

Priya

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Chief Executive's statement



As I take up the role of Chief Executive, Channel 4's purpose has never felt more vital. Channel 4 exists to represent unheard voices by broadening representation on and off screen, to challenge with purpose by telling authentic stories that spark debate and shift perspectives, and to reinvent entertainment by evolving with audiences wherever they choose to watch. In 2025, that mission cut through.

Although I joined Channel 4 after the period covered by this report, this Annual Report reflects both the strength of Channel 4's creative importance and the significance of its role today. In 2025, Channel 4 delivered new creative hits, deepened the reach and impact of its journalism, and grew digital audiences – particularly among younger viewers – while managing costs carefully in a tough market.

Creative impact that cut through

Last year's slate demonstrated the breadth and impact of Channel 4's creative enterprise. *Virgin Island* became our biggest new 16-34-year-old unscripted launch since modern records began and *Patience* was our biggest drama since *It's a Sin*. On the factual side, *1000 Men and Me: The Bonnie Blue Story* became our most-streamed documentary ever, and investigations such as *Operation Dark Phone: Murder by Text* and *The Disappearance of Jay Slater* delivered some of the year's largest streaming audiences.

Alongside our entertainment and factual hits, *Channel 4 News* continued to set the standard for trusted, duly impartial journalism, meeting audiences where they are across broadcast, streaming, and social platforms. Its reporting on global conflicts and domestic affairs was recognised at the 2026 Royal Television Society Awards, securing 'News Programme of the Year' for the third consecutive year.

Our commitment to representation remained central: from the nuanced portrayal of disability in *Pushers*, to documentaries such as *Jamie's Dyslexia Revolution* and *Groomed: A National Scandal*, our content sparked meaningful public debate, helping to shift public perceptions and, in some cases, inform policy and regulatory discussions beyond the screen.

I would like to thank Chief Content Officer Ian Katz who will step down from his role this autumn. He has been an outstanding creative leader for Channel 4 over nearly nine years – the channel's longest-serving head of programming. On his watch, he has overseen an era of creative renewal, delivering bold and distinctive public service programming, a succession of award-winning documentaries and current affairs and noisy General Election coverage, and a standout start to 2026 with acclaimed shows, from *Virgin Island* and *Dirty Business* to *A Woman of Substance*.

As ever, the independent production sector remains fundamental to how we deliver our remit and support British creativity. Indies are the lifeblood of Channel 4 and our commitment to supporting the sector right across the UK is in our DNA.

Film4 continued to distinguish the UK on the world stage, with ten features going into production and *We Live in Time* becoming the number two British independent production at the UK box office in 2025.

Transforming in a volatile market

Alongside this creative momentum, our digital transformation continued: streaming views reached 1.9bn (+8%) with 72.8bn minutes (+15%); and 53% of Channel 4 viewing by 16-34-year-olds came via streaming – the highest among UK commercial BVODs.

Portfolio share of commercial impacts ('SOCl') also strengthened across the year, including a particularly strong result among 16-34-year-olds at 18.1% (+0.8pp) – evidence of our growing relevance with young audiences. We exceeded our Ofcom licence requirements once again.

And, in a tough TV ad market, including a pronounced Q4 decline impacting the whole industry, we made deliberate choices to protect our remit and maintain investment in British IP.

Reaching the next generation, wherever they are

Channel 4's purpose is fundamentally distinctive. We exist to tell authentic stories that challenge perceptions, spark national conversations, and ensure that a plurality of voices are heard across the UK. That commitment extends beyond what is on screen. Through our investment across the Nations and Regions, and our nationwide skills programme 4Skills, we make a sustained contribution to the UK's creative economy, to opportunity, and to society itself.

Our ambition remains to reach audiences wherever they are with distinctive British content that delivers public value at scale. Our next phase is to maintain the vital impact of our distinctive content, grow streaming as part of the mix, and continue to diversify revenues to support long-term sustainability – while keeping our focus on younger audiences.

This sits within a wider national conversation about the future of public service media. It is critical that we protect a system that ensures trusted, distinctive British voices remain accessible to everyone.

Smart collaboration can strengthen our public service media and complement the plurality that has made UK broadcasting so strong, supporting a model where different public service media organisations with different funding models bring a range of perspectives, creative instincts, and benefits to audiences. We want to see even greater partnership and collaboration wherever it strengthens that ecosystem.

Together, these priorities shape a clear direction: Channel 4 will be a more agile, more digital, more creatively ambitious, more collaborative organisation – one that protects the values we were founded on while evolving boldly for the years ahead.

As I begin in this role, I am excited about what we will bring to audiences this year and beyond, and to build on this momentum with colleagues, partners, and producers across the UK as we write the next chapter of Channel 4's story together.



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