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# **BBC Audiences Review**

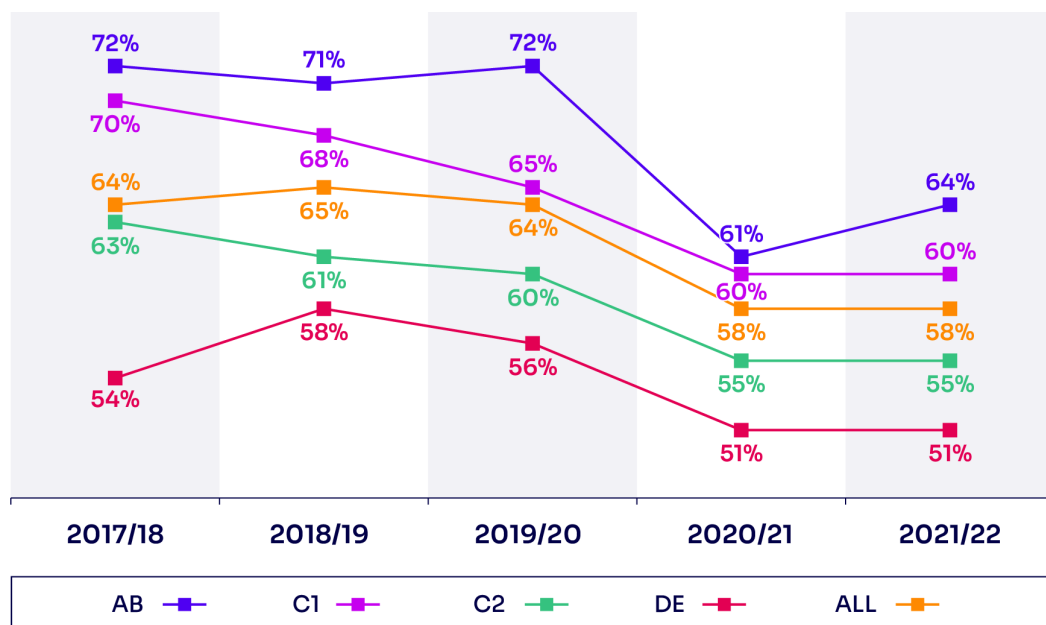
## Terms of Reference

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## The BBC has a unique role to serve all audiences across the UK

- 1.1 Our research has consistently shown that the BBC struggles to meet the needs of some audiences. Since taking on regulation of the BBC, we have been particularly concerned that audiences in what are traditionally called D and E groups continue to be less satisfied.
- 1.2 People from D and E groups are often referred to as having lower socio-economic status or being from working class backgrounds. They are more likely to be older, unemployed, have a disability or be retired with only a state pension. These groups are highly diverse and make up almost a quarter of the UK population.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 In our last [Annual Report](#) on the BBC we announced that we would be carrying out a review to examine why these audiences are persistently less satisfied with the BBC and seek to better understand their habits, and how the BBC is delivering for them.

Percentage with a positive overall view of the BBC



Source: Ofcom's fifth Annual Report on the BBC: [Interactive performance report](#). Note: year 5 (2021/22) and year 4 (2020/21) are not comparable to years 1-3 due to methodology changes.

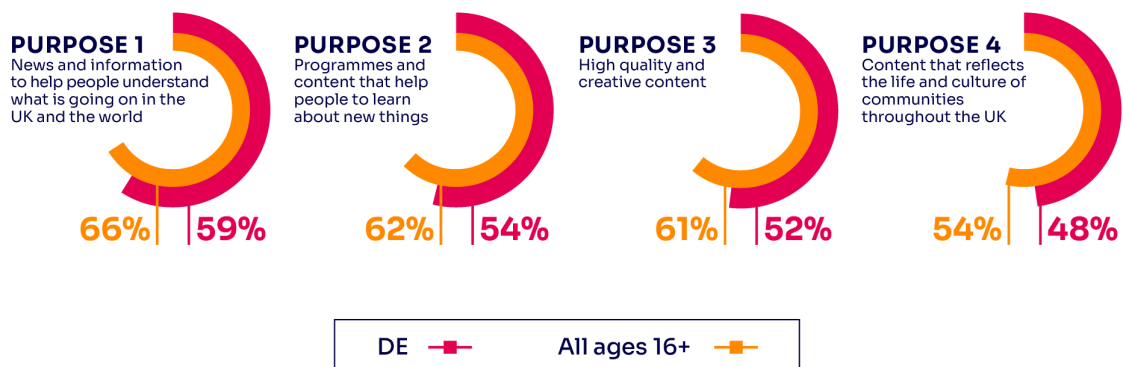
- 1.4 The [Charter](#) outlines the BBC's Mission, as set by the UK Parliament, in full – *to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high quality and*

<sup>1</sup> Socio-economic classification is typically based on occupation and includes the following categories: A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

*distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain* – along with its Public Purposes.

- 1.5 Since the [Charter](#) was put in place (2017), market changes, audience fragmentation and financial pressures have made delivering the Mission and Public Purposes increasingly challenging. Audiences have more choice than ever before, and the BBC and other public service broadcasters are facing growing competition from well-funded global players.
- 1.6 Overall, people are consuming less broadcast television and radio, however some groups, including those we will speak to as part of this review, remain more reliant on traditional services and are less likely to be online.
- 1.7 As part of our regulation of the BBC, we carry out in-depth reviews where we identify issues of specific concern. In the past we have looked at how the BBC [represents and portrays different people on TV](#) (Public Purpose 4) and we have also examined the BBC's [news and current affairs output](#) (Public Purpose 1). In this review we will look at why the BBC continues to face challenges with reach, engagement and satisfaction among certain audience groups and we will consider its delivery and performance across its remit.

#### Percentage with a positive rating for each Public Purpose (2021-22)



Source: Ofcom's fifth Annual Report on the BBC: [Interactive performance report](#)

- 1.8 Our regular [audience research](#) offers some insights as part of our ongoing monitoring and reporting of the BBC's performance. This review will use a variety of research and analytic techniques to delve deeper into their attitudes and habits, to investigate what content appeals to D and E audiences to further understand their relationship with the BBC and its services. Our review will focus on the following areas:
- i) **Connection:** We will explore how the BBC connects with audiences in lower socio-economic groups who have been shown to be less satisfied. We will look at their wider media consumption, the role the BBC plays in this, and how they access both the BBC and other media providers.
  - ii) **Content:** We will seek to understand how different types of programming serves different audiences and engage with the BBC to understand its approach to

commissioning with diverse audiences in mind. Some BBC content is popular with these groups, but overall, they use BBC services less than other audiences.

iii) **Context:** Previous research has highlighted that people’s views on the BBC can be shaped by a range of different factors. This can include the BBC brand, how it is funded and its portrayal in the wider media. During this review, we will also consider whether these issues and any others are relevant to how people form opinions and attitudes to the BBC.

- 1.9 We will carry out further analysis on the extensive information and data we currently collect in relation to the BBC. This will include assessing demographic, geographic, and attitudinal differences in our annual performance research and looking at reach data to attempt to understand which content resonates with certain audiences.
- 1.10 We will also commission new in-depth research, capturing the diversity of these audiences across the UK. We will speak with people who use the BBC more often, and those who utilise its services less.
- 1.11 The BBC has told us that it recognises the gap in satisfaction among these specific audience groups. It has conducted its own research in this area and has begun commissioning content specifically focused on attracting them. In the coming months, we will be engaging with the BBC on its own work in this area to ensure we fully understand and consider its approach to delivering for diverse audiences. We will also engage with wider industry and other interested parties.
- 1.12 This review forms one part of our ongoing regulatory scrutiny of the BBC. Our findings will inform our next annual assessment of the BBC’s performance, which will be published in autumn 2023.