



COMEDY AND ENTERTAINMENT COMMISSIONING ROUND

AUTUMN 2015

Proteus round: 2016 2017 – 2

Welcome to the Radio 4 comedy commissioning round. This commissioning process is open to all BBC departments and registered independent companies with the necessary expertise, as indicated in the briefs (section 4). Please only offer a proposal if you can demonstrate that you have this expertise.

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1 THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

TIMETABLE	
Guidelines published	18 th September
Pre-offers deadline	8 th October at 1200 noon
Pre-offers results	16 th October
Final offers deadline	10 th November at 1200 noon
Results released	Early December

HOW TO SUBMIT AN IDEA TO RADIO 4

Pre-offers submissions

This first stage of the round invites you to submit brief outlines of your ideas. These will be sifted by commissioning editors who will shortlist those they think worth developing for the final offers stage.

All ideas must be entered in the Proteus website by the stated deadline. We do not require hard copies of any proposal.

Enter comedy proposals, selecting: **2016 2017 – 2**

Each commissioning brief indicates the track record we require in suppliers to that slot. Please do not offer proposals unless you have the necessary expertise.

For pre-offers we require only the minimum information to enable short-listing.

The following must be entered for each proposal:

- **title** (of your proposal, not the slot)
- **commissioning brief number** Enter each proposal in one schedule slot only. If we consider it suitable for another slot, we will transfer it.
- **delivery date** Enter a nominal date e.g. 01/01/2020
- **number of episodes**
- **duration**
- **short synopsis: maximum 200 words**

Price per episode This information is managed by us. The guide prices quoted in these guidelines is – with only the rarest exceptions – the maximum we will pay.

Long synopsis Do not enter anything in this field at this stage. It will not be read.

When commissioning editors have read all pre-offers and selected those they consider worth further development, we release the results to you in Proteus. Proposals will show as either '**rejected**' or '**re-requested**'.

If your offer is 're-requested', this means we want to consider it in the final submission stage. A re-requested proposal does not have to be set up from scratch when entered as a final offer, so please do not create a new proposal. It will of course need to be edited to reflect the requirements for the final offers stage (see below).

Owing to the large number of submissions at this stage we are unable to provide feedback on rejected pre-offers.

Final submissions

You are invited to discuss short-listed ideas with the commissioning editor. Time pressures may require this to be by phone rather than face to face.

After your conversations with commissioning editors, the ideas you develop for final submission should be entered in Proteus. Generally, final submissions will be those which we “re-requested” at the pre-offers stage. It is also possible to submit fresh offers which have not been discussed.

All proposals must be submitted in Proteus by the deadline.

Enter comedy proposals in: **2016 2017 – 2**

Each commissioning brief indicates the track record we require in suppliers to that slot. Please do not offer proposals unless you have the necessary expertise.

Be realistic in the number of proposals you submit, in view of the number of programmes available, and observe the cap where this has been applied. If the cap says a maximum 10 proposals per supplier, we will only read your first 10. Fewer, better ideas are more likely to get through. In slots where each commission is for multiple episodes, the number of commissions will be far fewer than the number of individual programmes available.

The following must be submitted for each proposal:

- **title** If your idea is commissioned you must not subsequently change this title without written agreement of the commissioning editor.
- **brief number** Submit each proposal in one slot only. If we think it suitable for another slot, we will transfer it.
- **achievable delivery date** Linked to anniversary / event dates where relevant.
- **price per episode** Radio 4 has a set price it expects to pay for the majority of programmes. This is entered automatically. If your idea requires a budget significantly above or below the guide, make this clear in the long synopsis and explain your reasoning. Only by very rare exception will we agree to commission a programme above the guide price.
- **producer**
- **executive producer** Include CV in long synopsis field, if the exec is new to R4.
- **number of episodes**
- **duration**
- **The short synopsis for the final proposal must be under 50 words. It should convey the essence of the programme.**
- **The long synopsis must not exceed 2 x A4 pages of size 11 type.**
- **key talent** Any intended presenter/writer/abridger/performer etc should be shown in the long synopsis. You do not have to secure talent agreement before submitting an idea but you should let us know the degree to which named talent have expressed an interest in the project or have intellectual ownership of it.

Proteus style guide

- Don't use the **Notes** field. Anything in this field will be deleted.
- Don't insert a space or dots or asterisks before beginning the title.
- Don't put double spaces in the title.
- Don't put quotation marks around the title.
- Don't start the title with a slot name, e.g. *1130 Comedy*.
- Do begin titles in Proteus with *The* or *A* as appropriate, e.g. *A Short History of...*
- If you are preparing proposals offline to cut and paste into Proteus, keep the formatting simple: bold, underline and italics only. Proteus will remove other formatting, including bulleted and numbered points, as well as converting your font to the equivalent of Arial size 11.

Supporting material (audio, books, scripts etc) must be delivered to the Radio 4 commissioning office by the closing date of the round. Complete the pro-forma in section 2 of this document to provide us an inventory of what is sent.

HOW THE COMMISSIONING BRIEFS WORK

Section 4 contains the commissioning briefs with the following information:

Programme type The name of the commissioning brief.

Brief number This 5-digit number appears alongside the name of the brief in a drop-down menu when you enter your proposal in Proteus. NB: Proteus gives each proposal a proposal number unrelated to this one. Also, neither of these numbers is related to programme or tape numbers!

Slot Day/s and time of broadcast.

Eligibility Radio 4 always requires producers and executive producers to have a considerable track-record in the relevant type of programme making. Independent companies must have registered on the BBC Radio Independent Production Company database (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/articles/pitching-to-radio>).

Duration Programme length, including opening and closing announcements.

Estimated number of programmes Remember this is the number of individual programmes, not of individual commissions. In the 1830 Comedy slot 16 programmes available might result in just 3 or 4 commissions, each being for between 1 and 6 episodes.

Transmission period The period when your programme is likely to be broadcast. Please flag clearly if your idea needs to be transmitted outside this period.

Guide price Radio 4 expects to pay no more than the guide price for commissions so please budget at this level. If the cost is expected to be significantly above or below the guide price you must note this in the long synopsis of your proposal, explaining the reason. Only in rare cases will prices above the guide be agreed.

If you have queries about budgeting or prices, speak to your business manager or to Gittha Weerasinghe, our Finance Partner.

Independent producers should contact Lesley Eaton, Legal and Business Affairs.

Editorial guidance Details of the kind of programme needed for this slot.

Programmes commissioned in the last round This is to help you avoid offering ideas too close to what has already been commissioned. The list might not be complete. Often, if contract or budget negotiations are outstanding, commissions cannot be listed, so you may also wish to check with the commissioning co-ordinator.

Proposal to include This cannot be a definitive list, as only you can fully know what your idea needs for it to be properly assessed. Make your own judgement but if in doubt put something in rather than leave it out. However, your long synopsis should not be longer than two A4 pages.

FAQ ON THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Q: What's the role of the commissioning editor?

The commissioning editor's job is primarily to commission and review programmes, not to be the executive producer or series editor.

Commissioning editors work as editorial deputies to the controller, BBC Radio 4. In line with her strategy for the station, they support the development of proposals by commissioning and reviewing them. They will not normally intervene in a production unless this has been specified at the commissioning stage, or compliance matters arise, e.g. language referrals and editorial policy issues. However, they are available to provide guidance, if necessary. They may, at their discretion, feel it appropriate to be more closely involved in development, casting, scripting and editing.

Q: Do I need to have an agreement from talent before I put forward names?

If you name a presenter, please say whether you hope to be able to interest them, whether they have already expressed an interest, or whether they have any intellectual ownership of the proposal. Only in exceptional cases would we expect you to have agreement from actors, as they are often only booked within a few weeks of production. Citing possible casting is useful, though, as it helps explain how you "hear" a character.

It would be unusual to quote a writer or abridger if you had not already spoken to them, but in some cases it will happen. If so, please make this clear. If you want to pitch for an open commission for a writer, speak to a commissioning editor before you approach the writer.

It would also be unusual to have gained the agreement of contributors, guests or panellists ahead of an agreed commission. Again, it is useful for us to know the lines you are thinking along, so potential running orders and cast lists do help.

Q: How do I know if an idea has already been commissioned?

Each commissioning brief gives an indication of what was commissioned for that slot in the last round. In addition, the commissioning co-ordinator can check specific titles.

Q: Once I've received a conditional acceptance and all conditions have been agreed, do I need to talk to a commissioning editor before starting work?

Normally not, but sometimes the commissioning editor will want a pre-production meeting. This is most likely to apply to major new series and we will initiate the meeting. It will be designed to make sure everyone has the same understanding of how the programme or series is to be made and what it is trying to achieve.

Q: How much should I contact the commissioning editor while making the programme?

It is your responsibility to deliver the programme as agreed. The commissioning editor will not normally get involved. The exception would be if changes are made to what has been agreed, e.g. presenter, title, producer, executive producer.

Independent companies are expected to initiate at least one work-in-progress conversation with the commissioning editor before recording their programme, and must ensure the station is informed of any editorial policy issues.

Q: Does the commissioning editor need to hear it before broadcast?

No, but independent productions must be heard and approved prior to broadcast by the editor, editorial standards (sometimes referred to as the compliance editor).

It is the responsibility of your executive producer or editor to deliver a programme which matches the editorial brief, complies with BBC Editorial Guidelines and is technically fit for broadcast. The Editorial Guidelines set out the referral procedures for issues of sensitive content or impartiality.

Q: What's my proposal reference number?

You will find this to the left of the title in Proteus.

RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS

Results will be released in Proteus. We do not send out hard copies. Proteus will display one of four standard responses to each offer:

- rejection
- shortlist
- pilot
- conditional commission

Rejection

We will provide brief feedback on our reasons for not commissioning a proposal.

Shortlist

Shortlisting happens for 3 principal reasons:

- We are seriously interested in the idea but feel more work is needed. In this case, the commissioning editor will explain what we are looking for.
- Competing offers delay the commissioning decision. We need more information before deciding between them.
- We do not have space to commission the idea but want to keep it in reserve in case gaps appear in the schedule later.

We try to clear proposals from the shortlist quickly and we review it every 3 months or so to see whether we are in a position to move an idea forward or to reject it. If you ever need to know about the progress of a shortlisted idea, do get in touch. Should you ever wish to withdraw an idea from the shortlist, just let us know.

Pilot

We need to hear a pilot before committing ourselves. You should discuss this with the commissioning editor before doing further work.

Conditional commission

Final acceptance of all ideas is conditional on the following issues. Radio 4 is not responsible for any costs incurred prior to the full agreement.

○ Price and rights

Each conditional commission will be made with a fixed price offer that has been judged as value for money by the Commissioning and Finance and Business Affairs teams. It is intended that most will be at the published guide but we reserve the right to propose an alternative price if we believe it appropriate. If our price is accepted by you in writing there will be no need to submit a detailed budget. Contracts will be issued immediately to independent suppliers.

If, however, you wish to challenge the offer made, a detailed budget in Proteus will be requested and scrutinised by our Finance and Business Affairs team with the aim of reaching agreement.

Conditional acceptances may be withdrawn if agreement on price is not reached within a reasonable period.

Radio 4 requires an appropriate set of rights dependent on the type of programme. This will vary only in exceptional circumstances. The price quoted on the commissioning brief is based on buying the standard set of rights for that programme. If fewer rights are bought, the price may be reduced.

- **Internet use**

Rights should be cleared for simultaneous or near-simultaneous internet use, together with a 14-day “Listen again” window. Independent suppliers' rights clearance should include BBC Primary New Media rights (streaming and audio on demand).

- **Schedule and delivery dates**

Each proposal should include your ideal delivery date, though our conditional acceptance will not necessarily be able to reflect this date. We will not issue precise transmission dates for programmes not pegged to a particular anniversary or season but will give the calendar quarter in which we intend to place them. If you cannot deliver to meet the given transmission quarter, notify Tony Pilgrim, Head of Planning and Scheduling. Precise delivery dates will be confirmed well before the start of each calendar quarter.

- **Editorial**

Conditional acceptance might have specific editorial conditions attached to it, e.g. that a particular presenter is available, and fulfilment of them must be confirmed before the commission is finalised and before you start work.

BBC EDITORIAL GUIDELINES & COMPLIANCE

BBC Editorial Guidelines <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/>

All programmes, whether commissioned in-house or from an independent producer, are subject to the BBC Editorial Guidelines. These set out the BBC's editorial standards, policy on sensitive content, legal and political issues, and the system for consultation and referrals during the production of programmes. Failure to comply with these guidelines may lead to the commission being withdrawn and/or a claim for breach of contract.

Compliance

We require that every recorded programme be heard by a production person of appropriate seniority and formally signed off by them. BBC programmes are signed off by their executive producer or editor. But independent productions must be heard and approved prior to broadcast by Radio 4's editor, editorial standards (sometimes referred to as the compliance editor).

These decisions are logged in a compliance form, where editorially sensitive content must be flagged. The form is available to in-house producers on Proteus and to indies on the BBC commissioning site:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/compliance-and-policy/index.shtml>

2 SUPPORTING MATERIALS

These must be delivered by 1700 on the day of the commissioning round deadline. A complete inventory of materials supplied must be included. See below.

- Submit audio and video via an online file-sharing service. Make clear which proposal it is for. Audio must be in mp3. **Always identify which proposal it is for within the filename.**
- Material related to comedy briefs should be sent to sara.sund@bbc.co.uk.
- Unpublished written material should not be put in Proteus. Send it by email to one of the addresses above. Make it clear which offer it is for.
- Physical supporting material (published books, DVDs etc) must be delivered to:

Sara Sund
BBC Radio 4
Room 4028
Broadcasting House
London W1A 1AA
- Label each item with your name, your department or company, the title and the commissioning brief number of the proposal.
- The package should be accompanied by a complete list of supporting materials, using the form below.
- Indicate in the long synopsis that you are supplying supporting materials.

With the exception of published books and DVDs, we cannot return supporting materials to you.

INVENTORY OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR FINAL OFFERS TO RADIO 4

SUPPLIER DEPARTMENT / COMPANY		
COMMISSIONING BRIEF NUMBER	TITLE	SUPPORTING MATERIALS

SIGNATURE.....

CONTACT NAME

EMAIL

MOBILE.....

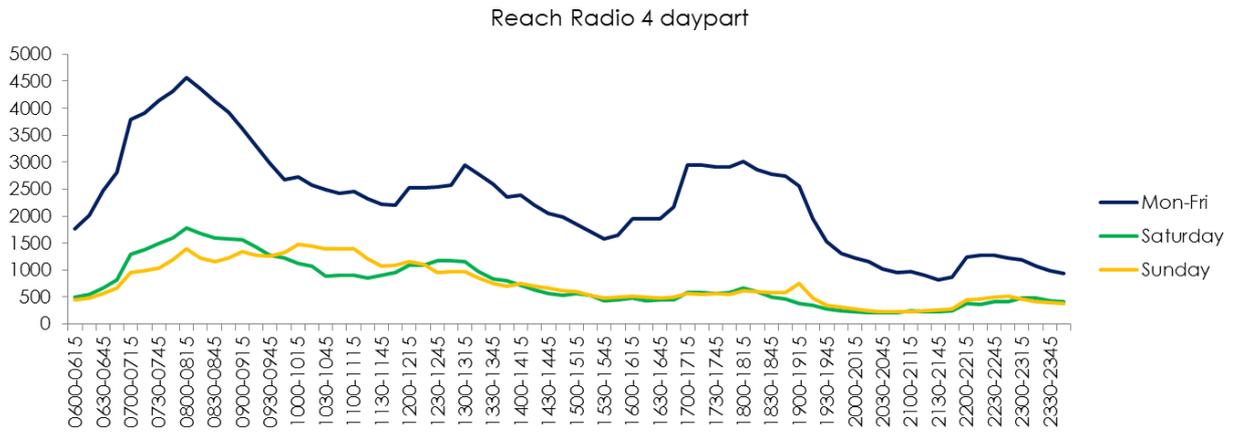
TEL

DATE.....

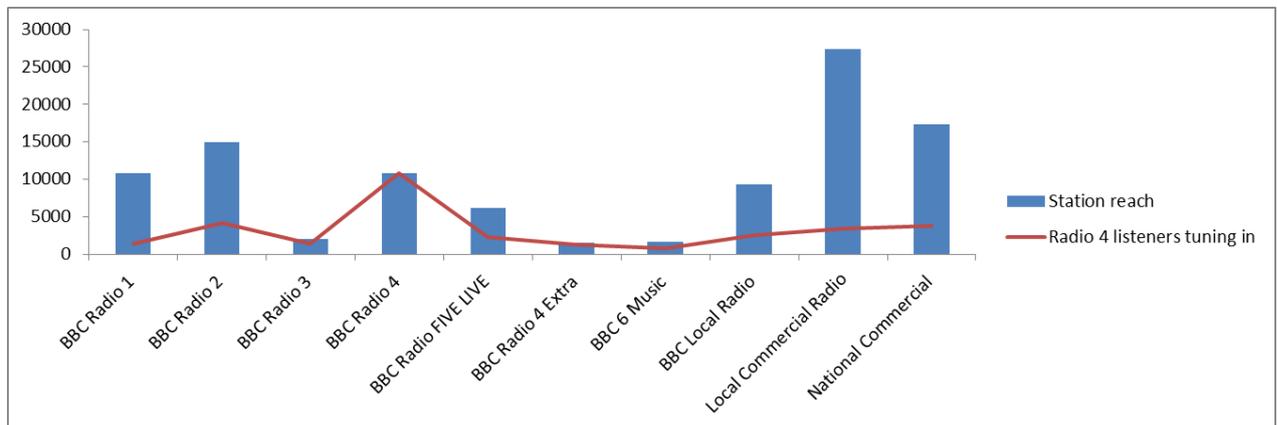
3 THE BBC RADIO 4 AUDIENCE

- **Reach:** 11.2 million, or one in five adults listen to Radio 4 each week, 21% of the population.
- **Hours:** Radio 4 continues to have a very loyal audience. The average Radio 4 listener tunes in for 11 hours and 30 minutes each week. In total that makes 129 million hours every week.
- **Share:** Share takes all the minutes listened to any radio, and works out what proportion of this Radio 4 makes up. Radio 4's share of listening is 12.5%, or one in every eight minutes of all radio consumed.
- **Genre:** News attracts the largest number of listeners, at 9.6m per week. Drama attracts a strong 7 million average listeners a week, and comedy reaches 5.5 million.
- **Online:** Radio 4 attracts 1 million unique browsers to its site each month, two in five of these on mobile or tablet. There are over 16 million iPlayer requests for Radio 4 programmes monthly, and a further 25 million podcasts around the world, providing Radio 4 with a huge digital footprint.
- The station continues to have a fairly balanced audience in terms of gender (51% male / 49% female) – however, our female listeners typically tune in for longer than our male listeners (13:18 vs. 09:47). The average age of the Radio 4 listener is 55 years old. The station also continues to have an upmarket bias – 75% of those tuning in fall into the ABC1 demographic.

When do they listen?



What other radio stations do they listen to?



For any questions about the Radio 4 audience, please contact Elizabeth Lane, Research Manager for Radio 4 and 4 Extra: Elizabeth.lane@bbc.co.uk.



COMEDY & ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

GENERAL NOTES ON COMEDY AND ENTERTAINMENT

See page 21 for detailed guidance on individual briefs

Commissioning Editor: Sioned Wiliam

Commissioning Assistant: Sara Sund

1130 Comedy Brief number 47013

1830 Comedy Brief number 47031

2300 Entertainment Brief number 47058

All briefs are open for returning series. The 1130 brief will be opened to new business which will be capped at two offers. No other slots will be opened for new business in this round.

Duration: All slots are 28'. In the 2300 Entertainment slot we commission some 14' programmes.

Transmission period: approx. September 2016 – March 2017.

Guide price for all slots: £11,300 (28') £5,650 (14').

The Idea

Very few new programmes will be commissioned in any round.

There are a lot of returning series. New series can only start if another stops.

Any offers must bring something distinctive to Radio 4.

Programmes that mimic programmes already on air in any slots (not just comedy) or have specifically not been requested in the following briefs will be turned down at pre-offers.

The producer

Your company or department will need to be able to demonstrate substantial and considerable experience in radio comedy and/or television comedy.

It's a long haul from pre-offer to broadcast.

The idea may have to be piloted; writers will need to be coaxed and supported to write a minimum of four scripts. Casting for a scripted comedy or a stand up show means your knowledge of performers and their skills has to be superb. You then need to be able to direct and produce the programme – a stand up can need as much production to help make the move from comedy club to radio as an actor reading someone else's lines.

Companies and departments with no radio comedy experience who are invited to a pre-offers meeting will be asked to name the experienced radio

producer(s) who will work with them on developing and then producing the programme if it is commissioned.

Work online is useful and interesting but will not be enough to demonstrate you can provide broadcast quality programmes that meet the editorial, talent development, compliance and technical levels we require.

Diversity

We are determined to continue broadcasting comedy that reflects the rich diversity of modern Britain. So, please consider how your programme can help us achieve that.

Celebrity-guest shows

Do not offer.

We have many shows across the network that revolve around a different celebrity guest appearing or being interviewed in each programme; think of established programmes such as *Desert Island Discs*, *Great Lives*, *A Good Read*, *With Great Pleasure* and newer titles such as *Chain Reaction* and *My Teenage Diary*.

Series or serials?

We want series. Serials may be considered if the overarching story arc is strong enough to bring listeners back week after week.

In a series, programmes can, to a greater or lesser extent, be placed in any order and do not need a detailed explanation each week to explain what has happened so far. Serials do.

ARE YOU READY TO OFFER?

As you read through the following paragraphs please ask yourself – do I really have enough material, the commitment from the on-air talent and writer(s), and the rights, if appropriate, to offer in this round?

THE PURPOSE OF PRE-OFFERS

I would strongly advise that you don't skip this part of the offers process otherwise you might lose out on essential guidance and support.

This stage of the process allows us to ensure we are developing the right mix and number of programmes and that we are not encouraging work that will be too close to programmes already in development or returning.

Obviously we cannot always judge the quality of the writer's work or talent's skills - but we can and will judge the subject matter.

We want to take audiences to the widest variety of places, through a myriad of emotional experiences and let them enjoy the greatest range of comedic talent. And make them laugh.

Nuanced differences to something already on air are not going to convince us there is not a clash.

Use your 200 words carefully to sum up what the show will be about.

Do not waste space describing how wonderful the show will be or how brilliant the talent is - that is taken as read!

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN PRE-OFFERS

Returning series

If your series is going out between September 2015 and April 2016 and you want to offer a further run it **must** be submitted at the pre-offers **and** main offers stage.

Offering work that has previously been rejected

If you have not been asked to re-offer it then we would politely suggest you don't.

Presenters and talent

If the programme is the talent's or the presenter's idea or they have been involved in its development, please make this clear to save possible confusion and awkwardness later.

Choice of talent

Unless you are building a show around a named individual you are **not** expected to approach performers at the pre-offers or final offers stage.

It is a waste of time and can cause embarrassment if the programme is

not commissioned. We also know that by the time a commissioned programme is ready to be recorded the chance of said individual still being available is negligible.

Audience or non-audience?

This is key. Please tell us at pre-offers if this is or is not an audience show.

And we will discuss this further if you are invited to a pre-offers meeting.

Very rarely is it an either/or. The writing, the speed of the jokes, the structure, the nuance of performance you may want to achieve, the importance of acoustic variety – all need to be taken into consideration when determining what is best for the show and the listeners.

Television ideas

It is perfectly ok to offer ideas that have been turned down by television. But do tell us.

It is perfectly ok to offer ideas that have been turned down by another radio station. Again, tell us.

AT PRE-OFFERS MEETINGS

If your offer gets through the initial pre-offers stage we will meet to discuss the idea in more depth and in particular focus on the following:

Your writer

Are they ready?

Have you actually seen samples of their radio writing?

If the writer has not written for radio before and you have not read anything they have written for radio how do you know they can write for Radio 4?

With your final offer you and your writer must be ready to submit:

- A full draft script or substantial scenes from the series specifically written for radio; this will differ from offer to offer and writer to writer and will be discussed at the pre-offers meeting.
- Storylines for following episodes.
- Character descriptions.

Talent

If your offer is built around named key talent, are you sure they want to work with you?

Have you asked them or their agent/management who else they are talking to?

It is not the end of the world if talent offer different ideas through different suppliers – but make sure it is not the same idea.

Rights and permissions

It is pointless to clear rights ahead of a commission. This wastes your time and money. It is not the end of the world if an offer falls over later because rights are not available.

However, where we know there are historical difficulties with the rights holders, we may ask you to clear them. We will agree this at the pre-offers meeting.

FOR FINAL OFFERS

Writers

Please include details of writers' past commissions for radio and/or experience elsewhere.

Please make it clear if television or radio programmes were pilots only or if they went to series.

Rights and permissions

If, as above, you were asked to clear rights in advance of the offer, please indicate if you have been able to do so.

Choice of talent

Unless you are building a show round a named individual you are **not** expected to approach performers at pre-offers or final offers stage.

But, for final offers, indicative names are needed so that we can judge the tone or attitude of the programme.

Please consider these carefully and ensure that there is a spread of talent across your offers.

We take diversity seriously.

Too many of the same names are still cropping up again and again, most of whom are on the network already.

Offers for returning series

When offering these you **must** include your critical thoughts on the series to date and how you might develop the show further.

Do not worry about including press cuttings – we will provide those.

Length of the offer

The final offer's long synopsis must not be longer than two sides of A4.

Supporting material

This is only required for final offers.

Apart from published books and commercially published DVDs, all work must be sent electronically.

Examples of Presenters and Talent

If they have work online (YouTube, blogs, podcasts etc.) please include a link in your offer rather than sending in downloads etc.

Delivery of Supporting Written Material

Written material (e.g. CVs, sample dialogue or scripts) should not be put on Proteus. It must be sent by email to sara.sund@bbc.co.uk. **Please identify which offer it is for within the filename.**

Delivery of Supporting Audio and Video

Submit via an online file-sharing service to sara.sund@bbc.co.uk. Audio must be .mp3 format. **Please identify which offer it is for within the filename.** You do not need to include audio for returning series as we already have access to the programmes.

WHICH SLOT SHOULD I OFFER TO?

Only the 1130 brief is open to new ideas this round and is capped at two per supplier. Returning series may be submitted in all briefs.

	1130	1830	2300
Slot reference	47013	47031	47058
Price	11,300	11,300	11,300/5650
Duration	28'	28'	28' or 14'
Estimated numbers for open competition	18	0	0
Range of output	Comedy Drama Sketch shows Panel shows Stand up Conversation	Comedy Drama Sketch shows Panel shows Stand up Conversation	Comedy Drama Sketch shows Panel shows Stand up Conversation
Slot details	<p>Brings lighter note to mid-morning schedule.</p> <p>Audiences expect first class writing and performing talent.</p> <p>This is not a slot to test the boundaries of audience expectations.</p> <p>Listeners will be busy with other activities and the structure of shows needs to take this into account.</p>	<p>Energetic comedy to engage listeners newly arrived from work or getting ready for the evening ahead.</p> <p>The audience expectations are particularly high here.</p> <p>This is not a slot for talent that has not already been tried and tested on the comedy circuit.</p> <p>Listeners will be particularly busy with other activities and the structure of shows must take this into account.</p>	<p>We're looking for projects that can absorb and entertain our audiences, taking them on imaginative flights of fancy whilst helping them unwind at the end of the day.</p> <p>This is also a time for comedy that may demand a late night placing either because of form or content.</p> <p>The slot is a safer haven for less experienced talent we wish to nurture who may later make the transition to 1130 or 1830.</p> <p>This slot may be part of a larger Radio 4 project in the Autumn of 2016 to act as a bridge between the workaday world and a time for relaxation.</p>

	1130	1830	2300
			This is the place for short form comedy.
Audience/ Non audience	Both	Audience	Both

	1130	1830	2300
Priority this round will be given to	<p>Programmes that celebrate the diversity of the UK.</p> <p>Sharply written sitcoms or comedy dramas without an audience.</p> <p>Characters should be clearly defined and the comedy should arise naturally from their interaction</p> <p>Stand ups or comedy lectures in this slot should be substantial and thought provoking.</p>	<p>Programmes that celebrate the diversity of the UK</p> <p>Sharply written sitcoms or comedy drama with or without an audience.</p> <p>Jokes should be character based with strong epigrammatic writing. Audience shows work particularly well here.</p> <p>Sketch comedy. I'm looking for original comic ideas as well as character comedy.</p>	<p>Programmes that celebrate the diversity of the UK</p> <p>Shows that play on the imagination of the listener.</p>
Not wanted	<p>Comedy Chat shows</p> <p>Comedy crime</p> <p>Comedy drama about siblings</p> <p>Comedy drama set in work place</p> <p>Impressionist shows</p> <p>Improvised comedy</p> <p>Programmes about the media or creative industries</p> <p>Quizzes</p> <p>Spoofs or parodies of broadcast shows</p>	<p>Comedy chat shows</p> <p>Comedy Crime</p> <p>Comedy drama about siblings</p> <p>Comedy drama set in work place</p> <p>Impressionist shows</p> <p>Improvised comedy</p> <p>Programmes about the media or creative industries</p> <p>Quizzes</p> <p>Spoofs or parodies of broadcast shows</p>	<p>Comedy chat shows</p> <p>Comedy drama about siblings</p> <p>Comedy drama set in work place</p> <p>Impressionist shows</p> <p>Improvised comedy</p> <p>Poetry or spoken word programmes</p> <p>Programmes about the media or creative industries</p> <p>Quizzes</p> <p>Single voice readings</p> <p>Speech programmes that are not comedy</p>

	Topical comedy	Topical comedy	Topical comedy
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SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ON FORMATS

Stand Up

There are many stand ups/ comedy lecturers and poets currently on the network. There is very little space for any more in this round.

Panel Shows

I have been auditing the very many panel games on the channel and will pilot some new formats next year. The holy grail seems to be to find a format that allows the panellists to be funny without tying them up in convoluted and complicated games/rules. It's worth noting that many formats have already been offered and there is very little room for more in this round.

Sketch

I am keen to develop shows with a genuine passion for comic ideas. Even character comedy should be underpinned with clearly developed narratives and comic shapes. There is a tendency sometimes for character comedy to feel unfocused. Rigorous script editing, careful phrasing and precision are absolutely necessary in great sketch writing. Comic milestones and returning characters add value to a show and build a relationship with the listener.

However there is always room for shows that genuinely redefine what is possible in the sketch format!

As with the other genres however – there is limited room in this current round.

Comedy Drama/Sitcom

Characters are at the heart of the best narrative comedies. They need plenty of flesh on their bones and the comedy should arise from their complex and distinctive attitudes. Whether they revolve around the dilemmas of a memorable central character like Ed Reardon or Damien Trench or a gallery of characters as in Clare, Brian and the social workers of *Clare in the Community*, the best comedies pull the listeners effortlessly into their world. And the joy of radio is that our shows can be set anywhere – in space, in a garden pond, in medieval times, in a plane. But no matter how exotic the backdrop, comedy always depends on characters who genuinely engage with their audience.

Radio 4 has always been the home of great comedy writing – it is ambitious and original and the bar has been set very high. Nevertheless I am keen to find new scenarios and memorable characters for the network, particularly in the 1130 slot.

ALL PROGRAMMES COMMISSIONED IN OR SINCE THE LAST ROUND

Please note this list is prepared for producers' use only, to facilitate clash checking talent and ideas. The list is subject to change for all sorts of reasons. The information contained within it is not for further publication.

We are including a list of programmes commissioned, shortlisted or agreed for pilot.

Please check earlier Commissioning Guidelines for previous commissions.

You are advised to match your idea against programmes listed for all comedy slots.

Returning series are in bold.

1130 Comedy

Title	Synopsis
The Break	Andy has come to his uncle's seaside home for a rest. All he wants is a quiet life away from the stress of the city. However what he gets is Uncle Jeff... Writers: Ian Brown and James Hendrie.
Guilt Trip	Felicity Montagu is one of Britain's best and most loved comedy actors. A vehicle built around her is long overdue. Here she performs with her real life daughter Olivia Nixon. Co-written by Katherine Jakeways, writer of R4's very successful North by Northamptonshire in which Felicity played a lead role.
Polyoaks	The head of the Royal College of GPs has said general practice is "under severe threat of extinction" and Brother doctors Roy and Hugh are not about to let this happen. Unfortunately as they have diametrically opposed opinions about what General Practice ought to be, it well might. Writers: Dr. Phil Hammond and David Spicer.
Start/Stop	Hit comedy about three marriages in various states of disrepair. Starring Jack Docherty, Kerry Godliman, John Thomson, Fiona Allen, Charlie Higson and Sally Bretton. Writer: Jack Docherty.
Fags, Mags & Bags	More over the counter philosophy and corner shop shenanigans from a post Indy-ref Lenzie. Five Alive!
Way Out East	Way Out East begins with Zoe Wheeler's arrival in the former British colony jobless and not knowing a soul. Sharing a flat with two other Brits she is drawn into the ex-pat community, a bizarre microcosm of what she thought she had left behind. Writer: Guy Meredith.
Josie Long: Romance and Adventure	Best known on Radio 4 as host of Short Cuts (Nominated Best Speech Programme in the Radio Academy Awards 2014), sell out comedian and multi-award winner Josie Long presents a naturalistic sitcom based on a fictionalised version of herself, living in Glasgow looking for romance and adventure.
Josh Howie's Losing It	Josh Howie's Losing It is an audience sitcom about the loss of freedom, sleep, space and sanity.
Sandi's Ticket to Ride	Each week Sandi Toksvig takes a ride on a different UK bus route in the company of a fellow comedian or comedy actor. Through humour and anecdote Sandi explores hidden delights that litter our hum drum bus journeys. From what-used-to-be-there before the Nandos, to fascinating street names, regular bus passengers and old haunts of her guests, Sandi will prove that you don't need much more than a bus fare to spend a hugely entertaining half hour.

Barry's Lunch Club	Self-styled lifestyle guru Barry from Watford invites an audience to his weekly lunch club where he scrutinises themes close to his heart. With comic documentary inserts informing his routine, and club secretary June Whitfield to rein him in this is the ultimate life-style guide for an ageing nation. Writers: Alex Lowe and Fraser Steele.
Michael Fabbri's Dyslexicon	Michael Fabbri is a dyslexic comedian who battles through life feeling trapped in the clutches of his condition. He's articulate, persuasive, eloquent and incredibly intelligent, yet somehow his condition makes him feel like he's stupid. Recorded in front of a live audience we'll hear all about Michael's hilarious experiences and entertaining opinions on the affliction that affects millions of people.

1830 Comedy

Title	Synopsis
The Unbelievable Truth	A sixteenth series of 'The Unbelievable Truth' with David Mitchell, the panel game in which four comedians are encouraged to tell lies and compete against one another to see how many items of truth they are able to smuggle past their opponents.
My Teenage Diary	My Teenage Diary is a six-part comedy series hosted by Rufus Hound in which fully-grown celebrities are given the chance to revisit their formative years by opening up their deeply intimate teenage diaries and reading them out in public for the very first time.
Six Thirty	Six Thirty is an audience sitcom set at one of the busiest times of the day - 6:30pm. Each week we join the same three groups of very different characters and their regular routines and rituals.
Paul Sinha's History Revision	Paul Sinha returns for a second series of his History Revision the show that uncovers the fascinating stories that we've forgotten in our onward march of progress.
Don't Make Me Laugh	Don't Make Me Laugh is the weekly panel show that asks comedians to do the one thing they hate the most - NOT be funny. Hosted by David Baddiel.
Heresy	A tenth series of the comedy debate program hosted by Vicky Coren (TBC), which strives to tear apart our most deep-seated assumptions.
Mark Watson Talks A Bit About Life	A second series from multi-award winning comic Mark Watson where he attempts to answer some of life's big questions and make sense of life, nimbly assisted/hampered by Tim Key and Tom Basden.
Mark Steel's in Town	Mark Steel returns to Radio 4 for a seventh series of the award winning show that travels around the country researching the history, heritage and culture of six towns that have nothing in common but their uniqueness, and does a bespoke evening of comedy in each one.
The Fair Intellectual Club	A new comedy series based on a true story. In 1717 three Edinburgh girls set up The Fair Intellectual Club in order to improve their minds. A story of teenage love, friendship and betrayal at the dawn of the Scottish Enlightenment. Writer: Lucy Porter.

Party	A fourth series following the machinations of the not-so-idealistic new political party, written by Tom Basden and also starring Tim Key, Jonny Sweet, Anna Crilly and Katy Wix.
Bun Club	Justin Edwards, Mel Giedroyc and Miles Jupp lead a comedy ensemble in this gleeful team-written half hour of sketch comedy. The versatile cast present a glorious array of sketches and musical comedy with recurring characters, monologues, a weekly serial (which changes every week) and that all important big musical finish.

2300 Comedy

Title	Synopsis
Kevin Eldon Will See You Now	A non-stop succession of sketches, character pieces, monologues and occasional songs.
And God Laughs	And God Laughs is the first comedy panel show to take a sensitive but funny look at religion in its many varied forms.
Expenses Only	A narrative-sketch show that gives an insight into the work experience world of Art, Politics, Advertising and Journalism. In each episode our two twenty-something protagonists Tim (enthusiastic worker) and Miranda (jaded graduate) attempt to break into a different industry through a series of increasingly challenging placements. Writer: Alex Lynch.
Love in Recovery	More stories of hilarity and heartbreak set in Alcoholics Anonymous starring Sue Johnston, John Hannah, Rebecca Front, Eddie Marsan, Paul Kaye and Julia Deakin, by Pete Jackson based on his own road to recovery.
Angela Barnes: You Can't Take It With You	Based on her highly praised Edinburgh 2014 show Angela Barnes shares the big stuff she's thinking about: life, love, family, work and death.
The Lach Chronicles	More stories from Lach's past and present, including memories of high school romance, a terrifying run-in with the mob in Las Vegas and plenty more of his questionable life choices, with some stories of his current "fish out of water" existence in Edinburgh.
Ria Lina: School of Riason	Based on Ria's 2014 Edinburgh show (Amused Moose Laughter Awards nominated; listed in Dave's Top 10 Jokes of the Fringe), School of Riason addresses the rather unusual topic of homeschooling.
52 First Impressions with David Quantick	A second series of talks by broadcaster and writer David Quantick in which he concludes his discussion of 52 of the most important people in his life; from the comedians and musicians who've influenced him, to friends and family. Do first impressions really count?
Couples	Couples is a non-audience character-led comedy series that unites the incredible talents of Julia Davis and Marc Wootton and brings them to radio for the first time.
Alex Edelman series	A narrative scripted series recorded in front of a live audience, that imagines Alex's internal monologue and decision-making process as more of a debate between a number of different voices in his head - his Mother's, Father's, Aunt's, Best Friend's, Famous Food Critic's, etc.- giving the listening audience a window into his neurotic way of thinking.

Enter the World of Simon Rich	Simon Rich is a superstar: not even 30 he's written for Saturday Night Live, Pixar and The New Yorker. Now Hat Trick brings his enchanting, sweet and absurd world to Radio 4 with a series adapting stories from his hilarious short story collections on the themes of love and childhood.
Bunk Bed	Critically-acclaimed, entertaining late-night conversations with Patrick Marber and Peter Curran.
Nurse	A second series of the pathos laden comic sketch series by Paul Whitehouse about a community health nurse and her various patients.
Lenny Henry: Rogue's Gallery	A confessional, warm, funny and surprising series of characters, all written and performed by Lenny Henry.

Sunday Comedy

Title	Synopsis
The Rest is History	A further series of Frank Skinner's The Rest is History.
Rumblings from the Rafters	Following the success of Tidal Talk from the Rockpool and Gossip from the Garden Pond, writer Lynne Truss and producer Sarah Blunt team up to create another series of witty tales, as the much maligned residents of an old house reveal what life's really like between the rafters and the floorboards.

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You can find it at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio/articles/radio4>