



# 2013-14 work plan

# About the BBC Trust

## Who are we?

The BBC Trust is the governing body of the BBC and consists of 12 Trustees. As Trustees, we are the guardians of the licence fee revenue and of the public interest in the BBC. We are supported by the Trust Unit, a team of professional BBC staff who report directly to us.

Within the BBC, the Trust is separate from the Executive Board which is led by the Director-General. The Executive Board is responsible for the operational delivery of the BBC's services and the direction of the BBC's editorial and creative output in line with the framework set by the Trust.

## What is our job?

Our job is to get the best out of the BBC for licence fee payers. We set the strategic objectives for the BBC and issue a service licence to every BBC service stating what we expect it to deliver and how much it can spend. We approve the BBC's editorial guidelines and protect the BBC's independence. We monitor performance to ensure that the BBC provides value for money while staying true to its public purposes. This work plan describes our work in relation to these key areas of responsibility.

## How is the Trust accountable to licence fee payers?

The BBC Trust is directly accountable to licence fee payers; this is essential to maintaining the BBC's independence. We consult licence fee payers on important decisions, we conduct audience research and we use our network of Audience Councils in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to help keep us informed on the views of licence fee payers across the United Kingdom.

We aim to operate as transparently as possible because it is our duty to ensure that the BBC observes high standards of openness and transparency. The Trust publishes the evidence and research on which our decisions are based, the findings of all editorial appeal decisions, the outcomes of value for money and service licence reviews and the minutes of our monthly Trust meetings. The BBC's Annual Report and Accounts is laid before the UK Parliament.

## Why publish a work plan?

The main purpose of this work plan is to provide an overview of our work in the coming year for licence fee payers and the wider media industry. It also includes advice from our Audience Councils and their views on key issues for the BBC in 2013-14. This document includes the work that we can plan for in advance. However, we also consider proposals from the Executive and handle appeals as they arise, so it does not include every piece of work the Trust will undertake in 2013-14. For the latest information, see our website [bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

The BBC Executive will publish its priorities and summary work plan in May 2013 after the budget has been considered by the Trust. That plan will include a summary of the BBC's budget, outline forward plans for each BBC service ('statements of programme policy'), and explain the work the BBC Executive will be doing to deliver its strategic priorities in 2013-14.

# Pursuing the BBC's strategic objectives

## Our role

*We set the strategy for the BBC and ensure that the BBC strives to meet all of its strategic objectives.*

The BBC's mission, as defined by its Royal Charter, is to inform, educate and entertain and to deliver its six public purposes.

In 2010 the Trust set four strategic priorities to ensure the BBC remains focused on delivery of its mission and purposes between now and the end of the current Charter period in 2017. These objectives are to:

- Increase the distinctiveness and quality of BBC output
- Improve the value for money the BBC provides to licence fee payers
- Set new standards of openness and transparency
- Do more to serve all audiences

In 2013-14 the Trust's priority is to keep the BBC focused on delivering these objectives. Our plans in relation to each of the four strategic objectives are set out below.

## Increase the distinctiveness and quality of BBC output

Being publicly funded, the BBC is expected by audiences to do more than any other broadcaster to make its output innovative and different from what is available elsewhere. We believe that within its public purposes, the BBC is committed to pursuing and fostering creative excellence and to enriching the cultural life of the United Kingdom.

We would particularly like to see more distinctive programmes on BBC television in peak time. Through our audience research – and via the advice from our Audience Councils – we are aware of the importance that licence fee payers place on high quality and distinctive programmes. Audiences want the BBC to take more risks, to be willing to fail and also to develop new programme formats across its services.

### Audience research

We will carry out our major annual survey of the audience expectations around the BBC's delivery of its public purposes.

### Service reviews

We assess the performance of each BBC service against its service licence and against our strategic priorities for the BBC by undertaking a service review every five years.

Our service review of BBC Online and Red Button will be completed in spring 2013 and our review of BBC output for children will be completed in summer 2013. We will be seeking to ensure that future strategies for these services enable them to offer value to audiences as their needs and behaviour changes.

As we announced earlier in the year, we will launch reviews of BBC Television and of BBC News in 2013 to report in early 2014. These reviews will cover two of the most important areas of BBC output.

The review of BBC television will cover BBC One, Two, Three and Four, including network and output for the nations and regions.

The review of BBC network news services will cover BBC News Channel, BBC Parliament, the national news bulletins on BBC TV and radio, daily news programmes such as the Today Programme and Newsnight and the BBC News website.

Terms of reference for the reviews will be published and public consultations will be held as part of both reviews to ensure the Trust has a full range of evidence on which to form its conclusions.

We will continue to follow up our past service licence reviews to ensure progress is made against agreed action points and report on progress in July 2013.

## Improve the value for money the BBC provides to licence fee payers

The Trust recognises the importance of demonstrating value for money in everything the BBC does. The Trust has set a target for the BBC Executive to generate annual efficiency savings of 11 per cent by 2016-17 and our main focus this year will be to oversee the delivery of this target. An important aspect of our work will be monitoring performance alongside savings to ensure that the programme does not jeopardise the BBC delivering distinctive, high quality output for licence fee payers.

This reflects the advice from our Audience Councils. They have asked the Trust to ensure that the programme of efficiency savings does not compromise the quality of programmes and services. They also want the BBC to offer, and demonstrate, enhanced value for money, noting the public has strong views on wanting the BBC to be as efficient as possible.

### Our value for money work

We will continue our work to:

- ensure that the Executive has put in place the necessary financial control and monitoring procedures to manage the next stages of the savings programme;
- use the rolling programme of service reviews to assess value for money at a service level;
- ensure the Executive delivers on our commitment to reduce further the number of senior managers at the BBC and implement our reforms to senior pay throughout the organisation; and
- ensure that BBC Worldwide operates in line with the commercial strategy set by the Trust.

In addition, this year we will:

- review whether the way the BBC distributes its content provides good value for money;
- examine the delivery of the BBC's DMI project to date and the business case for any future components of digital production; and
- continue to work in partnership with the National Audit Office in reviews of value for money throughout the organisation.

### National Audit Office value for money reviews

This year, the NAO plans to undertake two value for money reviews. It plans to report to the Trust on the severance packages awarded to departing senior BBC managers and the wider benefits included in their remuneration packages, and on the BBC's management of its property estate. The reviews are due to be published in summer 2013 and winter 2013-14 respectively.

In early summer 2013 the Trust will publish the NAO's report on the BBC's move of a number of departments to Media City in Salford.

## Set new standards of openness and transparency

One of the Trust's duties is to ensure that the BBC observes the highest standards of openness and transparency.

Our Audience Councils told us that the BBC could do a better job in explaining how it spent licence fee payers' money and what choices it had to make, such as whether to prioritise spending on programme content or distribution platforms.

Our work this year includes:

- meeting with media industry representatives in autumn 2013 as part of our commitment to involve the industry directly in the process of scrutinising and reporting on BBC performance;
- continuing to improve the Trust's website so that information is easier to find and the evidence on which we base our decisions is more clearly signposted;
- ensuring that the Executive publishes a budget and summary work plan in May 2013. The work plan will explain how money is spent on each service and the amount spent in particular areas of public interest;
- continuing to encourage the Executive to deliver on our objectives for greater openness and transparency;

We also will continue to publish our work, including for example publishing in association with the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, the papers that were presented to an Oxford seminar we organised in January on the future economics of broadcasting.

## Do more to serve all audiences

The Trust strongly believes in the need for the BBC to reflect the changing United Kingdom. The universal nature of the licence fee brings with it an obligation to try to deliver all the BBC's services and the same quality of service, to all parts of the audience. It means improving the extent to which BBC services resonate with all the UK's communities, and also reflecting the devolved nature of the UK and the distinctive character of its nations and regions.

### On-screen portrayal and representation

Audience Councils tell us that the BBC should do more to reflect all parts of the UK, and to provide an accurate and authentic portrayal of all audiences. They also considered that some sections of society, such as older women, are under-represented in BBC output.

This year we will work with the new Director-General and his team to improve the representation of women in the BBC's output.

### Performance amongst different audience groups

We are very aware of the changes taking place within the UK population and the challenges this can raise for the BBC. Together with the Executive, we regularly consider the BBC's performance amongst different audience groups and consider ways in which the BBC's services need to evolve to serve diverse audiences better. We report on key outcomes of this work each year in the Annual Report.

### Distribution of services

The BBC has a responsibility to make its content available on a range of platforms that are convenient and cost effective. In an increasingly interconnected world, this is challenging when everyone including the BBC has to find ways of doing more with less. Our review of BBC Online has highlighted the increasingly important role that this service might play in providing content in this connected world.

We are mindful that most of our spending should be on content. However we continue to challenge the Executive to balance providing quality content with providing access to all. This is echoed by advice from our Audience Councils. Audience Councils asked the Trust to ensure that the needs of all audiences around the UK are fully taken into account when considering access to BBC digital radio services.

With changes to the BBC High Definition (HD) channel offer – specifically the introduction of BBC Two HD – the BBC needs to consider the future of nations-specific content currently shown on BBC Two in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our Audience Councils want to see a clear plan from the Executive on how this content will continue to be delivered. We will be working with the Executive on this throughout the year.

### Equality and diversity

We will monitor delivery of the BBC's Diversity Strategy and report on the Executive's arrangements for promoting equality and diversity in the BBC's work force. In particular, the Trust will monitor the Executive's approach to retaining and recruiting disabled staff to ensure that the BBC meets its targets in this area and offers the appropriate level of support for disabled staff. We also have equality and diversity responsibilities in our own work. We will report on our work in this area alongside the Annual Report.

# Maintaining editorial standards

## Our role

*We aim to ensure the BBC has the highest editorial standards for its content and that its programmes live up to those standards. These are set out in the BBC's Editorial Guidelines which apply to everyone producing content for the BBC.*

## Impartiality

### Reviews

The Trust carries out regular reviews of the impartiality of BBC output.

In summer 2013 we will publish a review of the BBC's breadth of opinion in its News and Factual programmes. The review will include a report by an independent author, Stuart Prebble, content analysis, interviews with interested parties, and audience research.

We are also planning an impartiality review on the BBC's coverage of rural areas in the United Kingdom. Our report will be published in summer 2014.

### Seminars

Each year the Trust leads one or more seminars focused on impartiality to enable the Trustees to discuss current and emerging issues in parallel with the impartiality reviews of specific areas of BBC output. We invite BBC staff and external participants and publish a summary of the seminar on our website.

We are planning to hold a seminar on the BBC's Arts content in June 2013, followed by a seminar later in the year on the BBC's economic and political reporting on Africa. Further information will be published on our website when available.

## Complaints

In addition to our regular work hearing appeals from the Executive's decisions, we will conduct another mystery shopping exercise this summer to look at how the BBC's Complaints Framework works in practice at stage one. The results will be published winter 2013.

# Stewardship of the licence fee

## Our role

*The Trust is the guardian of licence fee revenue and the public interest in the BBC. We will continue to oversee implementation of the 2010 financial settlement and ensure that the governance and funding arrangements for the BBC's new obligations are in the best interests of licence fee payers.*

In October 2010 the BBC and the UK Government agreed a licence fee settlement. The licence fee will be frozen at £145.50 until 2017. The BBC agreed that the licence fee would fund the BBC World Service, BBC Monitoring and be the majority funder of the Welsh language TV service S4C. The BBC would also provide funding support for local television services and for broadband roll-out and use.

With the exception of the World Service, licence fee funding for these new commitments starts on 1 April 2013.

The BBC World Service will be funded by the licence fee from 1 April 2014. This year we will be working on the development of new governance arrangements for Trust oversight of the World Service. As part of this work, we will consult publicly in summer 2013 on a draft operating licence for the World Service.

More information about the licence fee settlement including about the governance and funding arrangements is available on our website [bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)



# Involving licence fee payers and stakeholders

## Our role

*Our role is to get the best out of the BBC for licence fee payers. To inform our decision making we undertake audience research and seek the views of licence fee payers and stakeholders through public consultations, stakeholder engagements and the work of our Audience Councils.*

## Public consultations

We run consultations to make better informed decisions and ensure your views are heard. These views help shape the decisions we take about the BBC's services and the priorities we set BBC management. For the most up-to-date information on our consultations please visit our website [bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

## Stakeholder engagement

As part of our programme of work we seek the views of relevant industry and professional stakeholders to ensure that the Trust understands the interests of the wider media industry and the potential impact of our decisions.

## Audience Councils

The Audience Councils are established by the Charter as the Trust's advisory bodies. They provide a direct link between the Trust and audiences across the UK.

There is an Audience Council for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, each chaired by their respective National Trustee and consisting of audience members drawn from the diverse communities that make up each nation. At the beginning of each year the Audience Councils jointly advise the BBC Trust on what they consider to be the key issues for the coming year.

## Get in touch

If you want to contact us about any aspect of our work then please get in touch. We welcome your feedback on whether this plan is useful and what else should be included.

BBC Trust  
180 Great Portland Street  
London W1W 5QZ  
[trust.enquiries@bbc.co.uk](mailto:trust.enquiries@bbc.co.uk)

Phone 03700 103 100 (textphone: 03700 100 212) between 9.30am and 5.30pm on weekdays.  
[bbc.co.uk/bbctrust](http://bbc.co.uk/bbctrust)

If you want to make a complaint, have a query about your TV licence, or want to comment on BBC output or find out more about the BBC's services we suggest that in the first instance you contact the BBC Executive rather than the Trust. All the different ways you can contact the BBC are listed at [bbc.co.uk/feedback](http://bbc.co.uk/feedback)