

BBC Local News Partnerships

Guidance Notes for Section 1 Applications

Local news providers wanting to receive content from the Local News Partnerships must meet the criteria set out in Section 1 of the Local News Partnerships Eligibility Criteria document.

The intention is to support established local news organisations which are already committed to public interest journalism, irrespective of size or means of distribution.

The scope

For the purpose of these Local News Partnerships, local news providers are those individuals, companies or groups

- whose intended audience is typically located in a specific geographical area which is smaller than a single Nation of the UK (ie smaller than Scotland)¹
- who generate and distribute their own news content
- whose journalistic output covers a broad range of topical subjects, but in particular local government and democratic institutions

News providers whose target audience is a community of interest (e.g. supporters of a sports team) or whose editorial is local but focussed on a narrow genre (e.g. entertainment listings, satire, etc.) will not be eligible for these partnerships.

Providers of national or international news will not be eligible to take part, nor will those organisations which aggregate or distribute content made by third party providers.

News agencies will not be eligible to receive any content generated by these partnerships. However agencies which supply local content will be eligible to tender for Local Democracy Reporter contracts so long as they meet all other relevant criteria.

News organisations which would prefer to make their application in Welsh or Gaelic should contact Danah Houghton

Meeting the criteria

The Local News Partnerships Eligibility Criteria are in bold, along with any additional information to assist with the application process.

- **A consistent level of contemporaneous coverage of all aspects of public institutions, organisations and civic life, including councils and public bodies.**

¹ If through expansion, acquisition, mergers, or aggregation an organisation becomes national in terms of its intended audience, it will no longer be deemed to be *local* and therefore will not qualify to benefit from the initiatives. National in this sense means: Great Britain; the United Kingdom; England; Scotland; Wales or Northern Ireland.

- Providers should regularly publish, broadcast or distribute news content
 - Interpretation of regularly will depend on the applicant (i.e. it might be hourly for a broadcaster, daily for a news website or weekly for some newspapers)
 - News content should be a key part of the offering to the audience
 - Coverage must already include public affairs, in particular local authorities
 - Providers will be expected to have provided this content for a minimum period of 12 months preceding the date of application
- **Meets and maintains high journalistic standards with reference to both the BBC's Editorial Guidelines and the Editors' Code of Practice. This can be evidenced by having journalists subject to oversight by a recognised regulator such as Ipso and/or by producing a demonstrable track record of quality material.**
 - All applicants will be expected to meet the core journalistic standards of accuracy and fairness common to both the [BBC's Editorial Guidelines](#) and the [Editors' Code of Practice](#)
 - In practice this will be the relevant parts of sections 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, and 18 of the [BBC's Editorial Guidelines](#)
 - Applicants' current content will not be expected to meet the BBC standard of impartiality. Should an applicant wish to go on in future to tender for a Local Democracy Reporter contract, they will be expected to ensure that all content supplied as part of that contract does meet the highest standards of impartiality.
 - Being subject to a regulator or being a member of a regulatory body will be accepted as a commitment to high journalistic standards, so long as local news (as set out above) is central to the offering
 - These bodies include (but are not limited to) Ipso, OFCOM, IMPRESS
- **Must be able to demonstrate a robust method for handling complaints.**
 - Being subject to a regulator or being a member of a regulatory body will be accepted as sufficient demonstration of a complaint handling mechanism
 - Local news providers who are not members of regulatory bodies will need to demonstrate a system to handle editorial complaints and preferably evidence of its operation

Other information

Applicants will need to define their editorial area by top-tier local authority area (e.g. county council, metropolitan borough, London borough, etc.). We have supplied a spreadsheet which lists all such authorities in the UK. This can be downloaded, completed offline and then uploaded.

For larger news providers this will mean indicating a number of council areas. For smaller providers (ie a news website for a single postcode area in a large town), please indicate the single most relevant local authority area.

The process

1. Applications will be completed using the [BBC's Procurement system](#). Click on the box marked <Current Opportunities> at the top left of the screen to apply.

2. The window for applications will be open from 15th May 2017 until 12:00 noon on 26th May 2017
3. Successful applicants will be notified on 8th June 2017
4. There will be a limited opportunity for unsuccessful applicants to challenge the decision
5. The process of Section 1 assessment will be complete no later than 23rd June 2017
6. The process of tendering for the Local Democracy Reporter Service contracts will begin shortly afterwards. The window for tenders will open on a region-by-region basis, and Section 1 partners will be notified automatically