



BBC
radio
wales



BBC
radio
wales



BBC
radio
wales

Commissioning Brief 2021 – 22

bbc.co.uk/wales

Contents

1. Introduction	03
2. Overall summary	
2.1 Key dates and guide prices	04
2.2 A brief guide to Proteus	05
3. BBC Radio Wales in a nutshell	06
4. Genres for commission	
4.1 Highlights from 2020-21	07
4.2 Themes for 2021-22	08
4.3 Comedy	09
4.4 Science, Technology & ideas	10
4.5 Arts	11
4.6 Features	11
4.7 Hour-long Programmes	12
4.8 Sunday Morning With	12
4.9 Rolling commissioning	12
5. Working with BBC Radio Wales	
5.1 Delivering additional content for daytime	13
5.2 It's all about the pictures	13
5.3 No paperwork, no programme.....	14
5.4 Delivery guidelines.....	14
5.5 Technical guidelines.....	14
6. Tariffs.....	15

1. Introduction

It is very difficult to reflect upon the past 12 months without certain clichéd phrases recurring. In short, we all know it has been a remarkable and challenging year.

Nobody could have predicted the extent to which all our lives would have changed. At BBC Radio Wales we responded with a flexible schedule, which delivered news and information when our listeners needed it most, but we also understood the need for escapism and companionship. And the audience demand has been clear, with many weeks seeing a 60% uplift in online listening.

The contribution from independent producers has been crucial. Many of our partners have shown great resilience, continuing to produce strands and deliver programmes in the most difficult of circumstances. The creative response has also been impressive, not least to our special commissioning round designed to react to events on air and provide much needed support to the creative community in Wales.

Coming together, amongst the many new commissions, we delivered The Machynlleth Comedy Festival on the radio, we brought the sit com *Tourist Trap* to radio with a lockdown special and reflected on the comparisons with the 1919 Spanish Flu in Wales with an update documentary.

Beyond the response to Covid-19, independent production companies also produced outstanding content to mark the 80th birthday of Sir Tom Jones, including a memorable interview between Tom and Cerys Matthews. We've also delivered a number of co-commissions, working with BBC Radio 4 to deliver the dramatisation of Myfanwy Alexander's novel, *Bloody Eisteddfod*, and the latest series of the comedy *Ankle Tag*.

Off air we've said goodbye to our old home at Llandaff and we're now broadcasting from our new studios at Central Square in Cardiff. Again, given the context of the move, it was no small achievement and I'm grateful to the production companies working with us at the time. I look forward to being able to welcome you all in person at some point in the future.

We also said goodbye to a BBC Radio Wales legend, with the passing of presenter Chris Needs. He was clearly a one-off and the loss has been felt deeply by the team and his listeners. I would like to pay particular thanks to Llinos Jones and her team at Terrier Productions. As the producer of the Friendly Garden, they have responded admirably in incredibly difficult circumstances.

So what lies ahead? After the last 12 months, some might say it's difficult to predict. As a result, we won't be fully commissioning for next year in one round. Instead, we'll provide another smaller window in 2021 to offer ideas which better react to events within the year.

The bar will be high on Covid related content. How do we find news angles and different ways of telling stories, which haven't been covered already? How do we provide escapism as well as reality checks? And how do we build on our work to deliver greater diversity on air with a broader range of voices?

Whatever happens next, I want to thank you for your continued support for BBC Radio Wales. The station relies on your creative input and I look forward to working with you over the next 12 months.

Colin Paterson.
Editor, BBC Radio Wales

2. Overall summary

2.1 Key Dates & Guide Prices

Here are the key dates in this year's commissioning timetable:

TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER - MIDDAY: Deadline for submissions

Friday 23rd October: Notification of shortlisted ideas

w/c Monday 2nd November: Interviews with shortlisted suppliers

w/c Monday 16th November: Commissions published

Proposals need to be submitted via [Proteus](#), the BBC's commissioning and scheduling system. If you don't have a Proteus log-in, please see Section 2.2.

Proposals on Proteus are formatted to include a very short 'headline' summary and then a longer synopsis in which you can outline the idea, treatment and tone of the programme. Short, succinct pitches are appreciated. Please ensure that you have approached your suggested presenters and have their agreement in principle.

If you need any further information about this document, please contact

Jeremy Grange, Assistant Editor, BBC Radio Wales jeremy.grange@bbc.co.uk

Tel: 07764 335183

Guide Prices:

We are aware that not all half-hour programmes require the same amount of production effort and we have introduced a range of guide prices to reflect that. Budgets for shortlisted ideas will be subject to close scrutiny. Here are the guidelines:

Half hour feature: £1500 - £4000

Hour long feature: £3000 - £4500

Scripted comedy: £6000 - £7000

Unscripted comedy: £3000 - £5000

OFFERS NEED TO BE SUBMITTED VIA PROTEUS BY MIDDAY ON TUESDAY 6TH OCTOBER.

2. Overall summary

2.2 A Brief Guide to Proteus

Proteus is a system which is owned and developed by the BBC. It is a 'one stop shop' for all programme-related information for BBC Radio.

It is used by internal BBC radio departments and independent productions companies to:

- Create and submit programme ideas
- Complete programme descriptions and compliance
- Create running orders (including contributors and music items)

Users in the BBC networks access the system to commission radio programme ideas, create programme schedules, support play-out and generate reports.

New Users:

Independent companies who do not have a Proteus account and who wish to submit programme ideas, must first contact Michelle Phillips (michelle.phillips@bbc.co.uk) and Ryan Angove (ryan.angove@bbc.co.uk)

- Name of company
- Address
- Contact Number
- Contact Name
- Email Address.

They will register you with access, and you'll then receive an email with log in information and a help card for guidance.

Existing users: Log on to [Proteus](#) now.

If you already have an existing account you will be able to select BBC Radio Wales from the Network dropdown.

Proteus support:

All of Wales radio's programme paperwork will be managed through the BBC's Proteus system.

If you're not already Proteus-trained and your proposal is successful during the commissioning round, you will be expected to complete an online 'Proteus for Independents' training course. Your Proteus account will then be extended enabling you to access the system in order to complete programme descriptions, compliance and running orders.

To ensure knowledge of the system is retained and practically applied, you should complete the course no more than three months before your programme(s) are due for transmission.

3. BBC Radio Wales in a nutshell...

We are the national radio station for Wales. Our mission is to create radio at the heart of life in Wales. We're predominantly targeting contemporary 50 somethings. We want to reinvent radio for the over 45s, avoiding the clichés and being clear about their passions and concerns.

We are at the heart of the national conversation, but we want to entertain just as much as we educate and inform.

And we aim to attract them by:

- **News:** outstanding news and current affairs, which really matters to people in Wales.
- **Sport:** giving priority to the moments which bring Wales together. Quality over volume.
- **Live:** speech led content which is distinctive, authentic, entertaining and has substance. Supporting the national conversation.
- **Comedy:** winning hearts, not just minds. A mix of big names and supporting new talent.
- **Music, culture and events:** supporting Welsh culture and entertainment in its broadest sense. A platform to reflect and celebrate Wales.
- **In-depth:** features which provide deep-dive moments for our listeners

4. Genres for Commission

4.1 Highlights from 2020-21

The COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown forced us to find a whole new way of working. In every aspect of our output we adapted not just stay on air but to add to our schedule at a time when our listeners needed us most. We gave them information, entertainment and companionship. And this commitment was as true of our half-hour programmes as it was of our regular daily shows. Indie producers pulled out all the stops to continue delivering commissioned comedies and documentary features.

Equally impressive was the response to the special commissioning round we launched in early April. We were looking for ideas with a focus on entertainment and heart-warming content to lift the spirits of our audience. We commissioned several features and comedies which fulfilled this brief.

We also gave a platform to festivals and other events which were cancelled because of the coronavirus crisis.

BBC Radio Wales has a long-standing relationship with the Machynlleth Comedy Festival and we worked with them to create a virtual festival on the radio with a weekend of comedy shows.

At the end of May Guto Harri selected his highlights of the Hay Digital Festival in *This Week at Hay*. And the Radio Wales Arts Show ran an hour-long special to announce the winners of Wales Book of the Year.

In August, as part of the BBC Wales season Lockdown Summer, we considered the impact of the coronavirus crisis on young people's lives, from their mental wellbeing and social lives to exam results and employment prospects.

Highlights still to come this year include Black History Month, featuring an exploration of the debate over statues and memorials in Wales and comedian Mo Omar's take on Welsh identity. We're also planning a week of programmes around the theme of kindness.

4. Genres for Commission

4.2 Themes for 2021-22

Because of the evolving situation with the pandemic, we won't be fully commissioning for 2021-22 in the current round. To retain flexibility we'll launch a top-up round in 2021 to commission ideas reflecting where we are at that point.

As we've seen in recent months, nothing can be taken for granted but key events currently in the diary for 2021 include the Senedd elections, the delayed Euro 2020 Championship and the Tokyo Olympics. There's also the 20th anniversary of 9/11. If you have original, compelling ways of reflecting any of 2021/22's anniversaries and events then we'd like to hear from you.

But what we're really looking for are ideas which reflect broader contemporary concerns and conversations. We want to give our listeners deeper insights into the issues which affect individuals, families and communities across Wales.

There's no doubt that **Covid** will provide the background and context to many of these conversations. In terms of commissioning, we'll be setting a high bar on ideas directly related to the crisis. We're looking for new angles and stories – and different ways of telling them.

This might be an opportunity to explore the idea of **lost generations** – whether it's the ongoing uncertainties around education, exams and employment for young people or the crisis in caring for the elderly.

And what will the **new normal** look like? In the long term how will it change the way we work, travel, shop and get our entertainment? What kind of re-balancing of attitudes and values will it lead to? And what are the positives – in the long-term will the challenge of Covid lead to new solutions and opportunities?

We're also keen to give our audience **escapism and entertainment** – programmes which provide a distraction the harsh realities from the pandemic and its aftermath. We're looking for ideas to make listeners smile – whether it's comedy, lighter features or other formats.

We're also looking to build on our work to deliver greater **diversity** on air with a broader range of voices across all our output.

These are just a few areas we're considering and we'd welcome ideas which play into them. But if you've identified other aspects of contemporary life in Wales – whether it's health, education, sexuality, politics, our relationship with technology or our relationships with each other - we'd like to hear your ideas and treatments.

We're looking for bold, ambitious ideas which make us sit up and take notice - ideas which surprise, intrigue and excite us!

4. Genres for Commission

4.3 Comedy

It's been another great year for comedy on BBC Radio Wales with highlights including series 2 of *Bravo Two Charlies*, the sitcom set in the world of North Wales traffic cops, our all-female sketch show *Welcome Strangers* and *The Musical Life Of...* which gave a unique comedic take on some great Welsh lives: Nye Bevan, Shirley Bassey, Boudica and Derek Brockway.

BBC Radio Wales continues to have a close working relationship with the Machynlleth Comedy Festival. The 2020 Festival was unable to go ahead because of COVID so we devoted the MachFest weekend to new programmes featuring comedians who would have been performing there. *Live from Lockdown* and *Stand Up... In My House* gave us sketch comedy and stand-up while *Ten Years of MachFest* brought together stories of performing at the Festival from, among many others, Stewart Lee, Nish Kumar and Bridget Christie.

In response to lockdown we also made two fast-turnaround commissions: a special edition of the TV comedy, *The Tourist Trap Stay at Home Radio Special*, and sitcom *Twinned Town*, written by and starring Leroy Brito and Ignacio Lopez. Other commissions for this year included *Becoming Welsh* in which stand-up comedian Mo Omar explores Welsh Identity and examines all the ways in which he has become Welsh since moving from Somalia to Cardiff as a child. Our topical comedy *The Leak* returned with a format adapted to lockdown. And alongside returning sit coms like *Bravo Two Charlies*, *Foiled and Ankle Tag* (a co-commission with Radio 4) we also commissioned pilot episodes for potential new series, including *The Learners*, *Pleasure People* and *It's Not a Cult*.

We will continue to commission single pilots for development as potential future sitcom series. More broadly we're looking to commission comedy in a range of formats and explore ways of showcasing new Welsh comedy talent. The tone of the station's comedy is contemporary, irreverent, robust and distinctively Welsh.

4. Genres for Commission

4.4 Science, Technology and Ideas

The Tuesday 18.30 slot focuses on ideas. It's a platform for voices from the worlds of science, digital technology and entrepreneurship, medicine, the creative industries and other fields - people whose ideas are shaping the future. We invite proposals for returning series, short series and one-offs which explore ideas in their broadest sense and which introduce new and diverse voices to explore this theme. Our regular science series *Science Café* runs in this slot for 26 weeks a year.

Commissions for 2020/21 have included *Kizzy Crawford: Autism and Me* in which the musician spoke candidly about her recent diagnosis and explored the impact of autism on women and girls. In *Eco Worrier* Francis Jones asked what it takes to lead a greener, more sustainable life.

We re-commissioned a third series of *The Idea* with Catrin Nye and, in *Tough at the Top*, Bethan Rhys Roberts talks to guests including Chris Coleman and Leanne Wood to asks what it takes to be a leader.

We also made a some fast turnaround commissions for this slot in response to lockdown: *The Mind Shed*, a forum for men to talk about their mental health, and *I Need My Space*, astronaut Dafydd Rhys Williams' guide to isolation. And, in *Going Viral*, technology writer Jason Smith considers the role of social media during the coronavirus crisis.

4. Genres for Commission

4.5 Arts

The Radio Wales Arts Show with Nicola Heywood Thomas runs in this slot for 26 weeks a year and in recent months has been keeping listeners updated on the challenges and responses of the Arts to the COVID crisis. We also have the monthly *Review Show* presented by Gary Raymond. There are opportunities for a small number of single features in this slot.

Commissions for the last twelve months have included a profile of Tommy Cooper on the centenary of his birth and comedian Lorna Pritchard's entertaining insight into synaesthesia in *What Colour is Friday?* Journalist and critic Jude Rogers uses the life of Peter George, creator of *Dr Strangelove*, to explore the influence of the Cold War on writing, film and music. And we take a Welsh road trip with Niall Griffiths, winner of the 2020 Wales Book of the Year.

We are looking for stand-alone feature ideas which give an insight into the creative processes behind visual arts, music, writing and performance - programmes which make the arts accessible and relevant to our listeners.

4.6 Features

The Thursday 6.30pm slot is the home of great documentary storytelling and insights into contemporary Welsh life. It covers a wealth of subjects: ordinary lives and extraordinary lives in Wales; popular culture, from music to sport; journeys through our landscape; and in-depth profiles of key figures in the life of our nation.

At the height of lockdown a real highlight for the station was our season of programmes celebrating the 80th birthday of a Welsh musical icon. *Tom Jones: King of Reinvention* explored how the singer's musical style has continuously evolved through his career; *The Day I Met Tom Jones* brought together memories of encounters with *Sir Tom*; *How Tom Jones Conquered America* charted the years when he was just about the biggest star on American TV; while comedy *The Other Side of Tom Jones* riffed on some of his forgotten contributions to recent history, from coaching the Welsh rugby team to being launched into space! The centrepiece of the week was Cerys Matthews' two-part conversation with the great man himself in *Sir Tom's Musical Years*.

Other commissions for this year have included Mo Jannah's exploration of the realities and myths around knife crime; *Monumental Change* which considers the debate about statues and other memorials in Wales; and *The Welshmen at Nagasaki* in which we heard a story of extraordinary human endurance.

In Never Mind the Bus Pass, Alison Kedge hops on the bus to talk sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll with the 'Sixties generation; *Gareth Gwynn Declares Independence* is a not-entirely-serious take on secession; and in *Titans of the Baize* Mike Bubbins celebrates the life of Ray Reardon and the Welsh obsession with snooker. There were also returning series including *Jacko's Sporting Almanac* and our series in which Chris Stuart reunites people who can say *I Was There* at a key moment in recent Welsh history.

We're looking for programmes which engage our listeners, surprise them, move them and make them think. Above all, these programmes are about good storytelling.

4. Genres for Commission

4.7 Hour-long programmes

We have a very small number of hour-long slots and usually place these on Bank Holidays and in the Christmas and Easter periods. Recent commissions have included Cerys Matthews' revealing two-part conversation with Sir Tom Jones in *Sir Tom's Musical Years*, a documentary on the parallels between the Spanish Flu outbreak of a century ago and the current pandemic and *The Last of the Bracchis*, an elegy to the Italian Cafés of the Valleys.

4.8 Sunday Morning With...

Sunday Morning With... is now well established in Radio Wales' weekend schedule with a series of high-profile presenters including Scott Quinnell, Alex Jones, Anna Ryder-Richardson and brother-and-sister team Colin Jackson and Suzanne Packer. This programme aims to provide a platform for big name presenters to attract the attention of our audience. The format will remain fairly similar regardless of the presenter – music and conversation for a Sunday morning. It's all about the calibre of the talent. If you've got a strong working relationship with the right person, and can deliver in this key slot, we're keen to hear from you.

4.9 Rolling commissioning

We are not at this point intending to commission any programmes beyond March 2022. However, we know that sometimes golden opportunities arise outside of the commissioning window and we do hold a small pot of money open to allow us to consider these.

The contact for these ideas is: radiowalescommissioning@bbc.co.uk

5. Working with BBC Radio Wales

5.1 Delivering additional content for daytime

The content we commission needs to make a real splash and capture the imagination of our audiences. We therefore look to maximise the impact of our features in as many ways as we can. Examples range from day-long specials around a theme, cut-down features in our weekday strands or supporting interviews in the daytime strands. This joined-up thinking helps promote your programme more effectively and generally enhances the quality of our daily strands.

Please outline how your material might be used in order to achieve this when submitting your offer, and be proactive in offering this material when you deliver your programme.

5.2 It's all about the pictures

Good visual imagery to accompany programmes is now an essential part of delivery. This means that images and, where appropriate, video must be supplied to represent your programme on social media and BBC Sounds – whether those images are from the production/content itself, or appropriately cleared existing/archive images. The specifications for image content are outlined on the BBC website. Guidance and best practice in this area can be provided by our Radio Wales digital team. Please seek their advice, if needed, before production.

Our BBC Radio Wales social media accounts are a fantastic way to promote your commission for both the live listen and BBC Sounds. Both our Twitter and Facebook accounts have a large number of active followers. Additional information or content (where appropriate) for the website and social media is also appreciated. This might include video, written material or suggested clips. These images are also useful for press releases and on-air trails. The contact for BBC Sounds and website issues is dylan.dawes@bbc.co.uk and for social media it's hannah.loy@bbc.co.uk

5. Working with BBC Radio Wales

5.3 No paperwork, no programme

While the delivery process works on the whole, we have had the occasional programme delivered without the appropriate paperwork, in the wrong format, not properly numbered, and so on.

If programmes and their accompanying paperwork are not delivered to the required specifications we are likely to refuse them. Everything you need to know about our delivery and technical guidelines is available on our website – link below - with examples of best practice.

In summary, this is what that we're expecting from you. These can all be completed on Proteus.

- **Billing** – 4 weeks in advance of tx – This is absolutely essential because all billings are now automatically made public 3 weeks before tx
- **Compliance Form** – when the tx copy is delivered
- **Continuity Announcement Form** – when the tx copy is delivered
- **P as B (Programme as Broadcast) form** – when the tx copy is delivered
- **Music Reporting form** – when the tx copy is delivered

5.4 Delivery Guidelines

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/cymruwales/commissioning/eldelivery/radio>

Everything you need to know is here.

5.5 Technical Guidelines

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/wales/radiotech_2013.pdf

This document can be found on the right hand side of our delivery page under Guidance and Specifications. Please be sure you read it before delivering your finished programme.

6. Tariffs

Our ambition is to commission the best ideas. We also have to consider cost and value for licence fee payers. Therefore we negotiate price on a case-by-case basis and budgets for shortlisted ideas will be subject to close scrutiny.

Here are the guideline prices:

Half hour feature: £1500 - £4000

Hour long feature: £3000 - £4500

Scripted comedy: £6000 - £7000

Unscripted comedy: £3000 - £5000