



THE BBC ACROSS THE UK

THE BBC 2022-2027

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INTRODUCTION

The BBC is an essential part of the UK's culture, democracy and creative economy. We celebrate the UK's creative strength, telling stories from every part of the country. We have a responsibility to nurture the UK's democracy, and we seek to do so with trusted, accurate and impartial programming. We are a critical foundation of the creative industries, one of this country's world-leading success stories. Over 90% of UK adults and 80% of young adults use the BBC on average per week. Almost 100% of adults use the BBC every month, making the BBC one of the most-used UK public services.

Today, our output celebrates the UK's creative strength and unique culture, finding diverse new voices and talent from across the UK and from all communities. We are a core part of the UK's democracy, with programming that aims to reflect a broad range of views and provides a public space for debate and disagreement. As the UK's largest media provider we play a critical role in bringing people together across the UK, to laugh, commemorate, and celebrate, but also to understand and appreciate our differences.

That has been borne out in the last year, where we have played a vital role in the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring the UK has remained informed, educated and entertained. Despite huge operational challenges, we have maintained the range of our services and delivered the biggest educational programme in our history. At the height of the crisis 84% of adults came to the BBC in a single day – 23 March 2020 and 31 October 2020. We have provided much-needed entertainment and escapism, with tens of millions of viewers and listeners coming to our drama, our comedy and our entertainment.

The profound changes in UK society over the last decade have been accelerated by the pandemic. Parts of the economy have been devastated, halting the partial recovery since 2008. Social inequality has increased. The pace of change in our lives has increased sharply.

The rapid shifts in the media market have also been turbo-charged. Big Tech has got bigger. Amazon, Google, Facebook, Netflix and Apple influence our lives in 2021 even more than they did in 2019. US programmes are a bigger part of our culture. Social media drives more of people's news consumption. Misinformation, disinformation and propaganda are weakening the UK's long-established journalistic strengths. Traditional media business models have come under yet more strain.

The BBC is needed more than ever

These rapid and seismic changes in UK society and UK media are making the BBC's mission, purposes and output more needed, more distinctive and more valued than ever.

Impartial news – at the heart of the BBC's first public purpose – has never been more vital. Many of the social, economic and cultural issues the UK faces over the coming years are complex and nuanced. Many are controversial, with passionately and strongly held beliefs on different sides of the same issue. At the same time social media is increasingly awash with partisan views and misinformation. As we have seen during the pandemic and recently in the US, this has real-world consequences. Bad information causes harm; good information can save lives.

The nature of impartiality is shifting, too. Many issues now cut across traditional political lines, and touch deeper identities. Political disagreements now speak to who people are, not only what they think. Impartiality means that localities and communities who do not feel they have heard their voices and

concerns reflected should have confidence that they will. Never has it been more important to keep open a civil public space for exchange, disagreement and resolution.

Covid has had a significant impact on the **education** of an entire generation. Along with many others, the BBC has stepped into the breach, supporting millions of children and parents with learning and education (our second public purpose).

Online media giants like Netflix, Amazon and Disney are bringing audiences brilliant global content that has been deservedly successful across the world. But that content, while popular in the UK and sometimes made in the UK, is rarely about the UK nor primarily made for the UK audience. It cannot substitute for programmes that show who we are and that shape how we engage as a society. The public service broadcasters collectively make around 32,000 hours a year of new UK content, compared to around 200 hours of UK-produced content available on SVoD services Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. Telling the UK's stories through **distinctive high-quality British content** – our third purpose – will become increasingly important and more reflective of the whole of the UK over this period.

As part of that purpose, rebuilding the UK's world-beating arts, music, culture and creative economy after the devastation of the pandemic will be an urgent task. Every £1 of the BBC's direct economic activity generates a total of £2.63 in the economy and 50% of the BBC's economic impact is outside London, compared to a sector average of 20%.

No media provider does more than the BBC today to serve the **UK's Nations, regions and communities**, our fourth public purpose. Covid has strengthened the need for local news and information, with big uplifts in audiences for our regional and Nations news coverage. But it has also accelerated the decline in local media business models. Covid has also had different impacts on different ethnic groups, with trusted information for those communities made even more valuable.

As the UK develops a new relationship with the world, the **global impact** the BBC brings to nearly half a billion weekly users – our fifth purpose – will be essential in carrying impartial journalism and UK values to the world. In a media landscape where value is increasingly captured by vertically integrated global media giants based in the US and China, ownership and control of British creativity and intellectual property will be of great global economic and cultural value.

Finally, as the pandemic increases economic inequality, bringing great value free at the point of use to audiences will become more valuable still in a world of multiplying subscriptions – where today a bundle of subscriptions providing services comparable with the BBC's would cost over £400 per year. And in a market where US media giants dominate the most popular sites in the UK, only the BBC can keep an online space open to all for British news, stories and creativity.

The BBC is well-placed to respond to these challenges for its audiences and for UK society. But these challenges are profound. To ensure we continue to deliver for the whole of the UK and that every household gets value from the BBC, we are developing a plan for change – the biggest programme of reform of our programmes, services and operations since the 1990s, a unique opportunity to restore the creative economy after the pandemic:

1. Getting closer to audiences across the UK, its Nations, regions and communities
2. Protecting and nurturing democracy and civil debate, through impartial news and information
3. Stimulating the UK creative sector, through distinctive, high-impact content
4. Learning, education and skills for all
5. Delivering impact across the world, tackling propaganda and misinformation and reflecting the UK's culture and values.

This document outlines our plans for the first of these: getting closer to audiences across the whole UK.

GETTING CLOSER TO AUDIENCES ACROSS THE UK

The BBC does more than any other broadcaster to reflect the different Nations that make up the UK, and their different communities, experiences and backgrounds. We seek out and tell the stories that matter most to those communities and bring them to UK-wide audiences through our channels and services. We provide an unparalleled range of content in a wide variety of genres on television, radio and online in each of the four Nations: from local radio to the BBC Scotland channel, from regional news to Radio Foyle, from *Angels of the North* to *Gavin & Stacey*.

This role is becoming increasingly valuable as huge new global players bring more non-UK content to audiences. The BBC will do more to serve and represent a UK that is changing fast, and where too many big editorial and creative choices are still too often rooted in just one part of the UK.

Authentic, passionate storytelling from across all our Nations, and from all their diverse communities, is what will truly make the BBC different from anyone else. It will help to demonstrate to audiences that we are for them. That we understand where they are coming from, and how they see the world. We will show audiences across the UK that we are relevant to their lives because the stories we tell will be rooted in, and inspired by, their communities.

Our 'Across the UK' plan will transform the BBC by making a decisive shift in its footprint. Over the next six years we will recreate the BBC as a genuinely UK-wide organisation with a much stronger presence across the length and breadth of the country. This shift will move the creative and journalistic centre of the BBC away from London to a much more distributed model that moves not just people, but power and decision-making to the UK's Nations and regions.

This shift represents an even bigger transformation than ten years ago when we moved hundreds of staff and a number of services to Salford. That relocation affected Children's, Sport, and 5 Live. Our 'Across the UK' plan will affect every part of the BBC, across all four Nations. Taken together, these proposals mean the BBC will cumulatively spend at least an extra £700m outside London by 2027/28, generating an additional economic benefit to those parts of the UK of around £850m.

1. Across the UK in video

We are proposing major changes to the way we commission and make TV programmes across the UK:

- For the first time in our history, the clear majority of our UK-wide TV will be made across the UK and not in London. We will set a new target of at least 60% of network TV commissions by spend to be made across the UK, which we would reach sustainably by the end of the Charter. This will benefit the creative sector across the UK and support the independent production community
- The money we invest across the UK will mean a noticeable shift in portrayal of different parts of the UK in key genres such as drama, comedy and factual
 - We will reallocate our content funds to deliver two new network long-running drama series over the next three years – one from the North of England and one from one of the Nations

- We will double the number of Nations co-commissions from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales which appear on UK-wide channels
- Over the next three years more than a hundred of our new and returning drama and comedy titles will reflect the lives and communities of audiences outside London, of which at least 20 will portray Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- Our programming across all genres will portray stories from all corners of the UK, including current commissions over the next few years set in Birmingham, Belfast, Bolton, Bristol, Cardiff, Cumbria, Cornwall, Coventry, Edinburgh, Faslane, Gateshead, Halifax, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Mansfield, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Norwich, Port Talbot and County Down
- We will grow our representation of audiences across the UK, tracking how much of our content delivers portrayal for our audiences
- Our increased investment in BBC Three will strengthen its role in reflecting the authentic voices of younger people across the whole UK. Our strategy to relaunch BBC Three as a part-time linear TV channel would help attract younger audiences that have a strong linear habit but are lighter users of BBC TV. These are more likely to be C2DE, in the north of England, and often with less access to digital on-demand services. We will aim for two-thirds of BBC Three spend to be outside London.
- To enable this, we will rebalance our network TV commissioning power across the UK to create a new 'Pan-UK commissioning model' that situates more decision-making outside London. We will grow the next generation of commissioning talent across all four Nations, while also bringing network and Nations teams closer together to commission content for both UK and Nations audiences to maximise portrayal, authenticity and impact. This will include new roles based in the North East, North West, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- We will expand the Writersroom hub in Salford, with our Head of New Writing being based there, to lead the nurturing of new talent in the North and across the whole UK. We will also create four new commissioning roles, to lead on new writer development and support the Commissioning Editors in each of the Nations
- To boost portrayal in our daily topical output, *Morning Live* will be presented live all year round from Salford
- We will build Birmingham's strength in TV formats, with more primetime brands alongside *Great British Menu*. We aim to build a centre of excellence in production in Birmingham by consolidating all BBC activity there into one creative quarter, such as Digbeth.

2. Across the UK in audio

We will make a similar revolution in the commissioning and production of our network radio and online audio to distribute these operations across the UK:

- 50% of network radio and music spend (including spend on performing groups) will be outside London by 2027/28, from under 40% today
- Each network radio controller will have at least one commissioner based in one of our hubs around the UK by 2027

- Key daytime strands on each of Radio 1, 1Xtra and Radio 2 will be moved from London and made across the UK
- Radio 3 will be rooted in the North of England – including its leadership in Salford – as part of a music cluster while continuing to source live music from across the country
- We will move the majority of 6 Music over time to Salford where it already has talent and production
- We will have a music events calendar that is more rooted across the UK, including staging pop station events around the UK and more Proms performances outside London
- The Concert Orchestra will be rebased outside the M25
- We will consolidate the Asian Network into one base in Birmingham
- As well as *Today* and *PM* being presented from across the UK, Radio 4 will move a number of factual strands out of London
- The BBC Audio science production unit will move to Cardiff.

3. BBC News across the UK

Moving significant parts of BBC News to centres across the UK will ensure that we cover the stories that matter most to audiences across the UK and more effectively represent different voices and perspectives. We have seen the difference this has made already – with 5 Live in Salford and Northern Ireland’s current affairs contribution to *Panorama*. Our flagship news programmes will be presented from across the UK, ensuring that the BBC is connecting and representing communities, and changing the tone of our news services.

We are transforming our News operation to move to a story-led, audience-centric model, delivering to all platforms to increase the impact of our journalism. As part of these changes, News will move to a more distributed model by basing more teams around the UK:

- At the heart of the new model are the multi-platform Story Teams. Half of the UK-focused teams will be based, all or in part, around the UK:
 - The Climate and Science news team will move to Cardiff
 - The Technology reporting team will move to Glasgow
 - Learning and Identity will move to Leeds
 - We will co-locate a new story team in Leeds, charged with finding new, original and audience-focused stories
 - Part of our data team will move to Birmingham
 - Radio Business and long-form audio (producing radio current affairs and podcasts) will move to Salford, alongside our other business teams.
- We want our biggest news strands to be presented from across the country to reflect different perspectives and draw on a broader range of presenting and reporting talent:

- The *Today* programme will be co-presented from outside London for at least 100 episodes a year
- Radio 4's *PM* will be presented regularly from different locations around the UK including BBC local radio stations
- *Newsbeat* on Radio 1 and the Asian Network news teams will move permanently to be presented from Birmingham
- *Newsnight* will be presented from different bases, including Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and Manchester throughout the year, to represent the range of issues across the UK better
- Our business output will be more reflective of the UK, with all our key morning output coming from an enlarged Business unit in Salford.

4. Supporting local communities

The BBC's commitment to get closer to communities right across the UK will be spearheaded by a big investment in BBC local reporting. Local news and information has never been needed more. And yet sources of high-quality local content are reducing as commercial pressures continue to bite. Younger audiences are also less well-served by existing local provision.

Our goal is to transform our portfolio of BBC local services to touch more lives, in more communities, more often – modernising our local radio network and regional television news services, and, for the first time, bringing local news and content to the heart of our online portfolio. For many people, the future BBC local service will be delivered via the BBC's increasingly personalised online products, with a greater focus on video storytelling from a new network of community reporters.

Online services

For the first time, we will harness the full potential of the BBC's online portfolio to deliver personalised local content that is prominent and easy to access. Across BBC iPlayer, BBC News, BBC Sport and BBC Sounds, we will be more local than ever before – better reflecting the passions and identities of a culturally diverse UK. In future, for example, our BBC News service will move from a one-size-fits-all approach in the UK to provide a personalised service that can foreground the local, regional and Nations interests of the user.

As part of this plan:

- We will transform the impact and quality of our regional news coverage online, harnessing the collective resources of our TV, radio and online teams. Our goal is to provide a consistent, round-the-clock service to users, seven days a week
- We will launch a new network of digital community reporters across the UK to get closer to some of our most under-served communities and enhance our regional online news provision. Driven by a commitment to original, hard-hitting journalism from across the UK, we will work with a new generation of more than 100 reporters based in towns and areas that have never benefitted from any regional TV presence to tell the stories of a changing UK

- Our new focus on digital community reporting will also be at the heart of our drive to increase the socio-economic diversity of our workforce, offering apprenticeship and entry-level opportunities to more than 80 young people every year
- We will maintain our current Local News Partnership funding of £8m a year supporting 150 reporters for commercial publishers and expand it to enable full access to our community video reporters. This will help support the local news industry and a plurality of local provision.

Closer to audiences when and where it matters most

BBC local radio will focus on what it does best: the biggest stories, the biggest local voices, passionate sports coverage and bringing people together to make a difference in our communities. But we want BBC local radio to do more, in more parts of the country:

- We propose to launch up to six new peak-time BBC local radio services in communities facing some of the greatest social and economic challenges – including Bradford, Sunderland and Wolverhampton
- We will introduce BBC local bulletins for more than fifty areas across the UK on BBC Sounds, providing relevant local information that is easy to find
- We will harness new technology to deliver a much more flexible BBC local radio network that can respond and flex quickly to changing priorities, introducing additional radio output in key areas when it can make a real difference
- We will launch *BBC New Voices*: a pan-BBC commitment to nurturing new and diverse presenter voices from communities across the UK, building on the success of the existing BBC local radio scheme that is already transforming the sound of our stations.

BBC One regional TV services

The BBC's regional and Nations TV news service at 6.30pm is the UK's most-watched news programme. It matters now more than ever before. To support this critical output:

- We will aim to launch BBC One HD services across all English regions by the end of 2022 to enhance the viewing experience for millions of viewers
- We will transform the range and diversity of our storytelling across regional TV and current affairs by harnessing our new network of digital community reporters
- We will introduce a tailored BBC One across Yorkshire, North West and North East England, with regional continuity and marketing campaigns that help audiences discover our most relevant programming and services.

Make a Difference

We will build on the enormous success of *Make a Difference* during the pandemic period, expanding this locally rooted initiative throughout the BBC to support positive community action across the UK. Our goal is to help and support more than three million interactions every year.

Working with partners in northern England and the Midlands, we will establish a network of Learning Hubs to provide face-to-face training and support for some of our most challenged communities, in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Liverpool and Hull.

We will assess our proposed local plans for materiality in line with our requirements under the Charter and Agreement, engaging with interested stakeholders and Ofcom.

5. *Online and technology*

As part of our strategy to extract more value from online, we will personalise our major products to deliver the UK's most culturally relevant experiences, so they reflect different passions and interests across the country. We will make Salford the main base for our digital and technology teams, a global centre of excellence, supported by digital teams in Glasgow, Cardiff and London. We will also create more than 100 digital engineering jobs outside London to support our News product development and online editorial teams.

6. *Production hubs and studios*

We will expand the BBC Studios bases in Bristol, Cardiff and Glasgow, and create a new Children's commercial production base in Salford. We will expand our physical studios operations in Glasgow, and explore strategic partnerships in other UK cities, including Belfast. We will partner with local communities, councils and education providers to develop technical skills locally to operate our studios.

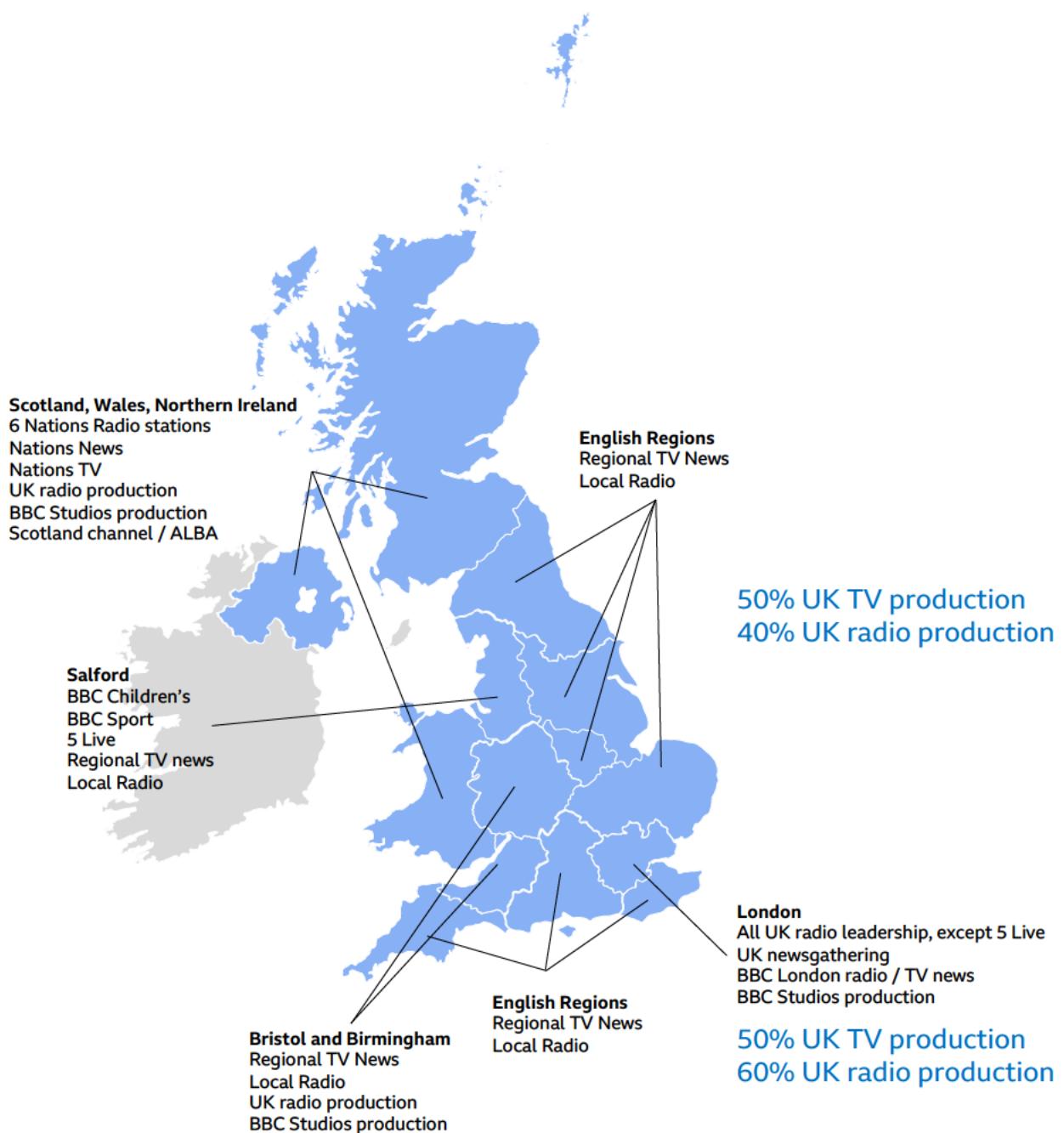
7. *Training and apprentices*

We will double our commitment to apprentices, supporting 1,000 apprentices in any year across the UK, piloting an Apprentice Training Agency in the West Midlands as part of the Digbeth regeneration plan. In parallel, we will explore with Northern Ireland Screen and the Northern Ireland Executive proposals to provide a tailored apprenticeship and training programme for a diverse range of younger entrants to the industry.

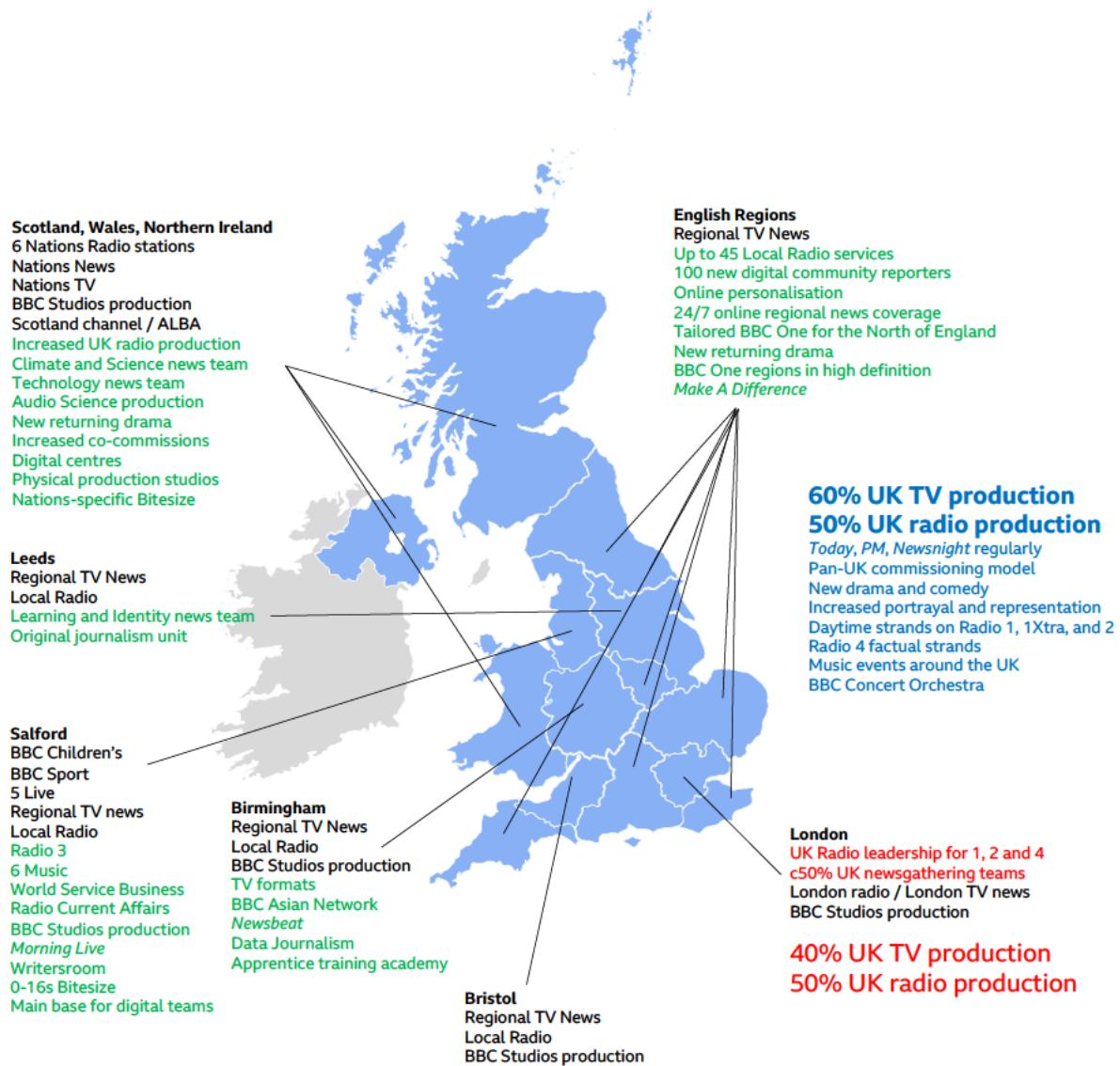
8. *Property*

As a result of these moves, the BBC's property estate in London will be reduced. We will upgrade our broadcast centre in Belfast.

The BBC across the UK today (indicative and high-level)



The BBC across the UK by 2027/28 (indicative and high-level)



Supporting creative partnerships in UK video

To maximise the impact of our economic stimulus package for the UK's creative economy, over the next three years we will refresh a number of creative partnerships and create new ones:

- We will renew our long-standing partnership with Northern Ireland Screen, strengthening the local production base and prioritising the creative pipeline for returning series across genres
- We will renew our partnership with Creative Scotland to strengthen studio-based production in Scotland, and support the growth and development of Scottish drama, factual and comedy
- We will launch a new partnership with Creative Wales, supporting the growth of the sector across drama and factual
- In England, we will continue to create new partnerships to support talent, skills and development opportunities at a local level – especially in the North and Midlands. BBC Three

will build on the success of its ‘Northern Voices’ scheme, by launching a similar documentary opportunity for Midlands producers to champion local companies who want to tell young, unique regional stories and to develop a talent pipeline from the region

- We will continue to work with the National Film and Television School on our expanded three-year partnership: to support new talent through their bases in Glasgow, Leeds and Cardiff, as well as London; to strengthen diversity across the UK through 20 funded bursaries; and to provide 60 free training opportunities for our small indie fund companies, two-thirds of which are based outside London
- We are actively working with other partners across the UK to deliver a more strategic approach to skills development and training in all four Nations to create the next generation of talent in factual, entertainment and sport programming to deliver our editorial ambitions.

Supporting the UK audio industry

Through BBC Sounds we will invest in the development of new audio talent in the UK. The newly introduced Sounds Lab will help to develop new talent from a more diverse background, ensuring voices from across the UK are part of our thriving audio sector. We will work with community radio to provide a home for content from different communities. We will invest in great new UK podcasts and we will help audiences to find more great UK content from outside the BBC (especially those podcasts that are not yet well-known) by bringing it on to our platform. We will move more of our productions to bases across the UK and increase the amount of commissioning spend outside London with the aim of building growing audio sectors in multiple locations across the UK.

With BBC Studios, we will look to create new opportunities for UK independent producers to exploit the growing global commercial opportunity for UK audio. Updated terms of trade will enable those producing for BBC commissions to benefit more easily from that growth.

Through the pandemic the BBC’s unique role in hosting live music has shown itself to be as important as ever. With audiences unable to attend performances and artists facing serious financial pressures, the BBC delivered hundreds of live performances, first from homes and then from live venues (including a special production of the Proms and a Radio 2/BBC One musical special). We recreated events including Glastonbury, Edinburgh and Reading and Leeds festivals through the archive to provide vital support to the industry at a critical time.

In the return from the pandemic and beyond, the BBC will play a fundamental role supporting live music and new UK artists with over 1,000 live events and sessions across pop and over 500 classical concerts and studio sessions. We will ensure our live events are spread across the UK with many of the BBC’s own flagship events taking place in different locations each year. A large majority of our classical concerts will be recorded outside London, including some Proms events.

In difficult times for the music industry, the BBC’s breadth of activity and relationships with labels puts it in a unique position to help UK artists. Across our networks, we will do more to support UK music, and play more tracks and more live music than any other radio stations. BBC Introducing has helped to provide a gateway for artists like Ed Sheeran and, more recently, Celeste to go from unknowns to number 1. Through it, we will continue to support hundreds of new artists who may not be able to build a fan base live, through track plays and live performance opportunities on air. And through partnerships with the PRS Foundation and the Creative & Cultural Skills Council, we will – as soon as possible – give new UK artists the opportunity to play at festivals and events around the world, building future UK music exports.

In classical, on top of our role in commissioning live music from a diverse range of performers and composers, we will develop partnerships with new classical ensembles and arts venues (especially in areas previously underserved), and continue to develop classical talent for the UK through commissioning, programming and schemes, including our *New Generation Artist* programme.

Supporting the development of indigenous languages

Over many decades, the BBC has played a critical role supporting the UK's indigenous languages and helping those who wish to learn them. Over the next six years, we will grow the impact of our provision across Welsh, Gaelic, Irish and Ulster-Scots, working with our partners across the Nations:

- We will harness greater online personalisation to ensure indigenous language content is more prominent and easier to access across the BBC's online portfolio
- We will develop our BBC ALBA, BBC Radio nan Gàidheal, BBC Radio Cymru and BBC Cymru Fyw services to increase our digital impact and improve our support for language learning, working in partnership with English-language services where appropriate
- We will expand our BBC Bitesize provision to improve our focus on the UK's indigenous languages
- We will modernise the BBC's long-standing partnership with S4C to reflect the digital landscape better and support the distribution of S4C services across multiple platforms
- We will modernise the BBC/MG ALBA partnership which delivers BBC ALBA to reflect the digital landscape better and support new talent development.

Delivery of the Across the UK plan

This part of our six-year delivery plan is a radical and ambitious change to our programmes and services so the BBC can help to support recovery in all parts of the country. It would require sustained investment in the BBC. It is the biggest creative and journalistic rebalancing of the BBC's footprint in our history.

In implementing the plan laid out in this document, we commit to supporting the creative sector in recovering from the devastating effects of the pandemic – helping the film-makers, technicians, actors, musicians, small businesses, production companies and all the suppliers who are essential to our industry. This support will have a multiplier effect on local economies across the country, bringing value, investment, education, jobs, skills, apprenticeships, local reporting and information, technology development and creative inspiration to all parts of the UK.