

Creative forward look

Chief Content Officer's statement



As we enter our 40th year we may have to grudgingly accept that Channel 4 is technically middle-aged, but we are more determined than ever to ensure that it is never middle of the road.

creating change

levelling in

levelling in

creating change

Ian
Katz



Married at First Sight UK

Creative forward look continued

In 2022, we will be doubling down on what we were created for: giving a voice to the unheard, challenging conventional thinking, and being a nurturing hubhouse for the new – be it talent, ideas, or ways of making and distributing television.

With our third highest-ever spend on content, made possible by the channel's considerable commercial success over the last two years, we'll be launching more new shows, committing more resources to key areas of our remit, and investing in the next generation of trailblazing new talent.

We will show that Channel 4 is still the freest place to make television, the place that airs the wildest, boldest, most outlandish ideas that Britain's brilliant independent producers can dream up.

After two years of remarkable digital growth, we'll continue to air more content that we know our young audiences love to stream; whether it's multi-episode reality shows like *Married at First Sight UK*, comedies like *The Curse* – our biggest original comedy on All 4 since 2018 – or conversation-driving documentaries such as *Jeremy Kyle: Death on Daytime*, which has already become one of our biggest streaming hits.

For the first time, we will also commission shows in Documentaries and Current Affairs that have been made specifically for our streaming audience. And we'll publish more original content on our social channels, as we connect with a younger, natively social generation.

Represent unheard voices

Channel 4 exists to give a voice to the unheard and the underrepresented and, already this year, Ed Stafford has done that powerfully with *60 Days with the Gypsies*. Ed's portrayal of the Gypsy community was sensitive, intimate and free of many of the lazy stereotypes that litter much television about that community.

Along with schedule staples, such as *Ackley Bridge* and *Steph's Packed Lunch*, we're making sure that we continue to improve our representation of the whole of the UK. Later this year, we have exciting new shows including Lucy Beaumont's new Humberside sitcom, *Hullraisers*, and heart-warming medical soap *Geordie Hospital*. I'm delighted that, in 2021, we hit a new high with 66% of our main channel content commissioned from Nations and Regions independent producers – and we're working hard to do so again this year.

We are redoubling our commitment to diversity of thought too, to ensure that we represent as wide a range of voices and opinions as possible. Regular programming such as *Steph's Packed Lunch* and *Channel 4 News*, as well as major commissions including *John Cleese: Cancel Me*, a new Sunday political programme with Andrew Neil, and an upcoming hilarious, spiky series from YouTuber and son of Turkish immigrants Alhan Gençay, commissioned by our Digital team, will ensure that the channel is always eclectic, iconoclastic and surprising.

Across the year, we will keep striving to improve all forms of representation. Continuing a long tradition of championing the LGBTQ+ community, we've commissioned a series of noisy, informative and entertaining programmes to mark the upcoming 50th anniversary of Pride.

This year will also see us push further to improve disabled representation. In March, at the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games, we became the first broadcaster in the world to field an entire disabled presenting team for a major sporting event. In addition to Rosie Jones' super-sized return of her hilarious travelogue, *Trip Hazard*, she will explore society's attitudes towards disabled people in a powerful new documentary and, in *Dine Hard*, will combine comedy, chat, and cooking for a brilliant new digital series. And we have launched a radical brief to find a bold, outlandish idea with the potential to shake up how disabled people are portrayed.

Building on last year's award-winning *Black to Front Project* and its legacy, we've recommissioned Yinka Bokinni and Zeze Mills' noisy chat show, *Unapologetic*; we've made outstanding daytime talent Tayo Oguntonade a regular on the BAFTA-winning *Great House Giveaway*; and we've cast other presenters from the day in other shows, including Mo Gilligan and AJ Odudu, whose sparkling performance presenting *The Big Breakfast* was recognised with an RTS Award in March, one of 13 RTS prizes won by Channel 4.

Behind the camera, as well as being the first broadcaster to ringfence commissioning spend, we've launched the Diverse Indies Fund, in collaboration with Motion Content, to help us achieve our commitment of tripling spend with diverse-led indies by the end of 2023. We're also committed to commissioning at least one new show from each genre every year that features ethnically diverse talent and/or ethnically diverse stories at their heart, and every Channel 4 Commissioning Editor will always have at least one ethnically diverse-led indie on their development slate.



Dispatches: India's Rape Scandal

Challenge with purpose

As ever, we won't be afraid to tackle tough issues, speak hard truths, and explore controversial subjects or unfashionable subjects.

Channel 4 News's vivid, intelligent and urgent reporting of the war in Ukraine has already attracted record audiences this year. With a new editor and a refreshed presenting line up split between Leeds and London, it will continue to provide the high-quality, trusted journalism that our viewers seek.

In current affairs, our new in-house Investigations Unit will hold power to account with even noisier and more ambitious *Dispatches* films. And through our new young-skewing investigations series *Untold*, we're ensuring that our current affairs output reaches all of our viewers including, most importantly, young people.

Our factual output will get the nation talking. The harrowing, must-watch *Jeremy Kyle: Death on Daytime* created a moment of reckoning for exploitative tabloid TV, causing all of us to question our complicity in it, and *Killed by a Rich Kid* exposed the class divide within crime and punishment. Following on from the success of eye-catching climate programming like *Joe Lycett vs The Oil Giant*, we're also commissioning more splashy shows about the climate emergency, punching up at big polluters and empowering our audiences to take action.

Across the slate, viewers will be confronted by surprising ideas and challenging thinking. *Open House: The Great Sex Experiment* questions whether monogamy is still the best model for a happy relationship, and *The Simpler Life* asks whether breaking from phones, social media and the 24-hour news cycle could make us all happier. And later this year, *Where Have All the Lesbians Gone?* will dare to ask one of the most controversial questions in the charged and hotly contested debate around gender and sexual politics.

Moneybags



Reinvent entertainment

Across every genre, Channel 4 will keep innovating throughout 2022, as we build up a new stable of returning brands. In a world dominated by broadcasters playing it safe and audiences reaching for the familiar, we will continue to roll the dice on exciting, inventive content and be a place where producers can take risks and try something different. For example, we will be launching a new youth-targeted digital platform featuring the likes of *Chunkz* and *JME*, fronting major hero commissions.

Across scripted, upcoming series include the coming-of-age darkly comic drama *The Birth of Daniel F Harris* from the producers of *The End of the F***ing World*, and the Steve Coogan/Sarah Solemani-led comedy *Chivalry*, which explores gender politics in the film and television industry during the #MeToo era. These join the final series of *Derry Girls*, which will provide heart, warmth and laughter to viewers across the country.

The anarchic, hugely creative comedy gameshow *I Literally Just Told You* – in which contestants are given all the answers – will also return, as will our Global Format Fund daytime hit, *Moneybags*. A new big-money quiz hosted by Claudia Winkelmann, *One Question*, and mad-cap dating format, *Let's Make a Love Scene*, are equally certain to bring joy to viewers. Meanwhile, we will also introduce a new generation of political talent in *Trust Me, I'm the PM!* and find the next great interior designer in *Design Your Dream*.

As part of our 40th birthday celebrations, we will also turn the wheel a few more times, commissioning a previously unseen-on-TV stunt, factual theatre or live event that totally rewrites the rulebook on what can, and should, be broadcast.

From the Paralympic Winter Games to Peter Kosminsky's epic new Cold War drama *Darkness Rising*; from an extraordinarily intimate documentary featuring Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe to *The Birth of Daniel F Harris*; from a new competitive show for aspiring politicians to the drama that turned Volodymyr Zelenskyy into a global political figure, in 2022 Channel 4 will be surprising, subversive – and frequently silly. Many things, but never middle of the road.