

# Impact across the Nations and Regions

## Backing stories, talent, and impact across the Nations and Regions

Our mission is to reflect stories from every corner of the UK. By putting down roots in the Nations and Regions six years ago – from our National HQ in Leeds to our Creative Hubs in Bristol and Glasgow – we reinforced Channel 4’s promise to represent the whole of the UK. In 2025, we went further still, strengthening our regional presence by doubling our footprint in Manchester with a new office.

This commitment is reflected in our investment. In 2025, our out-of-London spend on originated content across the TV portfolio was £185 million, including £40 million on content made in the devolved Nations. Sixty-two per cent of first-run hours on our main channel, and 49% of first-run spend, came from the Nations and Regions – well above Ofcom’s 35% quota, but slightly short of our 50% voluntary commitment, due to unexpected production changes towards the end of the year. Alongside this, we continued to invest in creative leaders across the UK, driving growth in the creative economy while ensuring voices from across the nation are represented on screen.

Our Nations and Regions strategy delivers impact well beyond commissioning. Twelve years after the nation fell for *Educating Yorkshire*, Dewsbury’s Thornhill Community Academy reopened its doors, offering a powerful portrait of modern Britain through the eyes of one school. The series reached 8.7 million viewers across streaming and linear, sparking national conversation and inspiring three in 10 surveyed viewers aged 16-34 to consider a career in education or youth work.

Regional production also underpins Channel 4’s digital future, ensuring that growth on social



and streaming platforms reflects voices from across the UK. Filmed in a purpose-built studio in Leeds, *Channel 4 Served* – our new social-first, short-form food and drink channel – showcases the vibrancy of UK food culture while reinforcing Channel 4’s commitment to regional production and representation (see page 41).

Across the year, Nations and Regions talent and locations remained central to our commissioning slate. We celebrated 30 years of *Hollyoaks* from Liverpool (see page 31), *The Great Pottery Throw Down* returned from Stoke-on-Trent, and Leeds-set coming-of-age drama *Dreamers* (broadcast in 2025) provided ten paid, full-time placements funded by 4Skills for local production talent in 2022.

Standout regional productions spanned the UK. These included *Trespases*, a forbidden love story set against the backdrop of the Troubles (Northern Ireland), and *Our Dream Farm with Matt Baker* (Wales), which

returned for a second series featuring Welsh language in every episode (and with Welsh subtitles available to stream on Channel 4). Scottish productions included thrilling drama *Summerwater* and new competition series *Game of Wool: Britain’s Best Knitter*, hosted by Olympic champion Tom Daley. Meanwhile, long-running favourite *Location, Location, Location* marked its 25th anniversary, receiving a BAFTA award for outstanding contribution to Scotland’s screen industry.

We also deepened collaboration with national and local screen agencies, and developed tailored commissioning strategies for each Nation (see page 20). During the year, we held open days and face-to-face engagement across the Nations working with Northern Ireland Screen (Belfast), Screen Scotland (Glasgow), and Creative Wales (Cardiff), introducing our dedicated Commissioning Leads and reaching around 150 indies.



## 4Skills: Powering the UK's creative talent pipeline

Leeds-based 4Skills opens up training and career development opportunities to people across the UK – from entry-level roles into the industry to progression at senior levels, while supporting independent producers to grow across the Nations and Regions. In 2025, 4Skills had a programme budget of £10 million and provided 51,600 training, development, and learning opportunities.

A new proposition, Accelerate, launched this year – a bold two-year, £6 million programme designed to unlock progression opportunities on Channel 4 productions outside London. Focused on mid- and senior-level off-screen talent, the programme fully funds roles and provides training and development support, enabling professionals to gain valuable experience, secure senior credits, and build long-term careers in their home cities.


Overall, Accelerate supported 48 independent production companies across the UK, funding 100 roles across major genres including Drama, Factual, Sport, News, and Digital. In total, 59 productions were supported, ranging from *Game of Wool: Britain's Best Knitter* (Scotland) and *Worlds Apart* (Wales), to *The Dog House* (South West of England), *Hollyoaks* (North of England), and *The Big Pound Shop Swap* (Northern Ireland).

In 2025, we continued to support the growth of Nations and Regions indies through the expanded Business Boost initiative, providing bespoke business, leadership, and management support to 24 production companies based outside of London.

The programme includes two strands: Business Boost Foundations for early-stage indies, and Business Boost Next Level for established companies ready to scale – both offering expert consultancy, financial planning, and leadership training to each business.

As part of Channel 4's commitment to widening access and developing future leaders, 4Skills also launched a Junior Commissioning Editor programme, funding three roles across multiple genres at Channel 4's bases in the Nations and Regions in 2025. The scheme gives producer-level professionals the chance to take the next step in their editorial careers and is helping develop a pipeline of commissioning talent outside of London.

Other central 4Skills initiatives included 4Schools, Channel 4's Production Training Scheme, and our apprenticeships programme, which continued to provide high-quality entry routes into the creative industries for people who might otherwise struggle to access them.

 [Read more about 4Skills on page 53](#)

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**The support that this scheme offers is a vital boost to productions like ours in Northern Ireland.”**

*Fintan Maguire, MD and Creative Director, High Rock Media, Northern Ireland*

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# Commissioning strategy

Across the Nations, our 2025 genre strategy focused on Drama, More4, and Digital, alongside targeted growth in Factual Entertainment and Entertainment & Reality development. In 2026, these remain our focus areas, as they continue to offer the strongest opportunities for driving impact, with flexibility to tailor our approach to the distinctive opportunities within each Nation.

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In 2025, we held a series of roadshows to launch the strategy and introduce dedicated Genre Leads for each Nation. In 2026, we are embedding the strategy further, with Commissioning Leads engaging proactively and consistently with producers to expand ongoing relationships and develop new ones.

The following Nation-by-Nation sections summarise the progress made in 2025, outline how our strategy is evolving, and highlight the specific priorities that will shape our work with indies in the year ahead.





## Scotland

### Commissioning strategy

2025 delivered standout Scottish productions including *Summerwater* from Glasgow-based Freedom Scripted (a Creative Investment Fund company), supported by Screen Scotland and featuring placements from our 4Skills Accelerate programme. In *Unscripted*, *Two Men on a Bike* and *Sailing the Shipping Forecast* – both produced in Glasgow – landed on More4 with strong returnable potential while Tern TV won its first Channel 4.0 digital documentary commission. *Game of Wool: Britain's Best Knitter* reflects our ambition for producing Factual Entertainment in Scotland and has already been recommissioned for a second series.

Our 2026 strategy for Scotland will continue to prioritise returning Lifestyle series, driving growth in Specialist Factual, delivering Premium Factual and Documentaries through funded developments, and expanding activity across Digital & Branded Entertainment. This includes STV Studios's new *Antiques Riviera* and builds on Firecrest Films' expertise in consumer and factual box-sets. In Drama, we have the thriller *Maya* (Two Brothers Pictures) created and written by Daisy Haggard.

We will also continue to deliver long-running audience favourites such as the BAFTA-winning *Location, Location, Location* and *Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It*.

In 2025, 4Skills created 17 roles on Scottish Channel 4 productions via Accelerate, added one Commissioner to our Glasgow Creative Hub through our Junior Commissioning Editor programme, and offered entry-level roles with *Raise the Roof* and *Firecrest Films* as part of the Production Training Scheme. 4Schools has now reached more than 4,200 pupils across almost 20 Scottish school visits.

### Engaging with Scottish producers

Our growing Creative Hub in Glasgow remains a key base for our commissioning activity. Led by Jo Street, Head of Lifestyle and Director of Commissioning for Nations and Regions, the Creative Hub brings together teams from across Channel 4, including the Head of Digital Commissioning, Indie Relations, 4Studio, and more.

It also serves as a key industry venue, regularly hosting BAFTA, TRC Media, 4Skills, and writers' events. In 2026, we will continue regular engagement with Scottish indies, support key industry events, and continue backing Scottish companies through schemes like the Emerging Indie Fund ('EIF') and EIF Extra.



## Wales

### Commissioning strategy

We have made considerable progress in terms of increasing commissioning spend in Wales in recent years. In 2025, we built on this by delivering a strong slate of Specialist Factual, Lifestyle, Documentaries, and Factual Entertainment in Wales, including returning series *Worst House on the Street*, *Can't Sell, Must Sell*, health series *Eat Smart: Secrets of the Glucose Goddess* and the ambitious reality format *Worlds Apart*. In Scripted, Expectation Entertainment's comedy drama *The Change* returned for a second series.

We continue to develop Cardiff's Cymru Broadcast Centre, a state-of-the-art, fully accessible production hub established for the Paris 2024 Olympics. It now plays a key role in developing Welsh talent through our 4Skills Accelerate programme and became the home of Channel 4's F1 coverage in 2025. Production company Whisper also produced our *Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games* coverage on-site.

In 2026, Scripted remains a key focus, alongside targeted growth in Factual Entertainment and a new Lifestyle series developed with Creative Wales. Early output already includes Jack Thorne's *Falling*, *999: What Happened Next* (Curve Wales) and the genre-defying Welsh language opera *Fires of the Moon*.

In 2025, 4Skills' Accelerate programme created 26 mid-to-senior-level roles on 13 Welsh Channel 4 productions, with a further seven supported through Factual Fast Track, and offered three entry-level roles on our Production Training Scheme with Kailash Films, Ty'r Ddraig, and South Shore. We continued our collaboration with local partners including Screen Alliance Wales, Media Cymru, Creative Wales, and the National Film and Television School to offer learning and development opportunities for indies, freelancers, and schools.

### Engaging with Welsh producers

Regular face-to-face engagement with Welsh indies will continue to be led by the Head of Lifestyle and Director of Commissioning for Nations and Regions, supported by nine genre leads and a bespoke 4Producers event in North Wales. We'll support and maintain presence at key industry events, including the Welsh Screen Summit. In addition, the EIF will continue to help Welsh indies secure Channel 4 commissions, while EIF Extra will provide additional targeted support.



Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games



# England

## Commissioning strategy

In 2025, we built on proven English region hits – from *Hollyoaks* (Lime Pictures) in Liverpool, celebrating its 30th anniversary, to *The Great Pottery Throw Down* (Love Productions) from Stoke-on-Trent. *Educating Yorkshire* returned after 12 years and Leeds-based drama *Dreamers* debuted, reinforcing our commitment to distinctive regional storytelling. In Factual, standout titles included *Groomed: A National Scandal* from Leeds-based Candour, Birmingham-based Full Fat TV's *Michael Sheen's Secret Million Pound Giveaway*, a second series of *Top Guns: Inside the RAF* from True North, and *The Jury: Murder Trial* (ScreenDog).

Our 2026 England strategy focuses on Reality & Entertainment and Factual Entertainment growth, while continuing to build on high-impact documentaries and factual content. We'll see the return of *The Jury: Murder Trial*, *The Dog House* (Five Mile Films, Bristol) and *Our Yorkshire Pub Rescue with Jon Richardson* (Full Fat TV, Birmingham). A strong pipeline of major commissions from across the country will bolster the schedule. In Scripted, highlights include Russell T Davies's *Tip Toe* from Quay Street Productions in Manchester and a fresh adaptation of *A Woman of Substance* in Yorkshire from The Forge. We are also taking bold bets on new formats such as *Apocalypse* (The Garden, Manchester) and *The Court* (Wall to Wall, Bristol), alongside several Premium Factual series to be announced.

In 2025, 4Skills created 47 progression roles in England through Accelerate on 30 regional productions, and 22 entry-level roles through our Production Training Scheme and Content Creatives programme. Our 4Schools programme engaged with over 28,000 students in almost 100 schools, and we supported 40 apprentices to launch their careers in our English bases.

## Engaging with English producers

Our National HQ in Leeds, Creative Hub in Bristol, and newly expanded Manchester Hub, give producers and stakeholders regular access to Commissioners. We continue to deepen our regional relationships through growing partnerships with Screen Yorkshire, Create Central, North-East Screen, and Norfolk Screen.

In 2026, we will maintain a strong presence across industry events in the English Regions, including Leeds Digital Festival, Leeds Film Festival, Royal Television Society Yorkshire Awards, and Sheffield DocFest, alongside opportunities such as the Creative Cities Liverpool programme. These moments help strengthen our engagement with indies across England and offer regular opportunities to meet Channel 4 Commissioners in person.



Trespases

# Northern Ireland

## Commissioning strategy

2025 was a standout year for Northern Ireland production at Channel 4 and across the wider industry. Our focus on drama was reflected in the acclaimed production *Trespases*, a strong example of our strategic commitment to bold, locally rooted storytelling. Our increased emphasis on returnable Lifestyle formats also delivered a diverse slate of Northern Ireland produced titles, including *Britain's Most Expensive Houses*, and *Our Tiny Islands* series 2, *The Big Pound Shop Swap*, and in Specialist Factual *Titanic: Our Secret Histories*.

Our 2026 strategy for Northern Ireland prioritises Specialist Factual and Documentaries, consolidating growth in returning Lifestyle series, and building on our Comedy initiative. This includes a high-volume daytime series *Escape to Florida*, two talent-led peak-time series from Waddell Media, and a health documentary on the science of sleep from Afro-Mic Productions. Aiming to continue our longstanding tradition of commissioning major scripted series from Northern Ireland, with active funded developments in both Drama and Comedy.

Through 4Skills in 2025, our Accelerate programme created 11 mid-to-senior-level roles on Channel 4 Northern Irish productions and supported five indies through Business Boost including High Rock Media, Walk On Air Films, and Afro-Mic Productions.



We also provided entry-level roles with Waddell and Stellify through the Production Training Scheme, and expanded our New Writers Scheme into Northern Ireland, which offered opportunities to five local writers. 4Skills also continued its collaboration with Northern Ireland Screen and Channel 4 commissioning, supporting a Comedy Lab writing initiative, offering three writers the opportunity to develop projects with Channel 4 Comedy Commissioners. We also continued our Digital Commissioning initiative focused on the YouTube-first documentary strand *In Too Deep*, through which we commissioned two short documentaries from Northern Ireland.

## Engaging with Northern Irish producers

Industry engagement remained a core priority throughout 2025. We supported major sector events including the Belfast Media Festival and Docs Ireland International Documentary Film Festival and delivered a dedicated commissioning roadshow in Belfast. In 2026, we will continue to work closely with local indies, underpinned by the dedicated commissioning genre leads, with ongoing support through the EIF and EIF Extra, alongside participation in key regional and national industry events.



Tip Toe