

C4 Music Rights and Clearances Guide

Each time music is placed within a Channel 4 programme this must be reported. Music is protected by copyright law and Channel 4 need to obtain consent to use it. This guide will take you through the process of using music in your production and key areas to consider.

This document is provided as a guide, please contact a member of the C4 [Rights team](#) if you require any additional guidance or assistance with music clearances across your production.

Part 1: What do I need to clear and how much does it cost?

1. Publishing, Recording and Performers' rights explained

For every commercial track there are two basic sets of rights to consider, publishing and recording. Both components are separately administered by PRS and PPL.

The publishing, owned and administered by a publisher, is the lyrics and notes that make up the song.

The recording, owned and administered by a record label, is the lyrics and notes, *recorded* and rendered as CD or MP3 / WAV.

Alongside publishing and recording there is a second tier of rights called Performers Rights. These are ascribed to the musicians that perform the composition. In most cases, these rights are bought out by whoever controls the recording rights i.e. the record label.

2. Publishing

a) Clearing publishing rights under the IPC scheme

'PRS for Music' offers a blanket agreement which is a standard music rights license called the IPC scheme which you can use to license tracks for Channel 4 commissions. Under the terms of the scheme, tracks registered with PRS are licensed at fixed rates, so you do not need to approach the publisher for approval or to negotiate a fee.

To clear publishing you must first ensure that your production company is registered for the IPC scheme. Please call 'PRS for Music' to check if you are not sure.

PRS for Music - 020 3741 4101

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/broadcasting-music-on-tv/ipc-licence>

Once you have registered for the IPC scheme, locate the track with the 'Work Search' function on the PRS database and ensure that all the 'Final Owners' are MCPS and PRS registered:

PRS for Music 'Search Works' (PRS will supply a username and password)

<https://www.prsformusic.com/works/searching-works>

Final shares						
Role	Name	CAE Number	Performance		Mechanical	
				Society		Society
Composer/Author	ALBARN, DAMON	161992353		PRS		Non Society
Composer/Author	HEWLETT, JAMIE CHRISTOPHER	291933639		PRS		Non Society
Composer/Author	BURTON, BRIAN JOSEPH	470979609		ASCAP		Non Society
Original Publisher	CHRYSALIS-MUSIC-LTD	39991729		PRS	Final Owner	MCPS
Original Publisher	GORILLAZ	154072395		Non Society		Non Society
Sub Publisher	EMI MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD	87019563		PRS	Final Owner	MCPS

This means that the publisher is allowing PRS to license and collect royalties for the publishing on their behalf. Therefore, you do not need to contact the publisher directly to request clearance. You must clear and pay for publishing ahead of first broadcast or use.

Works described on the database as N/S (non-society), are not covered by the IPC Licence and must be [cleared directly](#) with publishers if they are to be used in programmes.

The IPC scheme is not without limitations. For example, derogation, appropriation, and product endorsement are not permitted. You must be aware of these limitations before you clear a track for transmission. Please refer to [Section 2, Part 1 – ‘Exceptions and Restrictions’](#) before clearing.

b) Paying for publishing rights under the IPC scheme

Channel 4 does not have a pre-paid blanket to clear publishing so your production company music budget and [pay for your clearances](#) under the IPC Scheme.

[Costs for publishing rights](#) differ depending on the channel you are producing for, the type of music being used and the way in which it is used. Your production will most likely be a C4, E4 or More4 commission and a specific set of rights will need to be cleared for each channel. Check your production agreement if you are not sure what you need to clear for.

IPC rates include all associated ‘New Media’ rights for 30 days such as All4 or ‘Catch-Up’, multicast and streaming, as well as timeshift or ‘+1’ rights

Full Terms of the IPC Scheme along with Publishing Rate Rights Card:

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/broadcasting-music-on-tv/ipc-licence>

3. Recordings

a) Clearing recording rights

Channel 4 has a blanket agreement with PPL who represent record labels in the UK. To clear the track for background or featured usage you must locate the track using the PPL Repertoire Search and check that the recording you are using is owned by a PPL registered record label. There can be many different recorded versions of the same song so you must clear the specific recording you are using.

PPL Audio Repertoire Search

<https://repsearch.ppluk.com/ars/faces/pages/audioSearch.jspx>

Search Results

Artist Name	Recording Title	ISRC	Recording Rightsholder	Release Date	Duration
BASTILLE	Good Grief	GBUM71602654	Universal Music Operations Ltd	2016	3:26sec

If your track appears on the PPL search, then it should be clear for recording rights (see above).

You should always check the recording is PPL registered and be extra vigilant if you want to use recordings sourced from:

- ✗ **Film and TV soundtracks.** Generally, a film or TV producer will fund and acquire the recording rights to the soundtrack for their production. Even though the soundtrack *may* be available as commercial release on a PPL registered label the producers will still hold the recording rights. Soundtracks are therefore ineligible under C4’s PPL blanket.
- ✗ **Demos, home recordings or unsigned bands.** Any unsigned material or non-record company owned recordings will almost certainly not be PPL registered.

- × **Pre-release or un-released material.** The artist might have commercial recordings available but could be out of contract or yet to license their recordings to a PPL registered label.

Once you have checked the recording rights you must ensure the label's details are fully reported on your completed [cue sheets](#) to clear the recording.

b) Paying for recording rights

C4's PPL blanket covering recordings differs slightly from the IPC scheme covering publishing in that you do not need to pay to use PPL registered recordings. This includes background or featured usage in commissions across all of C4's terrestrial, digital, online and new media platforms and includes both Dubbing and Broadcast Rights.

It also covers commercial music for Titles and Credits, but only up to and including 2 episodes. For more than 2 episodes or if the music is used around the show's bumpers, you must clear the recording directly with the record company. This is likely to come at a cost, but you should pay no more than what you are paying for the publishing side (£338 per 30" approx). Please contact a member of the [Rights team](#) for assistance if you want to use commercial music over your Titles.

4. Cue Sheets and Music License forms

Music cue sheets are a contractual requirement; as per the IPC scheme and C4's PPL blanket, your tracks are not officially cleared until a Music Cue Sheet has been completed and submitted via Silvermouse (www.silvermouse.com). This ensures everyone receives their correct royalty payment. Please ensure your cue sheets are submitted *prior* to TX.

For C4 programmes, the electronic cue sheet is made available online in Silvermouse (or Soundmouse if your programme is contracted as a Licence or Acquisition). You will need a username and password to access Silvermouse so please go to www.silvermouse.com and click on New User and follow the steps there to request one if you do not already have one. If you can't see your music cue sheet in Silvermouse or have any technical difficulties adding your data, please email them at helpdesk@soundmouse.com.

Upon completion of the cue sheet with music returns data please 'Submit to Broadcaster'. C4 Rights will check and approve the data you supply and either approve or reject the cue sheet. Once approved you will need to submit your cue sheet/s to 'PRS for Music' at tvprogrammes@prsformusic.com. 'PRS for Music' will then invoice your company for the total cost of your IPC scheme music clearances based on the information held in the cue sheet. Please ensure that your durations and time codes are accurate, as if not, this may result in cue sheet rejection from Channel 4, or under / overpayment by you.

Part 2: Clearing outside of C4's blanket deals.

1. Exceptions and Restrictions

a) Respect the blankets!

Where there is sufficient budget for music clearances, most producers will opt to use commercial tracks for their shows and C4's blanket deals are in place to facilitate this. The 'spirit' of the blanket deals is convenience, freeing up valuable time and resources for labels, publishers, producers and broadcasters.

Strict guidelines are in place to ensure that commercially available repertoire is treated with the respect it deserves and the diligence it warrants.

There are several crucial exceptions and restrictions to which you must adhere when clearing tracks under the blankets. Failure to observe these restrictions could result in additional costs to your production budget.

b) Exempt artists

Please see link below to PRS Website for 'IPC Excluded Works':

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/broadcasting-music-on-tv/ipc-licence>

There are certain artists / performers who are sensitive about their work. Please always check with [Rights](#) regarding tracks / content usage if you are unsure whether your production could be deemed to be contentious, to prevent any copyright infringements / claims.

As well as individual artists, there are also publishers that are not MCPS members and whose entire catalogues are excluded from the IPC Blanket Licence. If you want to use their repertoire you will need to contact them directly to clear the necessary rights.

Please bear in mind that Channel 4 often rely on secondary blanket licences for further exploitation of content, so any tracks that you licence directly must be cleared for UK, all media, in perpetuity.

c) Appropriate usage

Artists, labels and publishers are extremely sensitive towards how their repertoire is used in productions, particularly as it can be used without consent. Please do not use either published compositions or records over anything which might be considered contentious.

Examples of contentious usage are:

- × **Parody** – Where a composition is mimicked or appropriated for comic effect. Re-writing of lyrics or melodies for any reason, comic or otherwise is not permitted.
- × **Burlesque** – Poking fun at the artist or their composition is not permitted, nor is using an original composition to drive a gag.
- × **Defamatory association** - Be wary of any associations that could be drawn between the track and the action on screen; particularly if it is sound-tracking extreme violence, rape, drug taking, blasphemy, racial or political content or any associations that could potentially offend the artists.
- × **Product endorsement** - Any direct or implied associations with a product or service.
- × **Manipulation of recordings** – As per the terms of our PPL agreement you cannot manipulate the track so that 'the sounds transmitted are different from those on the original sound recording'. This includes so-called 'mash-ups' where two tracks are edited together in such a way as to give the impression of an original recording or new composition.

Always err on the side of caution and if you suspect your usage comes close to any of the above you should contact your lawyer at C4 or a member of the [Rights team](#) for assistance.

If you are advised to clear directly, often this is simply a case of contacting the publisher or label for consent. If they approve you may be able to clear and report the track as normal. In some cases, they will request a fee so be prepared to replace the track if you can't afford the clearance costs.

d) Titles/Signature Music

Titles or Signature music is music that opens and closes each episode of a series, goes over the opening or closing credits or fits around the ad bumpers. Publishing must be cleared for every episode at twice the IPC rate (£338 per 30" for Channel 4 commissions and £248 per 30" for E4/More4). Recordings can be cleared as normal at no extra cost to your production budget providing your commission is 2 episodes or less. However, if you are producing 3 or more you must approach the record label to clear the recording directly. Use the fee you have calculated for publishing as a starting point and offer the same for recording. Do not pay more for the recording than you are paying for publishing. Contact a member of [Rights](#) if you require assistance.

Pre-Titles are covered under the IPC Blanket at the standard rate as long as none of the Title sequence or the title of the programme is shown on screen. We usually advise direct clearance for Pre-Titles if the same commercial work is being used for more than 2 episodes.

e) Sponsorship and Advertising

Any direct or implied associations with a product or service are not permissible under the terms of any of the blankets. Please contact Rights if there is any explicit product placement or sponsorship used in your production. It is likely that you will have to clear the track directly and the label/publisher will expect a much higher fee if it appears as if the artist is endorsing a commercial product.

f) Dramatico-Musical works

Dramatico-Musical works are expressly excluded from both the IPC Scheme and a broadcasters' PRS Agreement. The Rights department should be contacted, and a deal agreed prior to production, particularly for filmed ballets and operas. Please contact [Rights](#) for more info.

2. How to clear non PRS/PPL repertoire

c) Negotiating a license –

i) Clearing PRS/PPL repertoire

Assuming you know the publisher and label you need to clear your track with, the [Rights team](#) can supply direct contacts at most major labels and publishers.

When approaching the label or publisher you should supply the following along with the track details: Programme name, episode, scene description, duration of track used, a brief synopsis of the show and the rights you need to clear. These will most likely be one or a combination of the following:

- 2 TXs on C4 over 3 years + 30 Days catch up VOD rights
- 8 Playdays on E4/More over 2 years + 3 years archive VOD rights

Check your production agreement if you are unsure what you need to clear for.

ii) Clearing non-PRS/PPL repertoire.

In this case the above applies but you will need to negotiate a fee. Use the prevailing IPC rate (currently £169 per 30 seconds for C4 or £109 per 30 seconds for E4/More) as a starting point for both records and publishing. Record labels should not try to charge more for a track's recording than you are paying for the publishing component. If you end up dealing with a small label or artist that is new to music clearances for TV they might be slightly underwhelmed by the fees you are offering. You can politely explain that the £169 per 30 seconds is prescribed by PRS and is applicable to all artists published in the UK.

Please note - All tracks must be fully cleared ahead of transmission and clearances must include an obligation from the rights holders to fully register the tracks with PRS/PPL so that they continue to receive PRS royalties for any future exploitation.

If they are not prepared to register the track in order to receive royalties for future exploitation you should seek a buyout for the track. Please contact the [Rights team](#) if you need advice. Remember to submit all clearances with your Silvermouse Music License form.

iii) MFN – “Most Favoured Nation”

Watch out for this clause when clearing directly with publishers and delete where possible. If you are clearing multiple tracks across a single project and Publisher A invokes MFN, if Publisher B has agreed

a higher fee, Publisher A must receive a fee equal to that of Publisher B. Anyone invoking MFN therefore will receive an equal fee to the highest on the table. Bad news for your budgets, basically.

Appendix A - Useful contacts and links

Publishing:

Register for the IPC scheme:

PRS for Music - 020 7306 4101

<http://www.prsformusic.com/users/broadcastandonline/TV/IPC/Pages/IPC.aspx>

Clear your publishing:

PRS for Music 'Work Search' (you will need a username and password from PRS)

<http://apps.prsformusic.com/WACD/WorksSearch.aspx>

Full Terms of the IPC Scheme:

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/broadcasting-music-on-tv/ipc-licence>

Production Library Music:

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-production-music/production-music-guide>

Recordings:

PPL Audio Repertoire Search

<https://repsearch.ppluk.com/ars/faces/pages/audioSearch.jspx>

<http://www.ppluk.com/>

Videos:

VPL Repertoire Search

<https://repsearch.ppluk.com/ars/faces/pages/videoSearch.jspx>

Performance:

PACT / MU

<https://www.pact.co.uk/members-hub/contracts-guidance.html>

<https://www.pact.co.uk/>

Payment:

Technical help with your cue sheets:

Silvermouse – helpdesk@soundmouse.com

Further Assistance:

General questions/Music Licence Forms - Clare Morey - cmorey@channel4.co.uk/ 020 7306 8460

Promos & Trailers - musicclearance@channel4.co.uk

Cue Sheet Admin - silvermousequeries@channel4.co.uk

Updated May 2023