

Nations and Regions

Commissioning strategy

In October 2024, we announced the next phase of our **landmark 4 All the UK strategy** – our biggest-ever intervention in the UK's vibrant creative economy, designed to serve and reflect audiences **throughout the UK**. At its heart is a refreshed Nations and Regions commissioning strategy.

The strategy aims to harness the creative power of production companies across the UK: expanding investment, supporting industry growth outside London, and ensuring Channel 4 authentically represents viewers from every Nation. Led by Jo Street, Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions, and Sinéad Rocks, Managing Director, Nations & Regions, this strategy will strengthen Channel 4's relationships with producers across the UK and build a strong pipeline of commissions across our genres. The strategy has three core pillars, detailed below.



1.

Organisational

Embed the culture, people and processes to deliver growth across the UK

- Each Commissioning Genre Head will produce a tailored three-year commissioning plan for each Nation to ensure a bespoke, strategic approach
- In each Commissioning Genre, a dedicated Lead Commissioning Editor for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland is tasked specifically with nurturing stronger relationships with key suppliers. These dedicated editors will provide clearer briefs, quicker decision-making, and greater transparency for indies
- We will deepen our strategic partnerships with Screen Scotland, Creative Wales and Northern Ireland Screen to unlock greater creative potential

2.

Creative

Build close indie relationships with strong creative potential

- £35 million ringfenced for content from production companies based in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland
- From 2025, £100,000 annual match-funded spend per Nation, aligned to screen agency activity, will turbocharge development
- All new More4 commissions for 2025–2026 are reserved exclusively for Nations and Regions production companies

3.

Skills

Work with 4Skills to sustainably address talent needs across the UK

- Our flagship £6 million 4Skills Accelerate scheme will directly fund key roles to fast-track talent in critical shortage areas
- 4Skills' key focus for 2025–2026 is to help address senior skills gaps in the Nations and Regions
- A new 'Business and Leadership' strand will enhance the skills, capabilities and resilience of indies outside London

Nations and Regions cont.

Commissioning strategy

Engaging stakeholders to further develop our approach

The strategic pillars are underpinned by tailored strategies for each Nation, shaped through proactive conversations and engagement with independent producers and stakeholders in early 2025.

Briefing sessions have already taken place in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to share Channel 4's overarching Nations and Regions commissioning strategy. These were followed by Channel 4 Open Days across all Nations, led by the new dedicated Commissioning Leads. These reached over 150 independent producers in the Nations, with further outreach planned in the English Regions in early summer 2025.

In addition, the heads of each commissioning department, the Director of Streaming and Content Strategy, and the Chief Content Officer will continue regular face-to-face engagement in every UK Nation throughout the year.

A three-year strategy for the Nations

The strategy supports our ambition to deliver 12% of spend and hours from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland by 2028. Year one will focus on:

- 1) Engaging with the industry** to communicate and refine Channel 4's commissioning approach and deepen relationships with indies.
- 2) Investing in creative partnerships** and ideas to build a strong pipeline of new commissions and returning series.
- 3) Embedding organisational changes** and accountability.

Each year, the strategy will identify target genres for each Nation, leveraging local strengths and addressing untapped potential. Indies will be supported to diversify and transition to higher tariff commissions over time, so that producers in each Nation can secure commissions of scale in Channel 4's priority genres.

For 2025, there is a particular emphasis on responsive genres that commission and deliver in-year, with More4 commissions fully reserved for Nations and Regions indies. Commissioners will also actively build a pipeline for 2026 and beyond.

Drama, a cornerstone of our Fast Forward strategy and essential to capture the diverse spirit and stories of the UK, will be prioritised across all Nations. Our ambition with Drama commissions is to work with local producers where possible, and to ensure that every production has a significant local impact.

Digital commissioning also offers vital opportunities for emerging talent and producers in each Nation. This includes a new digital commissioning initiative match-funded by national and regional screen agencies.

Working in partnership with the Nations' screen agencies, we have identified specific genres and slots to focus additional activity on with the intention of finding new, returnable series.

In line with licence requirements, we will publish annual updates on our commissioning strategy for each Nation, detailing previous-year performance and future engagement plans.



"Great ideas surface when there are trusted and creative relationships between suppliers and Commissioners. By strengthening the relationship and understanding between our Commissioning Leads and production companies in the Nations, we'll give producers a better insight into the priorities for each genre, a sharper focus on what really cuts through for us and ultimately a better chance to get their ideas commissioned."

Jo Street, Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions and Head of Lifestyle

A TAILORED APPROACH TO EACH NATION

SCOTLAND

Commissioning strategy

Building on our legacy of successful Scottish-made programmes, our 2025 strategy for Scotland will initially focus on News & Current Affairs, Lifestyle, Documentaries and Factual Entertainment, building upon longstanding successes like *Location, Location, Location*. In partnership with Screen Scotland, we aim to develop new series with scale and match-fund premium factual documentaries with returning potential.

Working closely with 4Skills, the strategy addresses mid-senior level talent shortages, helping Scottish talent advance their careers locally. In 2025, initiatives include an Accelerate placement on *Game of Wool: Britain's Best Knitter (w/t)*, an ambitious new competition series from a small Scottish indie with strong returning potential. Additionally, Drama series *Summerwater*, a six-part series from Glasgow-based Freedom Scripted (which Channel 4 has invested in via its Growth Fund), showcases local production talent, Scottish IP, and authentic Scottish storytelling.

Engaging with Scottish producers and stakeholders

Our Creative Hub in Glasgow remains central to how we engage with industry, and is home to senior commissioning figures including the Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions and Head of Lifestyle, the Head of Indie Relations, Commissioning Editors in Lifestyle and Digital, and 4Studio roles, alongside broader Channel 4 employees. The Glasgow team is very active in engaging with local production companies, as well as educational institutions and political and regulatory stakeholders and this will continue in 2025.

4Schools will further extend its outreach programme to 11-16-year-olds in Scottish schools, particularly targeting those with a high proportion of free school meals, to help open up broadcasting career opportunities.

Throughout 2025, our Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions and nine dedicated genre leads will engage regularly in person with Scottish indies, beginning with a Glasgow Open Day in March. This engagement will be further supported by our Commissioning leadership attending and engaging at industry events like the Edinburgh TV Festival. Wider Commissioner engagement will also continue through the Emerging Indie Fund and Emerging Indie Fund Extra (which already works with Scottish indie Flabbergast TV).



↑ Trespasses



NORTHERN IRELAND

Commissioning strategy

We're deepening our commitment to Northern Ireland, initially targeting News and Current Affairs, Specialist Factual, Documentaries and Factual Entertainment. We'll build upon Channel 4's existing partnership with Northern Ireland Screen, as well as the success of *More4* in Northern Ireland. This includes match-funding a premium Specialist Factual box-set designed for returning potential.

Channel 4 Comedy, alongside 4Skills and Northern Ireland Screen, will continue to collaborate on Comedy Lab, supporting bold, distinctive comedy script development for emerging and established talent.

In partnership with Northern Ireland Screen, Channel 4 Drama will also continue to invest in gripping Northern Irish productions like upcoming *Trespasses* and *In Flight*.

Engaging with Northern Irish producers

Throughout 2025, the Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions and nine dedicated genre leads will deliver ongoing face-to-face engagement with Northern Irish indies, beginning with an Open Day in March, and a networking event for Northern Irish comedy writers, directors and talent.

Additional engagement from Commissioners and senior leadership will take place around key industry events such as the Belfast Media Festival. The Emerging Indie Fund Extra will further enhance creative relationships – it currently supports Belfast-based production companies Blair Black Films, Fabel Productions and Walk on Air Films.



↑ New Writers Scheme – Glasgow cohort

Nations and Regions cont.

Commissioning strategy

WALES

Commissioning strategy

Following the success of standout Welsh scripted content, such as the comedy-drama *The Change*, our 2025 focus in Wales will initially prioritise Specialist Factual, Lifestyle, Documentaries and Factual Entertainment. In partnership with Creative Wales, this includes match-funding a new lifestyle series with strong returning potential. Scripted content remains a key focus, building on the Nation's drama expertise. Upcoming highlights include the trailblazing and genre-defying Welsh language opera *One Moonlit Night* (Afanti), series two of *The Change* (Expectation Entertainment), a new drama series from Clerkenwell Films, and an as-yet-unannounced Entertainment commission, among others.

We will also further develop Cardiff's Cymru Broadcast Centre, established initially for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. This state-of-the-art, accessible production hub will become the home of Channel 4's F1 coverage in 2025, and it plays a significant role in our long-term support of Welsh talent through our 4Skills Accelerate programme.

Engaging with Welsh producers

Regular face-to-face engagement with Welsh indies will be led by the Director of Commissioning, Nations & Regions and nine dedicated genre leads throughout 2025, beginning with the Cardiff Open Day in April.

Engagement will also be supported through our involvement in key industry events such as the Wales Screen Summit. Additionally, the Emerging Indie Fund will continue to help local indies secure Channel 4 commissions, while the new Emerging Indie Fund Extra will provide focused support to Cardiff-based companies – currently it works with Welsh indies Kailash Films and Postcard Productions.



↓ *The Change*



↑ *Hollyoaks*



ENGLAND

Commissioning strategy

Building on our proven English regions-made hits – such as *Hollyoaks* (Lime Pictures) filmed in Childwall, Liverpool; *The Great Pottery Throw Down* (Love Productions) from Stoke-on-Trent; *Love Triangle* (Workerbee) from Manchester; or *The Dog House* (Five Mile Films) from Bristol – we aim to replicate and expand this success in 2025 by bringing back *Educating Yorkshire* and introducing a major new reality format outside London, among other key commissions.

Drama continues as a central focus, with productions such as Leeds-based *Dreamers*, from Indie Growth Fund company Duck Soup, hitting screens in March; Russell T Davies's drama *Tip Toe*, from Quay Street Productions in Manchester; and a fresh adaptation of *A Woman of Substance* in Yorkshire, from The Forge.

4Skills further supports this growth by nurturing new writing talent, working with 20 up-and-coming writers through its UK-wide New Writers Scheme. It has also agreed a new three-year partnership with New Writing North to support talented writers based in the North of England, and it provides placements for production talent on flagship series (such as *Hollyoaks* and *Educating Yorkshire*) through the Accelerate programme.

High-end documentaries and factual content remain key priorities in 2025, with upcoming productions including *Groomed: A National Scandal* from Leeds-based Candour; a second series of *Top Guns: Inside the RAF*, made in Lincolnshire by fellow Leeds-based indie True North; and returning series *The Jury: Murder Trial*, from Brighton-based Screendog.

Channel 4's partnerships with North East Screen, Create Central, Norfolk Screen and the National Film and Television School will also continue to deepen, delivering targeted support for regional production clusters in the English Regions in 2025.

Engaging with producers in the English Regions

Engaging with producers across the UK is a strategic priority for all Commissioners, regardless of their location. Our National HQ in Leeds and Creative Hub in Bristol are key to giving regular Commissioner access to producers and stakeholders in the English Regions. These two offices are home to Commissioners across several genres, as well as to our digital content and social engine room 4Studio and 4Skills, Channel 4's nationwide training and development programme.

As we deliver our refreshed 4 All the UK strategy, we'll also continue to actively engage producers through key events such as the Creative Cities Conference in Bradford. And our Emerging Indie Fund Extra will also continue to work with regional indies: currently, it supports seven companies across the English regions, including in Loughborough, Bedfordshire, Birmingham, and Frome.

Engaging audiences across all four Nations

We actively measure our engagement with viewers nationwide through comprehensive research, including brand trackers, viewing data, public value surveys and other key reputational measures – many of which are broken down by Nation.

As part of our Statement of Media Content Policy ('SMCP') metrics (see page 72), we track the statement "Channel 4 shows different kinds of cultures and opinions across the UK" by UK Nation and Region. In 2024, Channel 4 performed slightly below the UK-wide average in Scotland and Wales, but we recorded a year-on-year improvement in Northern Ireland, which was 4 percentage points higher than the UK sentiment overall.

Our partnership with Media Cymru is helping us to enhance regional on-screen representation – this is starting with a pilot in Wales, to gather audience insights on how communities are portrayed. We've also been tracking representation of regional accents through our 'Mirror On The Industry' annual advertising audit, to better understand regional representation in TV advertising and identify areas for improvement.

Insights gained from our audience research have directly influenced our genre priorities and commissioning choices for 2025, particularly to strengthen representation in areas where our performance was below the UK average.

Feedback gathered from the 2024 Open Days and stakeholder sessions have also directly informed our 2025 commissioning approach, ensuring our strategy genuinely reflects both producer ambitions and audience perspectives.

"This strategy brings together our commissioning strength, skills investment, and powerful partnerships to maximise Channel 4's positive impact in every Nation across the UK."

Sinéad Rocks, Managing Director, Nations & Regions



↓ Top Guns: Inside the RAF

