

Mission with mischief

2012 will be a hugely exciting year for Channel 4: with our commissioning budget at its highest ever levels, the Paralympics providing us with the biggest event in our history, and technology providing ever new ways of connecting with our viewers. We will embrace all of these opportunities – and invoke our mission with mischief in everything that we do.

Distinctive



Commission with courage

We want to be fearless in our commissioning approach – not afraid to take on the most ambitious of concepts, the riskiest subject matter or the most mischievous of ideas – with a clear purpose underpinning them. We believe the spirit of Channel 4 lies in being bold, and we want our producers to know we will hold our nerve when the going gets tough. Ultimately, we think this approach will enable us to reinforce our brand reputations with viewers, and potentially address some of the trends we have seen in our tracking statements.

Innovate



Nurture talent



Digital



Become the first broadcaster with a genuinely platform-agnostic approach to creativity

We will seek out talent from every corner of the UK as we continue our mission to broaden our supply base. And we will seek to commission the best ideas whatever discipline they happen to originate from, opening ourselves up to completely new kinds of creative companies and promoting more collaboration across genres.

Stimulate debate



Educational



Develop a consistently surprising schedule that reflects society back to itself

We want our schedule to be alive to the wider world and feel timely and relevant to our viewers. So we will be constantly seeking out new twists on the big issues of the day – whether unemployment, technology or prejudice. In a busy year for cultural and sporting events, we know that we will need to work extra hard to stand out from the crowd. So we will be creating key moments across the year to pique interest; whether in the form of stripping series across the week, launching dedicated seasons on specific issues or tying in programmes to topical events.

Alternative views



Cultural diversity



Celebrate diversity in all its forms

We will endeavour to tell stories from the widest range of communities, working across current affairs, factual, drama and comedy to develop programmes that reveal the changing face of modern Britain in all its glory. The Paralympics, in particular, will provide us with a huge opportunity to challenge the way viewers think about disability.

Inspire change



Build on success of campaigns to engage and empower audience

We know audiences look to us to be challenging and provocative – and we know that at our best we have the power to be real agents for change. We will seek to build on our previous success in engaging viewers around issues and place a greater emphasis on noisy, impactful series that have the power to resonate with viewers and make a difference to peoples' lives. Multi-platform projects will have a particular role to play in connecting viewers with the tools to enact genuine change.

Digital



Prepare ourselves for the converged future

We will ramp up our efforts to deepen our relationship with our audience, gaining greater understanding of our viewers' tastes so we can help them to get more out of Channel 4. Technology will be crucial in helping us deliver this ambition – and in 2012 we will pioneer new viewing experiences and develop more personalised features across our digital platforms.



Investing in creativity

2012 will see Channel 4 invest more money in original UK content than ever before.

Total content budget

We are budgeting for our total investment to increase in 2012. While our plan assumption is the advertising market will be broadly flat over the whole course of the year, we are committed to putting the maximum amount possible into content. Crucially, we are focusing our investment on UK content – with a planned spend of around £450 million in UK originations – the biggest investment in original commissions in Channel 4's history. Comedy, entertainment and documentaries will be particular beneficiaries of the increase in investment.

We know it is a daring step for a commercially funded company to increase our investment in uncertain economic times. But it is our belief that bold companies invest, rather than cut back, in tough economic times – and we hope that this decision will help maintain our distinctiveness in the years to come. Our plans are based on realistic forecasting, and given our unique status and remit we believe this is the right thing

to do as we look to maximise public value and support the wider creative economy. To aid it, we will be using some of the transitional financial surplus we have built up in recent years. We will also be shifting even more of the spend previously allocated to US acquisitions over to UK originations – with the result that audiences will enjoy even more originally produced content on our screens.

Breakdown by platform

The main Channel 4 service will continue to be a broad-based channel, delivering original and distinctive content across a range of genres for all age groups. It will be the major recipient of the increased UK content budget, as we aim to sustain and potentially grow the impact of the main channel. This budget will be invested in a programming mix of returning series alongside brand new commissions and one-offs.



We want E4 to remain the number one digital destination for 16–34 year olds. In 2012 it will have a slightly larger budget to spend on UK originations, as well as being home to some of the best in US content. For the first time, we will also be commissioning dedicated content before the watershed, for a younger audience.

More4 will be positioned more prominently as a lifestyle channel, with an exciting new online proposition to support its new emphasis on helping viewers to get the most out of their lives. A 'digital scrapbook' will allow users to collect, keep and share recipes, 'how to' guides, tips and advice from Channel 4 lifestyle shows and any other favourite destination.

Film4 will aim to maintain share after an incredibly successful 2011, continuing to deliver a mix of mainstream and alternative films alongside regular brand-defining seasons.

We will also look to launch a new service aimed at giving our viewers another opportunity to catch up on the best of our schedule, bridging the gap between our linear channel and an on-demand world.

Online investment will remain broadly flat, with a continued focus across three main areas. We will invest in ambitious multiplatform and convergent content propositions, and launch new tools aimed at enhancing the viewing experience, whether that is rolling out 4oD to even more devices or developing broadcast synchronised apps. And we will build on the progress we have made in 2011 in experimenting with how we can use our online products to help build a greater understanding of who the Channel 4 audience is and what they want.

Creative ambitions

Commissioning values

Promoting creative risk-taking will be a key objective for all of Channel 4's commissioners – as they are tasked with identifying exciting new companies, fresh ideas and emerging talent.

We will strive to be the partner of choice for independent creative voices from around the UK, and continue our work to diversify our supply base. We will extend the life of the Alpha Fund, increasing its size and funding projects of greater scale. We will also make an even greater effort to deliver more producer briefings and commissioning meetings outside London than ever before. Our online team will be running a dedicated year-long programme of regional events and work placements aimed at building the creative community's understanding of multiplatform content creation.

We will strive to reflect contemporary life across the UK, and in particular a changing culture and society. 2012 will be a timely moment for these big questions – when all eyes are on Britain, we want to interrogate who 'Britain' really is, as well as celebrating its diverse make-up. *Make Bradford British* will seek to ask uncomfortable questions about multiculturalism and identity. A dedicated arts season will look at the myriad cultures of the British club scene. And we will continue to work with diverse talent both on-screen and off-screen – with the return of series such as *Top Boy*, *Phoneshop* and *Misfits* as well as encouraging new projects from diverse talent: such as the drama series *Run* from emergent BAME company Acme Films.

2012 will also see what promises to be the biggest single event in Channel 4's history – the London 2012 Paralympic Games – including over 150 hours of live coverage and a raft of programmes in the build-up. As a major sporting event, we aim to take the Paralympics to a new level. By showcasing the excellence of Paralympic sporting achievement, we also hope to have a significant impact on attitudes to disability, as well as nurturing much-needed disabled presenting talent. In addition to the Paralympics, Channel 4 will feature disabled people prominently throughout the year in other genres, from comedy to documentaries.

Film and drama

2012 will see an increase in the number of one-off singles and serials in our drama slate as we seek to build our reputation for distinctive drama. The emphasis for these will be on giving new twists to contemporary themes: starting with *Coup*, a four part political conspiracy thriller starring Gabriel Byrne that explores the relationship between a democratically elected government, big business and the banks. Feature-length single drama *Complicit* will ask whether torture is ever justified in the War on Terror. *The Fear* will follow a Brighton gangster coming to terms with the frightening reality of his degenerative mental condition. And *Run* will feature five tightly-paced thrillers stripped across one week, examining the interconnectedness of modern city life. The series is the first drama from new production company ACME Films, and will feature first-time writing and acting talent. We will also be experimenting with cross-genre collaborations, such as drama/factual hybrid *The Mill*, which takes real historical records from a mill in Cheshire and turns them into powerful social drama.

Returning series will continue to play a crucial role in driving audiences as well as Channel 4's overall brand impact. Hit 2011 commissions *Top Boy*, *Fresh Meat* and *Beaver Falls* will return, and we will seek to build on their success by identifying a new long-running returnable drama series that can sit alongside perennial Channel 4 favourites *Hollyoaks* and *Shameless*. Serving young audiences with distinctive, contemporary content will remain a priority, and we will continue to experiment with social media as a way of deepening viewer experiences around shows like *Skins* and *Misfits*. We will also develop a new comic drama for this audience: *My Mad Fat Teenage Diary* tells the story of a boy-mad teenage girl living in Lincolnshire. The series is from a new writer originally found through our *Coming Up* strand.

Supporting bold and original filmmaking will remain the central aim of Film4. With our £15m annual budget, our ambition is to deliver between ten to fifteen distinctive feature films per year, which have the potential to resonate at home and internationally. 2012 cinematic releases include an array of daring and complex features featuring international and home-grown talent. Meryl Streep stars as Margaret Thatcher in Phyllida Lloyd's *The Iron Lady*, Bill Murray will appear as President Roosevelt in *Hyde Park on Hudson*, and Scarlett Johansson leads Jonathan Glazer's compelling sci-fi thriller *Under the Skin*.

Maintaining our commitment to British talent, the year will see films from several directors and writers nurtured by Channel 4 over recent years. These include *Shame*, Steve McQueen's second film after his award-winning *Hunger*, and *The Motorcycle Diaries* director Walter Salles with a distinctive take on Jack Kerouac's iconic novel *On The Road*. We are also working with Danny Boyle on his latest film *Trance*, Martin McDonagh on his first project since *In Bruges* and Ben Wheatley on a follow up to his 2011 hit *Kill List*.

In line with Channel 4's broader ambitions to reach out across platforms, our Film4.0 strategy will seek to break new cinematic ground, pioneering innovative ways of producing distributing and marketing film.

Comedy and entertainment

Our comedy slate will be hugely diverse, with a stream of new titles alongside returning favourites. These will span satire, sitcoms, sketch shows, prank shows and impressions alongside new areas such as a studio-based comedy series with Angelos Epithemiou and original animation series, *Happy Families*.

We will continue our commitment to uncovering a wide range of new talent – including comedy duos *Midnight Beast* and *Cardinal Burns*, who will both have new series on E4. *The Rubberbandits* will have their first full-length commission following the success of their online short *Comedy Blaps*, and Terry Mynott will display his exceptional ability to mimic voices in his very own show, *The Mimic*. We will also see the launch of several programmes for stars working for Channel 4 for the first time – including Noel Fielding's first solo series and Dan Skinner's character Angelos Epithemiou. We will also continue to test out new talent and invest more money in piloting and development.

In amongst this array of rising stars, we will also be celebrating those comic legends that Channel 4 helped to launch, with a special legacy season to mark our 30th birthday. Comedians such as Vic and Bob and Kayvan Novak will be starring in specially created one-offs alongside new stand-up shows from some of the biggest names in UK comedy, including Peter Kay, Lee Evans and Jimmy Carr.

There will be a particular focus on developing female writers and comedians, who are often underrepresented in television. Morgana Robinson will star in *VIP* and there will be a full series of *Bad Sugar*, a sitcom from the writers of *Peep Show* and *Fresh Meat* and the director of *The Inbetweeners Movie*, which brings together a dream team of female leads: Olivia Colman, Julia Davis and Sharon Horgan. We will also be working with new female comedians Anna Krilly and Katy Wix in their first series *Anna and Katy's Television Programme*.

We will see a broader mix of entertainment shows in the schedule as we continue to experiment with new formats and ideas. We will look to venture into new slots on the main channel as well as E4, and continue to develop Friday night as a stand-out destination for entertainment shows.



Live event shows with an interactive focus will be a major area of development for 2012, as we look to build on the success of *Million Pound Drop*. An online game for new show *The Bank Job* puts viewers head to head as they compete to win a virtual prize – and the opportunity to be selected to appear on the real show. There will be several more interactive projects of this nature throughout the year as we harness digital media's ability to connect viewers with our content in real-time.

We will also be developing a number of new entertainment faces for the channel, with new shows for comics such as Micky Flanagan (*Mad Bad Ad Show*) Lee Kern (*Lee Kerns' Massive Thing*) and Jack Whitehall (*Hit The Road Jack*).

Factual

A huge volume of new factual titles will launch across the year, as we seek to deliver more provocative content that has both mischief and a purpose. We will look to build on our ability to identify big issues that will resonate with audiences, and use digital platforms to connect them with the means to bring about change.

As we tackle the big issues of the day, we will offer new twists and unique perspectives. We will look at themes including work, drugs and immigration, and in particular, we will seek to make sure our programmes tap into everyday concerns about the UK's economic outlook. We will look at how to get Britain working, with Guy Martin exploring our industrial past and Mary Portas aiming to rebuild our manufacturing base. Elsewhere, *The Bank of Dave* will see entrepreneur David Fishwick attempt to show that there is an alternative to the global baking system – by opening his own bank to help inject much-needed life into local businesses. And Jimmy Doherty will look at whether, in a time when consumers are feeling the pinch, shoppers can really still afford to care about where the food on their table comes from.

Crucial to connecting audiences with these big issues will be getting our Channel 4 talent to champion them – and 2012 will see ambitious projects for Gordon Ramsay, Kevin McCloud, Mary Portas and Heston Blumenthal. We will also bring a host of new presenting faces to the channel, including Jimmy Doherty, Guy Martin, Tim Lovejoy and Simon Rimmer – as we aim to bring in more male viewers to Channel 4's factual content.

A new commissioning structure bringing together specialist factual and documentaries will result in a one-stop shop for producers and encourage more collaboration in factual ideas. We will continue to feature trusted experts in history and science – with Niall Ferguson travelling across China in a landmark three part series looking at the history of the biggest nation on earth. We will also aim to give our slate a more contemporary, accessible feel. Our aim is to give our viewers insights into science, history and religion that they wouldn't get anywhere else – with shows such as *Plant Detectives* and *A Short History of Everything Else*

attempting to put completely new spins on traditional subjects. And we will continue to provide viewers with a radical alternative in arts programming – including a major season on fashion, programmes on music and club culture, as well as specials from artists including Grayson Perry.

In documentaries, we will look at Britain through a range of different angles, and innovate in form with new kinds of documentary formats. We will continue to explore the potential of fixed-rig series, with our most ambitious project yet – looking across all 3 emergency services from a 999 call centre in Blackpool. This will accompany returning series of *One Born Every Minute*, *24 Hours in A&E*, *Coppers* and *The Hotel*. We will aim to increase the impact of our international documentary strand *True Stories*, moving it to a new home on the main channel. We will also look to refresh *Cutting Edge* as a showcase for the best documentaries about life in Britain.

News and current affairs

We will continue to invest in challenging, investigative and, independent reporting across our news and current affairs output. Our aim in 2012 will be to build on the changes we made to our key strands and news programme in 2011 to really maximise the impact of our journalism. We will also look to build on our efforts to create a more joined-up approach between our news and current affairs content, creating more opportunities for our journalists to cross over when the right story comes up.

We will embed the changes we made to *Channel 4 News*, and continue to maintain its distinctive and independent take on the day's events. We want to develop an even richer relationship with our audience, promoting more discussion between our reporters and viewers on Twitter and other platforms and developing new ways of giving viewers the kind of content they want in the way they want it. We believe this approach will help maintain the resonance of the Channel 4 News brand in the years ahead.

In current affairs we will continue to give voice to people from far-flung parts of the world in our acclaimed *Unreported World* strand – which Krishnan Guru-Murthy will introduce each week. We will launch a new format for our long-running *Dispatches* strand, to bring more range and topicality to the series. The number of episodes will increase from 30 episodes to 40, with most editions running to 30 minutes – and special one hour episodes when the subject matter justifies it. This approach will give us more flexibility to cover stories in the way that best suits each one.

Our current affairs output will reflect Channel 4's wider strategic aims to broaden its supply base. Four production companies have been awarded contracts to produce *Dispatches*, including one Manchester-based company, Nine Lives Media, which have never worked with Channel 4 before. We believe allocating the *Dispatches* contract in this way, rather than commissioning on a film-by-film basis, will help to build sustainable companies specialising in the kind of expensive investigative journalism that is increasingly under pressure. We will further support this crucial democratic role by establishing our own investigative journalism fund aimed at growing the next generation of journalists. The scheme will offer bespoke training for twenty people over two years.

Across all our output we will seek to remain at the forefront of digital innovation – in particular developing a new digital strategy for our current affairs strands. This will include investment in apps and tools that enable second-screen engagement.

Education and older children

We will continue to give viewers of all ages compelling, engaging educational content across a range of genres – whether that is a unique take on ecology or a documentary about the industrial revolution.

For 14–19 year olds, our aim will be to commission projects that are relevant to the interests and experiences of young people, outside the schools-based curriculum. Many of Channel 4's peak-time commissions will have particular appeal to this audience – for example in a new series Gok Wan will turn his attention to the issues facing teens, giving them advice and on how

to tackle their issues. From our dedicated educational budget, 2012 will see a renewed focus on television activity, with a broader spread of television and digital projects that reflect the balance of Channel 4's other commissioning teams.

Integrating educational projects to link more closely with existing series we know already have strong teen appeal will be a key strategic theme. We will work with *Hollyoaks* to develop bespoke content around a major bullying storyline, as well as launching an online advice clinic for teens to coincide with the next series of *Fresh Meat*. These projects will aim to harness the attention gained from these high-profile shows and channel it into targeted educational projects that are relevant to the specific teen audience.

We will also seek to build the visibility and impact of our educational projects. Following a hugely successful year in 2011, the fourth series of *Battlefront* will bring together different voices around one key campaign – youth unemployment. We will fund a number of one-off educational documentaries in peak-time that are specifically aimed at this younger audience. We will also maintain our commitment to digital innovation in the educational space, with our new games commissioner charged with funding a number of new educational games for 14–19 year olds.

For children, we will be making one of our biggest ever commitments to providing content for 10–14 year olds with the sequel to the iconic children's animation *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs. Working with the same animation team of the 1982 classic, this time the boy will embark on a brand new adventure with a new set of friends. We will continue to commission online games that will appeal to 10–14s, and are also developing new dramas for this younger age group, including an adaptation of Nick Hornby's novel *Slam*.