

OUTSTANDING VALUE FOR AUDIENCES



This report tells the story of a BBC that has delivered outstanding value to audiences over the past year, despite significant challenges and cost pressures.

It highlights the vital role that the BBC can play in helping to strengthen the UK's democracy, economy, and society at a critical time as we look towards the renewal of our Royal Charter.

During the course of this year, the BBC maintained its near-universal reach in the face of fast-changing audience behaviours and the pressures of a highly competitive global media market. We remain the UK's number one media brand, with 84% of UK adults using our services on average per week and 94% per month. We are the only UK brand for media in the top five most used for young people.

We continued to drive our digital transformation in order to grow our value, enrich our offer, and embrace the possibilities of a post-broadcast world. BBC iPlayer was the UK's fastest-growing long-form video-on-demand platform in 2024/25. We are determined to build a global public service media organisation that is fit for a digital, AI-driven age.

We accelerated our major programme of organisational reform in order to create a more streamlined, more agile BBC. We have made further savings through efficiencies and reprioritisation of spend whilst continuing to boost our commercial income in a tough market.

And we achieved all this against a backdrop of real jeopardy. Tight finances, rising costs, and well-financed competitors bring significant risks to the strength and sustainability of the UK's creative economy. More widely, forces of disinformation and division are feeding a growing crisis of trust which is having serious consequences for the UK's social cohesion, democratic stability, and economic growth.

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Cyclist Emma Finucane speaks to the BBC after Team GB's gold medal in the Women's Team Sprint at Paris 2024



Jack O'Connell stars in *SAS: Rogue Heroes*

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This report shows that the BBC continued to set the creative standard as the largest investor in UK-made programming, offering world-class content which was loved and valued by the public.

We saw big audiences for homegrown storytelling in every genre, from *This City is Ours* to *Solar System*, *Amandaland* to *The Traitors*, *Call the Midwife* to *Ludwig*. We also saw hits drawn from every corner of the UK, from *Blue Lights* to *Beyond Paradise*, *The One That Got Away* to *An t-Eilean (The Island)* – the UK's first high-end Gaelic drama. And we saw more examples of what only the BBC does best, from *Asia* to *Mr Loverman* to *Wolf Hall*.

It was not only audiences who recognised our creative quality. This year the BBC picked up 18 BAFTA TV Awards – more than any other broadcaster or streamer – across a broad range of genres from Children's and Entertainment to Factual, Comedy, Drama, Sport and News. And the fact that the BBC has won the publicly-voted 'Memorable Moment' award every year since it began – this time for Chris McCausland and Dianne Buswell's waltz to *You'll Never Walk Alone* on *Strictly* – is testament to the BBC's unique ability to create television that moves and inspires.

Our performance this year in audio and radio was recognised by 30 wins at the Audio and Radio Industry Awards (ARIAs) – including the much-coveted 'Station of the Year' title for BBC Radio 3 as it celebrated strong audience figures. And it has been another good year for BBC podcasts with audience favourites from *Newscast* to *Americast*, *Limelight* to *Intrigue*, *You're Dead to Me* to *Sliced Bread* all once again proving hugely popular – alongside award-winners such as *Miss Me?* and *Brown Girls Do It Too*.

This year the BBC brought people together like no one else. We celebrated important moments across the BBC from VE Day to

Holocaust Memorial Day to Eid Live from Bradford. We delivered a massive summer of sport, which saw nearly three quarters of the population come to our coverage of the Olympic Games in Paris, the Men's Euros in Germany, and Wimbledon in SW19.

And we brought coverage of Eurovision, Glastonbury, and the Proms to many millions – not to mention taking major events to audiences across the UK with Radio 1's Big Weekend in Luton, Radio 2 in the Park in Preston, and the 6 Music Festival in Manchester.

For the first time ever, ten out of ten of the UK's most-watched TV shows on Christmas Day were from the BBC, with over 20 million watching both *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl* and *Gavin & Stacey: The Finale*.

It was a big year too for BBC News and our commitment to pursuing truth with no agenda. Eight in ten adults came to the BBC's coverage of the results of last year's snap general election across all platforms. Three quarters of UK adults use BBC News on average per week.

Meanwhile, BBC Verify is the most likely fact-checker to be used by British adults, and our investment in BBC Local's online news services over the last two years has seen average weekly traffic grow by 33%. BBC Local online news stories now represent almost 30% of all news stories read on the BBC News website and app.

The fact that trust in the BBC went up in 2024/25 is a significant achievement in a fraught election year, and one that I am proud of.

I am also very proud of the work all our news teams are doing to provide world-class coverage of hugely consequential events and conflicts around the world, often in the toughest of circumstances.

Director-General's review continued

Globally the BBC remains the world's most trusted international news provider, carrying the UK's voice, values and influence to a weekly audience of 453 million people. Recent research highlights the unique impact of the BBC World Service as a champion for the UK: BBC users around the world are not only more favourable towards the UK and our values, they are also more likely to invest in this country.

But maintaining the trust of our audiences requires constant diligence and care. And this was a year which saw the reputation of the BBC damaged by serious failings in the making of the programme: *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone*.

It was important that the BBC took full responsibility for those failings and apologised for them. It was also important for me to commission a fact-finding review, in order to ensure that we have a detailed understanding of the nature of the failings that occurred, and so that lessons can be learned to prevent issues such as this arising in the future.

The broader context for the BBC is the crisis of trust that is now growing both here in the UK and around the world. It is a crisis which I believe risks serious consequences for our society, our economy, and our democratic stability and security.

Today, according to the World Press Freedom Index, press freedom is at its lowest recorded point. Journalism is either completely or partially blocked in more than 75% of the world – and growing. For over half the world's population, press freedom is totally absent.

Reporters all round the world are facing increasing dangers and levels of harassment and intimidation. Recently one of our own journalists was expelled from Turkey, and we have seen a sharp and deeply troubling escalation in the persecution of BBC News Persian journalists in the UK and their families in Iran.

Meanwhile, disinformation is thriving. The World Economic Forum has singled it out as the biggest short-term risk we face globally. RUSI, the security think tank, points to malign information, often supported by state actors, as a direct threat to our security and cohesion.

This so-called epistemic crisis, where many of us lose faith in the integrity of our information environment and feel there is no agreed backbone of facts on which to base constructive deliberation, affects each of us every day.

The World Values Survey revealed that less than half of all UK respondents now say that most people can be trusted. Our own BBC research shows that three-quarters of UK adults say that UK society feels divided, and six in 10 say they feel exhausted by these divisions.

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This erosion of deeper connections, the decline in a sense of “we” versus “I”, has been a consequence of an online world where social media companies proliferate.

And importantly, researchers have found a direct causal link between higher levels of trust and increases in economic growth. It is critical that we invest in building social capital, the depletion of which has consequences for everything. From low growth and stalled social mobility to loneliness and unrest in our communities. So how do we act in the face of these challenges?

Despite the threats, I believe the opportunity for the UK is huge, based on our strengths. A society underpinned by strong institutions and democratic values. The second biggest exporter of services in the world, the third largest exporter of creative services, and a leader in foundational technology and upstream scientific development.

A trusted place to do business. A soft power superpower that leads the world in high quality media, outstanding universities, and the best football league on the planet: all underpinned by trust.

In May I gave a speech in Salford where I argued that the UK now faces a choice. A choice to build a stronger society, strengthen democracy, increase security and stimulate economic growth. A choice to deploy technology in our interests whilst fostering joyous creativity. A choice that requires intervention, innovation, and investment.

The BBC is determined to play its part. We have talked a lot over the past year about the three unique roles we have in today's world: to pursue truth with no agenda; to back the best homegrown storytelling; and to bring people together. This report highlights how much we have already achieved in helping to strengthen the UK's democracy, creative economy, and society.

But now we want to go further. I believe the BBC can play a critical role in helping the UK to make the bold, urgent choices that are needed to respond to this growing crisis of trust. To make the UK a global leader in trusted information. To support our democracy from the roots up. To deploy cutting-edge technology and AI to help, not harm, our children and their futures. To maximise growth in our economy by investing in every part of the UK. And to make sure everyone benefits from digital transition, with no one left behind.

In Salford, I set out some of the ideas we are currently exploring to support these aims and to increase the value of the BBC for the public and the UK as a whole. But I stressed that they are all contingent on the BBC being properly funded and supported – with strong backing from government, regulators, and partners.



Florence Welch joined Jules Buckley and his orchestra at the BBC Proms in 2024



Wolf Hall: The Mirror and The Light is directed by Peter Kosminsky and stars Mark Rylance

Our plans also require the BBC to continue to deliver reform, and to accelerate the rapid organisational transformation that has been underway in recent years.

I am proud of the record laid out in this report when it comes to how the BBC is transforming to meet the challenges of a fast-changing media landscape.

We are creating a leaner, more agile organisation. We have made further progress towards our £700 million annual recurring savings target by March 2028, achieving total savings of £564 million since 2022/23. We are a more streamlined organisation, and have once again reduced our public service headcount this year.

Our digital transformation continues at pace. This year saw record growth for iPlayer with a total 8.9 billion requests – up nearly 10% year-on-year. BBC Sounds grew to 2.6 billion plays and saw a record-breaking start to 2025. More than a third of UK adults use BBC News online on average per week, and the BBC News app is the number one app in the UK for monthly reach.

We are working hard to transform the BBC through cutting-edge technology and AI-driven innovation.

We have already used Gen AI to increase the value we offer audiences with initiatives such as adding subtitles to programmes on BBC Sounds, translating content into different languages on BBC News, and creating live text pages for football matches. We continue to look at ways that Gen AI might be used to deliver value and we are looking at new, major partnerships with the world-leading tech companies.

This will all be done in support of our public service mission and in line with our published AI principles – never relinquishing editorial oversight and always in support of human insight, talent, and creativity.

And we continue to boost our commercial income to generate maximum possible value for the licence fee. BBC Commercial achieved record sales of £2.2 billion this year despite tough trading conditions. BBC Studios has doubled its revenues and profits once and we want to ensure it has the capital and plans in place to double again.

As well as transforming our organisation, we continue to work hard to transform our culture.

This year brought major challenges in the form of the appalling Huw Edwards revelations along with further examples of truly unacceptable behaviours coming to light. An independent review into the BBC's workplace culture produced a series of recommendations which we accepted in full. We have since rolled out a comprehensive set of actions which directly respond to the challenge of these findings and kicked off a two-year programme of work to deliver real change in our workplace culture.

As the report showed, the BBC today feels like a very different place than it did a decade ago. But my vision is a BBC culture that is kind, inclusive, safe and supportive – without exception. Where there is no place for anyone who is not prepared to live up to our standards and values, whatever their role. And where everyone feels inspired and enabled to do their best work. We are working hard to make sure that vision becomes a reality.

Looking ahead, the process of renewing the BBC's Royal Charter will shortly begin in earnest. This will determine the scale and scope of the BBC beyond 2027, and therefore its long-term role and impact for the UK.

If we are to play our part to the full in helping the UK to respond to the challenges we face in the years ahead – both domestic and global – we need a strong Charter that secures a universal public service BBC for a generation.

That means a Charter which safeguards the BBC's independence in the interests of the public. It means one which ensures that we are sustainable for the long term and can support a thriving UK media ecosystem, including through sufficient, reliable funding. And it means one that enables the BBC to meet changing audience needs with speed and agility, and be more directly responsive and accountable to the public.

There are other critical areas where we are calling for enlightened policy interventions to support the UK's world-class creative industries and help the country respond to the growing trust crisis.

We want to see increased incentives for UK production, including tax credits. It's a system that's proven to work but it should be reformed and extended to support key and at-risk genres, as well as to incentivise public service media objectives like encouraging production outside London, telling local stories, or preserving IP within the UK.

We also need to see robust implementation of the Media Act at pace – to secure good PSB prominence on every platform at a crucial moment for the future of our PSBs and their role in national life. If people can't find our services, and prominence is simply secured by the highest bidder, then we can't play our part in building connections and trust.

We need a clear commitment from the Government to deliver a fully inclusive digital transition. And we need to ensure that there is a sensible regime in place that ensures UK IP creators get fair reward for their work in the AI world.

This is not a moment for hesitation. It is a time for decisive action and intervention. This report demonstrates how determined the BBC is to build trust in our society and help shape the future we all want for the public, for our creative industries, and for the country as a whole.

Tim Davie CBE
Director-General
27 June 2025