

Review of Public Service Media (2019–2023)

Annex 3: Channel 4 Corporation's
performance in delivering its media content
duties

Report

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1. Overview

Channel 4 Corporation (“C4C”) has performed well in meeting its remit and content duties over the last five years

The past five years have been difficult for all broadcasters and for the production sector. However, across the review period C4C has invested in a broad range of high-quality and diverse programmes that demonstrate innovation, experimentation, creativity and distinctiveness.

A particular challenge for C4C has been attracting and retaining younger audiences. Over the last five years, C4C’s viewing performance has generally held up well but younger audiences spent less time with Channel 4 and the rest of the C4C portfolio. C4C has developed a new strategy for younger people, including putting in place new initiatives to address the lack of engagement from these audiences.

C4C’s news and current affairs continues to occupy a vital place in the public service broadcasting landscape. We highlight the many successes C4C has had over the review period in terms of new content strands, new modes of distribution such as expansion on social media, and industry recognition and awards for its news and current affairs.

C4C has shown a strong commitment to on- and off-screen diversity. We highlight improvements made in both on- and off-screen diversity, as well as key initiatives such as C4C’s innovative Paralympic Games and Winter Paralympic Games coverage.

C4C has recently published its *Fast Forward* strategy and has set out its plans to become the first public service streamer by 2030. It has sought ways to diversify its revenue and to maximise the reach and impact of its content by innovating online and on social media. The success of *Fast Forward* is important given the growing risks to C4C’s delivery of its media content duties. TV advertising budgets remain under pressure and while digital advertising revenues are growing, they are not offsetting the fall in linear spend.

Legal framework

C4C is a publicly owned, not-for-profit body. It operates the main Channel 4 service, a range of portfolio channels and a streaming service referred to in this document as Channel 4 Streaming (previously All4).

Under the Communications Act 2003, C4C must prepare an annual statement setting out its plans for meeting its media content duties in the coming year and reporting on its performance over the past year. C4C must consult with Ofcom in preparing the publication and have regard to Ofcom [guidance](#). It must also prepare a similar statement in relation to its delivery of Channel 4's public service remit and licence obligations. In our guidance, we ask C4C to combine the statements in a document which we refer to as C4C's Statement of Media Content Policy ("SMCP"). We respond to C4C's SMCP annually, setting out our views on the delivery of C4C's duties and its future strategy. More information is available in the 'Background and legal framework' section at the end of this document.

Ofcom is also required to report at least every 5 years on how the public service broadcasting ("PSB") services (the BBC, Channel 3, Channel 4, Channel 5 and S4C) have, when taken together, fulfilled the statutory public service broadcasting remit. We have published a *Review of Public Service Media (2019-23)* which also considers the future challenges for delivery of public service broadcasting. Alongside that review, we are also required separately to assess C4C's performance in respect of its media content duties. This document sets out the findings and conclusions of C4C's performance during 2019-23. Full details of our yearly reports can be found at [annual responses to C4C's SMCPs](#).

We recently made the decision to renew Channel 4's licence for a ten-year period. As part of the licence renewal process, we published a significant amount of research and analysis around C4C's performance over the previous licence period (2014-2024). To avoid unnecessary duplication, this report summarises our key conclusions relating to C4C's delivery of its media content duties during the 2019-2023 review period. Further detail is available in our annual responses to C4C's SMCPs.

2. C4C is operating in a challenging environment

A downturn in the TV advertising market, following a post-Covid-19 pandemic rebound in 2021, has been hard for all the UK's commercial PSBs to navigate. However, C4C's operating model, which is predominantly reliant on advertising, is even more vulnerable to fluctuations in the advertising market.

[C4C has said](#) that the post-Covid-19 pandemic 'bounce' in advertising spend has been followed by a prolonged and unexpected slump which has forced the broadcaster to adjust costs, in part, by cutting its commissioning budget. There was additional uncertainty during 2022, as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) considered privatising C4C, although those plans were later scrapped.

However, certain conditions were included in the Government's Media Bill (now Act) designed to safeguard the future of Channel 4 and ensure its sustainability, such as the removal of the publisher-broadcaster restriction that prevents C4C from making its own programmes.

Like all broadcasters, C4C is transitioning from a linear to a streaming model

With younger audiences continuing to turn away from traditional TV, C4C launched [Future4](#) in 2020, its five-year strategy for responding to the challenges of digital transition. It included plans to prioritise digital audience growth, to diversify C4C's revenue streams away from linear advertising to support its future sustainability, and to generate strategic partnerships. Three years later in our [2023 response](#) to C4C's SMCP, we said that C4C needed to clearly outline the next phase of this transformation. In response, C4C launched its [Fast Forward](#) strategy in January 2024, a plan it says is designed to ensure C4C is a "genuinely digital-first public service streamer by 2030".

Fast Forward has three strands:

Digital growth and transformation: C4C has said it plans to shift to a "digital-first" commissioning strategy, focusing on content that drives streaming growth and remit delivery. It has also said that it will: concentrate on "fewer, stronger titles" that generate scale and impact and drive viewing to its streaming platform; continue to target younger viewers on platforms such as YouTube; improve the user experience of its streaming platform; and build new distribution partnerships to enhance visibility of Channel 4 content.

Diversified new businesses: C4C plans to reduce its reliance on advertising revenue by continuing to diversify revenue streams including exploring the potential of IP ownership, such as making and owning its programming within the context of the removal of the publisher-broadcaster restriction by the Media Act 2024.

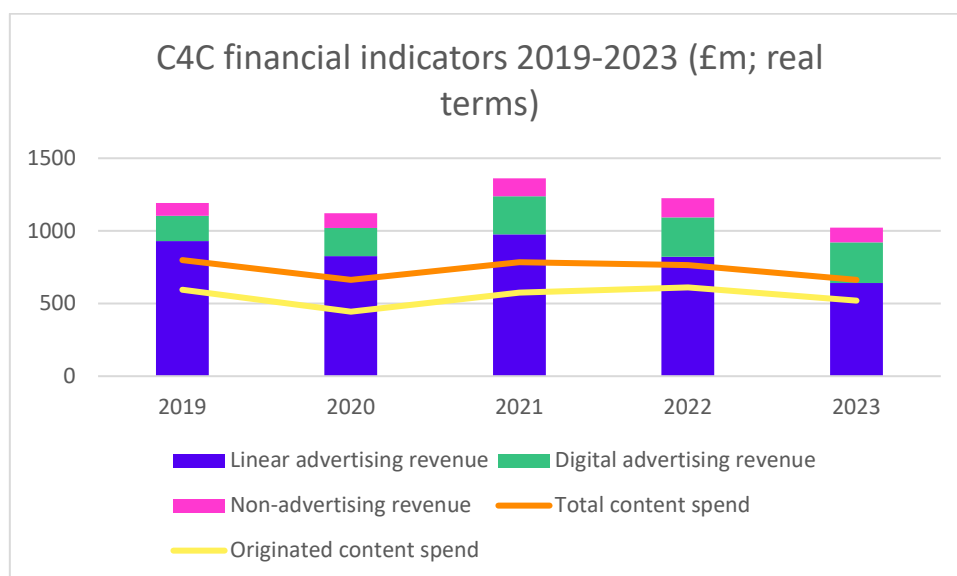
Reengineering the business for a digital-first world: C4C plans to reduce its operational costs significantly by: selling its London offices at Horseferry Road; reducing headcount; and closing small linear channels that it considers no longer deliver value for money.

In Figure 1 below, we highlight the changing proportions of C4C’s overall revenue. In 2023, digital and non-advertising revenues represented a greater proportion of C4C’s revenue than at any other point in the review period. The continuing dominance of linear advertising in C4C’s overall revenue profile makes successful delivery of C4C’s digital transformation even more pressing.

C4C has acted to protect investment in content as its revenue has fluctuated

As part of our annual reviews, we consider how much C4C invests in content and how it attempts to maintain this investment during challenging financial periods.¹ As can be seen from Figure 1, total content spend (which includes acquisitions) and originated content spend have varied across the reporting period. We highlighted in our [2024 response to C4C’s SMCP](#) that, despite its recent financial challenges, it was still able to invest the second-highest amount (in nominal terms) in originations in Channel 4’s history.

Figure 1: Key financial indicators 2019-2023 (£m; real terms, adjusted for inflation)

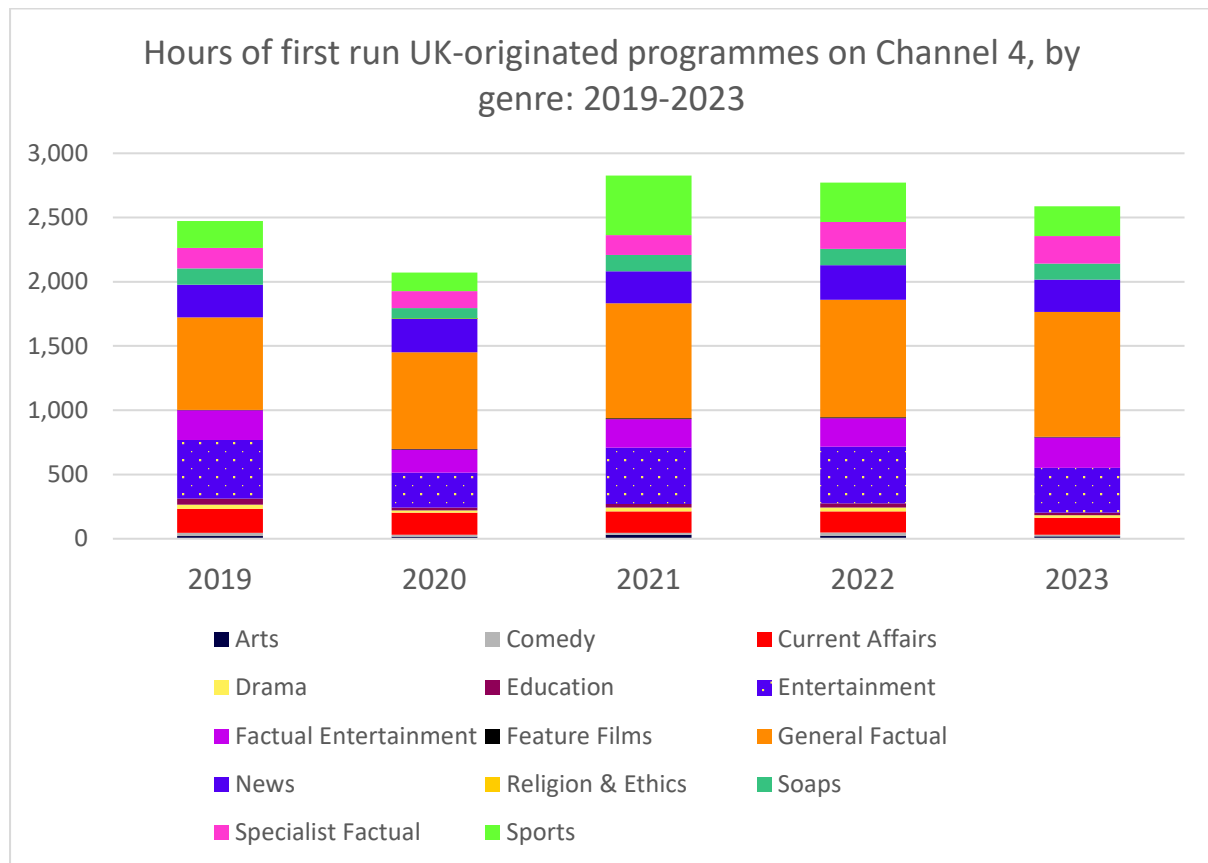


Source: Channel 4 annual report and accounts 2019-2023. Figures are adjusted for CPI at 2023 prices.

Our recent licence renewal [Statement](#) reveals that Channel 4 has delivered a relatively steady volume of first-run originations in recent years across a broad range of genres, as illustrated by Figure 2 below. Despite financial challenges C4C continues to invest in a broad range of UK content that appeals to different audiences.

¹ The figures in Figure 1 are adjusted for inflation and therefore differ slightly to those reported year-on-year in C4C’s annual reports and in our performance assessments.

Figure 2: Hours of first-run UK-originated programmes on Channel 4, by genre: 2019-2023



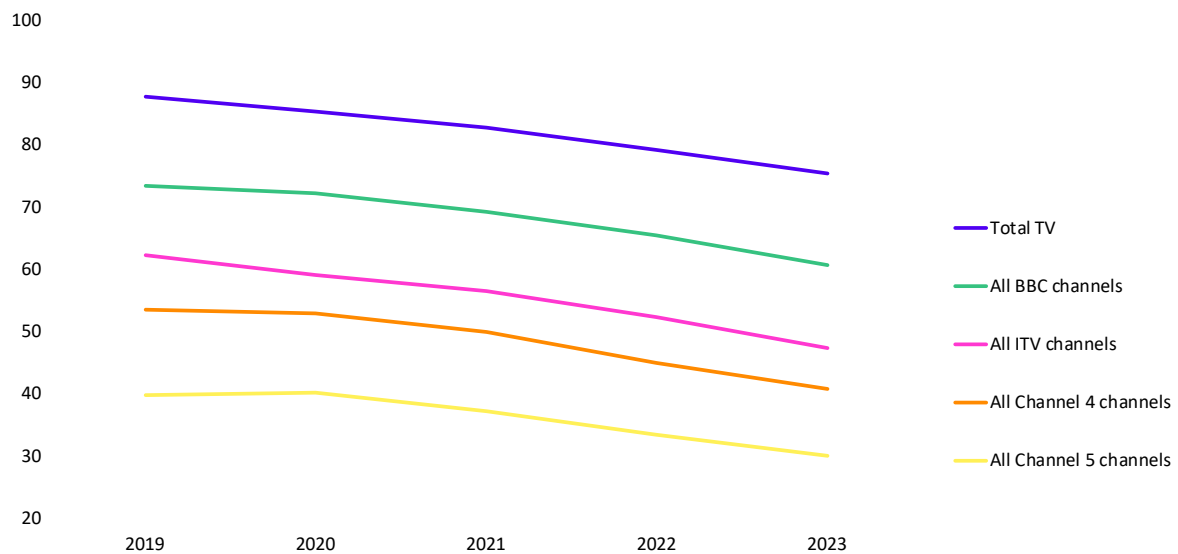
Source: Ofcom/C4C.

Attracting and retaining viewers to C4C’s linear channels remains difficult

Following a long-term trend, viewing to C4C’s main channel and its portfolio of channels declined overall across the review period. As can be seen from Figures 3 below, linear reach to the C4C family of channels fell, largely in line with other PSBs. C4C’s linear performance has held up relatively well. C4C remains the third-largest PSB, behind the BBC and ITV, in terms of linear reach.²

² Barb 28-day consolidated, individuals 4+, TV sets only. Weekly reach is defined as the number in thousands of all individuals 4+ watching 15 consecutive minutes or more in an average week.

Figure 3: Average weekly reach % by channel group: 2019-2023

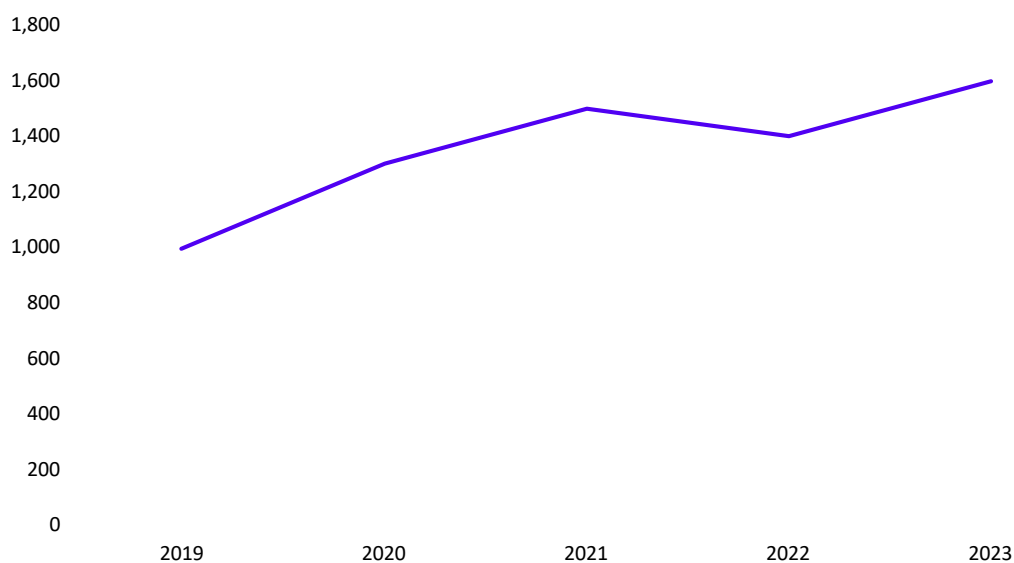


Source: Barb 28-day consolidated, individuals 4+, TV sets only. Reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes.

Channel 4's share of viewing among all viewers has remained relatively steady across the review period, at 4.8% in both 2019 and 2023. However, there was a more discernible decline in share among 16-34s – a key audience group for C4C – over the same period.³

C4C's *Future4* and *Fast Forward* strategies both aim to drive viewers – particularly younger ones – to watch more content via streaming. Viewing to C4C's streaming service has increased across the review period. Views to Channel 4 Streaming reached a record high of 1.6bn views in 2023, after a drop in 2022. While some levelling-out post the Covid-19 pandemic was to be expected, we said in our [2023 response to C4C's SMCP](#) that C4C needed to redouble its efforts to bring people to the service if it is to meet its goal, set out in *Future4*, of 2bn views per year by 2025.

Figure 4: Views to Channel 4's streaming service (millions): 2019-2023



Source: Channel 4's Annual report and accounts 2019-2023.

³ Barb, 28 day consolidated, Channel 4 excludes Channel 4 +1.

A key element of C4C's strategy in recent years has been to improve its offering for younger audiences, who are more likely to watch C4C content on streaming and social channels. In our [2023 response to C4C's SMCP](#), we highlighted that C4C had begun to report on new metrics relating to views of its content on social media and we will continue to monitor this element of its performance.

Continuing to grow the performance of its streaming services and broadening engagement with its content and brand through social media, will be crucial to the success of C4C's *Fast Forward* strategy, given established patterns of audience behaviour.

Currently, C4C can only deliver its public service remit through its main channel, but this will change once the Media Act is implemented, giving broadcasters greater flexibility to meet their obligations across their range of services. Despite these changes, C4C will be obligated to continue to serve audiences on its main channel, while it also focuses on increasing viewing to Channel 4 Streaming and its other services.

3. C4C has performed well in meeting its content duties over the last 5 years

Channel 4 must invest in a broad range of high-quality and diverse programmes that demonstrate innovation, experimentation, creativity and distinctiveness. In delivering its media content duties, C4C must participate in making a broad range of relevant media content of high quality which, taken as a whole, appeals to the tastes and interests of a culturally diverse society.

Findings from Ofcom’s Public Service Media (“PSM”) Tracker show that among viewers of Channel 4, from 2021 to 2023, it had high satisfaction levels.⁴ Satisfaction with C4C’s BVOD service, Channel 4 Streaming, was also relatively high.⁵

A majority of viewers in the past six months say Channel 4 TV channels and Channel 4 Streaming are performing well at delivering ‘a wide range of programmes such as drama, comedy, entertainment and sport’ (54% and 63% respectively) and programmes that ‘appeals to a wide range of different audiences’ (54% and 64%).⁶

C4C has a particular duty to provide content which appeals to older children and young adults

A challenge for all PSBs has been attracting and retaining younger audiences.⁷ Research we conducted as part of the Channel 4 licence renewal process found that younger audiences typically find other media services (particularly SVoDs and video sharing and social media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok) to be more relevant to them. This research also found that younger audiences were less engaged with and had lower levels of awareness of Channel 4’s content than other audience groups.⁸

Younger and older children are watching Channel 4 and the Channel 4 family of channels less often. Average weekly reach to these audiences dropped across the review period, as can be seen from Figure 5 below.

⁴ Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2021 – 2023. The tracker only offers comparable data back to 2021. The question is asked to viewers in the past six months: 2021 (77%), 2022 (79%) and 2023 (77%).

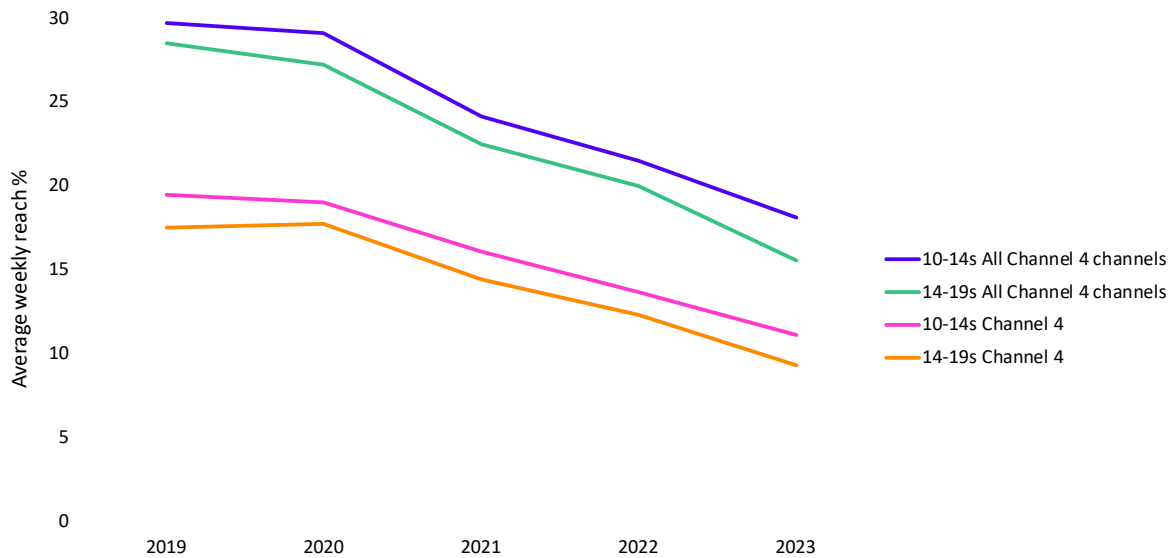
⁵ Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2021-2023. Viewers in the past six months: 2021 (73%), 2022 (75%) and 2023 (70%).

⁶ Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2023.

⁷ E.g. 4-15s and 16-24s, Barb total in-home video viewing. More information can be found in Ofcom Media Nations 2024, p. 7-8.

⁸ Jigsaw, 2023. Channel 4 relicensing research (2023), p.12.

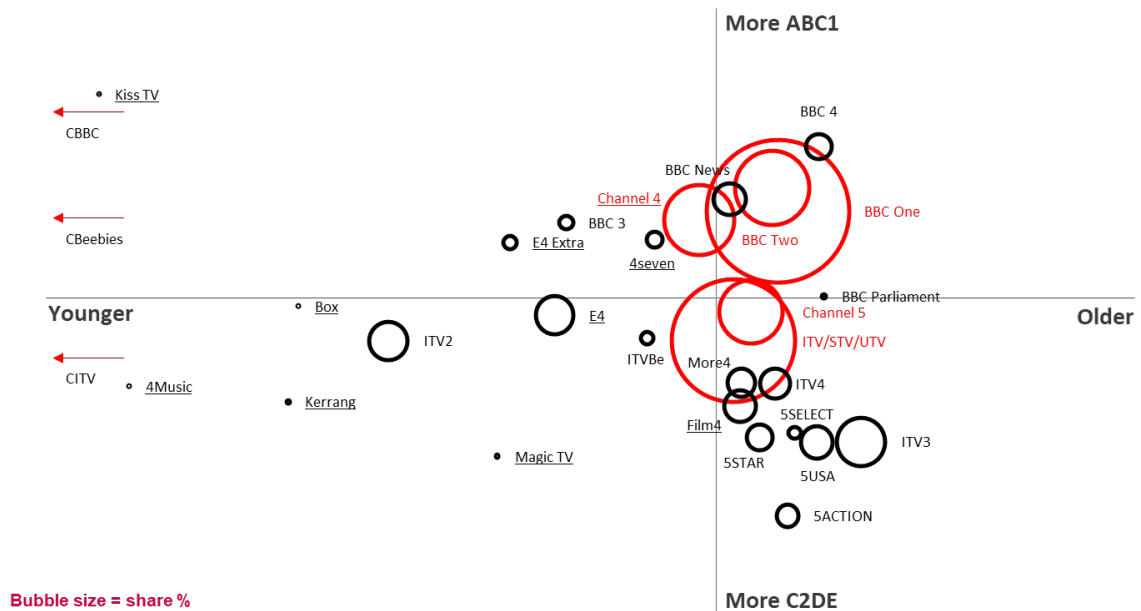
Figure 5: Average weekly reach % for Channel 4 and all C4C channels, 10–14-year-olds and 14-19-year-olds: 2019-2023



Source: Barb 28-day consolidated, TV sets only. Reach criteria: 15+ consecutive minutes. Channel 4 excludes Channel 4 +1. All Channel 4 channels includes all C4C channels.

Viewers of C4C’s portfolio of channels continue to skew younger (and more towards the ABC1 demographic) than viewers to the other PSBs’ main channels, as can be seen from Figure 6 below. In 2023, Channel 4 Streaming was also the youngest-skewing PSB BVoD service in the UK.⁹

Figure 6: Age and socio-economic audience profiles of PSB portfolio channels: 2023



⁹ Barb, as-viewed, 16-24 adults profile (against individuals 4+).

Source: Barb 28-day consolidated, TV sets only. Size of bubble relates to share among individuals 4+. Profile based on age: % 35+, SEG: % ABC1. Axes cross at the average age/SEG profile of total broadcast TV. Includes +1 variants where applicable.

C4C has developed a new strategy for younger audiences

C4C has responded positively to our call in our [2021 response to C4C's SMCP](#) for it to do more to attract and retain younger viewers. In 2022, C4C undertook a major piece of research, '[Beyond Z](#)', which aimed to better understand the views and perspectives of 'Generation Z'.¹⁰ In recent years it has put in place new initiatives to address the lack of engagement from these audiences.

C4C has improved its offer on social media platforms and launched its new YouTube channel, Channel 4.0, in late 2022. It also launched its digital-first current affairs strand *Untold*, and new programmes and content strands aimed at younger viewers. In 2022, C4C [also announced](#) it was making its younger-focused soap *Hollyoaks* digital-first, premiering new episodes on Channel 4 Streaming before linear showings on Channel 4 and E4.

C4C report increased engagement with its content on social media platforms, particularly by younger audience groups. Its annual report outlines that in 2023, content on Channel 4.0 generated 216 million global views across YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat, with 85% of their viewers on YouTube being under the age of 34.¹¹

We will continue to monitor C4C's initiatives for improving engagement with younger viewers as they become more established.

C4C's news and current affairs occupies a vital place in the public service broadcasting landscape

Across the review period, we have highlighted that Channel 4's news continues to perform strongly among younger audiences and those in minority ethnic groups.¹²

Research we commissioned as part of the licence renewal process found that *Channel 4 News* was rated as a trusted source of news by viewers.¹³ Our PSM tracker found that audiences consistently rated Channel 4 TV channels for delivering well on '*trusted and accurate UK news*' (50% in 2021; 53% in 2022; 51% in 2023).¹⁴ Similarly, our News Consumption Survey further finds that regular viewers of news on Channel 4 continue to rate it highly for accuracy (71% in 2019 and 68% in 2024) and trustworthiness (69% in 2019 and 72% in 2024).¹⁵

Channel 4 News was also felt to have a younger and more progressive reporting style and format compared to other PSBs. Audiences thought that *Channel 4 News* was prepared to go where other PSBs would not, for example when interviewing politicians or talking about political issues.¹⁶

¹⁰ People aged between 13 and 24 at the time of the research taking place.

¹¹ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.60.

¹² Website: [Regulating Channel 4](#).

¹³ Jigsaw, [News Consumption in the UK 2024 supporting data slides](#), p.28. Regular users of Channel 4.

¹⁴ Public Service Media Tracker 2021 – 2023. Base is all those who have watched a Channel 4 TV channel in the past 6 months.

¹⁵ Jigsaw, 2024. [News Consumption in the UK](#), p.25. Regular users of each channel for news, Jigsaw, [News consumption in the UK: 2019 report](#), p.74. % of regular users rating each source highly.

¹⁶ Jigsaw, 2023 [Channel 4 Corporation Relicensing research](#), p.30-31.

However, the average audience to Channel 4's weekday evening news programme has fallen across the review period (2019: average 561,000; 2023: average 463,000).¹⁷

In this reporting period, Channel 4's news and current affairs output has received numerous awards from the Royal Television Society (RTS) and British Academy Film and Television Awards (BAFTA) for its UK and International coverage. It also was nominated for Best Documentary, for *For Sama*, at the 2020 Academy Awards.¹⁸

Online news and current affairs has continued to attract younger viewers as C4C has expanded its provision on social media

Channel 4 and its younger-focused portfolio channel E4 launched on TikTok in 2021. TikTok has become a particular area of focus for C4C in terms of bringing in younger audiences to C4C's news output. In our [2024 response to C4C's SMCP](#) we highlighted that in 2023 there were 474 million views of *Channel 4 News* content on TikTok, more than five times the 2022 figure. C4C outlined that 61% of its audience on TikTok is under 35, with 43% of its audience on YouTube also being under 35. On YouTube, there were 394 million views of *Channel 4 News* content.¹⁹

Untold, C4C's youth-focused current affairs documentary series, has performed well since its launch in 2022. C4C reports that *Untold's* two seasons in 2023 achieved 2.2 million global views on YouTube across 14 episodes. On Channel 4 Streaming, *Untold* achieved 3.8 million views, of which 39% came from 16-34-year-olds.²⁰

C4C continues to invest across the UK but needs to do more outside of London

In recent years C4C has sought to spread its investment, commissioning, training, and support across the UK

Throughout the review period, C4C has consistently met and surpassed its licence quota for Made outside London production. C4C must spend at least 35% on first-run originated content on the main channel and devote at least 35% of hours to programming commissioned from suppliers in the nations and regions of the UK.

In 2019, C4C launched [4 All the UK](#), designed to further expand its operations across the nations and regions of the UK. It opened new creative hubs in Leeds, Glasgow and Bristol and put in place new initiatives for production sector training and support. In 2024, C4C announced [the next stage](#) of *4 All the UK* to mark five years of the strategy.

As part of *4 All the UK*, C4C committed to a voluntary 50% quota for out of London spend on the main channel by 2023 (it met this commitment in 2021, two years ahead of schedule). In 2023, 67% of its first-run programming hours and 51% of spend on its first-run commissions came from the nations and regions.²¹ Figure 7 shows levels of investment outside of London across the review period.

¹⁷ Barb, 28 day consolidated, 16+, Channel 4 (excluding +1), weekday only.

¹⁸ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.32.

¹⁹ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.32.

²⁰ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.62.

²¹ [Channel Four Television Corporation Report and Financial Statements 2023](#).

Figure 7: C4C originated content spend outside London: 2019-2023 (£m; real terms, adjusted for inflation)

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| English regions | 186 | 136 | 216 | 196 | 151 |
| Scotland | 25 | 23 | 27 | 23 | 27 |
| Wales | 12 | 7 | 13 | 20 | 13 |
| Northern Ireland | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Total spend outside London | 228 | 169 | 260 | 244 | 193 |

Source: Channel 4 annual report and accounts 2019-2023. Figures are adjusted for CPI at 2023 prices.

Over the last five years we have consistently urged C4C to do more to invest in and represent Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In 2020, C4C’s Made outside England (MoE) quotas were raised from 3% of hours and spend to 9% and we have recently made the decision to raise them again to 12% from 2030. As well as supporting production outside England, this aims to contribute to a diverse range of programmes reflecting the lives of people across the UK, while giving C4C flexibility to implement its digital strategy to deliver for the benefit of all UK audiences.

C4C has performed relatively well in reflecting the diversity of the UK

In 2023, over half (55%) of viewers in the past six months said Channel 4 TV channels deliver well on ‘programmes which feature people from different backgrounds’,²² performing well in relation to other PSBs.²³ C4C’s own research also showed that when audiences were asked to what extent they associated each PSB with ‘showing different kinds of cultures and opinions in the UK’, C4C was the highest scoring amongst its competitor set.²⁴

Audiences living in the nations and regions of the UK should be able to see themselves reflected and represented on screen. Around a third (32%) of viewers in the past six months say Channel 4’s TV channels deliver ‘programmes that feature my region/country’ well, similar to previous years (33% in 2022; 29% in 2021). For BBC TV channels and ITV TV channels, around half of their viewers in the last six months say the same (50% and 46%, respectively). Half (50%) of viewers say Channel 4 TV channels deliver well on ‘programmes that are relevant to me’ and a slightly lower proportion say the same for ‘programmes that feature people like me’ (43%).²⁵

Viewing data shows that Channel 4’s main channel has a stronger minority ethnic profile against all viewers in 2023 than any of the other main PSB channels and is on a par with linear TV services as a

²² Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2021 - 2023. Viewers in the past six months: 2021 (57%) and 2022 (60%).

²³ Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2023.

²⁴ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.45.

²⁵ Ofcom Public Service Media Tracker 2023.

whole. This has remained relatively steady across the review period, with only a very slight increase since 2021.²⁶

C4C has shown a strong commitment to on- and off-screen diversity

Since 2022, C4C has reported on its performance regarding on-screen diversity using data from the Diamond system, established by the PSBs and Sky. When looking at C4C's on-screen diversity performance, 2023 data suggests that people from minority ethnic groups were represented on-screen in line with the national population overall (in 2023 and 2022 this figure was 19%, 1pp higher than the population estimate of 18%). People who identified as LGB were represented in 18% of on-screen contributions (in 2022, 18%), which is well above the 3% figure from the 2021 Census. However, women were under-represented on-screen compared to the national population estimate (in 2023, 50%; 2022, 49%, both slightly below the population estimate of 51%).²⁷

C4C highlighted in its 2023 Annual Report that disabled people only accounted for 9% of on-screen contributions (in 2022, 8%), which was well below the 18% population figure. C4C has said that it will take steps to drive change through its recently launched Disability Strategy and new disability portrayal guidelines.²⁸ We have highlighted across the review period that C4C has shown commitment to improving portrayal of disabled people for example through its innovative Paralympics coverage.

The Paralympics

Since 2012, C4C has been the official UK broadcaster of the Paralympic Games and we have highlighted its commitment to widening access to the Games and innovating in terms of its coverage in our annual responses to C4C's SMCPs.

[C4C's coverage of the 2021 Paralympic Games](#) brought together the largest ever team of disabled on-screen talent to cover the Games and provided over 300 hours of coverage on Channel 4 and More4, and over 1000 hours on C4C's dedicated Paralympics website. In attempting to reach younger audiences via social media, C4C was also an early adopter of TikTok, and reported that its 'TikTok Paralympics Hub' for the 2021 Games drew 4.1m views. [C4C's coverage of the 2022 Beijing Winter Paralympics](#) further strengthened its commitment to representing the diversity of the UK on- and off-screen, with its coverage hosted by an all-disabled presenting team.

The 2024 Paralympics fell outside the reporting period of our [2024 response to C4C's SMCP](#). However, due to the delay to publication of our response because of the 2024 UK General Election, we again highlighted the steps that C4C took to bring the Paralympics to the widest possible audience, including on Channel 4 and Channel 4 Streaming, and through its innovative approach to content distribution on YouTube.

²⁶ 'Minority ethnic profile' refers to the percentage of a channel's viewers who are from a minority ethnic group. Barb, 28 day consolidated, excludes + 1 channels.

²⁷ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.53.

²⁸ Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.53.

Over the past 5 years, C4C has continued to diversify its workforce and supply base

Within C4C there are now more women in senior management positions than ever before and a higher percentage of disabled employees and employees from minority ethnic backgrounds. These increases have continued year on year across the reporting period.²⁹

As part of our assessment of C4C's performance in representing the diversity of the UK, we also consider its supply base – looking at the number of production companies it commissions and how many of these are qualifying independent producers or 'indies'.³⁰

In June 2020, as part of its [anti-racism strategy](#), C4C announced its commitment to double the number of ethnically diverse-led indies in its supplier base by 2023 from a baseline of 8 in 2019.³¹ C4C reports that target was achieved by the end of 2020, three years early. The number of diverse-led indies continued to rise (2022: 27), before decreasing slightly (2023: 19), however the proportion of ethnically diverse suppliers remained the same at 13% in both 2023 and 2022.³²

As can be seen from Figure 8 below, the total number of suppliers commissioned and the number of qualifying indies has fluctuated, however, C4C has consistently exceeded its licence quota for independent production (25% of first-run originations) across the review period.³³

²⁹ [Ofcom's EDI reports 2020-2023](#). Women in senior management = 45% in 2020, 46% in 2021, 52% in 2022, 53% in 2023. MEG overall = 17% in 2020, 17% in 2021, 18% in 2022, 22% in 2023. Disabled employees = 10% in 2020, 11% in 2021, 15% in 2022 and 23% in 2023.

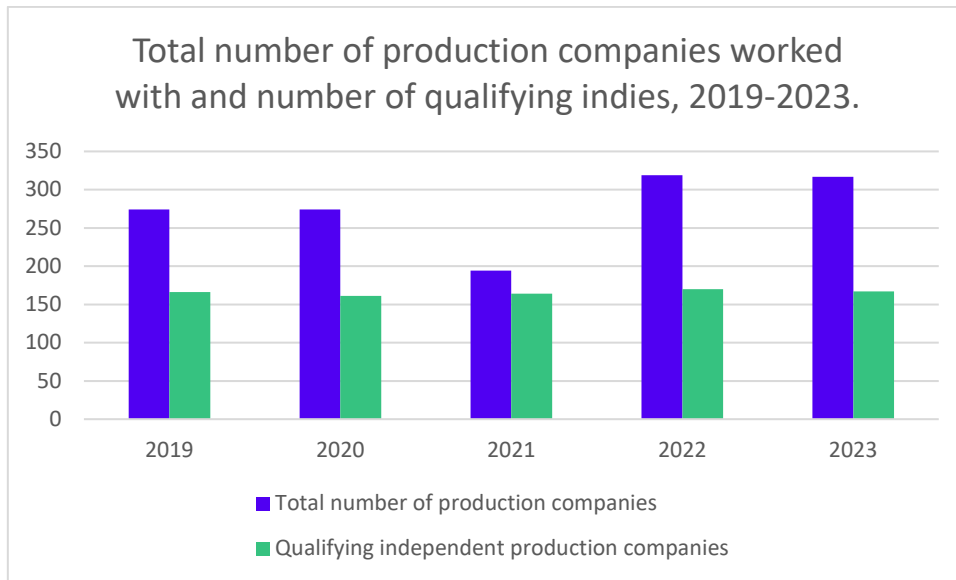
³⁰ A company not tied to a UK broadcaster through significant common ownership. The Broadcasting (Independent Productions) Order 1991 (as amended) states that an independent producer is: (i) not employed by a broadcaster; (ii) does not have a shareholding greater than 25% in a UK broadcaster; or (iii) in which no single UK broadcaster has a shareholding greater than 25% or any two or more UK broadcasters have an aggregate shareholding greater than 50%.

³¹ C4C define 'ethnically diverse' commissions as being from production companies where the main shareholders, the leading decision makers or the creative leaders comprise those from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

³² Channel 4 Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023, p.86.

³³ In our recent licence renewal [Statement](#) we explained that the minimum quota level, as set out in section 277 of the Communications Act, could only be amended by legislation and that when the Media Bill was introduced to Parliament on 8 November 2023, the Secretary of State announced that the level would be increased from 25% to 35% as part of a package of mitigations intended to ensure that Channel 4's role in driving investment in the independent production sector would be safeguarded if it decided to develop its own production capability. We said we would implement this change once it is in force.

Figure 8: Total number of production companies and number of qualifying independent production companies worked with, 2019-2023



Source: Channel 4 Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2023.

Summary

In this report we have summarised our key conclusions relating to C4C's delivery of its remit and media content duties across the review period. Full details of our yearly reports 2019-2023, can be found at [annual responses to C4C's SMCPs](#).

A1 Background and legal framework

Channel Four Television Corporation (“C4C”) is a publicly owned, not-for-profit body, funded by commercial revenues. Its main channel, Channel 4, was launched in 1982 with the aim of extending the choice available to viewers, appealing to tastes and interests not generally catered for by other broadcasters and in doing so encouraging innovation and the development of the independent production sector. Historically, C4C has operated as a publisher-broadcaster, meaning that it does not produce its own programmes but commissions them from production companies across the UK. This restriction has now been lifted³⁴ and from 1 January 2025, it will be able to produce its own content.

Over the years, C4C has launched a range of portfolio channels³⁵ and a streaming service, referred to in this document as Channel 4 Streaming (previously All4).³⁶ In November 2022, C4C brought its portfolio together under the single brand of ‘Channel 4’.

C4C’s duties are defined in statute

While the main channel has a unique remit and should also contribute to the overall objectives of public service broadcasting, the Digital Economy Act 2010 extended C4C’s obligations beyond the main channel by introducing media content duties which it can deliver across its full suite of services. These include duties to:

- a) make a broad range of high quality content that appeals to the tastes and interests of a culturally diverse society;
- b) provide news and current affairs;
- c) provide content which appeals to older children and young adults;
- d) make, broadcast and distribute high quality films, intended to be shown to UK audiences, and broadcast and distribute films (including third-party films) that reflect cultural activity in the UK to audiences;
- e) support the development of people with creative talent;
- f) promote alternative views and new perspectives;
- g) promote measures intended to ensure that people are well-informed and motivated to participate in society; and
- h) support and stimulate well-informed debate on a wide range of issues, including by providing information and views from around the world and by challenging established views.

³⁴ Section 31 of the Media Act 2024.

³⁵ These include E4, E4 Extra, More4, Film4, and 4seven.

³⁶ Webpage: [Channel 4 transforms brand to help viewers navigate crowded digital world.](#)