

BBC Asian Network

Part I: Key characteristics of the service

This service licence describes the most important characteristics of BBC Asian Network, including how it contributes to the BBC's public purposes. Service Licences are the core of the BBC's governance system. They aim to provide certainty for audiences and stakeholders about what each BBC service should provide.

The Trust uses service licences as the basis for its performance assessment and as the basis for its consideration of any proposals for change to the UK public services from the BBC Executive. A service may not change in a way that breaches its service licence without Trust approval. The Trust presumes that any proposed change to a stated Key Characteristic of a licence will require it to undertake a Public Value Test. Should it decide not to carry out a Public Value Test before approving any such change, then it must publish its reasons in full.

1. Remit

The remit of BBC Asian Network is to provide speech and music output appealing to British Asians, with a strong focus on news and current affairs. It should be primarily in English, but some programming should be provided in a range of South Asian languages.

The primary target audience is British Asians under 35 but the station should also appeal to anyone with an interest in British Asian issues, music and culture.

2. Scope of the Licence

BBC Asian Network should be available every day for general reception in the UK on DAB digital radio, Medium Wave in parts of the country (various frequencies), digital television platforms and it may be simulcast on the internet.

It may also offer its broadcast content on fixed and mobile internet protocol networks or via other platforms¹. On the same platforms, it may allow users retrospectively or prospectively via pre-booking to stream or download multiple episodes of first-run series (known as 'series stacking')² until a date no later than seven days after the last episode in the relevant series. This includes series where there is a break in scheduling between sub-sections of the

¹ In accordance with the Trust's Syndication Policy for BBC on-demand content.

² Programmes may be series stacked if the series has a distinct run with a beginning and an end and a clear 'narrative arc' or if it has exceptionally high impact.

series. The aggregate volume of such "series stacked" content must represent no more than 15% of all content offered on-demand.

The service may offer its programmes streamed or for download on-demand for a limited period after broadcast.³ It may also offer broadcast radio content for download for an unlimited period of time after broadcast, although this must not include unabridged readings of published works nor full track commercial music nor classical music (even if recorded by the BBC),⁴ and other interactive station and programme-related content via bbc.co.uk. Broadcast audio programmes may be visually enhanced.⁵ The service may also offer some speech audio content online up to seven days in advance of broadcast.

3. Budget

BBC Asian Network has an annual service budget of £7.5 million in 2016/17.

Any planned or actual change in annual expenditure on the service of more than 10% in real value requires approval from the BBC Trust and may entail variation of this Service Licence.

4. Overview of aims and objectives

BBC Asian Network programmes should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and it should nurture UK talent.

BBC Asian Network should deliver its remit through an approximately 50:50 split of music and speech during daytime, with the precise balance varying over the course of the week.

Speech output should include a strong focus on accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs, together with debate entertainment and culture relevant for a modern British Asian audience. The music played should include a broad range of South Asian-influenced music, with a particular emphasis on new and live music and British Asian artists. During the day an extensive playlist should form the backbone of the schedule, while weekend programmes should focus on more specialised areas.

Language programming should aim to appeal both to people who are fluent and to those who wish to develop their knowledge.

BBC Asian Network should provide high quality content that encourages radio listening via digital platforms, especially among young British Asians. The broadcast output should be supported by a complementary online service with some use of visual enhancements and listeners should be encouraged to interact and communicate with each other and the station. BBC Asian Network should use new technologies to broaden its reach and ensure its audiences have the maximum opportunity to access programmes as and when they want.

³ BBC Asian Network currently offers a limited amount of mainly speech content on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast. Any expansion of the scope of this requires the approval of the BBC Trust.

⁴ Download of classical music in the form of incidental music, signature tunes or clips of up to two minutes duration within speech based programmes with a specifically musical theme is permitted

⁵ This may include video related to output created for BBC broadcast, but should not include the commercial purchase of unrelated video rights.

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BBC Asian Network should contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission some output from independent producers.

Part 2: Contribution to public value

5. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes

5.1 Sustaining citizenship and civil society

BBC Asian Network should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily through its strong focus on accurate, impartial and independent news and current affairs presented in an accessible style for its target audience.

Complex issues should be explained and placed into context to help the audience develop a greater understanding of UK and international events. Listeners should be encouraged to explore a broad range of subjects, to share their experiences, and to be offered regular opportunities to engage in debate. BBC Asian Network should also regularly offer discussion programmes and specially commissioned documentaries providing in-depth analysis on issues relevant to the audience.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should:

- Ensure that content is approximately 50% music and 50% speech during daytime⁶ each year
- Broadcast at least 24 hours of news and current affairs programming each week, including regular news bulletins on weekdays and weekends

5.2 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

BBC Asian Network should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by providing a platform for new and established British Asian talent.

In its music output, BBC Asian Network should cover a wide range of genres with an emphasis on new music and on nurturing and developing new acts. Through its broadcasts of live performances it should seek to support and increase the appreciation of live music.

The station should find and develop new production and presentation talent.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should ensure that in daytime across the year:

- at least 30% of its music output is from UK artists
- at least 30% is new music (released within the last 2 months)
- at least 10% of music is South Asian⁷

⁶ Daytime is defined as 0600 - 1900 weekdays and 0800 - 1400 weekends

- at least 10 live events or festivals are covered

BBC Asian Network should also contribute to BBC Radio's commitment to commission at least 10% of eligible hours of output from independent producers

5.3 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities

BBC Asian Network should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its audience by responding in its output to the diversity of the British Asian population in terms of geography, interests, ethnicity, and religion. It should stimulate, support and reflect the diversity of cultural activity in the UK, within the defined scope of the service.

As a UK-wide, rather than local, service it is aimed at the whole British Asian population, and it should address the needs and interests of a wide range of Asian communities in the UK, giving a broad and fair view of them, reflecting them back to themselves and to the wider community. Its news and current affairs should reflect the voices of the different British Asian communities. Daily phone-ins should seek to encourage debate and reflect opinion from around the UK. Programmes in Hindi/Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Mirpuri and Punjabi, should seek to connect listeners with each other, and with their cultural and linguistic roots.

A broad range of music should be played, encouraging listeners to appreciate music from communities and cultures they may never have come across before. BBC Asian Network's coverage of religion and festivals should aim to put British Asians in touch with each other and with their spiritual roots. The station should also play a role in pan-BBC social action and community campaigns of significance to the BBC Asian Network audience, bringing people together to participate in related programmes and events.

BBC Asian Network should also support and encourage the wider BBC to create journalism and cultural content of interest to this audience and help listeners to find these and relevant programmes on other BBC services.

Conditions

BBC Asian Network should:

- Broadcast at least 20 hours of language programming each week, including a mixture of Hindi/ Urdu and English and other regional languages.

5.4 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

BBC Asian Network should contribute to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by bringing the world to the UK. Its news and current affairs output should regularly cover

⁷ Generally music from Pakistan, India (non-Bollywood), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Regional/Classical music, including the Qawwali and Ghazal music genres.

international events and issues. The station should give the audience the opportunity to debate and share knowledge with people around the world through phone-ins, simulcasts, live link-ups, and use of guests from other countries, as well as through its online communities. The station should regularly use its relationship with communities around the world, particularly in the Indian sub-continent, to help British Asians connect with their roots.

The music played should include international artists.

5.5 Promoting education and learning

BBC Asian Network should play its part in contributing to this purpose amongst its audience, primarily by providing opportunities for informal learning. Its language programming should be aimed at listeners who may speak English as a first language. It should aim to link British Asians with their linguistic roots in an engaging way.

BBC Asian Network should take part in pan-BBC social action and learning initiatives when they are relevant to the station's audience.

5.6 Emerging communications

The BBC's sixth public purpose is defined in the Charter as "in promoting its other purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television".

BBC Asian Network should contribute to the promotion of this purpose in a variety of ways which are described in this Service Licence.

6. Annexes to this Licence

6.1 Annex 1 – Performance assessment

The performance of BBC Asian Network will be assessed by the Trust using the framework described in Annex 1. BBC Asian Network's compliance with any Conditions, as described in section 5, will also be measured on an annual basis and reported in the Annual Report and Accounts.

The BBC Trust will expect BBC Asian Network to comply with the commitments described in sections 4 and 5 of the Service Licence. The BBC Trust will monitor compliance with these commitments retrospectively as part of its periodic service reviews and/or on an exceptional basis if there is evidence or allegation of non-compliance.

Annex 1: Performance measurement framework

The BBC Trust has the function of assessing the performance of the Executive Board in delivering the BBC's services and activities and holding the Executive Board to account for its performance.⁸ It uses the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Asian Network.

The framework uses a range of metrics based around the four drivers of public value:

- Quality
- Reach
- Impact
- Value for money.

The Trust can amend this framework without this constituting formal variation to this Service Licence.

⁸ Charter, article 24 (c)