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Creative Forward Look

After a period that has seen the purpose and public value of Channel 4 debated at length, the channel's 2023 slate is packed with content that delivers against precisely what it was created for: ensuring that those who feel they are unheard are given a voice, challenging those in power, and remaining the boldest, most collaborative partner to producers across the country.



At the heart of the channel's 2023 schedule lies a prioritisation of the kind of must-stream content that we hope will drive video-on-demand ('VoD') growth in line with our Future4 strategy. From unmistakably Channel 4 new comedy like *The Change* to supersized returners like the second series of *The Curse*, from watercooler formats like *The Piano* to big-scale reality like *Rise and Fall* – our slate of shows says something interesting, and often urgent, about the country today, and demonstrates the value that a public service media organisation like Channel 4 can bring to Britain.

Represent unheard voices

Whether it's through showcasing stories from diverse voices across the country, nurturing unknown talent or ensuring that our programming encompasses the widest range of thoughts and opinions, representing unheard voices is core to our purpose.

Following the release of our Disability Code of Portrayal, our 2023 slate features the widest and most prominent representation of disabled people on the channel to date. So far, we've already seen Rosie Jones exploring society's attitudes towards disability in a moving documentary, and hilarious visually impaired comedian Chris McCausland in *The Wonders of the World I Can't See* – a unique take on a travelogue which sees audio description organically embedded into the format as Chris' famous friends describe "what the fuss is all about" at some of the globe's most iconic locations. Still to come are moving documentaries *Amputating Alice and Adam Hills: Take His Legs Again*. Finally, we'll see *The Unique Boutique* open its doors and create jaw-dropping bespoke pieces for those who aren't catered to by high-street fashion brands. We're also delighted by the impact that Lucy, the 13-year-old blind and neurodivergent winner of new hit *The Piano*, has had, creating what will surely be one of the TV moments of the year.

Regional representation is also high on the agenda – from the anarchic Joe Lycett's *Big Brummie Party*, aired live weekly from Birmingham, to the beautiful Welsh language opera *One Moonlit Night* via the brilliant *Belfast Midwives*. We're also excited by the returns of *Geordie Hospital*, *Hullraisers*, and *Rescue: Extreme Medics* (set in Scotland) later in the year. The opening of *Channel 4 News'* permanent Leeds studio (alongside the appointment of a Leeds-based correspondent) will also ensure that we are covering more topics that resonate with those outside of the M25.

Building on the legacy of our ground-breaking *Black to Front Project*, we'll see *The Defenders*, *Crazy Rich... Ghanaians*, *Blue Therapy* and *Secret History: Britain's Human Zoos*. Meanwhile a number of Black presenters have since become fixtures in our primetime schedule including Stuart and Scarlett Douglas (*Worst House on the Street*), Yinka Bokinni (*Interview with a Killer*) and Tinie Tempah who returns with new series about property and cars.

After her hugely impactful menopause documentaries, Davina McCall is tackling another hot topic in the area of women's health this year – the contraceptive pill. Bridget Christie, meanwhile, turns her comic gaze on the experience of mid-life women in *The Change*, almost certainly the first comedy about the menopause.

Finally, we remain as committed to diversity of thought as other forms of diversity. *The Andrew Neil Show* has been recommissioned for a third season. Already this year, we have aired a thoughtful and sensitive film exploring the hotly contested question of assisted suicide (*Prue and Danny's Death Road Trip*) and later this year we'll air provocative polemics about the monarchy and climate change, as well as an examination of the very live argument over trans and gender through the story of Kathleen Stock, the philosopher drummed out of Sussex University for her gender-critical views.



↓ My Dead Body

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Challenge with purpose

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Channel 4 News' daily output, now accessible on multiple social platforms, will continue to provide the high-quality, trusted journalism that viewers seek. Alongside this, our current affairs output will keep holding power to account with a series of uncompromising *Dispatches* investigations such as the highly impactful *Undercover Ambulance*. We'll also see the return of our hit streaming-first Current Affairs series aimed at young people, *Untold*. With around two million views for the first series (and millions more on our YouTube documentaries page), it has proved that PSMs like Channel 4 can engage young people with current affairs content across a range of topics from toxic masculinity to fast fashion. Subjects tackled in 2023 will range from life inside prison to the fascinating world of sugar mummies.

Two major moments will punctuate our year.

Firstly, the Coronation of King Charles III will give us the opportunity to examine Britain's relationship with the royals in a way that no other broadcaster would. Frankie Boyle will ask, in his own inimitable style, whether the monarchy has a place in our modern world, and – only slightly less seriously – *The Windsors* will return for a special episode on Coronation Weekend. Then in August, our Climate Season will feature a number of films designed to inspire meaningful change. This will be the biggest and most important series of programmes that Channel 4 has ever made on this subject and comes at a critical moment in determining whether Britain can really get onto a path that will take it to net zero by 2050.

We'll also make sure we are covering the hot topics that are in the zeitgeist. In a year when toxic masculinity has become more prevalent and visible than ever before, we've already aired *Consent* – a searing docu-drama about rape culture in schools. We have also commissioned Maggie Gaudin and Dan Reed (*Leaving Neverland*) to make a documentary examining the rise of Andrew Tate and why his anti-feminist agenda resonates so loudly with many teenage boys.

As part of our Future4 strategy to drive VoD viewing, we are investing in Premium Factual box-sets – many of which are likely to prompt vigorous debate. 72 Films' four-part series exploring the rise and fall of Boris Johnson is intended to be the definitive documentary on the events that shaped one of Britain's most controversial and influential political figures. Similarly, we'll take in-depth looks at Prince Andrew, the Johnny Depp and Amber Heard trial, and we have already aired the moving *George Michael: Outed and Paula* this year.

Consent ↓



Reinvent entertainment

We will continue to innovate in 2023 as we build on a solid slate of new returners, drive young viewing on VoD, and continue to offer producers a place to pitch their boldest, most ambitious ideas.

Investment in young-skewing reality shows is a central part of our Future4 plans to drive VoD viewing, and this year will see a number of major launches. Our tentpole reality show, *Rise and Fall*, explored the age-old but timely tension between haves and have-nots with drama, humour and plenty of entertainment, while *Scared of the Dark* offered a genuine twist in the celebrity reality space. Also coming up is *Alone*, perhaps the most extreme survival show to feature on British screens, and a soon-to-be-announced series asking who has what it takes to survive in prison. On E4, joining an extended series of smash-hit *Married at First Sight UK* and *Made In Chelsea* is *Alan Must Win* – an anarchic twist on reality which sees a group of celebrities secretly doing everything they can to ensure an underdog wins a popularity contest.

Across every genre, viewers will find content that feels like it couldn't exist on any other channel. This includes *Naked Education* – a heartwarming, body-positive format, where our resident GP presents a class of teens with a wide variety of nude bodies to discuss issues like pubic hair and penis size. *No Strings Attached*, where celebrities enter Mel Giedroyc's X-rated book club to read erotic fan fiction written about themselves while a group of puppets act it out, is certain to get people talking too.

Alongside schedule staples like *Gogglebox*, *The Great British Bake Off*, *24 Hours in Police Custody* and *Taskmaster*, a new generation of returners are taking their place as schedule fixtures. The noisy *Open House: The Great Sex Experiment* is back to explore whether monogamous relationships are right for everyone, while *The Dog House* and *Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker* are sure to provide even more joyous moments to viewers around the country. Love Productions' *The Piano*, meanwhile, was our biggest unscripted launch since June 2020.

And while we continue to innovate in long-form content, we've also significantly expanded our digital offering to engage young people across Britain, many of whom consume more of their content on social media than in front of the telly. The launch of *Channel 4.0* late last year has already proved a success, quickly becoming a go-to brand filled with entertaining and anarchic content from the best and biggest creators in Britain including Chunkz, Nella Rose and Alhan Gençay.