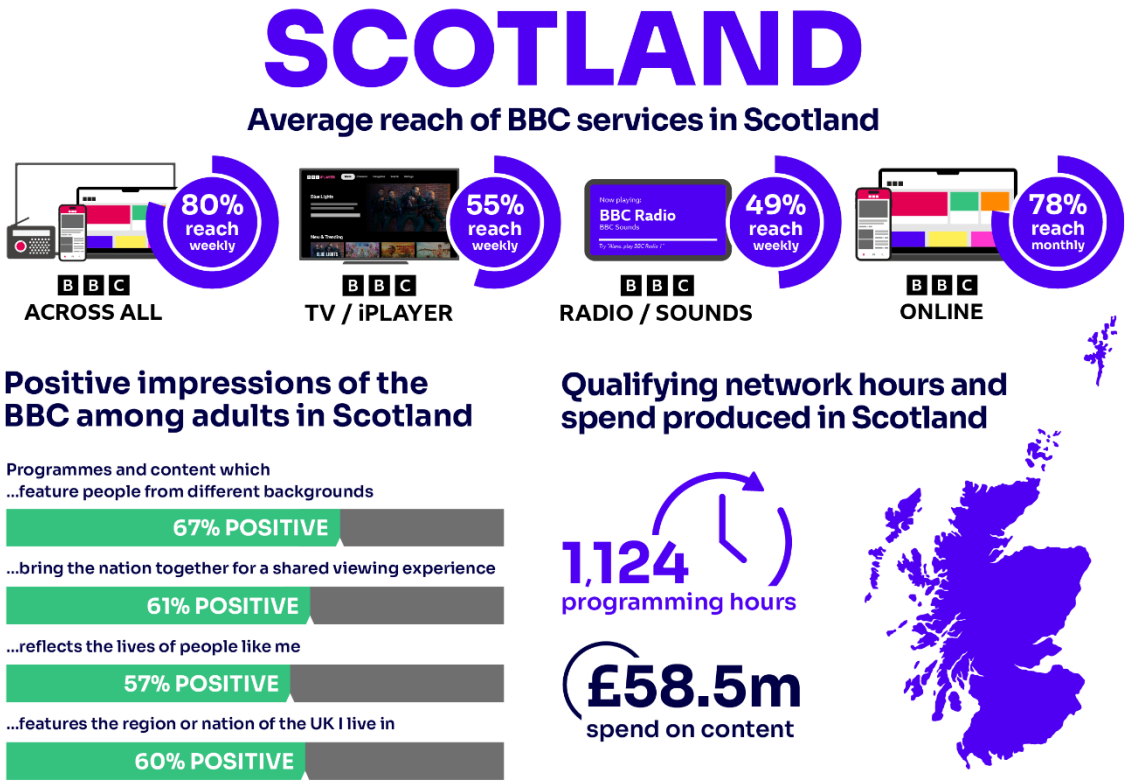
[197] Ofcom analysis of BBC supplied data. Accounts returning to BBC iPlayer after no use for 13 weeks

[198] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26

[199] RAJAR Q1 2025 and Q1 2026 on a 12-month weighting.

[200] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.34, 123, 189-190

[201] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Note that a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; Barb-as-viewed across TV channels and on-demand, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home (15+ minutes reach); Ofcom Audio Survey 2026; Ipsos iris, Online Audience Measurement Service, internet users aged 15+, March 2026, custom selection defined by Ofcom; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

The BBC continued to reach a large majority of adults in Scotland, and it was used by 80% each week, compared with 82% in 2024/25.[202] In an average week, 54% of adults consumed content delivered by BBC Scotland, down from 56% in 2024/25.[203]

Hours and spend on non-network programming in Scotland fell

The BBC delivered 2,577 hours (including 1,100 first-run hours) of programming across BBC One Scotland and BBC Scotland. This included 501 hours of news, 263 hours of current affairs and 1,813 hours of non-news/non-current affairs programming. It said it met all but one of its commitments for this programming, missing its first-run current affairs on BBC One Scotland commitment by four hours. It said this was due to rescheduling and election coverage ending earlier than expected.[204] It delivered 93 hours of 'high-impact' programming representing and portraying Scotland last year.[205]

First-run originated non-network spend in Scotland fell by 11% to £58.5m, the lowest nominal level since 2020, and hours also fell, driven by a reduction in news, although current affairs output increased. We note network spend used for co-commissioned content is excluded from this. Scotland's share of qualifying network hours rose from 11.2% to 19.8%, while its share of qualifying spend increased from 9.7% to 10.4%.[206]

---

[202] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26 and Ofcom BBC Performance Tracker 2024/25. Questions from each year are comparable but in a different format so comparison should be taken to be indicative.
[203] BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p53
[204] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.115-117. It delivered 21 hours of first run current affairs programming on BBC One Scotland against its commitment of 25 hours.
[205] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.102.
[206] Ofcom analysis of BBC data

The BBC has been seeking to evolve and is delivering more content online

In 2024, Ofcom approved the BBC's request to reduce the number of peak-time broadcast hours of news programming on BBC Scotland. In January 2025 following the ending of *The Nine,* it introduced *Reporting Scotland: News at Seven,* focused on communities across Scotland, and introduced the *Scotcast* podcast available in both audio and visual formats. The BBC reported a slight improvement in viewing, with the average audience around 5,000 higher than *The Nine's* in 2024.[207] Overall, BBC Scotland reached an audience of 1.3 million each week.[208]

In 2025/26, BBC Radio Scotland was listened to by 17% of adults in Scotland.[209] The BBC reports that Radio Scotland delivered more than 3,000 hours of news and current affairs. It highlighted success for a range of podcasts such as *Crime Next Door*, *Inside Murder Trial*, *Scottish Football Podcast* and *Breaking the News*. It also said that *Scotcast* received more than 440,000 plays on BBC Sounds during 2025/26, while approximately 137,000 weekly active accounts listened to BBC Radio Scotland content on BBC Sounds, 19% more than in 2024/25.[210]

It continued to deliver Gaelic content on BBC ALBA

The BBC delivered 2,614 hours of programming on BBC ALBA, including 571 first-run hours, meeting its overall commitments, but did not meet a separate Gaelic-learning commitment, delivering 660 hours including 23 first-run hours (commitment was 700 hours and 32 first-run hours). The BBC said it continued using bilingual titles to aid discovery, as well as placing this content on various BBC iPlayer rails. It also highlighted coverage of Celtic Connections, Òran Ùr, Belladrum and the Mòd.[211]

Content representing and portraying Scotland resonated with audiences

The BBC reported strong viewing in Scotland for *The Celebrity Traitors*, with 25% of Scottish audiences watching compared with 23% of UK audiences; *The Traitors*, at 20% compared with 19%; *Shetland*, at 16% compared with 10%; and the *Two Doors Down Christmas Special*, at 14% compared with 5%.[212] Sport and Entertainment content helped bring audiences in Scotland back to BBC iPlayer; the key titles for activations included *Winter Olympics 2026*, Wimbledon, *Glastonbury*, *Sportscene*, International Football Six Nations Rugby, *The Celebrity Traitors* and *The Traitors*.[213]

Audience perceptions were positive, but fewer felt personally reflected

Among people in Scotland, 67% rated the BBC highly for 'the BBC features people from different backgrounds', 'the BBC brings the nation together through shared viewing experiences' (61%), 'the BBC features their nation or region' (60%), and that 'the BBC's content reflects the lives of people like them' (57%); 77% of viewers in Scotland say that they are satisfied with BBC One.[214]

---

[207] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.116

[208] Barb as-viewed. TVs and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Live, recorded playback and BVoD. Individuals 4+, 2025, reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes

[209] RAJAR Q1 2026; 12 month-weighting

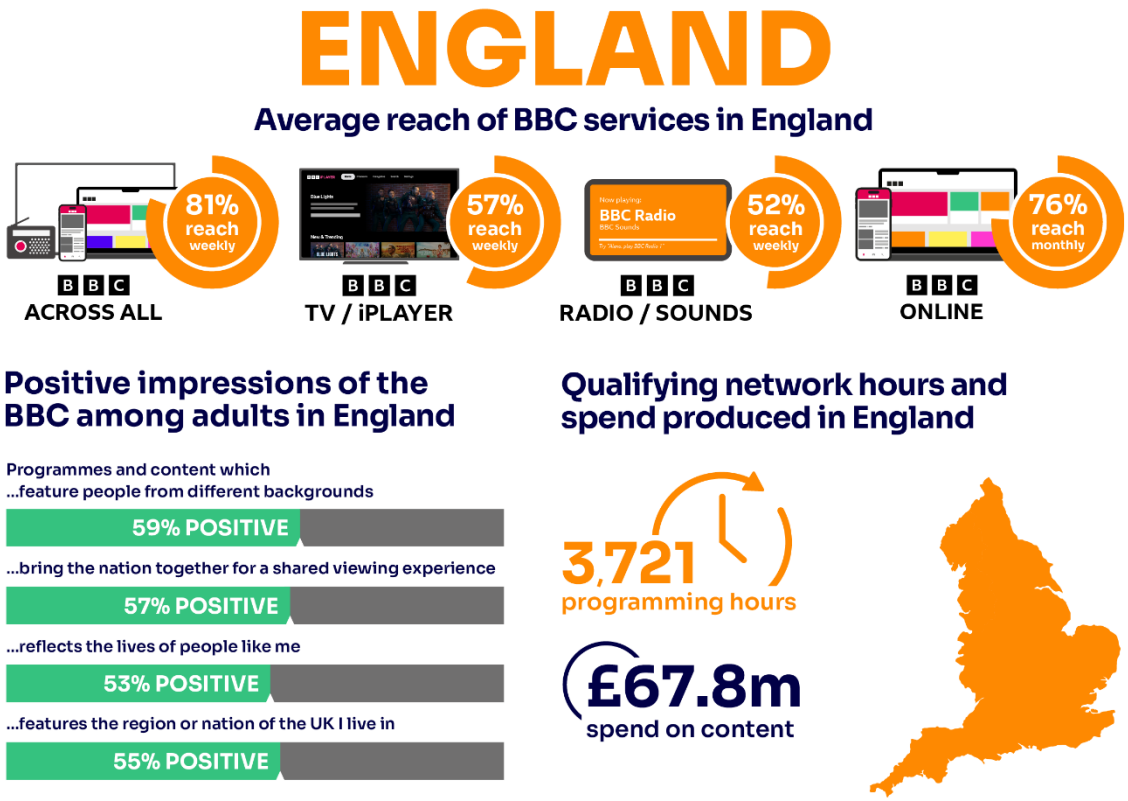
[210] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.117 and 120

[211] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.118

[212] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.117. BBC analysis, Barb as-viewed. Data extracted from 30 March 2025 to 29 March 2026

[213] Ofcom analysis of BBC proprietary data. Accounts returning to BBC iPlayer after no use for 13 weeks

[214] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26. Note that a "high" or "positive" rating is considered to be a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point scale



Sources: Ofcom analysis of BBC data; Barb-as-viewed across TV channels and on-demand, TV sets and other WiFi connected devices in the home (15+ minutes reach); Ofcom Audio Survey 2026; Ipsos iris, Online Audience Measurement Service, internet users aged 15+, March 2026, custom selection defined by Ofcom; Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26.

Overall, the BBC continues to reach a large majority of adults in England, used by 81%, down from 84% in 2024/25.[215] In an average week, 43% of adults in England consumed BBC local content.[216]

Audience reach varied across the regions of England

This year 57% of people in England watched BBC TV or BBC iPlayer each week. Reach was highest in the South East at 62% and lowest in London at 52%.[217] See also our interactive data report for further detail.

The BBC exceeded its regional programming commitments, while non-network spend in England fell

The BBC delivered 3,725 hours of regional programming on BBC One and BBC Two England, all first-run, against an Annual Plan commitment of around 3,680 hours. This included 3,518 hours of news, 203 hours of current affairs.[218] The BBC reported that it met all of its news and current affairs commitments for 2025/26.[219]

The BBC's spend on non-network TV programming in England fell by 26% to £67.8m, the lowest nominal annual total over the Charter, driven by a reduction in news spend. The BBC continued to

[215] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26 and Ofcom BBC Performance Tracker 2024/25. Questions from each year are comparable but in a different format so comparison should be taken to be indicative.
[216] BBC Annual Report and Accounts, p.55
[217] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Live, recorded playback and BVoD. Reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes, individuals 4+
[218] As well as 4.5 hours of non-news and non-current affairs
[219] BBC Annual Plan 2025/26, p.81; BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.105

meet its regional production targets in England, although this year its share of qualifying hours fell from 42% to 37.5% and share of qualifying spend fell from 35.9% to 33.1%.[220] It delivered 435 hours of 'high-impact' network programming representing and portraying the English regions, against its commitment of 400 hours. This included *This City is Ours*, set in Liverpool; *Riot Women*, set in Hebden Bridge; *The Dream Lands*, set in Margate; and *Man Like Mobeen*, set in Coventry.[221]

Local radio and online services remained central to the BBC's local offer

In 2025/26 10% of adults in England listened to BBC Local Radio, while 34% of those in England used the BBC website or app for local news.[222] 82% of BBC Local Radio listeners say that they are satisfied with it.[223] The BBC highlights a range of programming that delivered for local audiences, including its *Make a Difference* initiative, *BBC Introducing*, *BBC Upload*, local sport and new brand *Need to Know* and podcast *In Detail…*.[224]

The BBC reported publishing approximately 82,000 online stories across 45 'index' areas covering England, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It also described 39 local multimedia hubs, a signed-in "local slice" in the BBC News app, promotion of local stories on the BBC News and Sport front pages, and greater personalisation for sport. On BBC Sounds, it introduced club feeds and piloted AI-generated short football bulletins for some clubs.[225]

In December 2025, we approved a change to the BBC's Operating Licence, to amend the time period during which shared programming on BBC Local Radio can count towards its condition for original, locally-made programming. This gave the BBC flexibility to refocus its resources while protecting the most valuable listening hours for local audiences. More recently the BBC has announced further changes to BBC Local as part of its savings plans. As the BBC implements changes, we will continue to assess how well the BBC is serving audiences with local content.

Popular titles reached large audiences

Appointment to view television continued to bring people together: *The Celebrity Traitors* averaged 12.5 million adult viewers in England and *The Traitors* 10.7 million.[226] A range of output brought audiences back: the key titles for 'activations' on BBC iPlayer included *The Traitors, Match of the Day, Glastonbury*, *This City is Ours*, *Eastenders*, *Women's Euro 2025*, and *The FA Cup*.[227]

The BBC continues to expand its presence in the English regions

As part of its *Across the UK* strategy, the BBC has continued to strengthen its presence and production capability outside London, committing to creative growth in the West Midlands and North East – including relocation of programmes such as *MasterChef* and *Silent Witness* to Digbeth, and to spend at least £25 million on Network TV commissioning in the North East. [228]

---

[220] Ofcom analysis of BBC data
[221] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.102
[222] RAJAR Q1 2026; 12-month weighting, Ofcom Local Media Survey, 2026
[223] Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2025/26
[224] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.106-108
[225] BBC DoMAPP 2025/26, p.108
[226] Barb as-viewed. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Live viewing, recorded playback and BVoD. *The Celebrity Traitors* Series 1, episode 9 and *The Traitors* series 4, episode 1. Highest performing episode per title based on total cumulative viewing across the whole year for adults 16+ in England.
[227] Ofcom analysis of BBC proprietary data. Accounts returning to BBC iPlayer after no use for 13 weeks
[228] BBC DoMaPP 2025/26, p.90-91

Protecting fair and effective competition

BBC Competition in 2025/26

- Following our assessment of changes to BBC radio services, in July 2025 **we concluded that the BBC may not proceed with the proposed Radio 2 and Radio 5 Sports Extra extensions due to competition concerns**. We allowed **Radio 1 Dance, Radio 1 Anthems and Radio 3 Unwind to proceed** as the public value of these proposals justified the limited impact on competition.
- The BBC proposed **a number of other changes** which we agreed were not material.
- In May 2026, **we updated our competition guidance** to reflect the changes to the Agreement and to support a more targeted and flexible regime.
- **Our view of the BBC's position in the audio and audiovisual sectors remains broadly similar to last year**. Despite the continued shift online, we consider that if the BBC were to propose changes to its linear services, this could still have a significant impact on competition. Changes to BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds may be less likely to do so. However, the competitive impact of any change will depend on its particular circumstances, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Trends in the consumption of BBC local news are in line with previous years.** For local online news, commercial providers have experienced a decline in visits to news pages, but we have not seen evidence to indicate that the BBC is driving this.

In this chapter we set out recent changes to the BBC's regulatory framework and then examine the BBC's performance and place in the market over the reporting period 2025/26. We provide our latest assessment of the BBC's positions in the audio and audiovisual sectors, as well as in the provision of local and regional news.

The regulatory framework

As a large, publicly funded organisation operating across TV, audio and online, the BBC can have a significant impact on competition, both positive and negative. Ofcom's role is set out in the Charter and Agreement and requires us to protect fair and effective competition in the UK and to put in place rules for the BBC's public service and commercial activities.

The BBC must consider whether any proposed changes to its public service activities are material (i.e. whether the proposals may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition). Where they are, the BBC is required to conduct a public interest test (PIT), which Ofcom is required to review. Ofcom may then carry out a BBC Competition Assessment (BCA) or a shorter assessment, to assess whether the public value of the proposed change justifies any adverse impact on fair and effective competition. If the BBC proposes changes to its commercial activities, we may consider whether the relationship with the BBC public service gives rise to an unfair competitive advantage.

In December 2025, the Government published updates to the Agreement following its mid-term review of the BBC Charter and Framework Agreement. These updates included changes to Ofcom's

regulation of the BBC in relation to competition. Following consultation, in May 2026 we published a statement and updated our competition guidance to reflect these changes.

Our updated guidance:

- confirms that where the BBC makes a material change to its public service activities and its public interest test has appropriately identified and addressed competition issues, Ofcom may make a determination that a change may proceed without an Ofcom competition assessment;
- clarifies the factors Ofcom may take into account when making this determination, including the quality of the BBC's analysis and its engagement with stakeholders;
- clarifies when Ofcom will now consider conducting a shorter assessment;
- reflects that Ofcom may approve a BBC change subject to conditions or modifications after undertaking a shorter assessment; and
- removes references to "new UK public services" being automatically treated as material changes.

The changes took effect from 16 June 2026 and should support a more targeted and flexible BBC competition regime. How a new competition regime might operate under a new Charter and Agreement will be a matter for Government to consider as part of the Charter renewal process.

BBC Competition Developments

Developments over the reporting period

Changes to BBC radio services

In July 2025 we published our Final Determination on the BBC's plans to launch four new music radio stations and extend the broadcasting hours of Radio 5 Sports Extra.[229] We concluded that the BBC may not proceed with the proposed extensions of Radio 2 or Radio 5 Sports Extra because in both cases the public value was not sufficient to justify the significant impact on fair and effective competition.

Radio 1 Dance, Radio 1 Anthems and Radio 3 Unwind launched as stations in September 2025. We have looked at their performance to date under the Public Purpose 3 chapter.

Changes to S4C content on BBC iPlayer

In February 2026, the BBC sent us its materiality assessment of its proposal to enable advertising around S4C linear programming on BBC iPlayer. We did not consider the proposed change may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition. This decision is specific to the long-standing partnership arrangement between the BBC and S4C established under the Charter and Agreement.

BBC Radio 6 Music additional stream

In March 2026, the BBC sent us its materiality assessment of its proposal to launch a 6 Music additional stream on BBC Sounds. Following our review of the BBC's analysis, we did not consider the proposed change may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition. The stream, called Indie Forever, launched in July 2026 and focuses on indie rock and pop music from the

[229] Note that we included this determination in last year's BBC Annual Report, although this fell outside the reporting period for 2024/25 (see 2024/25 BBC Annual Report, page 62).

1980s–2010s as well as indie music from emerging artists. The BBC stated the stream will target younger and C2DE audiences, who are currently underserved by 6 Music.

Developments since April 2026

BBC Bitesize: A levels

In July 2026, the BBC sent to us its materiality assessment concerning its proposal to expand BBC Bitesize to provide support for A-level learners and teachers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The BBC proposed to use curated audio and video content from the BBC archive to provide supplementary A-level learning materials with a primary focus on humanities and social sciences. We did not consider the proposed change may have a significant adverse impact on fair and effective competition. The BBC plans to launch a series of curriculum-aligned Bitesize pages initially across 10-12 subjects over three years and beginning with English literature later this financial year.

Stakeholder engagement

We consider transparency and stakeholder engagement help support effective oversight of the BBC and are important aspects of the accountability framework. Stakeholders often can provide valuable information about the potential impact on audiences, market or sector, which may not otherwise be available to the BBC or Ofcom.

As part of the materiality assessment process, Ofcom requires the BBC to engage with stakeholders to allow them the opportunity to comment on concerns they might have regarding the potential market impact of a proposed change. In July 2026, we received a formal complaint concerning the BBC's compliance with this requirement, in relation to the Radio 6 Music additional stream. After reviewing the information available to us, we concluded there were insufficient grounds to open an investigation into the complaint. In reaching this view, we considered whether the BBC's engagement with stakeholders on this proposal was proportionate, and therefore sufficient, to the nature and scale of the proposed change and concluded it was in this case.

No concerns have arisen from our monitoring work on the BBC's commercial activities

In 2025/26, the BBC reported that its commercial arms delivered revenues of £2.2bn (2024/25: £2.2bn) and EBITDA of £267m (2024/25: £228m).[230] There were no concerns arising from our review of its compliance with our commercial and trading activities reporting requirements in 2025/26, and we received no complaints regarding the BBC's compliance with our commercial and trading activities requirements.

The BBC states it is on track to achieve its contestability targets by the end of this Charter

The BBC must meet specific targets in relation to the proportion of content commissioned for its public services through a contestable process. The BBC has met its target for contested radio hours, and states it is on track to reach 100% contestability for TV and online by 31 December 2027.

[230] BBC, Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26, p.75.

Figure 4: Table outlining % contested and targets for TV, radio and online content, by year

Year	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Target
TV	62%	64%	62%	63%	77%	77%	87%	100% By 31 December 2027
Radio	48%	53%	55%	62%	61%	61%	62%	60% by 31 December 2022 (met)
Online	62%	59%	72%	80%	82%	98%	99.6%	100% by 31 December 2027

Source: BBC Commissioning Report 2025/26. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number except for the percentage contested for online content in 2025/26 in order to show that the 100% target has not been met yet.

This year 87% of relevant TV programmes[231] were contested. The BBC already contests 100% of the newly commissioned TV hours and is evaluating the remaining titles that will need to be tendered to meet the remaining 13% of hours.

We speak to TV and radio and audio producers as well as industry representative bodies across the UK as part of our ongoing sector engagement and monitoring programme. No formal complaints about the BBC's commissioning processes were raised during this reporting period, and many producers said they value their engagement with the BBC. More generally, producers noted the pressures arising from a difficult commissioning environment, including budget constraints and reduced commissioning activity across the sector. They highlighted the importance of transparency and sustained commissioning opportunities to support production businesses across the Nations and Regions.

Market assessment

The BBC's position in audiovisual and audio sectors

As audiences increasingly move towards online services, the BBC's impact in some sectors could reduce, particularly given the scale of competition with global providers. However, there will likely be sectors where the BBC continues to have the potential to have a significant impact on fair and effective competition.

Our annual assessments of the competitive conditions within the audiovisual and audio sectors are intended to help stakeholders understand the starting point we are likely to adopt when assessing the potential impact of BBC changes on competition.[232] We will however continue to assess the BBC's proposals on a case-by-case basis, recognising that the potential impact will depend on the specific nature of the change.

[231] The Framework Agreement states that 'relevant television programmes' includes all television programmes included in the UK public services except programmes reserved for independent productions, news and news-related current affairs, and any programme where the BBC considers that complying with the obligations to make the content contestable would not secure value for money. The BBC considers value for money exemptions on a case-by-case basis based on criteria approved by the BBC Board.

[232] As part of the DCMS Mid-Term Review of the Charter and Agreement, we committed to providing an update on these competitive conditions in our Annual Reports.

Annex 3 sets out our most recent estimates on the share of viewing and listening to the BBC and commercial operators. This indicates a broadly similar picture to the previous year in terms of the BBC's position relative to commercial operators across each sector. In particular:

- **Audiovisual:** Viewing shares show that the BBC's linear services account for 15% of overall identified viewing, a higher share than other domestic broadcasters.[233] However, we note this share is declining, in particular among younger viewers, falling from 5% in 2024 to 3% in 2025 for this demographic group. BBC iPlayer remains the largest BVoD service, but its viewing is relatively small in terms of overall viewing share (5%).[234]
- **Audio:** The listening shares show that the BBC's radio portfolio still accounts for a sizeable proportion of listening (although this is declining over time) and the BBC's share of online radio (live and catch-up) has remained stable but accounts for a relatively small share of overall audio listening (5%).[235]

We note that the BBC's online position has been growing over time, but this remains modest. Our high-level views of these sectors therefore remain similar to last year. We also note that the BBC may be less likely to launch or expand linear services in the future (given the continued shift towards online and the BBC's plans to make substantial savings including by closing some linear services) but we have set out our views for all sectors below for completeness:

- **Changes to the BBC's linear TV services** may have the potential to have a bigger impact on domestic competitors, posing a higher risk of crowding out than changes to BBC iPlayer.
- **Changes to BBC iPlayer** are generally less likely to have a significant impact on the viewing share – and revenues – of domestic competitors and are therefore not expected to carry a significant risk of crowding out.[236] However, we recognise that the risk could be higher if the impact of a specific change was expected to fall on a concentrated pool of domestic commercial providers.
- **Changes to the BBC's radio services** which could result in a significant increase in listening have the potential to have a bigger impact on domestic commercial radio providers. As such, we consider there is a higher risk of crowding out from such changes, compared to changes that are limited to BBC Sounds.
- **Changes that only affect BBC Sounds** are generally less likely to have a significant impact on the listening share – and therefore the revenues – of domestic competitors and we do not expect a significant risk of crowding out. However, similar to our view on BBC iPlayer above, we consider that further scrutiny will be required for changes which could have a larger impact on a smaller pool of domestic competitors.

We recognise that audiences are increasingly shifting their viewing online, and linear and online services are becoming increasingly substitutable.[237] This is reducing the importance of linear services

[233] We use the term 'linear' throughout this section to refer to live viewing and recorded playback from TV channels.
[234] Barb as-viewed. Viewing share is out of all identified in-home viewing. This may be different to elsewhere in the report where shares have been calculated out of all in-home viewing, including some unidentified TV set usage.
[235] RAJAR and IPA TouchPoints. RAJAR data is used for time spent listening to live radio. IPA TouchPoints data is used for other forms of audio (catch up radio, podcasts, streamed music and 'other' including personal music, music video sites/channels and audiobooks).
[236] If the BBC changes its public services in a way that leads audiences to switch away from commercial services to the BBC's services, commercial providers' revenue may diminish. This may in turn limit commercial providers' ability to invest in their services, reducing the overall choice, quality and range of content available for UK audiences. We refer to this effect as 'crowding out'. Crowding out is not the only way in which the BBC can harm competition – for example, there is a risk that BBC activity may cause harmful impacts on services elsewhere in the UK media supply chain.
[237] E.g. audiovisual audiences increasingly choose between linear and online options within the same viewing environment, facilitating easy switching.

over time. We expect these trends to continue, and to shape competitive conditions over the longer term. However, as noted above, the BBC remains an important provider of linear services, while linear revenue continues to be an important source of income for commercial operators.

Audience behaviour and the audio / audiovisual sectors will continue to evolve, and this could affect the competitive conditions across the sector. We will therefore monitor and reflect any changes in our views in subsequent Annual Reports.

The BBC's position in the local news sector

In our Review of Local Media report, published in November 2024, we committed to monitoring the BBC's position in local news and the impact of any additional changes to the BBC's local / regional news services. We also committed to providing an update of our view on the BBC's position in local news sectors in our Annual Reports on the BBC.

Annex 3 sets out our most recent data on viewing and listening to local news for the BBC and commercial operators.

- **Regional news on TV**: The viewing shares show that the BBC remains relatively large in terms of nations / regional news viewing (accounting for 65% of total viewing). This continues to vary across the nations, with the BBC's viewing shares of regional news higher in Wales (74%), and lower in Scotland (56%) and Northern Ireland (53%).[238]
- **Local news on radio**: The use of BBC nations / local radio for local news and information has declined since 2023, although this has slowed (11% in 2026 compared to 12% in 2025 and 16% in 2023).[239] There was also a decline in the number of users of local commercial radio (17% in 2026, down from 21% in 2025 and 22% in 2023).[240] Total listening hours for BBC local / nations' stations are also down 5% year on year but the reach remains stable at 12%.[241] The reach of BBC nations / local radio stations continues to vary across the UK with weekly reach higher for Northern Ireland (25%), Scotland (19%) and Wales (15%) compared to the UK average (12%).[242]
- **Local online news**: The BBC's local online page views have generally increased since 2022, with slower growth between H1 2025 and H1 2026. Trends varied across the nations during this period, with page views increasing significantly in Wales but declining slightly in England.[243] Over the same period, local commercial news providers experienced a significant decline in page views across the UK and we discuss this further below.[244] Our recent survey indicates that the percentage of adults that use the BBC website or app for local news and information has declined since 2025 (33% in 2026, down from 37% in 2025). The percentage that use local groups or accounts on social media has increased in the past year (36% in 2026, up from 34% in 2025).[245]

[238] Barb as-viewed, adults aged 16+. TV sets and other devices connected to the home WiFi. Viewing includes live, recorded playback and on-demand.
[239] The difference between 2025 and 2026 usage of BBC nations / local radio for local news and information is not statistically significant.
[240] Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026.
[241] RAJAR Q1 2026 vs Q1 2025. 12-month weighting.
[242] RAJAR Q1 2026. 12-month weighting; reach of BBC Local Radio in BBC Radio Ulster TSA, BBC Radio Scotland TSA, BBC Radio Wales TSA and All Radio TSA.
[243] BBC RFI data on local online page views.
[244] Ipsos Iris data.
[245] Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. The difference in the percentage of respondents that use 'BBC website or app" and "local groups or accounts on social media' is not statistically significant.

Any assessment of the BBC's position in local news must acknowledge that it has obligations to serve audiences with this content and that the BBC is an essential part of a plural media landscape. Our competition focus is on the impact of the BBC adapting its services in response to changing audience needs, which will vary by sector. Our high-level views of these sectors remain similar to those stated in our 2024 Review of Local Media report, as the updated data shows broadly the same picture across the audiovisual, audio and online sectors.[246,247] In particular:

- **Regional news on TV:** We consider there is greater potential for changes to the BBC's regional news programmes to have a significant impact on competitors (i.e. Channel 3), compared to changes to local radio, as the BBC continues to have a large share of nations/regions news viewing. Overall, we consider that the impact would depend on the nature of the change, and we would need to consider the impacts on audiences as part of a competition assessment if a material change to BBC nations/regions TV news is proposed.
- **Local news on radio:** We consider that the impact of any change to BBC local news on radio is likely to be limited, given that commercial local radio attracts a larger audience than BBC local radio, including for local news. However, we consider that the impact will depend on the specific geographic area affected, and the specific changes made by the BBC.
- **Local online news:** As illustrated above, local commercial providers are facing headwinds but there are indications that this may be driven by factors other than the BBC. We note that Reach PLC reported lower referral volumes to its publishers' websites, mainly from Google, in its 2026 interim report.[248] Some reports suggest that the expansion of AI overviews[249] and algorithmic changes[250] may be reducing visibility of, and clicks to, publisher websites. We also note some evidence that indicates people may use BBC and commercial local news (across online, TV and radio) for slightly different purposes.[251] However, given the BBC's steady growth in local online news, the BBC should consider the potential impact of any future changes to its services.

[246] As discussed in last year's BBC Annual Report, we understand that the European Broadcast Union (EBU) has assessed the impact of impact of PSM activities on commercial online news publishers, but we considered it difficult to apply its findings to the UK as it is mainly a cross country study.
[247] We also understand that, based on the BBC's response to our formal information request on the Annual Report, the BBC has not made any significant changes to local news provision in the past year.
[248] Reach PLC interim results 2026, 22 July 2026.
[249] Enders Analysis, 14 July 2025, Publishers' (in)visibility problem: Organic traffic under pressure; Pew Research Center, 22 July 2025, Google users are less likely to click on links when an AI summary appears in the results; Reuters Digital News Report 2026, page 38-40.
[250] Press Gazette reported that Reach's CEO Piers North told investors Google Discover traffic to Reach sites was down 46% in the second half of the year (2025) as the platform prioritises more user-generated content and video. Reuters 2026 article "Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2026" shows a decline in referrals to publisher sites from Google Search and Google Discover in the second half of 2025.
[251] A 2025 Government study on local news across online, radio and TV found some qualitative evidence that, in areas where both BBC and commercial local services exist, commercial providers provide greater depth and more of a hyper-local focus than the BBC.

Content Standards

The BBC's approach to editorial standards is fundamental to its provision of high-quality news and content that audiences can trust as accurate, fair and impartial. Those standards underpin much of what we describe in our earlier chapter on Public Purpose 1, and their importance is becoming ever more vital in the current information environment, where the truth is harder to establish and discovery is increasingly controlled by third parties. From this backdrop, the editorial standards context for the BBC in 2025/26 has been challenging, particularly due to the fallout from some high-profile editorial issues that contributed to resignations from the BBC's Director-General and the Chief Executive of BBC News.

Content Standards performance in 2025/26

- There was a significant rise in the number of complaints made to the BBC in 25/26, likely to be linked to several high-profile editorial issues over the period. Despite this, the number of BBC related complaints made to Ofcom fell compared with the previous year. The BBC also published fewer decisions outlining its reasoning in this period. It told Ofcom that this was because there has been an increase in complaints about its online content. To date the BBC has not been required to publish decisions about these complaints, but we are planning to update our requirements to ensure there is transparency for both linear and online material complaints.
- Ofcom launched two investigations into BBC content during 25/26. One, relating to a Fairness and Privacy complaint, was not upheld.[252] The other concerned the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a War Zone*, which we found ultimately breached Rule 2.2 ("material misleadingness") of the Broadcasting Code. [253] Given the seriousness of the breach, Ofcom directed the BBC to broadcast a summary of its findings.

The regulatory framework for BBC content standards

Confidence in the BBC's editorial standards depends on effective oversight and accountability. The BBC Board is responsible for its own editorial policy and for the setting of and adherence to the BBC's Editorial Guidelines, while Ofcom provides independent regulation of content standards on the BBC's UK public services through the Broadcasting Code and our published procedures. The BBC's Editorial Guidelines incorporate the requirements of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and extend further into BBC editorial policy for BBC content.

Two important changes to the BBC regulatory framework have been introduced for this coming year:

- The new BBC Online Material Code (BBC OMC) extends Ofcom's regulation to BBC online content published as part of its UK Public Services. This will include content on BBC news and sports websites, BBC apps on smartphones or other devices, any official BBC social media account and BBC educational and learning resources.[254]

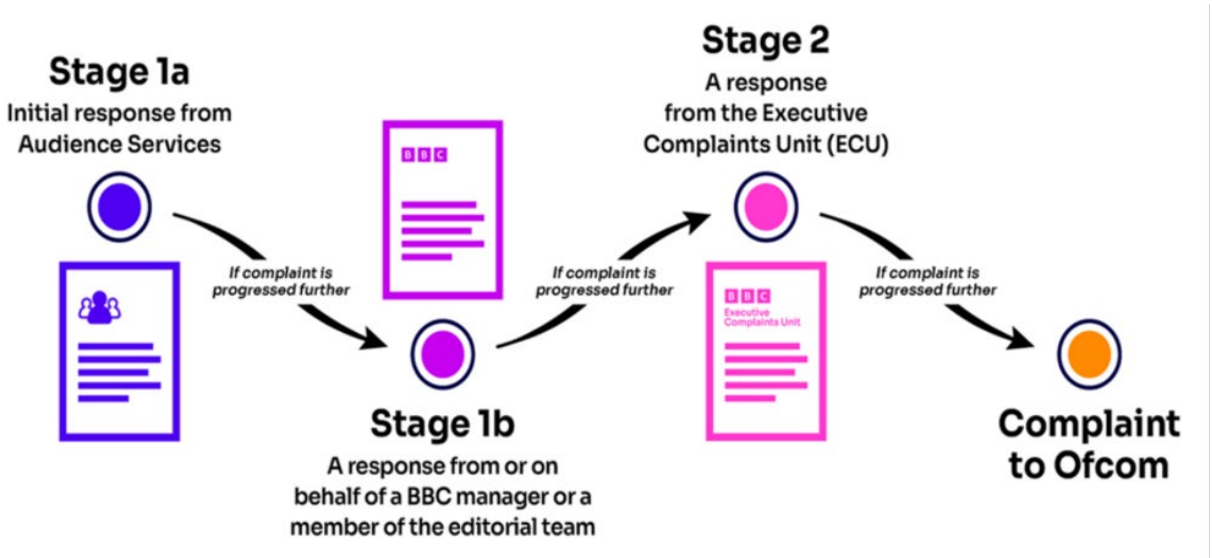
[252] Issue 531
[253] This investigation was launched in July 2025 but was reported on in Ofcom's previous Annual Report on the BBC for 24/25, out of cycle for that performance year, due to strong public interest in the case. Ofcom considered that the breach had the potential to erode the high levels of trust that audiences expect of BBC factual programming.
[254] The new BBC OMC was developed following recommendations made in the Government's 2024 BBC Mid-Term Review of the BBC's Charter and subsequent update to the BBC Framework Agreement.

- A new duty on Ofcom to review a representative sample of BBC complaints within our remit which have completed the final stage of the BBC's complaints process (Stage 2).[255] In July 2026 we published a Protocol agreed with the BBC setting out how these reviews would be conducted and reported. We have begun regularly reviewing a representative sample of Stage 2 complaints. While this work falls largely outside the reporting period covered by this report, our initial findings are set out in Annex 4. We will report more fully on this work in next year's Annual Report on the BBC.

Complaints handling in 2025/26

Unlike other regulated broadcast services, the BBC has the opportunity to resolve audience complaints before they can be escalated to Ofcom and complaints can normally only be raised with Ofcom once that process has been completed. Ofcom will then assess the complaint against the Broadcasting Code and take enforcement action where necessary.[256] The BBC First process allows audiences to hold the BBC directly to account and it also helps to ensure the BBC stays close to the issues concerning its audiences.

Figure 5: The 'BBC First' process for audiences who have complained about the BBC



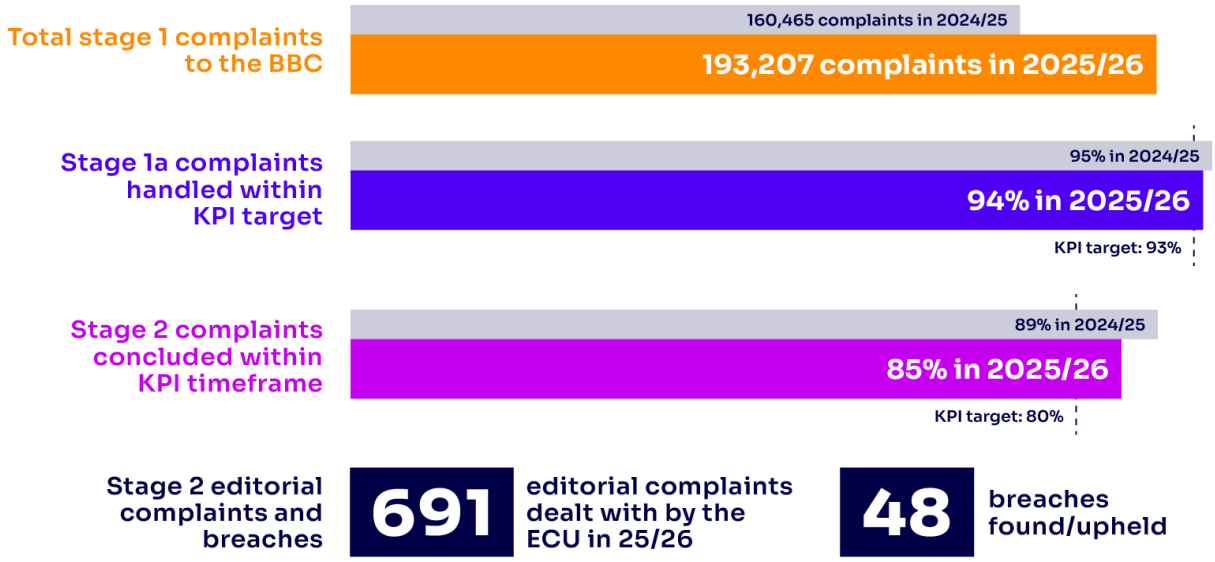
The BBC met its complaints response KPI targets in 2025/26

Despite a significant rise in the number of complaints made to the BBC, it met its own key performance indicators (KPIs) for complaints in this period.

[255] This requirement also arose from the Government's 2024 Mid-Term Review, and was subsequently incorporated into the BBC Framework Agreement.

[256] The BBC First system is implemented by Parliament and reflects the BBC' Charter and Agreement.

Figure 6: Overview of BBC complaints and KPI targets in 2025/26



The BBC reported two serious editorial breaches to Ofcom during 2025/26:

- The first was a BBC East programme in which, during an interview with an Awami League politician, the guest used the opportunity to pursue an agenda without any challenge. On this occasion, given the steps already taken by the BBC, Ofcom did not consider any further regulatory action was necessary.
- The second was regarding the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone* (see above).

BBC live broadcasting issues in 25/26

Two live broadcasting incidents raised concerns about the effectiveness of the BBC's compliance and editorial oversight in relation to its streaming services.

Chants led by the band Bob Vylan at the Glastonbury music festival in June 2025, which was streamed live on BBC iPlayer, resulted in the ECU finding the broadcast in breach of the BBC's Editorial Guidelines on harm and offence. The ECU did not uphold related complaints about breaches of impartiality rules.

In February 2026 the BAFTA film awards ceremony was broadcast on BBC One with a two-hour delay. It included an instance of a highly offensive racial slur being aired, which remained in the version made available on BBC iPlayer until the following morning. The ECU conducted an urgent investigation and upheld harm and offence complaints.

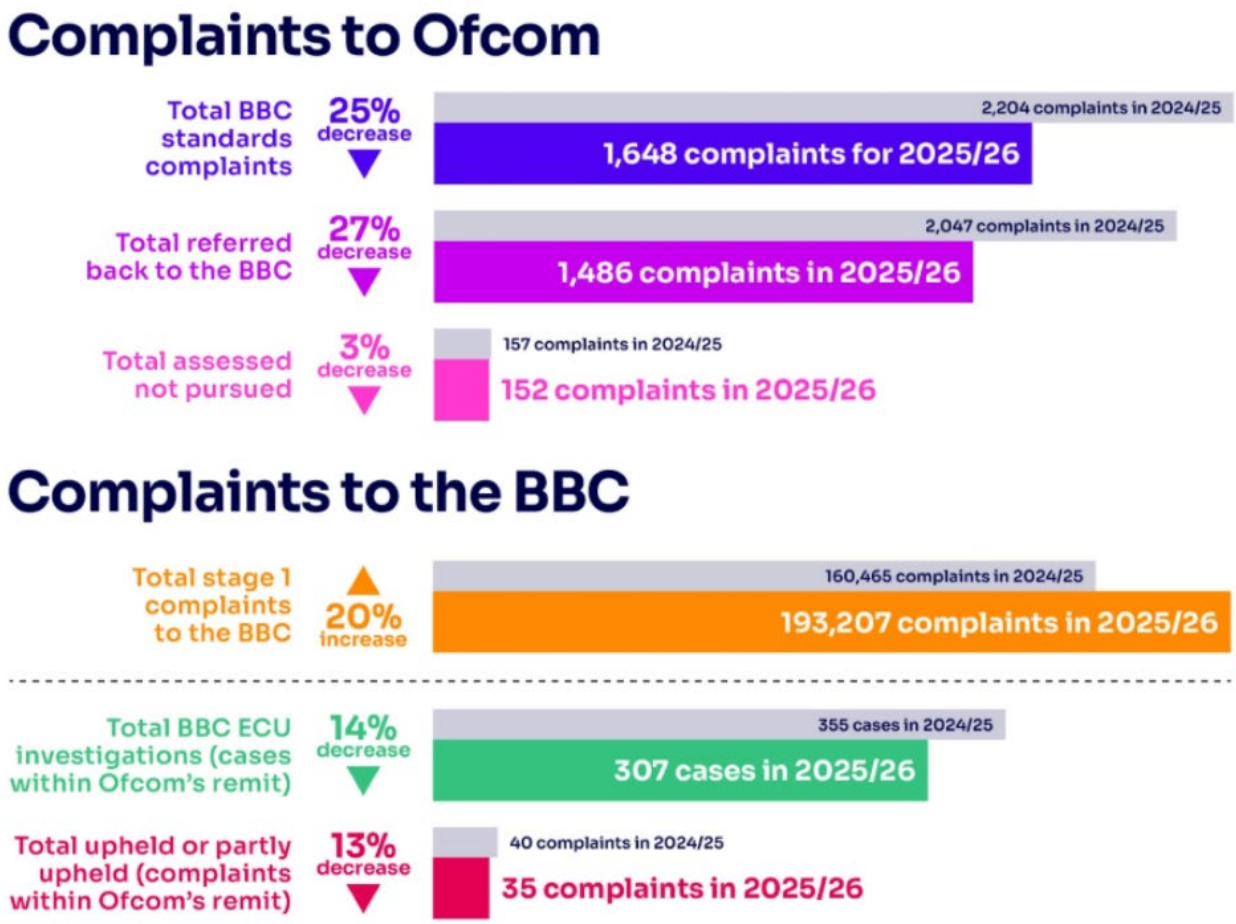
Ofcom held discussions with the BBC about these cases. The BBC committed to take further actions following its ECU decisions, including strengthening its assessments for live event broadcasts and increasing internal awareness of its policies for removing content on BBC iPlayer.

Complaints to Ofcom decreased as Stage 1 complaints to BBC increased

Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 Ofcom received 1,648 standards complaints about BBC content. Of these, only 162 had completed the BBC's complaints process and therefore we referred the remainder back to the BBC. This continues a downward annual trend in such complaints being

made to Ofcom and being referred back to the BBC.[257] However, total Stage 1 complaints to the BBC experienced a 20% increase from 2024/25, as outlined in the figure below.

Figure 7: Overview of Complaints dealt with under the BBC First system in 2025/26



We have engaged with the BBC on this issue and it has explained that in this reporting year, particular issues prompted a large number of complaints. Specific incidents such as the livestream of Bob Vylan at Glastonbury, as well as more general issues such as complaints regarding the level of coverage provided to Reform UK across the year, were particular drivers of the increase.

Case Study: BBC *Question Time Makerfield By-Election Special*

On 4 June 2026 BBC News and BBC One broadcast a special edition of *Question Time* ahead of the Makerfield by-election. It featured a panel consisting of five candidates who represented the Labour Party, Reform UK, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party. Following the broadcast, and after receiving the BBC's final response, the Restore Britain Party complained to Ofcom that their candidate had been excluded. Ofcom's Election Committee[258] was tasked with

[257] Ofcom's Annual Report on the BBC 2024-25, p.69, Figure 8

[258] During an election period, Ofcom has an Election Committee, which has the delegated authority from the Ofcom Board to make decisions on due impartiality complaints about election-related programmes which, if upheld, might require address before the election.

deciding whether the programme gave rise to any due impartiality concerns under the Broadcasting Code and concluded that it did not.

The Committee considered that the BBC had made a reasonable editorial judgment at the time of broadcast in not including the Restore Britain candidate despite the Restore Britain Party polling at 7% in third place. The Committee's decision underscored the need for broadcasters to keep relevant new evidence of current electoral support under review during election periods, to ensure that political parties receive due weight and appropriate coverage.

Ofcom did not refer any complaints about the BBC's election coverage in May 2025 for investigation

For the local and mayoral elections in England in 2025, the BBC implemented bespoke election guidelines covering due impartiality, fairness to candidates and other matters in its election coverage. The ECU received no complaints related to the May 2025 local and mayoral elections.[259]

However, over the course of the 2025 election period Ofcom considered 13 complaints (5 cases) related to BBC election content which had been made to Ofcom without completing BBC First. We assessed each of these complaints to determine whether Ofcom needed to step in on an exceptional basis ahead of BBC First, but concluded that we did not. All of these complaints were therefore referred back to the BBC. We did not consider any complaints relating to BBC online material.

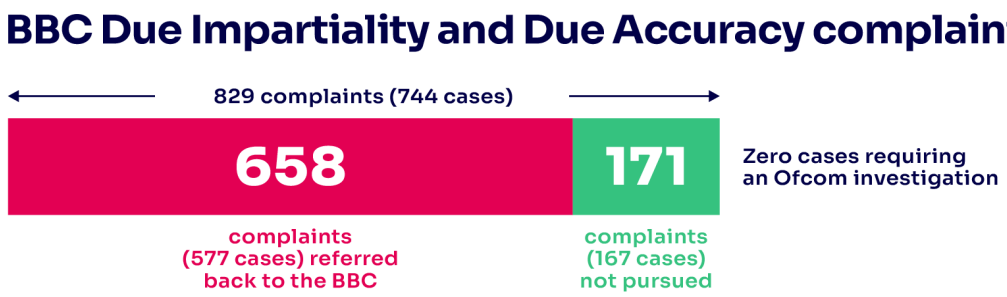
Notable BBC election content complaints considered by Ofcom included eight complaints about *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg,* broadcast on 13 April 2025. Complaints stated there had been disproportionate coverage of Nigel Farage and the Reform Party in the programme, despite the party having only four MPs. The complaints argued that Reform was receiving more airtime than other parties of similar or greater parliamentary size, excluding Labour and the Conservatives. Ofcom considered these complaints and referred each of them back to the BBC to complete BBC First.

The number of BBC due impartiality and due accuracy complaints Ofcom considered increased across the year

During the 25/26 period Ofcom received 829 due impartiality complaints (36% of all BBC complaints to Ofcom), relatively similar to last year where we received 827. These figures cover both BBC Standards and BBC Online Material complaints.

[259] BBC Response to Request for Information. 28 July 2026

Figure 8: Overview of BBC Due Impartiality and Due Accuracy complaints in 2025/26



There was a fall in published reasoning for BBC complaints in 25/26

The number of not upheld cases the BBC published its reasoning for fell from 240 in 24/25 to 167 in 25/26.[260] This is the lowest figure in four years. The BBC explained that the reason for the decrease was due to it having received an increase of complaints about BBC online material and a decrease of complaints about linear content compared to previous years. The BBC is not currently required to publish its findings in relation to online material complaints, whereas it is required to do so for linear complaints. Ofcom is now planning to update its Determinations in relation to BBC complaints handling to ensure there is transparency for both linear and online material complaints.

Fairness and privacy complaints continue to be a priority for Ofcom

Ofcom has a duty to ensure broadcasters avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organisations that appear in, or are directly affected by, programmes. It also has a duty to ensure broadcasters do not unwarrantedly infringe individuals' privacy, either in programmes as broadcast or in the gathering of material included in programmes. Fairness and privacy complaints can be made by individuals or organisations directly affected by programmes and can be made directly to Ofcom (they are not required to complete the BBC First process). During 25/26, Ofcom assessed 57 complaints about BBC programmes in relation to unjust or unfair treatment, and/or unwarranted infringement of privacy - ten more than in 2024/25. None of the 25/26 complaints assessed were upheld. Ofcom completed one fairness and privacy investigation into a BBC programme, which was not upheld.

Ofcom did not provide an opinion on any online material cases

Prior to the introduction of the BBC OMC, enhancing our regulatory powers for BBC online material, Ofcom had a role in providing an opinion on whether the BBC had observed its own Editorial Guidelines in this content. In 25/26 Ofcom assessed and closed 113 complaints (109 cases) in this way, compared to 58 complaints (58 Cases) last year. A further 552 complaints (282 cases) were referred to the BBC under the BBC First system or were found to be outside our remit. Of the 109 cases Ofcom assessed in 25/26, 107 were closed as 'not accepted' following assessment by Ofcom.

This means that we did not consider the online material in question raised potential issues under the relevant BBC Editorial Guidelines and did not warrant further consideration by Ofcom. The remaining two cases were found to be outside of Ofcom's remit. We will report on the implementation of the BBC OMC, and all other regulatory developments regarding the BBC's content standards, in Ofcom's next Annual Report on the BBC.

[260] In accordance with our current Complaints Determinations, the BBC is required to publish its reasoning for (i) all decisions related to a complaint about due accuracy or due impartiality that reach the final stage of its complaints process and (ii) all decisions related to a case where the BBC has received more than 100 complaints about the item at Stage 1a.