What is Channel 4?

Channel 4 has always had a unique cultural, economic and social role in the UK.

More than £1.5bn spent on content in the Nations and Regions over the last decade

36% of all UK investment in indies by public service broadcasting

We are a publicly owned and commercially funded UK public service broadcaster, with a statutory remit to deliver high-quality, innovative content that focuses on diversity and challenges the status quo.

Our remit is the template for us to be an alternative and distinctive voice in broadcasting, to innovate and inspire change in how people see the world, and to champion diversity. We have a stronger relationship with young people than other public service broadcasters, with 23% of our total audience aged 16-34 – this is more than the BBC and ITV.

For over 35 years, we have successfully balanced our twin goals of delivering this public service remit while, at the same time, being totally self-sufficient. Ours is a powerful business model that enables us to maintain our editorial and financial independence, whilst continuously reinvesting our revenues back into high quality British content and creative businesses.

In 2016, we spent a record £169 million in the Nations and Regions and we accounted for 36% of all UK investment in indies by public service broadcasting.

As a publisher-broadcaster, all of our programmes are commissioned externally from hundreds of production companies, right across the UK. This means that we play a vital role in supporting the creative economy, giving opportunities to British creative talent and supporting a thriving and world-renowned production sector. We also have a major impact on the wider economy, supporting 17,000 jobs every year across the UK and contributing £1.1 billion in GVA.

In everything that we do, diversity plays an extremely important role. Our goal is to reflect the full diversity of contemporary Britain on and off-screen. We want viewers to feel that Channel 4 shows Britain the way it is. We want our employees to feel that their individual talents are appreciated, that they can be themselves and be different. And we want our production partners to feel that Channel 4 enables them to produce challenging and creative content that tells the stories of an inclusive Britain.
4 all our north, east, south and westsiders.

4 All the UK
This is the biggest change to the structure of our organisation in our 35-year history.

All the UK

Channel 4 will significantly boost jobs in the Nations and Regions and representation across the UK with the launch of its 4 All the UK plan, a strategy aimed at ensuring that we are serving the whole of the UK.

At the heart of our strategy is a major new commitment to significantly increase our Nations and Regions content spend from our current quota of 35% to a new voluntary target of 50% by 2023. This will result in a cumulative boost of over £250 million in Channel 4’s Nations and Regions’ commissioning spend. It reflects both external analysis and feedback from the industry that increasing spend would have the greatest impact on regional economies and jobs.

To support and catalyse this spend across the UK, we propose to move to a multi-site operating model, establishing three new creative hubs in the Nations and Regions in 2019. These will be home to jobs from across the business, including key creative decision makers. Upon this strategy being fully implemented, it is envisioned that 300 Channel 4 jobs will be based in the Nations and Regions. It is intended that Programme Commissioning Editors with responsibility for some of Channel 4’s biggest shows and who oversee significant spend will be based across the three new creative hubs, alongside a variety of other creative and business functions. The largest of the creative hubs will become Channel 4’s National HQ and will regularly host Channel 4 Executive and Board meetings while Horseferry Road will be Channel 4’s London HQ.

Channel 4 News will also expand its footprint in the Nations and Regions, opening three new bureaux outside of London, which will further boost regional representation. The process for determining the location of the new bureaux will be led separately by ITN, in partnership with Channel 4.
The proposed significant expansion of our presence in the Nations and Regions is part of the next stage of Channel 4's strategic development. Improving the delivery of our remit across the UK and driving innovation throughout our business will also act as a positive catalyst for economic and cultural growth in the areas we move to.

The National HQ is envisaged to be a broad-based centre, including commissioning, production, digital content and related support functions from across the organisation. Our creative hubs will begin with a focus on programme commissioning, but will welcome a broader talent base as we develop our plans and deepen our commitment in the Nations and Regions.

Our plan provides us with the opportunity to carefully consider, from the very start, how we want to work, and what our spaces and facilities must look like to enable us to thrive as a multi-site business. We want to develop state of the art, creatively-orientated office spaces that will attract the best talent and provide our teams with the right environment to do their best work. These offices will also require cutting edge connectivity and technology to enable fully agile working facilities and a seamless experience between our geographically dispersed locations.

We are a talent-driven organisation, so our ability to attract people to work with us is critically important. The quality of life and the general attractiveness of any new location is therefore paramount. We also require robust local infrastructure and transport, and in particular, frequent, fast and reliable national transport options.

We deeply believe in developing new and diverse talent, on and off screen. Therefore, we will be looking for ways in which we can fully integrate ourselves and partner with the local area. We will provide new opportunities through links with educational providers, outreach programmes and other local initiatives that will enable us to bring different views, fresh ideas and new thinking into our business and onto our screens.

An important element of our proposed new National HQ proposition is a state-of-the-art studio that will be used to produce Channel 4 programmes and events and will enable us to broadcast live. It gives us a base for daily programmes, and a new digital production unit. This unit will create compelling short-form digital content targeted at young audiences and reflects the diversity of UK culture and values. This will therefore come with a defined set of space, technology and staffing requirements.

As well as expanding to open multiple new bureaux across the UK, Channel 4 News also plans to co-anchor from outside the London studio every night, opening a newsroom in a city outside London. This hub will help to provide a gateway for journalistic talent into Channel 4 News in the Nations and Regions.
For people like us and people like you

4 All the UK

The vision for the National HQ and Creative Hubs

Specifically, we are looking for a space that will provide Channel 4 with the ability to design a dynamic and innovative environment that will represent our remit. The workspace must be fully accessible, of a high quality, with the ability to be flexible and open plan. For each of our Creative Hubs, we envisage these being of equal quality and design but at a size that represents the required level of resourcing.

We are looking for spaces for our National HQ and creative hubs which provide access to high bandwidth fibre connectivity. Further details of our requirements are summarised herein.

These new locations will provide the base upon which we will excite and inspire our employees and partners, and you should highlight any specific sites you have available in 2019 within your submissions.
Firecrest Films
Based in Glasgow, independent production company Firecrest has grown rapidly since it received Channel 4 Alpha Fund support in 2012. The company tripled its turnover in 2017 following investment from the Channel 4 Indie Growth Fund in January and moved to expanded offices in May to accommodate its fast-growing team.

Building on existing success in the Nations and Regions

As a business with creativity and innovation in our core DNA, our new locations need to have a well-developed creative/digital ecosystem and culture. This will enable us to benefit from collaboration with like-minded people and businesses, as well as providing an inspirational environment for our talent to live and work in.

We envision these office spaces not only being used by our own Channel 4 family, but that they will also act as creative hubs and accelerators in their own right by providing local creative and digital communities with facilities to drop in, work remotely and collaborate with us. Our set up needs to enable and encourage this to happen.

Nimble Dragon
Independent production company Nimble Dragon, headquartered in Cardiff, received Alpha Funding from Channel 4 in 2016 and again in 2017. Since then, the indie has won a commission for a 20-part hour-long daytime series called Sun, Sea and Brides to Be.

We now have over 30 freelance and full-time staff at our Cardiff Bay offices. Our daytime series currently in production for Channel 4 has given us the foundations to grow the company and we have since added a series with another broadcaster. It’s an exciting time for the TV production sector in Wales

Gareth Rees, MD of Nimble Dragon

Fundamental to our success has been the support of Channel 4, particularly through commissioning, but also from schemes and funds to support smaller indies and develop new talent

Nicole Kleeman
MD of Firecrest Films

Ackley Bridge
Ackley Bridge, a new drama launched in June 2017 in an 8pm primetime slot, was developed as part of Channel 4’s commitment to new talent and regional production.

Targeted at young people, the programme is set in a fictional Yorkshire mill-town, home to a largely divided white and Asian population. The six-part drama follows storylines at the fictional brand new academy Ackley Bridge College.

Filmed in Halifax, West Yorkshire, production company The Forge worked with Calderdale, Kirklees, Bradford and Leeds city councils during the development of the series. Many of the supporting actors in the series were ‘street cast’ alongside professionals.

These local residents – who were talent scouted in local boxing clubs, schools and community groups – provided the show with extra authenticity and grit. The production company also gave work experience placements to local students throughout the preparation and production of the show.

Ackley Bridge was a success – it was one of Channel 4’s most successful dramas of 2017, reaching 5.5 million viewers over the series. Ackley Bridge returns for an extended second series in 2018.
Filmed on a dedicated set on Lime Pictures’ campus in Childwall, Liverpool, Hollyoaks is Channel 4’s biggest Nations and Regions commissioned programme. Now running at five episodes a week, Hollyoaks is also one of our most popular and enduring shows. As well as providing entertaining storylines that appeal to hard-to-reach young viewers, it delivers impactful, important public service messages to this core audience on challenging subjects.

The scale of Channel 4’s investment in Hollyoaks provides Lime Pictures with a stable platform from which to build and invest in talent over a sustained period of time. Having developed a stable of writers and directing talent, Lime Pictures has become one of the most successful British production companies, producing programmes for other broadcasters including The Only Way Is Essex for ITV2, Geordie Shore for MTV and Disney’s Evermoor.

Lime Pictures’ success brings further economic benefits to its local economy: it is an important local employer, with half of its entire Childwall-based staff living within a 20-minute drive of the campus. And it has helped to ensure a rich and varied talent pool in the Liverpool area, many of whom will go on to build successful careers in the creative economy.

Hollyoaks is Channel 4’s biggest Nations and Regions commissioned programme.
We are inviting cities across the UK to pitch to become our proposed new National HQ or one of our two new Channel 4 Creative Hubs, with the aim that a decision on the location of the National HQ and Hubs will be made in Q3 2018.

The pitch process

This document outlines what we are looking for and certain entry guidelines we believe need to be met for us to be able to operate our business effectively in respect of the new National HQ and each of the new creative hubs. Please note that the process for determining the location of the new Channel 4 News bureaux will be led separately by ITN and will not form part of the pitch process.

We will then answer any questions relating to this brief. Subsequently, we would ask that you provide a short, written submission (no longer than 5,000 words max), to be received no later than 11 May 2018, to allow us to shortlist a number of cities. Submissions should outline the strengths of your city and how it can help meet the vision for the National HQ and Hubs will be made in Q3 2018.

Please send submissions or any questions you may have related to the pitch process to C4NationsandRegions@Channel4.co.uk.

Indicative timeline

- 16th April: Launch and issue of Pitch Brief
- 23rd April: Cities to submit questions
- 30th April: Channel 4 to respond to submitted questions
- 11th May: Deadline for written submissions
- 30th May: Cities notified of shortlist taken through to next stage
- 11th – 29th June: Presentations by shortlisted cities
- 29th June – 31st August: Period of internal review and dialogue with applicants
- 1st Sept – 30th Sept: Channel 4 approval process
- 1st October: Cities notified of final decision

We are a talent-driven organisation, so our ability to attract people to work with us is critically important.

We will also visit your city in order to provide the opportunity for you to further illustrate your written pitch submission through a presentation to the Channel 4 team, with a Q&A session.

Finally, following the conclusion of the presentations, we will engage in further discussions with cities/regions as necessary to ensure that we fully understand the partnership before formally selecting our final locations.
Entry Guidelines

National HQ

Working population of 200,000+
Travel time to London up to 3hrs
High level of physical and digital connectivity/inrastructure

Creative Hub 1 & 2

Working population of 75,000+
Travel time to London up to 4hrs
Proximity to a well-developed independent TV/Digital production community

Key considerations
There are number of considerations we will take account of in this pitch process, although Channel 4 reserves the right in its discretion with regard to the application of these considerations and the selection or otherwise of any locations.

These considerations include:
1. Economic, demographic, diversity and environmental factors
2. Existing availability of talent and future pipeline including educational links
3. Local connectivity and broader infrastructure
4. Ease and speed of travel for Channel 4 employees and partners between hubs
5. Effectiveness and efficiency of available office space

Additionally, there are a number of entry guidelines which Channel 4 has and which a city/region will need to consider carefully as they decide whether to participate in this pitch. These have been developed in line with external analysis commissioned by Channel 4 and we intend to engage external advisers to assist with this pitch process going forward.

The entry guidelines are different for the National HQ and the two creative hubs, given the variance in role and scale. Therefore, some cities/regions may only be placed to pitch for one of the smaller creative hubs, rather than the National HQ. However, where a city has pitched for National HQ, they may still be considered for one of the creative hubs if their city is not the preferred location for the National HQ.
Terms and Conditions

The attention of cities and other third parties participating in this pitch process is drawn to the further information set out below. By participating in this pitch process you are deemed to confirm your acceptance and agreement to all of the following.

Additional information
While the information contained in this document (the “Pitch Brief”) is believed to be correct at the time of issue, neither Channel 4 nor any of its advisers, will accept any liability for its accuracy, adequacy or completeness, nor will any express or implied warranty be given. This exclusion extends to liability in relation to any statement, opinion or conclusion contained in or any omission from this Pitch Brief and in respect of any other written or oral communication transmitted (or otherwise made available) to any third party.

Neither the issue of this Pitch Brief, nor any of the information presented in it, should be regarded as a commitment or representation on the part of Channel 4 or any other person (including third-party information). Any written or oral communication transmitted (or otherwise made available) to any third party.

Channel 4 News
Channel 4 News is made by external supplier ITN. Whilst Channel 4 and ITN will work in partnership, they will each carry out a separate process and make their own decision relating to the ultimate location of the proposed National HQ, creative hubs and Channel 4 News bureaux (as relevant).

Freedom of information
Channel 4 is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”) in respect of information it holds (including third-party information). Any member of the public or other interested party may make a request for information.

Third parties should be aware that, in compliance with its transparency obligations, Channel 4 may be required to publish information regarding its business without consulting the provider of that information.

Requests for information received during or following the pitch process shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, applying the principles of FOIA, which permits certain information to be withheld, for example where disclosure would be prejudicial to a party’s commercial interests, and in accordance with Channel 4’s transparency obligations.

Therefore, third parties are responsible for ensuring that any confidential or commercially sensitive information has been clearly identified to Channel 4.

Publicity
No publicity from a third party regarding the pitch process or the subsequent selection or otherwise of any location or any related understanding or agreement will be permitted unless and until Channel 4 has given express written consent to the relevant communication.

Conduct and conflicts of interest
Any attempt by third parties or their advisers to influence the pitch process in any way may result in that third party ceasing to be considered. Specifically, third parties shall not directly or indirectly at any time:

• Devise or amend the content of their pitch in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, other than in good faith with a person who is a proposed and disclosed partner.

• Enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other third party as to the form or content of any other pitch, or offer to pay any sum of money or valuable consideration to any person to effect changes to the form or content of any other pitch.

• Enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other person that has the effect of prohibiting or excluding that third party from submitting a pitch.

• Canvass (outside of this pitch process) Channel 4 or any employees or agents of Channel 4 in relation to this pitch process.

• Attempt to obtain information from any of the employees or agents of Channel 4 or their advisers concerning another third party or pitch.

• Third parties are responsible for ensuring that no conflicts of interest exist between the third party and its advisers, and Channel 4 and its advisers. Any third party which fails to comply with this requirement may cease being considered in connection with this pitch process at the discretion of Channel 4.

Channel 4’s rights
Channel 4 reserves the right to:

• Waive or change the requirements of this Pitch Brief from time to time without prior (or any) notice being given by Channel 4.

• Seek clarification or documents in respect of a third party’s submission.

• Cease to consider any third party that does not submit a compliant pitch in accordance with the instructions in this Pitch Brief.

• Cease to consider any third party that is guilty of serious misrepresentation in relation to its pitch, expression of interest or the pitch process.

• Withdraw this Pitch Brief at any time, or to re-invite cities on the same or any alternative basis.

• Choose not to select any location or enter into any understanding or agreement as a result of the current pitch process.

• Make whatever changes it sees fit to the timetable, structure or content of the pitch process, depending on approvals, processes or for any other reason.

• Share any information received in connection with or otherwise relating to the pitch process with Channel 4’s stakeholders including: HM Treasury, UK Government Investments, The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Ofcom.

Pitch costs
Channel 4 will not be liable for any pitch costs, expenditure, work or effort incurred by any third party in proceeding with or participating in this pitch process, including if the pitch process is terminated or amended by Channel 4 for any reason.