

BBC ENGLAND

CALL FOR PITCHES
September 2020

**OUR
LIVES**

OUR LIVES



BBC ENGLAND is looking to commission two stand-alone 30 minute documentaries that will run as part of the OUR LIVES series on BBC ONE in 2021 (7.30pm).



The OUR LIVES strand started in 2017. The films celebrate the diversity of contemporary life across the UK. You can see the wide, eclectic mix of films commissioned to date: [OUR LIVES](#).

Each of our films needs to be rooted in England. These observational documentaries are character led, based around a single person or a small group of characters. We want stories that are uplifting and inspirational, told with beautiful imagery of modern Britain.

With a budget of £60 – £70k we are looking for an ambitious project, with high production values.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Diversity – stories that help us portray life in contemporary England, across class, gender and ethnicity.
- A small cast of extraordinary characters, or a strong single-person narrative.
- Films with something to say about 21st century Britain
- A surprising story that unfolds – action, events, developments to film
- Unforced narratives: we want observational documentary not ‘factual entertainment’ ideas.
- A suitable tone for BBC One at 7.30pm.
- A strong sense of place and insight into one part of England – although story lines may of course take you to other locations too.
- The story may be ‘local’ but not small or whimsical – they must have universal values and relevance to an audience across the UK.
- A great title

STYLE

- The tone should be uplifting and warm.
- We can have ‘grit’ but nothing that is too grim.
- Difficult subjects aren’t off limits, but would require a treatment that makes them accessible and offers hope.
- Most films are narrated but there may be cases for presenters. If you are suggesting a presenter, they should be authentic, have a genuine connection to the story and appeal to a BBC One audience.



“Bhangra or bust” August 2020

TRICKY AREAS

- Historical context can work, but the films must be contemporary docs
- The commissioners get lots of countryside, coastal and island-life ideas, so competition in these areas can be tough.
- We don't get as many urban ideas so this could be worth exploring
- The docs can be informed by a current agenda / issue but this is not a current affairs series.
- We can go abroad within a film but the story should be rooted in England.

NB: BBC Wales, BBC Scotland and BBC Northern Ireland also contribute programmes for Our Lives and have their own commissioning rounds (making the overall series 12 x 30). We are looking after the programmes for BBC England.



"Life of Pies" Summer 2019

RECENT BBC ENGLAND EXAMPLES

Soul Boy – a 17-year-old boy living in care discovers a love for Northern Soul and finds a new 'family' in Nottingham. (June 2020)

Bhangra or Bust – the battle of dancers in Birmingham as they enter the national Bhangra competition (August 2020).

Life of Pies – following contestants in the national pie competition held in Melton Mowbray. (Summer 2019)

Zoo Mum – the curator of Colchester zoo takes us inside as staff and animals come out of lockdown. (Summer 2020)

PITCHING AND TASTERS

- Pitch documents should include a 100 word (max) summary at the top and be no more than three pages long overall.
- You should be realistic, honest and clear about access and characters.
- Short tasters of the main character(s) are expected – these can be simply shot on a phone if necessary. The key is to see how well people come across on screen. Please embed the link into your pitch document.
- A strong episode title is always helpful.

CONTACTS

- For process and business affairs queries please contact isabelle.hutchins@bbc.co.uk
- For editorial guidance please contact diana.hare@bbc.co.uk

DEADLINES

- Please send pitch documents to isabelle.hutchins@bbc.co.uk by October 12th 2020
- We anticipate delivery will be March – May 2021 with TX over the summer months –TBC

