

BBC Trust Review

BBC Network News and Current Affairs

April 2014

The logo for BBC News, featuring the letters 'BBC' in white on a red square background, with the word 'NEWS' in white below it.

BBC
NEWS

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Headline Conclusions

Nothing the BBC does is more important than its journalism. Every week four out of five adults get news from the BBC. They rate its journalism as more trustworthy and better informed than any other provider. Informing the public about events, discovering uncomfortable truths, helping us understand difficult issues, and enabling everyone to challenge and debate them – these are all critical roles for the BBC in informing our democracy.

This review by the BBC Trust has looked for the first time at all the BBC's network news and current affairs on television, on radio, and online. It shows how highly audiences regard the BBC's journalism and also the ways in which it needs to evolve to meet audience expectations and adapt to the changing technology through which news is consumed. So we are asking the BBC to take a range of actions to ensure its journalism retains its place at the heart of civic society.

Network News

The BBC is seen as a very high-quality news provider

The BBC's legacy and heritage remain important in driving audience perceptions. Audiences rate the BBC's network news very highly for its range and depth of coverage, and its focus on using specialists and expert reporters is widely recognised and appreciated.

BBC News' overall reach remains high but it continues to reach some audiences far more effectively than others

Almost 80 per cent of UK adults consume some BBC network news output each week, a figure which has remained stable over time in spite of the significant changes in the broader news market and audience behaviour. But there are parts of the population that the BBC has always found harder to reach, in particular younger audiences, and this challenge has grown in recent years.

The BBC needs to be responsive to change to maintain its effectiveness

New technology and new habits are changing the news landscape and audience behaviour. Although audiences of the BBC's core TV and radio programmes remain high, there are signs of pressure on traditional patterns of consumption, and online is now considered the main source of news for young people. The changes appear to us likely to prove not cosmetic and transitory, but radical and lasting; they pose both significant risks and opportunities for the BBC.

We have identified a number of actions the BBC needs to take to strengthen its delivery of the public purposes to all audiences

While the BBC has established a worldwide reputation for its news online, in future it needs to do even more to ensure its news content is available to all UK audiences when, where and how they want it.

Against a background of strong audience approval overall, there are some parts of the audience who find BBC News 'distant', both in tone and subject matter. All audiences expect the BBC to have a serious agenda built on its traditional values of accuracy and

impartiality, but some want a broader agenda too, better reflecting the diversity of life in the UK today; they want a greater variety of tone, and they want story-telling that is more engaging.

In part this audience need could be addressed by BBC News and Current Affairs looking, sounding and, most importantly, being as diverse as the audience it serves. This is not a new challenge and it is one recognised by the entire industry, but the Trust believes the BBC must take a leadership role for the sector as a whole.

While the BBC's network news has made good progress in reporting domestic issues that apply in some but not all parts of the UK, the task becomes increasingly complex as devolution progresses. The BBC must continue its efforts to find ways for closer co-operation between all its UK newsrooms and increase the network's use of correspondents, reporters and stories from the nations and regions, adding authenticity and diversity of voice.

We also found an appetite among some audiences for a wider international agenda and greater depth and coverage of lesser-known places. We are asking the BBC to exploit better the full scale of its foreign newsgathering capacity to ensure that a wider range of international stories reach domestic audiences.

BBC news has delivered significant efficiency savings in recent years, but will need to manage its budgets and resources carefully to deliver the full range of its aspirations

Between 2008-09 and 2012-13 the BBC News Division delivered around £40 million in recurring savings from its cost base. We are satisfied that these savings have been delivered without causing significant damage to output. BBC News needs to develop a clear plan for how it will deliver the further savings needed, supported by robust information about their costs and likely audience impact.

We will explore introducing a single service licence for the BBC's network journalism

We currently outline our expectations of the BBC's journalism through the separate service licences that specify the remits of each channel and network and of BBC Online. This review has made a cross-cutting assessment of the performance of the BBC's journalism on each service. We are minded to introduce a single service licence for BBC News and Current Affairs which would make a series of public commitments for the BBC as a whole to deliver high-quality journalism across its services.

Introducing such a licence would represent a significant change in the way we govern the BBC's activity (in effect, creating a genre licence), so we will explore further whether this could be done to provide more effective governance and accountability without placing an unnecessary regulatory burden on the BBC or having any other unacceptable impacts.

Network Current Affairs

The BBC's network current affairs output on TV and radio should be securing wider recognition and impact

The BBC makes the most significant investment in Current Affairs programming in the UK. Investigating, unearthing, explaining and challenging are all key parts of the BBC's

journalistic mission, and we will ensure that Current Affairs remains a prominent part of the BBC's services.

Our review has confirmed that the BBC's network Current Affairs output on both TV and radio covers an impressive range of domestic and foreign stories. The BBC makes more current affairs, has larger audiences and is perceived as better than other providers for being high-quality and relevant, and for keeping audiences informed of issues.

However, we also found that audiences expect more from the BBC's Current Affairs. They rate it less well at offering fresh perspectives, covering lesser known stories and covering issues other channels would not. They want it to do more to cover stories and issues which stand out. And for those audiences who consider the quality of investigative journalism as an important factor in differentiating providers, they rate Channel 4 higher than the BBC. We also found a relatively low audience awareness of much of the BBC's Current Affairs output.

The challenge facing the BBC's Current Affairs is therefore to make greater impact. This is a significant challenge to which we expect the BBC to make a significant response. It is a challenge of not only ideas, story-selection, resourcing, innovation and production, but also of scheduling and branding.

BBC One's current affairs should lead the way, and to support and secure its place we will change the wording of BBC One's service licence to strengthen the channel's remit for this genre.

The BBC's political journalism plays a unique role in informing UK democracy

Alongside its dedicated political news coverage, the BBC provides more generally a wide range of output that covers political issues and institutions from the UK and abroad through its TV, radio and online programming. This includes discussion, debate and opinion programmes and is underpinned by BBC Parliament and Democracy Live, which provide unmediated coverage of Parliamentary and Assembly proceedings from the UK and Europe. In doing so, the BBC is providing a unique public service and fulfilling an important civic purpose.

These, and many other programmes of political discussion and debate, are commitments the BBC makes in order to fulfil its purpose of enabling audiences to play a full part in political life – and not just at election time. We expect the BBC to maintain this high level of commitment and to seek new ways of engaging additional audiences in democratic debate through new technologies and through every media platform. In addition, we believe there may be scope for Democracy Live to increase its audience - which is low in comparison with BBC Parliament - especially at key moments of democratic debate, and we look to the BBC to develop a plan to achieve this.

The BBC's contribution to plurality

This review has been about the consumption of BBC journalism and the audience's expectations of it. But we are keenly aware of the need for "plurality" in the overall news market in the UK – loosely defined as the number of different voices, opinions and agendas available to the public. We are equally aware of the critical contribution the BBC makes to plurality. So this review emphasises the importance of BBC programmes

speaking with a wider range of voices, reflecting diversity of opinion, and offering the broadest possible agenda for domestic and international news.

The BBC's approach to news and its responsibility to the public are different from those of other providers and are rooted in its Royal Charter, where its first public purpose is to sustain citizenship and civil society. The BBC's constitution and its public funding differentiate its journalism from other providers, even those who share its aim for serious and well-informed reportage and analysis, whether in printed or broadcast media or online. The BBC's journalism is subject to intensive scrutiny from the Trust in terms of its impartiality and accuracy – and for broadcasting standards generally the Trust sets detailed compliance requirements that go beyond those set by Ofcom for other public service broadcasters.

We believe these differences in standards and in regulation explain, to a large degree, why audiences choose the BBC and why so many of them rate it as the best and most trusted source of accurate information. Not everyone agrees with this argument, and some of the BBC's commercial competitors disagree profoundly. However, we believe the range of opinions about the size and scale of BBC News are best debated as part of the Charter Review process.

In the meantime we consider that the BBC will be more successful in serving all parts of the audience if it pursues the actions set out in this report aimed at bringing its journalism closer to the entire population of the UK, in particular:

- exploiting new digital technologies to reach new audiences [paragraphs 65 to 75]
- seeking even greater variety in tone and agenda [paragraphs 76 to 83]
- showing greater diversity on-air and in its production staff [paragraphs 84 to 89].

Our findings sit alongside the conclusions the Trust drew from its 2013 independent review of the breadth of opinion in BBC output, conducted by Stuart Prebble. Following that review, the Trust has already asked the BBC to consider how BBC journalists can broaden both the range of people who comment on stories and the range of stories itself, to ensure that the BBC is gathering its opinions – and its stories – from as wide a range of sources as is necessary.

We will examine the BBC's response to both the Prebble review and this service review in the course of the next year.

Actions

These are the principal actions we are asking the BBC to take as a result of this review.

The BBC must continue to develop the content and delivery of its online and digital news so that it remains relevant for all audiences

The BBC needs its online news provision to keep pace with audience expectations, in particular: better use of graphics and more audio/video content; a more in-depth mobile news offer; and wider use of social media and other third-party platforms.

We consider the BBC's provision of online news content for younger audiences is under-developed in comparison with its tailored broadcast offerings on TV and radio.

We expect the BBC to address this, while actively considering the potential market impact of any changes to its digital news services before they are implemented, to make sure that:

- the BBC does not simply duplicate what is already on offer elsewhere in the market
- wherever possible, the BBC provides external links to alternative news providers and credits any external sources of particular stories
- the BBC applies the Competitive Impact Principle (under the Fair Trading rules set by the Trust) to identify any potential market impact from a change to a service and does whatever it can to minimise that impact

Timing: Ongoing, but we will review progress in this area in one year

The BBC should improve the variety of its agenda and tone and refine its story-telling

The audience insight we have gathered for this review suggests there are opportunities for the BBC's news to provide a greater variety of tone and agenda, and to use more engaging story-telling.

There is no evidence that radical change in editorial direction is necessary, but audiences need to be able to identify more readily with the BBC. They should be attracted by both the stories it tells and the ways in which it tells them. The *BBC News at Six* and *BBC News at Ten* programmes should be as recognised for the excellence of their story-telling as they are for their authority and expertise.

Audiences need to recognise their own lives, perspectives and concerns duly reflected in the BBC's programmes. BBC News needs to be heard as having a multiplicity of voices, with its own authority grounded in its experience and understanding of the many interests, cultures and communities that make up the UK.

In part this will be achieved by developing a workforce, on and off-air, of greater diversity. We expect to see concrete proposals from the BBC to achieve this, and further progress in terms of both gender and ethnicity.

Timing: We will follow up progress in this area within one year

The BBC should find ways to increase the impact of its current affairs output

The BBC needs to find ways to increase the impact of its current affairs output on TV and radio, ensuring that its stories and issues stand out and that commissioning decisions are driven, above all, by the significance or relevance of the subject matter.

We will continue to monitor quality scores and audience levels for Current Affairs. We recognise that programmes aimed at informing national and international debate are a critically important part of the BBC's remit, but may not necessarily appeal to large audiences. The BBC needs to ensure that programming of such importance is scheduled, promoted and signposted to audiences in a way to maximise its potential impact.

Timing: Ongoing, but we will review progress in this area in one year.

In support of these efforts, we will strengthen the BBC One service licence to ensure that its commitment to Current Affairs captures our expectations for this genre, as well as guaranteeing a minimum level of output each year.

Timing: By autumn 2014

The BBC should ensure that a wider range of international stories reach domestic audiences

Since co-locating last year with the World Service, domestic news programmes have begun to benefit from the country-specific expertise and diversity of its journalists. At the same time, the BBC's commercially-funded international TV news channel, BBC World News, has increased its ambition over the past year, aiming to cover a wider range of stories and feature a more diverse range of voices. We want the BBC to exploit better the full scale of its foreign newsgathering capacity so that it brings a wider range of international stories and international understanding to domestic audiences.

We recognise there is limited capacity for the BBC to expand its international coverage on the core bulletins. But the BBC has many other outlets and platforms, including the News Channel and News Online, where capacity is available to serve audiences who have a particular interest in international news as well as the growing number of licence fee payers who have family or cultural ties to other parts of the world.

If the BBC can propose a sufficiently ambitious plan for achieving these objectives we will consider ending BBC Four's service licence commitment to offer a daily global news programme, given its relatively low impact.

Timing: We will consider a plan from the BBC in autumn 2014

We will explore introducing a single service licence for the BBC's network journalism

We will undertake further work in the coming months to be satisfied that a single service licence for network news and current affairs would add to the BBC's public accountability for its most important activities without creating an undue regulatory burden or having any unacceptable impacts. We would consult publicly later this year on the terms of any licence.

Timing: By autumn 2014

Main Report

Introduction

The BBC Trust is the governing body of the BBC and it is our responsibility to get the best out of the BBC for licence fee payers. One of the ways we do this is by carrying out an in-depth review of each of the BBC's services. This review covers the BBC's network news and current affairs produced for UK audiences on television, radio and online, including the following.

- On TV, the daily national bulletins on BBC One, relevant weekday morning output and *Newsnight* on BBC Two, *60 seconds* news on BBC Three and *World News Today* on BBC Four. The review also covers the News Channel and BBC Parliament.
- On radio, news bulletins and *Newsbeat* on Radio 1 and 1Xtra, news bulletins on Radio 2, 3 and 6 Music, *The Jeremy Vine Show* on Radio 2, Radio 4's daily and weekly news programming (such as *Today*, *World at One*, *PM*, *The World Tonight*, *The World This Weekend*) and daily politics output, 5 live's daily news output (largely its weekday daytime schedule) and news on the Asian Network.
- Online, the news sections of BBC Online and the Red Button, including mobile apps and use of social media.
- Current affairs output includes *Panorama*, *This World* and around 60 hours of other output on BBC Two and BBC Three, as well as political output such as *Question Time* and *Daily Politics*. On radio this includes the range of Radio 4 and 5 live's current affairs and politics programming.

The review excludes:

- Global News output (including The World Service and BBC World News)
- news output made for and shown in the UK's nations and regions (such as Radio Scotland, BBC London, the 6:30 TV nations and regions news, *Newsnight Scotland*)
- an assessment of impartiality, as we have an ongoing programme of work reviewing the BBC's impartiality
- issues of market impact
- output that could be interpreted as 'news-like', such as the *One Show* and other topical output.

We carried out a public consultation at the end of 2013 and received over 9,000 responses from licence fee payers. We also commissioned qualitative and quantitative audience research to inform our thinking for the review. We received a number of responses from the industry and other stakeholder organisations and have spoken to a number of the other news providers in the UK. We also interviewed many of the BBC's editors, commissioners and most senior journalists. This evidence, alongside performance monitoring and financial analysis, has given us a clear picture of the current state of the BBC's network journalism as well as identifying areas where it can develop.

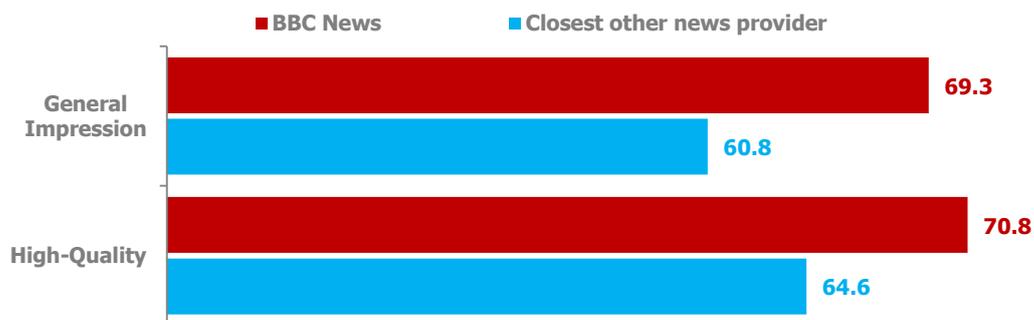
Part 1: Current Performance

The BBC’s network news is widely consumed and highly regarded by audiences

The BBC is seen as a very high-quality news provider

- 1 The audience’s overall impression of BBC News is high. Some 69 per cent of users are ‘high approvers’ of the service and the majority (71 per cent) strongly agree that the BBC provides high-quality news coverage¹. When compared with the audience reaction to other news providers the ‘general impression’ audiences have of BBC News is significantly higher. It is rated better at providing high-quality coverage, and is regarded as being ‘best for news’ on TV, radio and online. The BBC’s television news is rated particularly highly, as almost two-thirds of adults state the BBC is the best provider.

Figure 1: General Impression and High-Quality perceptions of BBC News and other news providers (2013)



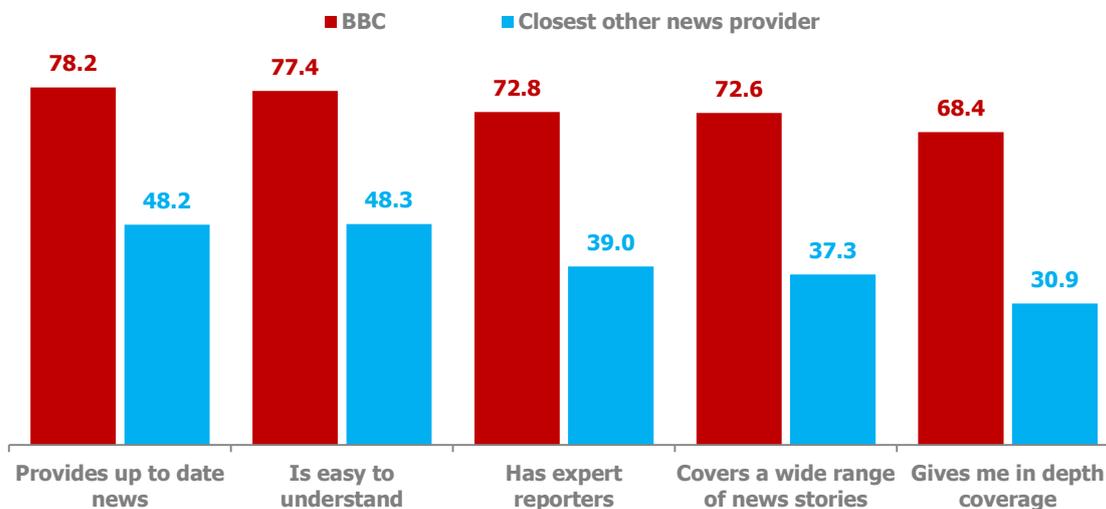
Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker 2013, adults 16+ who have used the service in the last seven days. Results are the proportion of users who rated the service at 8 or more out of 10.

- 2 The BBC also tracks audience perceptions of its news coverage for accuracy, impartiality and trustworthiness. In 2013 some 76 per cent of adults agreed BBC News was accurate, while 73 per cent felt it was trustworthy and 67 per cent that it was impartial². These findings are supported by our own audience research commissioned for this review which found that BBC platforms emerge as first choice for news for the majority of audiences and are seen by most to be the ‘best in class’ for impartiality.
- 3 BBC News also measures its performance against a range of other criteria, including perceptions of expertise, depth and range. As shown in Figure 2, BBC News is significantly more likely than any other news provider to be associated with these attributes. Our own audience research supports these findings. The research shows that the BBC News brand is heavily associated with depth and expertise. Its legacy and heritage remain important in driving brand perceptions and its focus on using specialists and expert reporters is very widely recognised and appreciated by audiences.

¹Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker, 2013, adults 16+ who have used the service in the last seven days. ‘High approvers’ are those rating the service at of 8 or more out of 10 when asked their general impression of BBC News.

² Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker, 2013, adults 16+ who have ever used BBC News, so are not comparable with the scores outlined in paragraph 1

Figure 2: Proportion of audience associating BBC News and other providers with a range of news attributes (2013)



Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker 2013, all adults aged 16+ aware of BBC News / other news providers

Audience perceptions of BBC News have fallen slightly over the past year

4 While the metrics the BBC uses to monitor perceptions of BBC News are high and remain so, there have been some declines in the last year. The ‘general impression’ and ‘high-quality’ scores both fell slightly in 2013 compared with 2012, and the proportion of the audience that agrees that BBC News is accurate, trustworthy, independent and impartial has also fallen (all by between 3 and 4 percentage points).³

5 These declines first started following the series of events that affected the BBC at the end of 2012 and early 2013, starting with the revelations about Jimmy Savile. While there were signs of recovery at the start of 2013, perceptions have since slipped back. While we note that the declines have been relatively small and perceptions of the BBC remain significantly ahead of other news providers, it is unclear at this stage whether these are an indication of long term changes. However, we recognise the importance of retaining high audience perceptions of the BBC in this area, so we will continue to monitor these measures very closely over the coming months.

The overall reach of BBC News remains high, but there are some long-standing variations in consumption among different demographic groups

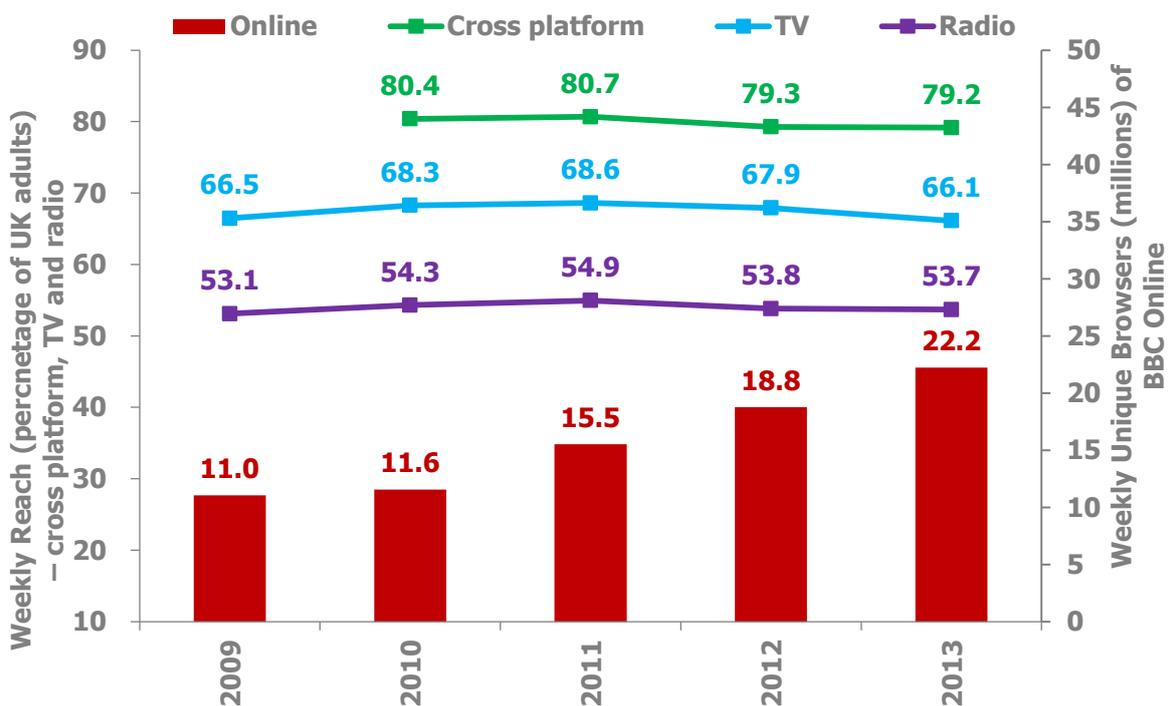
6 Almost 80 per cent of UK adults consume some BBC network news output each week, a level which has remained fairly stable during the past few years⁴. As illustrated in Figure 3, this period has seen a significant growth in the number of browsers using BBC Online, which has been largely additional to, rather than at the expense of, traditional news consumption on TV and radio. We can look at this by platform

³ Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker, all adults aged 16+

⁴ Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker (previously Pan BBC Tracking Survey) all adults aged 16+. Note that the survey question was changed in 2009, so data prior to 2010 is not directly comparable.

- BBC News on television is watched by around two-thirds of all UK adults each week⁵. While this has declined slightly in the last few years (down from 69 per cent in 2011), this reflects overall trends in viewing to BBC television, and we note that some individual bulletins have increased their audience in this time.
- Around 54 per cent of adults listen to BBC Radio News in an average week. While this level has been fairly stable during the last five years, over the longer term it has increased slightly, from the 50 per cent who listened each week in 2006. This increase is in line with overall trends in listening to BBC network radio.⁶
- Usage of BBC News Online has grown significantly over recent years. In 2013 more than 22 million 'unique browsers' accessed the site each week, and this has grown substantially each year since 2010, as people are accessing the site on more and more devices⁷. While 'browser reach' has grown significantly, the number of people using the service (not shown in the chart) has increased at a slower rate in recent years, now standing at around 26 per cent of adults each week. News on the BBC Red Button (not shown in the chart) is accessed by around 13 per cent of adults each week, up from around 8 per cent in 2009⁸.

Figure 3: BBC Network News weekly reach (per cent) on TV, Radio and all platforms, and weekly unique browsers (millions) of BBC News Online



Source: - BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker (previously Pan BBC Tracking Survey) for total cross platform, BARB for TV, RAJAR for radio and BBC iStats (previously BBC SAGE) for online. Figures shown are percentage of UK adults for cross platform, TV and Radio reach, weekly 'unique browsers' for online reach.

⁵ Source: BARB, all adults aged 16+, 3 minute weekly reach of 'News: National/International' and 'News: Miscellaneous'

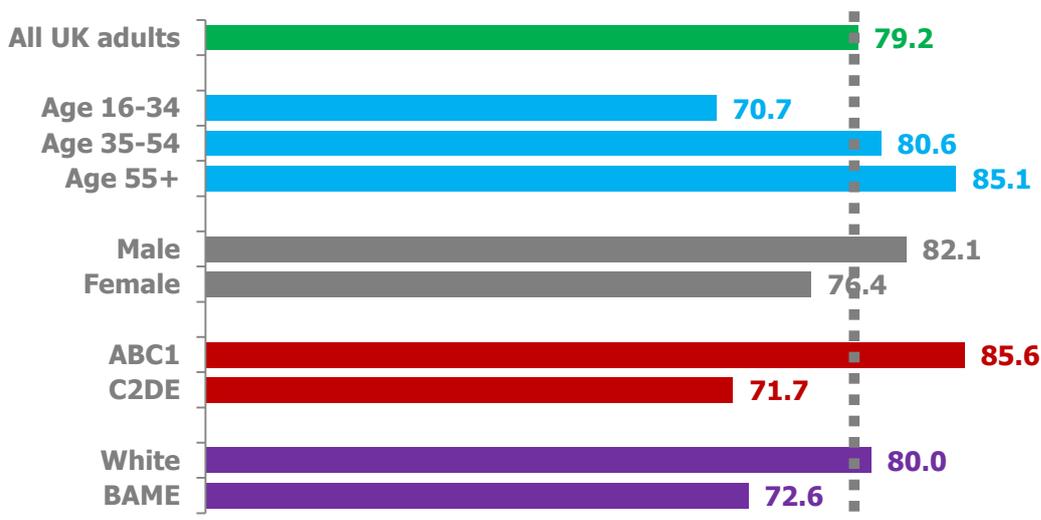
⁶ Source: RAJAR, all adults aged 15+

⁷ Source: BBC iStats (previously BBC SAGE server logs)

⁸ Source: BBC Cross Media Insight Survey (previously Nunwood Media Tracker for BBC Red Button reach)

- 7 In addition to its strong use of traditional platforms, BBC News has successfully extended its content onto new digital platforms, including mobile and tablet apps and using third-party sites such as Instagram, YouTube and other social media. The @BBCBreaking Twitter feed is followed by more than 9 million people, higher than any other UK news provider, although it is lower than @CNN and @NYtimes.
- 8 Despite the very strong overall reach figures highlighted above, usage of BBC News varies significantly by demographic group, being lower than average among younger audiences, women, C2DE and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: 'Claimed' reach (per cent) of BBC News by demographic group



Source: BBC Accountability and Reputation Tracker 2013

- 9 When looked at by individual nation of the UK, the BBC's news has a higher than average reach in Wales and lower than average in Northern Ireland, while Scotland and England are broadly similar.
- 10 The differences in usage of BBC News by age are most clearly manifested in reach on TV. While on average 66 per cent of UK adults watch at least 3 minutes of BBC News on TV each week, this is considerably lower among 16 to 24 year olds, at just 33 per cent, while around 47 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds watch⁹. We consider these demographic differences in more detail in Part 2.

The BBC is meeting its statutory and service licence commitments for volumes of news

- 11 The BBC has two statutory commitments¹⁰ for its news output. It must broadcast a minimum of 1,380 hours of news on BBC One, of which at least 275 hours must be in peak time. As shown in Table 1 BBC One has fulfilled these commitments over the last

⁹ Source: BARB all adults aged 16+, 3 minute weekly reach of 'News: National/International' and 'News: Miscellaneous' genres on BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, BBC News

¹⁰ These are Ofcom Tier 2 quotas set by the BBC Trust in consultation with Ofcom (for agreement in some cases)

three years. In 2012 (the latest year's available data)¹¹, it broadcast 1,639 hours of news, with 281 hours in peak.

- 12 We have also set the BBC a range of service licence commitments for delivering news on TV and radio. Radio 4 has a commitment to broadcast at least 2,500 hours of news and current affairs programming each year. In 2012-13 it delivered 3,424 hours, a slight increase from 3,409 in 2011-12. We have also set commitments for news output on The News Channel, Radio 1, Radio 2, 5 live, 6 Music and Radio 1Xtra, as well as a number of commitments for BBC Parliament, all of which have been met over the last three years, as shown in Table 1.
- 13 In its response to our public consultation the RadioCentre stated that Radio 2 was not meeting its service licence commitments with regards to overall volume of news and current affairs programming. It stated that the only prescribed current affairs programme, *The Jeremy Vine Show*, while widely acclaimed as high-quality could not be judged to contain 100 per cent news output. The RadioCentre asserts that less than half of *The Jeremy Vine Show* should count as news content, as it estimates at least one in four of the 'news' features on the show should not be considered as genuine news stories.
- 14 We have investigated these concerns and believe the BBC calculates its compliance against this condition on a reasonable basis. The BBC arrives at the total for news and current affairs on Radio 2 by adding together its news summaries, bulletins and headlines, travel news, sport news, business news and 60 per cent of *The Jeremy Vine Show*. The 60 per cent figure is based on the BBC's estimate that it typically plays no more than 40 minutes of music across the two hour programme, and that the majority of the remaining speech content qualifies as news and current affairs.
- 15 As we stated in our service review of 5 live published in 2012, 'news' is a highly subjective term, both in terms of subject matter and how it is presented. While it is clear that not all speech content can be legitimately considered as news - and to qualify towards news commitments, content must be topical and rooted in current events - we have found in this review that audiences are very positive about some of the BBC's news programmes that offer different tones and agendas from the BBC's core bulletins; such programmes include *The Jeremy Vine Show*. Indeed this particular programme has a specified remit to cover current affairs such as consumer interests, education and health in an accessible manner. We have found no evidence that it is not meeting this remit in this regard.
- 16 We also heard some concerns regarding 5 live's news programming; in particular that entertainment topics continue to feature extensively throughout news programming. In our service review of 5 live, published in 2012, we agreed that programme by programme measurement of the station's news quota would continue to be appropriate, as long as it is clear which programmes are included. Since then, each year, in its public reporting of service licence compliance, the station has named the programmes in its schedule that contribute to the 75 per cent news commitment, and we believe the station is meeting its service licence commitments in this regard.

¹¹ 2013 data will be published in the 2013-14 annual report

Table 1: Performance against statutory and service licence commitments related to News output

Service	Commitment	10/11	11/12	12/13
BBC One	Broadcast at least 1,380 hours of news (1)	1,617	1,606	1,639
	Broadcast at least 275 hours of news in peak (1)	278	280	281
Radio 1	Broadcast at least 1 hour of news during daytime each weekday, including two extended bulletins	1 hour 7 mins	1 hour 7 mins	1 hour 7 mins
	Provide regular bulletins during daytime at weekends	Yes	Yes	Yes
Radio 2	Broadcast at least 16 hours news and current affairs programming each week, including regular bulletins	18	19	18
Radio 4	Broadcast at least 2,500 hours of news and current affairs programmes each year	3,399	3,409	3,424
5 live	News and current affairs programming represents around three-quarters of output each year (2)	75%	75%	74.3%
Radio 1Xtra	Broadcast at least 1 hour of news during daytime each weekday, including two extended bulletins	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
	Regular weekend daytime news bulletins	Yes	Yes	Yes
6 Music	Broadcast at least 6 hours of news each week	6 hours	6 hours	6 hours 10 mins
BBC News Channel	At least 90 per cent of broadcast hours should be originations (1)	96%	97%	97%
	Feature more international news coverage than the other main continuous news channel(s) in the UK	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Feature more local and regional news coverage than other main continuous news channel(s) in the UK, in part through giving regional perspectives to national stories	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Report sports news throughout the day, rounding up the day's main sports stories every evening, delivering at least 100 hours of sports news each year	Yes, 135	Yes, 117	Yes, 149
BBC Parliament	At least 90 per cent of broadcast hours should be originations (1)	98%	98%	98%
	Broadcast at least 70 hours of coverage of the Westminster Parliament during a normal sitting week...	78	81	74
	...including at least 10 hours of Select Committees	13	13	14
	Broadcast at least 260 hours of proceedings of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly each year, with significant proportions of coverage given to each	393	303	340
	Broadcast at least 100 hours of programming from Brussels and Strasbourg (including repeats) each year	149	150	149

Source: BBC Performance against Statements of Programme Policy 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Notes: 1) These are statutory Ofcom Tier 2 quotas and results are based on calendar rather than financial years. These quotas and performance figures are for network programming only and exclude overnight transmissions of BBC News.

2) Measured on a programme by programme basis. Since 2011-12 these have been named in the BBC's public reporting of service licence compliance.

Taken as a whole, audiences believe that BBC news is delivering the BBC's public purposes effectively, although there are gaps in some areas

- 17 The BBC's Royal Charter defines the main objective of the BBC as the promotion of six public purposes. For this review we have assessed how well the BBC's news and current affairs output delivers three of those public purposes to audiences
- sustaining citizenship and civil society
 - bringing the world to the UK
 - representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities.

Sustaining citizenship and civil society

The BBC generally delivers its commitments in this area well

- 18 This purpose requires the BBC to provide high-quality journalism to a wide audience, to facilitate conversation and debate about news and current affairs, and to build understanding of UK politics and political institutions.
- 19 As outlined above, overall audience perceptions of the quality of BBC News are high. The BBC's news output is seen by many as comprehensive and trustworthy, with a strong reputation for being professional and telling stories in a 'straight' manner. This reputation bolsters perceptions of accuracy, expertise and depth of analysis. Its downside, though, is in not engaging as well with younger audiences and those in lower socio-economic groups. This challenge, and the BBC's response, is discussed in Part 3.
- 20 In our research we asked audiences to rate the BBC against a number of criteria. The BBC was rated very favourably at covering the most important issues of the day, covering stories in depth, covering a range of topics and having expert reporters. Very few respondents rated the BBC's news unfavourably for these characteristics.
- 21 The BBC was also seen to do more than anyone else to facilitate public discussion and debate on the day's issues and topics. Output such as *Question Time*, *The Andrew Marr Show*, *Newsnight*, *The Jeremy Vine Show* on Radio 2 and phone-ins on Radio 5 live were all seen as making important contributions to this area.
- 22 Alongside coverage on daily news bulletins and the News Channel, the BBC provides a very wide range of output covering UK politics, political issues and institutions across TV, radio and online.
- 23 This includes discussion and debate programmes (e.g. *Question Time*, *Any Questions*), daily political coverage on BBC Two daytime (*Daily Politics*) as well as weekly opinion and round-up programmes such as *This Week*, *The Andrew Marr Show* and *Piennar's Politics*. Audiences to this type of output vary, with *Question Time* having the largest (around 2.5 million viewers on BBC One and 500,000 listeners on the Radio 5 live simulcast).¹²
- 24 In support of this programming BBC Parliament and Democracy Live provide unmediated coverage of parliamentary proceedings throughout the UK. In doing so the BBC is providing a unique public service and fulfilling an important civic purpose.

¹² Source: BARB average audience ,adults 16+ 2013, and RAJAR, adults 15+ Q4 2013

- 25 BBC Parliament reached around 670,000 people each week in 2013. This has been a stable figure in recent years, although it can rise significantly for big political moments – more than 1 million watched BBC Parliament in the week of the budget in 2013. The channel’s audience skews heavily male and older.¹³ We have published further analysis of BBC Parliament’s performance on our website as a separate Annex to this report.
- 26 Democracy Live is an online portal launched in 2009 and offers up to 8 live video streams of proceedings in Westminster, the devolved nations of the UK and the EU. It is accessed by around 38,000 unique browsers each week¹⁴. While this can rise for significant political moments – 121,000 unique browsers accessed Democracy Live in the week of the vote on same-sex marriage in February 2013, for instance – its overall usage remains low.
- 27 This may, in part, reflect public perception of Parliamentary debate, as well as interest in this area typically being higher among audiences less likely to use the internet. But we believe there may be scope for Democracy Live to increase its audience, especially at key moments of democratic debate, and for the BBC to secure better value for money for its investment in this important area. We look to the BBC to develop a plan to achieve this. Establishing a higher level of awareness of Democracy Live might be a first step, possibly through more aligned branding with BBC Parliament, as well as better integration with the BBC’s online politics news and appropriate cross-promotion from broadcast channels.

Bringing the world to the UK

Audiences generally rate the BBC’s global coverage highly, although the BBC faces challenges in meeting the expectations of different audience groups

- 28 This purpose requires the BBC to provide high-quality coverage of global issues in its news and current affairs output for a broad range of audiences and to ensure a breadth of perspective on international affairs.
- 29 Audiences rate the BBC’s news relatively highly for its global coverage. Our research shows that many audiences see BBC News as the trusted ‘go-to’ source on the big global stories and events, for instance the Philippines Typhoon at the time our research was undertaken. Our research also suggests that most audiences feel the balance of global and domestic coverage in the BBC’s core bulletins broadly meets their expectations.
- 30 We found evidence that audiences recognise and appreciate the BBC’s extensive network of overseas correspondents both in prominent and lesser-known areas. There is also anecdotal evidence that the growing use of indigenous bi-lingual correspondents to report to domestic audiences from foreign bureaux is appreciated by audiences, and is something widely thought by those we talked to in the industry as adding authenticity to the BBC’s reporting.
- 31 However we also found a varied appetite among different audiences for global news, and the BBC faces a challenge to satisfy the needs of both heavier and lighter users. In general terms, audiences that consume less news seem satisfied by a lighter coverage,

¹³ Source: BARB, 3 minute weekly reach, all adults

¹⁴ Source: BBC iStats, 2013

while among heavier news consumers there is an appetite for a wider international agenda and greater depth and coverage of lesser known places.

- 32 Given the BBC's resources and its extensive range of foreign bureaux, we were surprised that our research found that some of the BBC's competitors were seen by heavier news consumers as having a wider-reaching global news agenda and were better than the BBC at discovering stories in lesser-known areas. This finding chimes with a submission to this review from the International Broadcasting Trust which argued that BBC News tends to cover the same international agenda with similar treatment and use of pictures as many other UK News providers.
- 33 We are therefore asking the BBC to develop a plan to ensure a wider range of international stories reach domestic audiences. We note that the simulcast of World News broadcast at 7pm on BBC Four continues to struggle to attract audiences, partly because it opens the channel's daily schedule and therefore inherits no audience. Even so, its average audience is around 50,000 and has fallen by around 12 per cent on the previous year, at a time when BBC Four was increasing its overall audience. We will consider ending BBC Four's service licence commitments in this area if the BBC can propose a plan to showcase its international journalism more effectively for domestic audiences.

Action 1: The BBC should ensure a wider range of international stories reach domestic audiences

Since co-locating last year with the World Service, domestic news programmes have begun to benefit from the country-specific expertise and diversity of its journalists. At the same time, the BBC's commercially-funded international TV news channel, BBC World News, has increased its ambition over the past year, aiming to cover a wider range of stories and feature a more diverse range of voices. We want the BBC to exploit better the full scale of its foreign newsgathering capacity so that it brings a wider range of international stories and international understanding to domestic audiences.

We recognise there is limited capacity for the BBC to expand its international coverage on the core bulletins. But the BBC has many other outlets and platforms, including the News Channel and News Online, where capacity is available to serve audiences who have a particular interest in international news and the growing number of licence fee payers who have family or cultural ties to other parts of the world.

If the BBC can propose a sufficiently ambitious plan for achieving these objectives we will consider ending BBC Four's service licence commitment to offer a daily global news programme, given its relatively low impact.

Timing: We will consider a plan from the BBC in autumn 2014

Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities

The BBC's network news has made good progress in reporting domestic issues that apply in some but not all of the UK, although the task becomes increasingly complex as devolution progresses

- 34 This purpose requires the BBC to report stories and issues about the UK's nations, regions and communities to the rest of the UK.
- 35 Our research indicates that, at a high-level, audiences feel that reasonable weight is given by the BBC's network news to stories from around the UK. However, we recognise that many audiences cannot consider the BBC's network news in isolation from their experiences of their national or regional output.
- 36 Through the lens of network output alone, we published research in 2008 which found that some viewers felt that the BBC's network news output was not covering politics and policies in a way that enabled all audiences to understand fully what was happening in different parts of the UK. In subsequent follow-up work published in 2010 we found the BBC had increased its references to the devolved nations and made significant improvements in the accuracy of its network reporting of domestic stories that apply only in specific parts of the UK.
- 37 It is clear that major improvements in this area have been made. We note, for example, the response from Audience Council Scotland to this review which cited coverage of three major UK stories that took place in Scotland in late 2013 as examples of BBC news "at its best". These stories were the future of the petrochemical plant at Grangemouth, the BAE Systems job losses at Govan and Portsmouth, and the helicopter crash in Glasgow. The Council also stated that coverage of another significant story – the launch of the Scottish Government's White Paper on Scotland's Future in November 2013 – was comprehensive, though they felt it lacked the expected degree of subsequent follow-up analysis.
- 38 However, the Audience Council Scotland, as well as those in Wales and Northern Ireland and some respondents to our public consultation, also cited evidence that there is room for the BBC to do more to reflect the increasingly complex policy landscape of the UK.
- 39 The challenge for the BBC's network news is to make stories that are highly significant for audiences in one part of the UK both relevant and engaging to audiences not directly affected. This challenge will get progressively harder as legislative differences across the UK increase, and the political, social and economic priorities of each of the devolved nations and the English regions diverge.
- 40 We will consider when we review Nations and Regions journalism in 2015 whether further measures may be appropriate to ensure that every part of the UK receives the best service of international, UK, and national/regional news in the context of evolving diversity of agenda. In the meantime, we would expect to see the BBC continue its efforts in the following areas.
- To find ways for closer co-operation between all the BBC's UK newsrooms, especially in the news hour between 6 and 7pm. We note, for example, how effectively their combined resources can work together in the public's interest at times of major breaking news events, such as the past winter's weather.
 - To increase the network's use of correspondents and reporters based in the nations and regions. This can add to both the speed and the authenticity of local

stories, and there is evidence that audiences appreciate seeing and hearing “their own” BBC journalists on the network news. We endorse this approach, not least because it can be an effective way of adding to the network’s diversity of voice and helping it better reflect the UK today.

Part 2: The Key Challenges Facing BBC News

The BBC faces a number of significant challenges to maintain its performance, posed by technological change and consequent shifts in audience behaviour

41 The growth of mobile technology and methods of communication seen over recent years means there are significant challenges as well as opportunities for traditional news providers. As choice and competition have increased, consumption habits have become much more complex. Although the BBC's reach remains high, there are signs of pressure on television and radio consumption.

42 Our work for this review has looked at consumption trends across TV, radio and online in detail to try to establish the extent of the challenge for the BBC and to consider how it should respond.

Television remains the key platform for the BBC to deliver its news to large audiences

43 In an average week most UK adults (77 per cent) watch at least 3 minutes of news on TV (on any channel), of which the vast majority watch some BBC news (which reaches 66 per cent of UK adults).¹⁵

44 The BBC's share of news viewing in the UK has grown in recent years, and in 2013 the BBC accounted for around 74 per cent of news viewing across all channels¹⁶. The average BBC news viewer watches for around 2 hours 30 minutes each week, and this has increased slightly in recent years. These figures are driven, in part, by the popularity of the BBC News Channel and BBC One's *Breakfast* programme which viewers tend to watch for much longer periods of time than core news bulletins.

45 This means BBC One delivers the largest amount of the BBC's news reach, with its news bulletins being watched by some 63 per cent of UK adults each week. Of all those who watch some television news on the BBC, all but 3 per cent get at least part of it from BBC One.¹⁷

46 The trends in viewing to the BBC's television news bulletins are shown in Figure 5. In 2007, BBC One introduced an additional one minute news bulletin, broadcast on weekdays at around 8pm. Due to the channel's high audience during this peak time slot, this is one of the most watched news bulletins, with an average audience of 3.9 million in 2013. The bulletin reaches around 24 per cent of adults each week and adds around 1.1 million additional viewers to BBC news (based on 1 minute reach). These 'unique reach' levels are highest among younger, female and C2DE audiences.

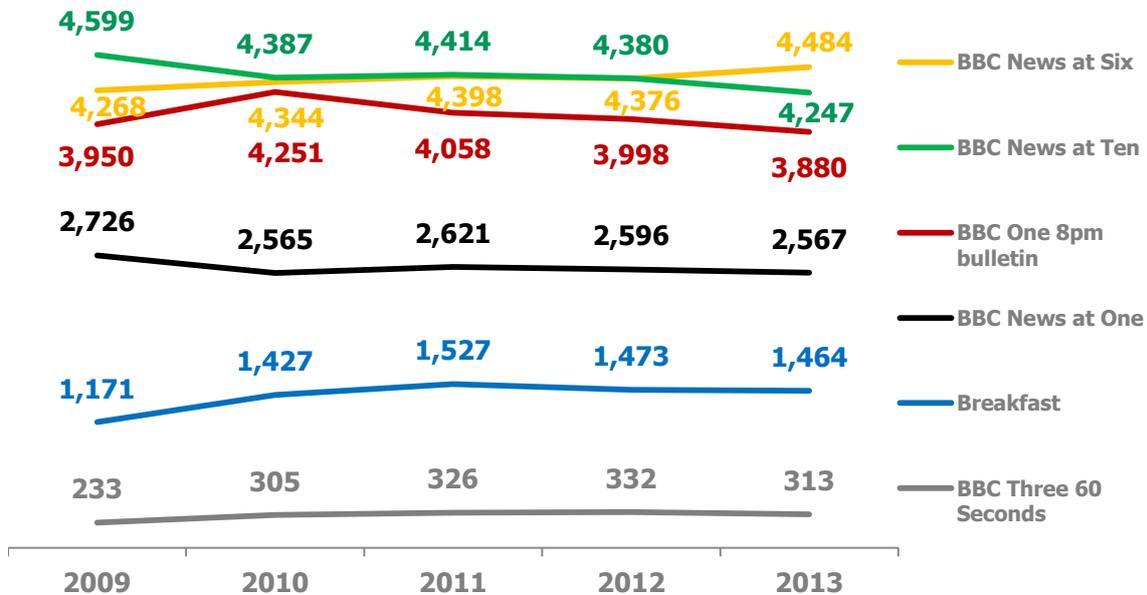
¹⁵ Source: BARB reach of 'News: National/International' and 'News: Miscellaneous'

¹⁶ Source: BARB. Proportion of viewing among all adults to 'News: National/International' and 'News: Miscellaneous' on BBC TV out of viewing to these genres across all channels reported in BARB figures

¹⁷ Source: BARB 3 minute weekly reach, all adults. Note this does not include viewing to programmes shorter than 3 minutes long.

- 47 BBC Three's *60 Seconds* news updates are watched by an average audience of just over 300,000, but over a week they reach 6.3 million people, equating to 13 per cent of all adults.

Figure 5: Average audience (000s) of selected BBC TV network news programmes



Source: BARB, all adults

- 48 The BBC News Channel reaches around 19 per cent of UK adults each week. Although this level has fallen slightly after many years of growth, it continues to attract substantial audiences at times of major developing news stories¹⁸. For instance, 6.7 million people watched the channel when President Obama was sworn in in January 2013.
- 49 The BBC News Channel also remains the most-watched continuous news channel in the UK by a considerable margin. The closest comparable provider, Sky News, reaches 11 per cent of adults each week. Looking at performance within Sky households only, the reach of the BBC News Channel is still higher than Sky News (watched by 16 per cent and 14 per cent respectively), although the gap is very small.
- 50 The average amount of time viewers spend watching the BBC News Channel has increased slightly to around 1 hour 44 minutes of the channel per week, up from just over an hour and a half in 2009. While Sky News reaches fewer people, the amount of time its viewers spend watching the channel is actually slightly higher, at just less than two hours each week.
- 51 In common with viewing trends to BBC News overall, BBC News Channel viewing is significantly skewed towards an older audience, reaching 28 per cent of 55+ adults, compared with 9 per cent of 16-34s. In contrast, however, with the overall BBC News trends, reach among BAME audiences is higher than average, the channel being watched

¹⁸ Source: BARB, 3 minute weekly reach, all adults

by 24 per cent of BAME adults, compared with 18 per cent of white adults. These trends are also seen in the Sky News audience, which reaches 18 per cent of BAME audiences and 10 per cent of white audiences.

But there are signs of pressure on traditional consumption habits

52 On the whole, the comparative performance of the BBC's news bulletins is strong. However, more detailed analysis reveals signs of fragility, with the key points highlighted below.

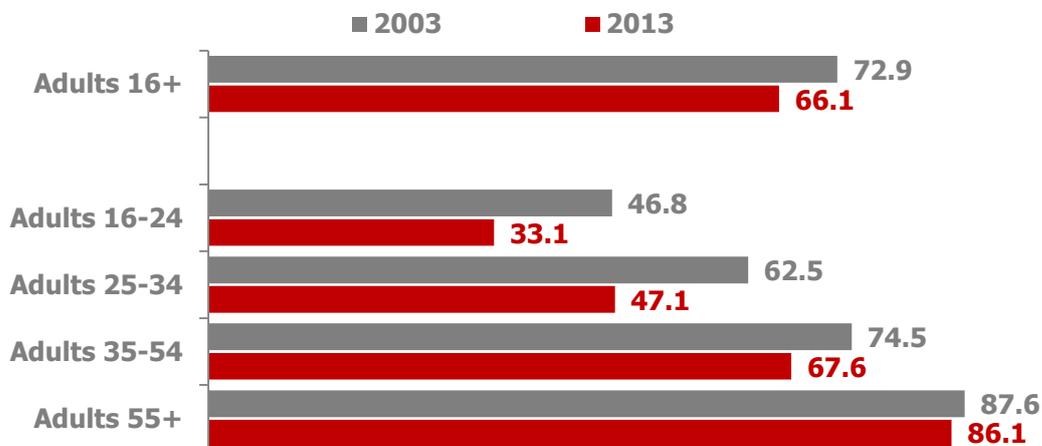
- While the average time spent with BBC News on TV remains high overall, levels of consumption of BBC News for many audiences can be relatively 'thin'. While 78 per cent of UK adults watch at least one minute of BBC News on TV in a week, we estimate that only 56 per cent watch for more than 15 minutes, and only 36 per cent for more than one hour in total across a week¹⁹.
- Further to this, average consumption of BBC News output is relatively infrequent. More than half of the audience of the *BBC News at Ten* watches the programme only once per week, while fewer than four per cent of its audience watch every night.
- As one of the BBC's flagship news programmes, there are signs that viewing to the *BBC News at Ten* is under some pressure, having fallen by around 10 per cent in the last few years. The audience at 10pm is still influenced by live viewing of the 9pm slot on BBC One, which itself has fallen by around 20 per cent in the same time period. Conversely, the audience of the *BBC News at Six* has grown, partly helped by BBC One attracting a larger audience in the preceding slot.

There are particularly significant challenges for the BBC in reaching younger audiences with TV news

53 This pressure is seen most acutely for younger audiences. Historically, young people have always consumed less BBC News – and indeed less news and media generally – than older age groups, but the gap is widening. Figure 6 shows the changes in reach of BBC News between 2003 and 2013. BBC News reach has fallen by around 14 percentage points among 16 to 24 year olds, and by 15 points among 25 to 34 year olds, while it has fallen only slightly among over 55 year olds. In 2013, less than one-third of 16 to 24 year olds watched BBC News each week.

¹⁹ Source: BARB, weekly non-consecutive reach levels. Note this analysis is based on viewing to the regular timeslots of BBC News only and so will not capture all viewing to BBC news programmes

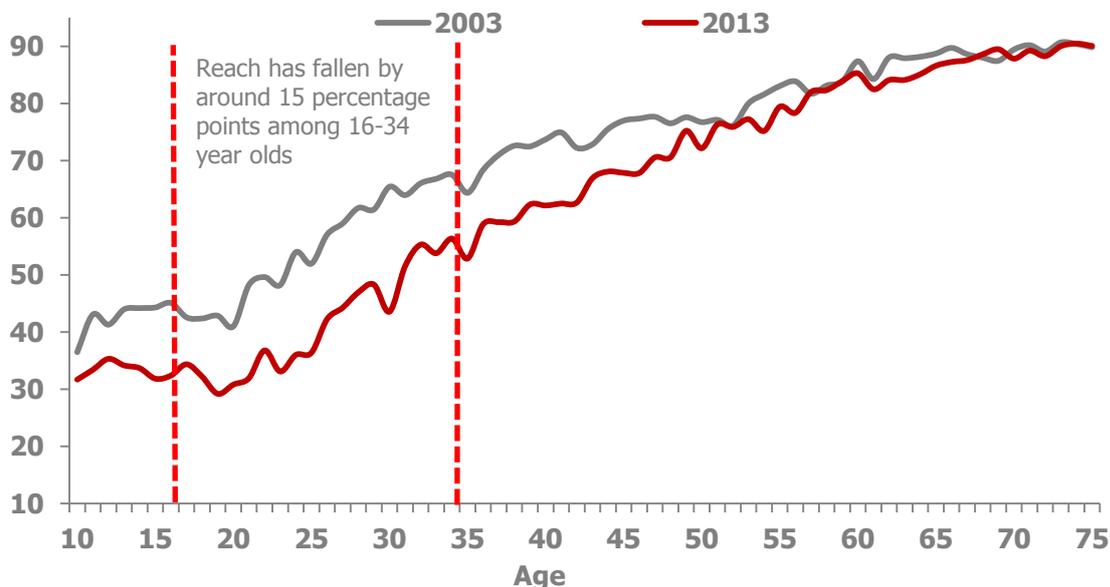
Figure 6: Change in BBC TV News reach (per cent) between 2003 and 2013 by age



Source: BARB, weekly 3 minute reach

54 We have also looked at the changes in BBC News reach by individual age (Figure 7). This shows that the weekly reach of BBC News for 21 year olds in 2013 is 16 percentage points lower than 21 year olds in 2003. But there is little difference between the weekly reach of 55 year olds in 2013 and 55 year olds in 2003. The implications of this are discussed in Part 3 of this report.

Figure 7: Change in BBC TV News reach (per cent) between 2003 and 2013 by individual age



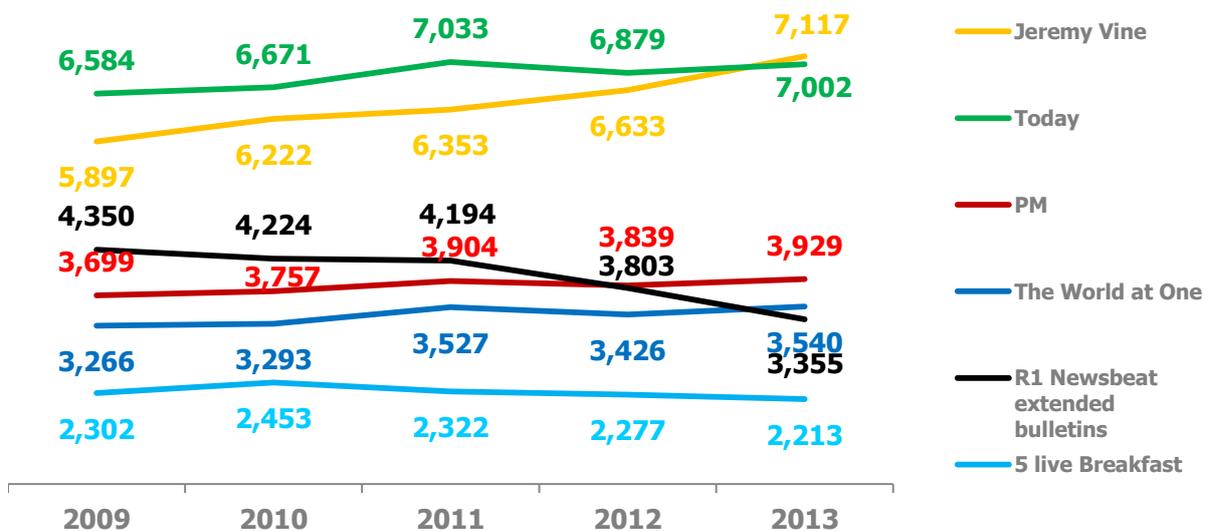
Source: BARB, 3 minute weekly reach

55 In addition to lower reach, the time spent with BBC News is considerably lower among younger audiences. Other metrics, such as frequency of viewing and the significant drop off between 1 minute and 15 minute reach levels, all reveal a similar trend of much 'lighter' consumption among younger audiences.

BBC Radio news is facing long-term pressure due to a fall in listening hours

- 56 As noted in Part 1, the overall reach of BBC radio news is very strong. Some 54 per cent of adults listen each week and this has increased from 50 per cent in 2006, reflective of the overall trends in listening to BBC Radio.
- 57 Audiences of the BBC’s main news programmes on radio generally remain very strong, and some key strands (including *Today* and *PM* on Radio 4 and *The Jeremy Vine Show* on Radio 2) have done extremely well to increase their listenership in recent years.

Figure 8: Weekly reach (000’s) of selected BBC Radio programmes



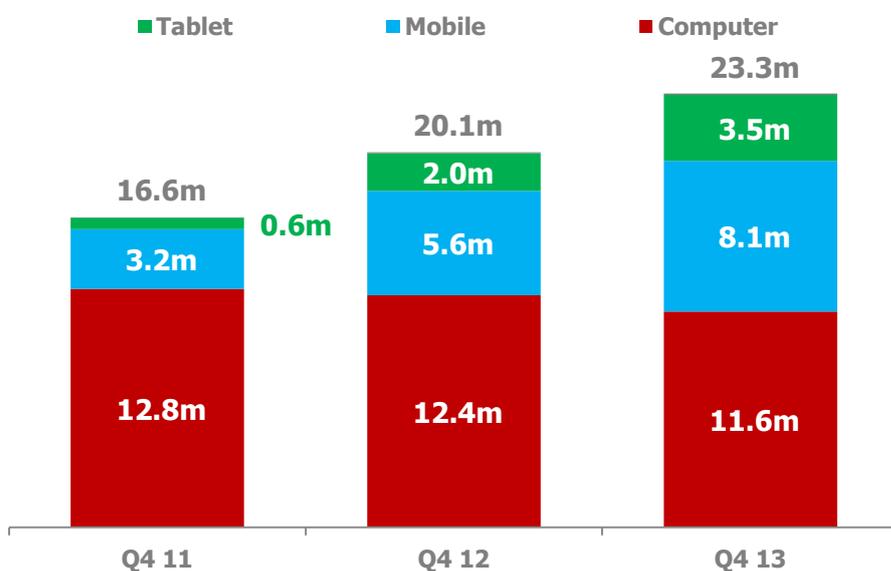
Source: RAJAR, all adults aged 15+

- 58 However, BBC Radio is facing a challenge of declining listening hours, particularly among younger audiences. While hours among all adults have fallen by only around five per cent in the last five years, this is significantly higher among 15 to 24 year olds and 25 to 34 year olds, down by around 20 and 17 per cent respectively from an already lower level.
- 59 In news, these changes are most clearly manifested in listening to Radio 1’s flagship extended *Newsbeat* programmes. Radio 1’s hours per listener have fallen 29 per cent in the last five years, and this has significantly affected the volume of listening to *Newsbeat*, as well as its reach, which is down by more than 20 per cent in the same time period. We believe that the declines in radio listening can be accounted for largely by the increasing sources of entertainment and new ways to access music (for example through YouTube and Spotify).
- 60 In the last few years there are also signs that the hours of listening to BBC radio are falling among older audiences. Since 2011 hours per listener to BBC radio have fallen by around one hour for all age groups between ages 35 and 64, which appears to be driven by a decline in listening hours to Radio 4 and 5 live.

In contrast, usage of BBC News Online has grown significantly in recent years

- 61 BBC News Online is the biggest 'product'²⁰ of BBC Online. Usage has grown significantly in the last few years, and in quarter 4 of 2013 the site was accessed by more than 23 million unique browsers each week, up by 16 per cent on the previous year.
- 62 This growth has largely been driven by people accessing the site through mobile and tablet devices. As illustrated in Figure 9, desktop usage has fallen slightly in the last few years, and now accounts for less than half of all browsers accessing BBC News Online. Mobile and tablet usage has grown significantly, however, and accounts for around 50 per cent of browser access.

Figure 9: Weekly 'browser reach' of BBC News Online by device



Source: BBC iStats

- 63 While browser reach has grown significantly, the number of people using BBC Online is growing only slightly. Around 26 per cent of UK adults used the site each week in 2013, and this has increased from 24 per cent in 2012²¹.
- 64 In the UK, BBC News Online's reach is similar to that of *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail* on desktop devices, but on mobile BBC News is by far the most used site²². For other metrics, such as time spent and number of visits per month, BBC News Online is behind some other news providers.

²⁰ BBC Online is split into ten distinct 'product' areas. These are News, Sport, Weather, Homepage, Search, Knowledge & Learning, TV & iPlayer, Radio & Music, CBeebies, CBBC

²¹ Source: BBC Cross Media Insight Survey

²² Source: ComScore UK. It should be noted that mobile usage is based on claimed, as opposed to measured, usage. For mobile usage, news, sport and weather are all included in the 'news' category.

Part 3: Responding to the Key Challenges

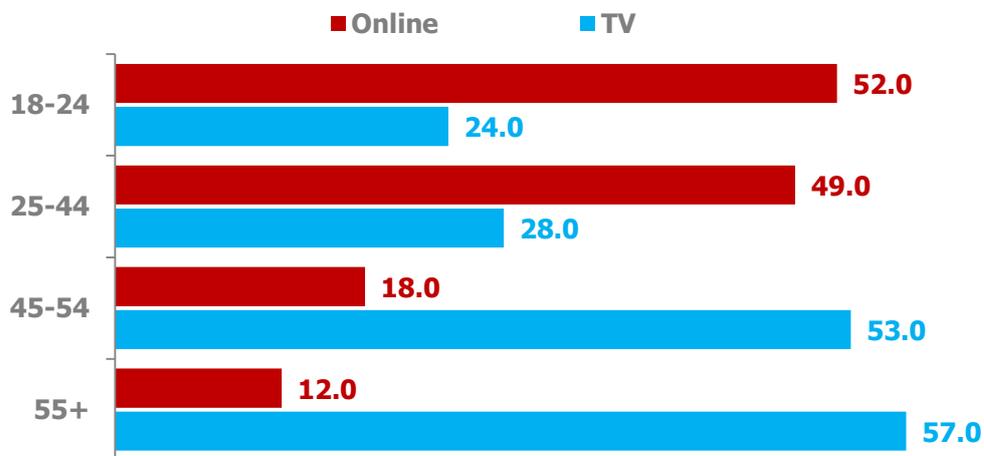
These challenges require the BBC to make a strong technological and editorial response if it is to strengthen its delivery of the public purposes to all audiences

The technological response

Making use of technology to get content to audiences where and when they want it

- 65 Looking back through the BBC's history, we can see a fairly consistent concern about the degree to which it can attract younger audiences. But the conventional wisdom was that younger people would turn to the BBC as they grew older and felt a greater need for information. That can no longer be taken for granted.
- 66 Whereas it was once fairly straightforward to assess news consumption – essentially by measuring usage through television, radio, newspapers and magazines – audiences can now get their 'news' in many more ways and from a much wider array of organisations, including:
- online outlets of traditional media, including broadcasters and newspapers
 - new online-only news providers, such as the Huffington Post and Vice Media
 - online news aggregators, including search engines and newsfeeds
 - social media, ranging from specialised sites like BuzzFeed through to general social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
- 67 This dramatic increase in provision means there is a plausible risk for the BBC, and other traditional news providers, that younger audiences will carry those habits with them as they grow older. Over time, this may diminish their reliance on traditional forms of news consumption.
- 68 The corollary, of course, is that the BBC, as with other traditional news providers, has the opportunity to reach these audiences in new ways, and at an earlier age than before.
- 69 Recent research conducted by the Reuters Institute highlighted the generational differences in preferred means of consuming news content. This research, shown in Figure 10, asked people to state their main source of news. For 16 to 24 year olds, less than one-quarter said television, with more than half saying online.

Figure 10: Stated main source of news content, by age



Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 2013

- 70 These trends require the BBC to reach audiences in new and innovative ways through digital methods. We have been surprised that two parts of BBC News that have been historically successful at reaching young audiences through innovative methods using traditional media – *Newsbeat* on Radio 1 and *60 Seconds* news on BBC Three – have very underdeveloped online and mobile offerings. There is a clear opportunity for the BBC to develop its online and mobile provision for young people much further (whether through these existing brands or something new), both editorially and through presentation.
- 71 The challenges facing traditional news providers do not apply solely to younger audiences, of course. As part of this review, we asked audiences more broadly about their expectations of the BBC’s use of technology, as well as their views on current performance.
- 72 Despite the very high usage outlined in Part 2, perceptions of quality of BBC News Online have fallen in the last few years. The average appreciation index (AI) score fell from 81.3 in 2009 to 77.6 in 2011, as it was significantly affected by a site re-launch in 2010. Since the re-launch, the AI score increased slightly but has been at a lower, albeit fairly stable, level since 2011; it remains below BBC management’s own target of 80.
- 73 Our own audience research for this review showed that more than three-quarters of people were favourable about the quality of BBC News Online, and were generally satisfied with the ways the BBC currently uses technology to deliver news.
- 74 However, it is also clear that audience expectations in this area are changing very quickly, as new devices and applications proliferate. Even among audiences who do not use the latest technologies themselves, our research found an expectation that the BBC should keep pace with technological innovation in delivering the news. It is, therefore, crucial that the BBC continues to innovate in content and its delivery so that it can fulfil its public purposes to the widest possible audience.
- 75 Our research identified four key trends where the BBC has opportunities to develop its offer further in coming months, set out below.
- First, making more of mobile technology. The widespread use of mobile technology is fundamentally changing audience expectations and behaviour. We found that although the BBC’s mobile news is widely appreciated for its

accessibility and navigation, more 'advanced' users (often younger audiences) tend to view it as too restrictive, lacking in depth and not "explorable" enough. Allowing greater personalisation of content was also a functionality suggested by parts of the audience we talked to. We also found anecdotal evidence that breaking news alerts from the BBC News mobile application are too inconsistent and infrequent to be seen as a constant source for breaking stories. We recognise, however, that accuracy must remain the key driver for BBC breaking news and that there is an inevitability that some providers who put speed first will be prepared to sacrifice accuracy.

- Second, making more of the full range of the BBC's TV and radio content. Although iPlayer is a very strong brand it is not seen by audiences as a vehicle for news and current affairs content; they think the BBC could do more to promote the range of content available on demand. Linked to this point, some of our discussions with BBC News editorial staff, particularly those in radio, described the technical difficulties in getting their content onto BBC News online.
- Third, satisfying the growing need for instant news and informed comment. For heavier news consumers, social media and online news brands have significantly changed their experience of news and information. They expect to know the news the moment it happens and are often aware of breaking events before traditional broadcasters are able to verify and broadcast them. These audiences also have an appetite to develop a more direct and interactive relationship with the journalists who bring them the news. We were struck by the high level of interaction between some individual correspondents and their followers on social media. This is engaging audiences on a personal level and gives correspondents direct feedback, and sometimes important information. At this point in the development of social media as a platform for established news organisations, it is understandable that their use is inconsistent, depending on the aptitude and appetite of individual journalists. We want to encourage the BBC to make more consistent use of third-party sites to deliver content to a broader audience, subject to compliance with the BBC's editorial guidelines and our syndication policy. One key objective of this will be to increase direct connection between individual BBC journalists and those who follow them, breaking down any perception of the BBC as speaking at audiences rather than listening to them.
- Finally, visualisation. Although we found that audiences rate the BBC relatively well for its use of graphics and video around big news events, other providers are considered better at routinely using 'news graphics' and integrating audio/video content into stories to illustrate and enhance news content.

Action 2: The BBC must continue to develop the content and delivery of its online and digital news so that it remains relevant for all audiences

The BBC needs its online news provision to keep pace with audience expectations, in particular: better use of graphics and more audio/video content; a more in-depth mobile news offer; and wider use of social media and other third-party platforms.

We consider the BBC's provision of online news content for younger audiences is under-developed in comparison with its tailored broadcast offerings on TV and radio.

We expect the BBC to address this, while actively considering the potential market impact of any changes to its digital news services before they are implemented, to make sure that:

- the BBC does not simply duplicate what is already on offer elsewhere in the market
- wherever possible, the BBC provides external links to alternative news providers and credits any external sources of particular stories
- the BBC applies the Competitive Impact Principle (under the Fair Trading rules set by the Trust) to identify any potential market impact from a change to a service and does whatever it can to minimise that impact.

Timing: Ongoing, but we will review progress in this area in one year.

The editorial response

Against a background of strong audience approval overall for BBC News, we found some criticism of the range of editorial agendas and of tone

- 76 As outlined in Part 1 of this report, audiences highly value the BBC's news, which has developed a strong reputation for being professional and telling stories in a 'straight' manner. This reputation bolsters perceptions of accuracy, expertise and depth of analysis.
- 77 Although most audiences experience only a very small part of the output – and so their perceptions will be heavily influenced by a narrow sample – we found that the BBC rates very well when audiences are asked about its overall topic range (77 per cent favourable). This is perhaps a reflection of the BBC's aim to provide something for everyone. The audience wants, and expects, plurality of tone and approach from different BBC News programmes, and it is clear that there are significant differences in the agenda, tone and treatment of stories on the *Today* programme and *Breakfast* on BBC One, for example, or *The World Tonight* and the *BBC News at Ten*.
- 78 We also tested perceptions of the BBC's range of output and tone qualitatively through our research and our public consultation. Generally, we found that audiences have positive perceptions. For example, around two-thirds of those who responded to our

public consultation felt that the BBC provides a good range of subject areas and types of output. However, there were some criticisms, particularly around the BBC's tone.

- Some respondents to our consultation stated that the ways in which particular types of story were covered by the BBC should be more accessible – examples cited included making health and education stories more relevant to people's everyday lives (and less about the politics and institutions that surround these areas); covering a broader range of sports; and covering technology news in greater depth. We recognise, however, that the BBC has made significant progress in some of these areas already.
- Some audiences, in particular younger and lower socio-economic groups, wanted more tailored content and the BBC's delivery to be less formal and uniform in tone, which, with a few notable exceptions such as Radio 2, 5 live and BBC Three, can be off-putting for less traditional audiences.
- While this review has found that the News Channel is meeting its remit, particularly in covering major breaking and developing stories, some of our Audience Councils and respondents to our consultation stated that there can be too much repetition across the News Channel and that it would benefit from greater range and more stories that do not receive widespread coverage elsewhere. We recognise there is an inherent conflict for any news channel between the need for a varied agenda and the audience's expectation to be able to get all the main stories within a few moments of switching on, but there may be scope for the BBC News Channel to adjust its balance slightly to increase its variety.

79 These findings chime with some of our quantitative research, which found that audiences tend to rate the BBC less favourably when asked about its capacity to surprise them either in its story choice or presentation. This was evidenced in their responses to statements such as 'offering fresh perspectives', 'being surprising and different' and 'covering stories others would not', for example.

80 In many ways this audience reaction is not surprising. In our view it reflects the following points.

- The BBC's focus on delivering serious and significant news content with depth, authority and gravitas, particularly through its core bulletins. This can lead to a perception of uniformity of tone and agenda, with exceptions generally found on services targeted at particular demographics, or individual programmes that consciously try to be different, such as *This Week*.
- The clear necessity for the BBC to cover the day's major national and international news stories on different bulletins and throughout the day, recognising that only a small part of the audience watches or listens to more than one main news programme per day. This helps provide a niche for other broadcasters to try and differentiate themselves by taking alternative approaches and covering alternative stories to the BBC.
- The demands of serving a 24-hour news cycle, as well as using fewer programme specific reporters. This means that key BBC reporters and specialists appear more often and across many different outlets on any given day than in the past, which contributes towards perceptions of 'sameness'. No other provider faces this

issue to the same degree as no other provider has a similar range or number of news programmes and outlets.

There are opportunities for the BBC to offer greater variety in agenda and tone

- 81 Talking to the industry and journalists within the BBC, there is a strong feeling that the story-telling on BBC news has suffered in the face of the requirement to serve more outlets. This means reporters and correspondents have less time to craft words, sound and pictures in the most compelling and engaging way. We note that only around half of the audience we asked agreed that the BBC presented stories in ways that are interesting and compelling.
- 82 While we recognise the reasons for this, we believe the BBC needs to improve perceptions in this area in the following ways.
- As the BBC's flagship TV news bulletins, we believe that the *BBC News at Six* and *BBC News at Ten* need to be recognised by audiences, not only for telling the most important stories of the day but also for telling them better than anywhere else. We also note that some respondents to our public consultation suggested that *BBC News at Ten* was sometimes too repetitive of the *BBC News at Six* and wanted more new stories or alternative perspectives. Although the overlap in audience between the two bulletins is relatively low, for heavier news consumers greater differentiation would clearly be welcome.
 - Part of improving story-telling includes looking for ways to tell stories with different tones and in different styles. It is imperative, however, that this is done in a way that does not compromise the BBC's strengths – including its perceived authority and expertise.
- 83 Our findings also suggest that there is some appetite for the BBC to cover a somewhat broader daily news agenda. This includes making greater use of stories from the BBC's network of nations and regions journalists, both in core network bulletins and particularly on the News Channel.

BBC News must do more to ensure its workforce better reflects the diversity of the UK

- 84 Our research found a clear view from under-served parts of the audience that much of BBC News is distant from their lives, both in tone and subject matter. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) audiences, as well as those from lower socio-economic groups, were significantly less favourable than other audiences when we asked whether BBC News has a diverse range of presenters and correspondents that reflect the make-up of the country.
- 85 As highlighted in paragraph 8, BBC News' reach is lower among BAME audiences. This difference can be illustrated by the viewing levels of BBC News on TV, which is watched by 55 per cent of BAME adults each week, well below the average 66 per cent among all adults. Further to this, the amount of time BAME viewers spend watching BBC News is also significantly lower and has fallen slightly in the last few years. However, there are some areas where BBC News is doing well among this audience. As noted in paragraph 51, the reach of the BBC News Channel is higher than average among BAME adults, a trend also seen in viewing of Sky News.
- 86 While it is difficult to prove a causal link between workforce diversity and audience consumption and satisfaction, we believe that production teams will have an instinctive

feel for a fuller range of issues and concerns of the audience when the BBC's workforce is fully reflective of that audience.

- 87 Because of the way that it is funded, the BBC must keep pace with societal changes and reflect the different communities and interests of licence fee payers in an increasingly diverse United Kingdom. This applies both in the stories it tells and the way it tells them, and also in the make-up of its staff.
- 88 Despite a series of initiatives over many years there remains an issue with the degree to which the BBC's workforce as a whole reflects the full diversity of its audience, particularly in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability, as well as social background. This applies to BBC News, both on and off air.
- 89 The BBC has put some initiatives in train to help address this: for instance, by introducing apprenticeship schemes and announcing a commitment to improve the gender balance of local radio presenters. With regards to ethnicity, we note that the rest of the news industry faces a similar issue, but we believe the BBC must take a leadership role here for the sector as a whole. We recognise the challenges, especially at a time when staff numbers are themselves under pressure, but we need to be convinced that the challenge is taken seriously and that further concrete progress is made as a matter of priority.

Action 3: The BBC should improve the variety of its agenda and tone and refine its story-telling

The audience insight we have gathered for this review suggests there are opportunities for the BBC's news to provide a greater variety of tone and agenda, and to use more engaging story-telling.

There is no evidence that radical change in editorial direction is necessary, but audiences need to be able to identify more readily with the BBC. They should be attracted by both the stories it tells and the ways in which it tells them. The *BBC News at Six* and *BBC News at Ten* programmes should be as recognised for the excellence of their story-telling as they are for their authority and expertise.

Audiences need to recognise their own lives, perspectives and concerns duly reflected in the BBC's programmes. BBC News needs to be heard as having a multiplicity of voices, with its own authority grounded in its experience and understanding of the many interests, cultures and communities that make up the UK.

In part this will be achieved by developing a workforce, on and off-air, of greater diversity. We expect to see concrete proposals from the BBC to achieve this, and further progress in terms of both gender and ethnicity.

Timing: We will follow up progress in this area within one year.

Management and Oversight

BBC News has delivered significant efficiency savings in recent years, but will need to consider its budget allocations and resource management to deliver the full range of its aspirations

- 90 In 2012-13 the BBC spent around £227 million on its network news operations, representing around 6 per cent of licence fee expenditure. This figure excludes journalistic expenditure by the English Regions, BBC Scotland, BBC Wales and BBC Northern Ireland, which are largely out of scope of this review.
- 91 BBC management makes an estimate of the costs incurred by each particular service on its journalism for the purposes of allocating expenditure to each service licence. However, we note the complexity of identifying this with complete accuracy because many of the costs incurred in gathering and reporting a story are centralised costs spread across different programmes and channels.
- 92 In addition, there is also a significant amount of cost incurred that helps deliver network news output but which is funded by other parts of the BBC. For instance, journalists in the nations and regions who appear on the network are not funded by the central News Division. A large part of the current affairs expenditure for BBC television is funded from the Television budget, while some Radio 4 news and current affairs programmes are funded directly from the Radio budget. In addition, journalists from the English regions and World Service often appear on network news programmes but are not funded by network news.
- 93 BBC News has made very significant savings in recent years. Between 2008-09 and 2012-13 BBC News Group delivered £39.5 million in recurring savings. Finding these, and future savings, is difficult because of the nature of the cost base within BBC News, which has a high percentage of fixed costs in its staff and needs to budget for the unpredictability of stories/events. The majority of these savings have, therefore, been delivered through redundancies or redeployments of staff.
- 94 In delivering these savings, the BBC monitors the impact against a number of key performance indicators to determine whether savings are impacting negatively on the output. The indicators include overall reach and consumption, as well as quality and impact metrics. We are satisfied that current savings have been delivered without significant damage to output. Indeed, on the basis of this review, we can compare cost and performance and see that current performance remains strong in spite of the cost savings that have been made.
- 95 However, further savings are required to contribute to the BBC's wider Delivering Quality First plan, as well as to fund any new strategic priorities to meet the challenges facing the BBC's journalism. BBC News needs to develop a clear plan for how it will deliver these further savings, although we recognise the challenge in achieving these through efficiency measures alone. This puts an imperative, as it does for the whole BBC, on strong planning and smarter use of existing resources, in order that any savings are made with robust information about their costs and likely audience impact.
- 96 We also note that some respondents to our consultation raised concerns about perceived inefficiency or poor value for money. The commonly cited examples are sending presenters to report from location and sending multiple reporters and crews to cover events. For others, however, using on-location presenters and reporters is seen to add

authenticity and enrich the story-telling process. We recognise the concerns about value for money and it is very important that BBC News is as efficient as it can be. We also note the following points.

- There is a balance between reporting an event in the cheapest manner possible and ensuring coverage is as good as it can be.
- The BBC has many different outlets and news programmes across TV, radio and online, and it is entirely reasonable for the BBC to decide to cover a story from different angles or perspectives for its different services and audiences. In contrast, other broadcasters may be reporting only for a single programme.
- Furthermore, the audience expects a variety of tone and approach. *Newsnight* sending a reporter to an event, for instance, may well result in a style and depth of reporting that could not be provided by a single journalist serving all news outlets throughout.

- 97 Ultimately, the deployment of staff is an operational decision for BBC management to take. Given the BBC's responsibility to deliver good value for money to the licence fee payer, as well as the funding constraints that the BBC is under, we expect decisions to be taken with clear consideration of the costs and benefits, as well as wider perceptions of value for money.

We will explore introducing a single service licence for the BBC's network journalism

- 98 We currently outline our expectations of the BBC's journalism through the separate service licences that specify the remits of each channel and network and of BBC Online. This review has made a cross-cutting assessment of the performance of the BBC's journalism across each service. We are minded to introduce a single service licence for BBC News and Current Affairs which would make a series of public commitments for the BBC as a whole to deliver high-quality journalism across its services. We do not envisage applying the same principle to other genres and believe this is an exceptional case, recognising the centrality of journalism to the BBC's public role.
- 99 Introducing such a licence would represent a significant change in the way we govern the BBC's activity (in effect, creating a genre licence), so we will explore further whether this could be done to provide more effective governance and accountability without placing an unnecessary regulatory burden on the BBC or having any other unacceptable impacts.

Action 4: We will explore introducing a single service licence for the BBC's network journalism

We will undertake further work in the coming months to be satisfied that a single service licence for network news and current affairs would add to the BBC's public accountability for its most important activities without creating an undue regulatory burden or having any unacceptable impacts. We would consult publicly later this year on the terms of any licence.

Timing: By autumn 2014.

Part 4: Network Current Affairs

The BBC's network current affairs output covers an impressive range of domestic and foreign stories. Audiences generally rate individual programmes as high-quality

- 100 The majority of the audience (64 per cent) state that the BBC is best for current affairs on TV, and the audience's perceptions of the quality of BBC Current affairs are generally strong. The BBC's flagship current affairs programme, *Panorama*, achieved an average AI score of 83 in 2013, while current affairs output on BBC Two received an average score of 84, and on BBC Three an average of 82. These scores have all increased in recent years.
- 101 In addition to these high overall perceptions, a number of individual editions have scored very highly for audience appreciation. Across 2012 and 2013 there were 21 individual television programmes that received exceptional AIs of 88 or higher – eight episodes of *Panorama*, eight programmes on BBC Two and five on BBC Three.
- 102 The BBC's current affairs programming on Radio 4 and 5 live is a genre of output made only by the BBC and is highly valued by its listeners, although awareness among non-listeners tends to be fairly low. Our audience research found that Radio 4 content in particular emerged as very well-known and loved amongst existing listeners. Audiences were particularly positive about current affairs programmes on lesser-known topics, including coverage of international stories from further afield.
- 103 Audience perceptions of the quality of radio current affairs vary significantly, with *From Our Own Correspondent* achieving an average AI score of 88 in 2013, one of the highest of any programme on Radio 4. The success of *From Our Own Correspondent* over many decades in bringing audiences new international stories and insights, crafted with storytelling skill, is a notable achievement. Other strands, such as *Money Box* and *Crossing Continents*, also tend to score very highly. On Radio 5 live, perceptions of *5 live Investigates* are high and have increased on the previous year.
- 104 The overall range of programming on TV and radio is very broad. Around 25 per cent of *Panorama* episodes are based on international stories, and there is also a broad spread of domestic stories. Output on BBC Two and BBC Three includes the long running strand *This World*, as well as a wide range of 'non-stranded' programmes based on domestic and international stories.

The BBC is meeting its statutory and service licence commitments for the volume of current affairs

- 105 As set out in Table 2, the BBC is meeting its statutory and service licence commitments for the volume of current affairs.
- 106 The BBC has two statutory commitments²³ for its current affairs output. It must broadcast a minimum of 365 hours on BBC One and Two, of which at least 105 hours must be in peak time. As shown in Table 2, the BBC has fulfilled these commitments over the last

²³ These are Ofcom Tier 2 quotas set by the BBC Trust in consultation with Ofcom (for agreement in some cases)

three years. In 2012 (the latest year's available data)²⁴, BBC One and Two broadcast 539 hours of current affairs programming, and 117 hours in peak.

- 107 BBC Three has a service licence commitment to broadcast at least 15 hours of new current affairs programmes each year. It has consistently met this commitment in the last three years, and there was a sizeable increase in hours in 2012-13, as it broadcast 42 hours.
- 108 Radio 2, Radio 4 and 5 live's commitments to current affairs are shared with the stations' news commitments, which have all been met over the last three years.

Table 2: Performance against statutory and service licence commitments related to current affairs output

Service	Commitment	10/11	11/12	12/13
BBC One and BBC Two	Broadcast at least 365 hours of current affairs on BBC One and BBC Two (1)	557	541	539
BBC One and BBC Two	Broadcast at least 105 hours of current affairs on BBC One and BBC Two in peak (1)	124	116	117
BBC Three	Broadcast at least 15 hours of new current affairs programmes each year	31	31	42
Radio 2	Broadcast at least 16 hours of news and current affairs programming each week, including regular news bulletins	18	19	18
Radio 4	Broadcast at least 2,500 hours of news and current affairs programmes each year	3,399	3,409	3,424
5 live	News and current affairs programming represents around three-quarters of output each year (2)	75%	75%	74.3%

Source: BBC Annual Report 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13

Notes: 1) These are Ofcom Tier 2 quotas. Results are based on calendar rather than financial years.

Viewing to current affairs output has declined in recent years

- 109 The number of viewers of current affairs output on BBC television has fallen significantly in recent years, from 8.3 million adults per week in 2011 to 6.3 million in 2013. This decline is larger than the broader decline in reach on BBC One and Two over this period and is mainly driven by a fall in audience to *Panorama* and a lower volume of programming on BBC Two.
- 110 The average audience to *Panorama* fell by around 20 per cent in 2013, when it was watched by an average of 2.3 million adults. This decline was largely due to the special hour-long episodes achieving a lower audience on average than in 2012. Excluding the special episodes, the audience has been fairly stable over the last five years.

²⁴ 2013 data will be published in the 2013-14 annual report.

- 111 We also note that there has been a decline in the number of episodes of *Panorama* per year (down from 55 in 2011 to 45 in 2013). This is in line with plans we endorsed in 2010 for *Panorama* to do slightly fewer programmes. The decline in volume is also reflected by the number of weeks in which *Panorama* was broadcast, which has fallen from 46 in 2011 to 39 in 2013, although we recognise that in some weeks there were both regular and special editions.
- 112 While the weekly reach of current affairs on BBC Two has fallen in recent years, the average audience to this output has been fairly stable and it has benefitted from more consistent and prominent scheduling, which the Trust previously requested. In 2013 almost all current affairs programmes were broadcast in the 9pm slot. This compares favourably with preceding years, when around half the programmes were scheduled outside of this prime slot.
- 113 BBC Three has had some notable success in bringing current affairs to a wide audience. It reaches around 1.2 million adults per week – up by around 25 per cent on the previous year, although relatively comparable with the 2011 figures. In 2013 three programmes (*Oscar Pistorius: What Really Happened*, *Prince Harry: Frontline Afghanistan* and *Thailand's Drug Craze with Stacey Dooley*) were watched by more than 900,000 people.
- 114 BBC radio current affairs output attracts almost 5 million listeners a week²⁵, with the majority of this audience coming from Radio 4. Audiences of current affairs on Radio 4 vary significantly by programme but can be close to 2 million for programmes such as *From Our Own Correspondent* and *Money Box*. Listening figures for Radio 5 live current affairs have significantly increased since being awarded a better slot in the schedule in 2013, following our service review of the station.

BBC current affairs should be securing wider recognition and impact from its output

- 115 The BBC makes the most significant investment in current affairs programming in the UK. It is a genre that requires initiative, time, resources and persistence, and, while it generally attracts lower audiences than news programmes, at its best it enlightens, exposes, provokes and sparks national debate. It is at the core of the BBC's public service mission, and must remain an essential and prominent part of the BBC's offer.
- 116 This review has looked across current affairs output on TV and radio. We have found strong examples of in-depth investigative and analytical journalism across a full range of subject areas, made with a variety of tones and approaches that appeal to different audiences. We have also confirmed that the BBC makes more current affairs, has higher audiences and is perceived as better than competitors for being high-quality, relevant and keeping audiences informed of issues and debates.
- 117 However, we remain of the view that the BBC can make more of an impact with its current affairs output, given the extent of its resources and the overall popularity of its services. It can do this through a combination of aiming for stories that offer important insights and investigations of high significance, and through better promotion and signposting of its content.

²⁵ Source: RAJAR. Note this includes output on BBC World Service radio in the UK.

- Our research found that the BBC's current affairs could do more to meet the audience's appetite to cover stories and issues that stand out and are seen to challenge the instruments of power.
- We also found that, among the more engaged current affairs audiences, for whom the quality of investigative journalism was an important factor in differentiating between providers, there was a perception that Channel 4 is more associated with being pioneering and taking risks than the BBC in its current affairs (and documentary) programming.
- Our quantitative research found that audiences rate the BBC's current affairs highly for covering important issues of the day and being expert, but less highly for offering fresh perspectives, covering lesser known stories and covering issues that other channels would not.
- We also found a relatively low awareness of current affairs content on BBC Two and BBC radio, with people often unable to cite any key/flagship programmes or many stand-out moments. We are concerned that this programming is often failing to gain credit from audiences, even when consumption is fairly high, and we expect the BBC to look at changing perceptions in this area, perhaps by the ways in which this programming is promoted and signposted.

- 118 Alongside this, the BBC can do more to increase the impact of the two main current affairs strands on television with high audience recognition: *Newsnight* and *Panorama*.
- 119 In the face of competition from the wider array of TV channels and other media available nowadays, *Newsnight's* audience has been under pressure for some years, falling by 30 per cent since 2009. We note the BBC's determination to reinvigorate the programme in recent months, its fresh approach to both content and style and more active use of social media. Although it is too early to judge success, we believe *Newsnight* continues to occupy an important place in the portfolio, with the purpose of adding something new and fresh to the daily news cycle.
- 120 *Panorama* remains, not just one of the BBC's oldest brands, but also one of its strongest with audiences, and it should exemplify the BBC's commitment to current affairs. Several editions over recent years have received outstanding AI scores from audiences and have taken persistence and considerable courage. Inevitably, as would be the case for any weekly strand, some episodes have been less successful, but their threat to the overall brand is greater because of its very strength. The challenge, therefore, is to try to maintain a consistency of quality, where the importance or significance of the subject matter and the excellence of the journalism combine to deliver real impact. We welcome the BBC's plans to allow for more flexibility about the placing of particular investigations, so that they receive airtime and scheduling most appropriate to their subject matter.
- 121 We regard it as imperative for BBC One to maintain both the volume and the ambition of its current affairs programming, and we will change the wording of BBC One's service licence to ensure the channel's remit in this regard is clear. Although it is, of course, for BBC management to decide whether to label its current affairs under a specific strand, and to choose the styles and formats to deliver its commitments, our revised wording will make clearer our expectations for BBC One current affairs. These include that:
- commissioning decisions are driven first and foremost by the significance of the subject matter and by the insight programmes can deliver

- such output must go beyond observation and illustration to offer a broad audience insight into, and revelation or analysis of, issues of national and international concern
- we will set a minimum volume of current affairs on BBC One (currently the channel shares a statutory commitment for a minimum number of hours with BBC Two).

- 122 Our research shows that BBC Three has found new ways to bring relevant current affairs to its younger audience. Some of the channel's output is seen to provide more pace, relevance and 'edge' than other current affairs, and its output is generally felt to be more risky and challenging than that seen elsewhere on the BBC.
- 123 In March 2014 the BBC Executive announced its wish to close BBC Three as a TV channel and move its content online from autumn 2015. We will undertake a Public Value Test to assess this proposal and will use relevant findings from this review to inform our decision. Our assessment will include detailed scrutiny of how the BBC proposes to serve younger audiences with current affairs output that meets their needs, both through BBC One and BBC Two, as well as through the proposed new online version of BBC Three.

Action 5: The BBC should find ways to increase the impact of its current affairs output

The BBC needs to find ways to increase the impact of its current affairs output on TV and radio, ensuring that its stories and issues stand out and that commissioning decisions are driven, above all, by the significance or relevance of the subject matter.

We will continue to monitor quality scores and audience levels for Current Affairs. We recognise that programmes aimed at informing national and international debate are a critically important part of the BBC's remit, but may not necessarily appeal to large audiences. The BBC needs to ensure that programming of such importance is scheduled, promoted and signposted to audiences in a way to maximise its potential impact.

Timing: Ongoing, but we will review progress in this area in one year.

In support of these efforts, we will strengthen the BBC One service licence to ensure that its commitment to Current Affairs captures our expectations for this genre, as well as guaranteeing a minimum level of output each year.

Timing: By autumn 2014