



## **Channel 4 confirms Leeds as new National HQ and Bristol and Glasgow as new Creative Hubs**

***Significant £250m boost in C4's Nations & Regions content spend will benefit all areas of the UK***

Channel 4's Chief Executive, Alex Mahon and the Channel 4 Board have today confirmed that Leeds will be the location of its new National HQ and Bristol and Glasgow will be the locations of its two new Creative Hubs.

Channel 4 announced its 4 All the UK strategy in March 2018, the biggest change to the structure of the organisation in its 35-year history. At the heart of it is a significant increase in the organisation's Nations and Regions content spend – from 35% to 50% of main channel UK commissions by 2023, worth up to £250m more in total. This increase in Channel 4's spend will benefit all areas of the UK, not just the specific locations and will support up to 3,000 production jobs in the Nations and Regions economy.

The new National HQ and Creative Hubs will be home to 300 Channel 4 jobs when fully established, including key creative decision makers – responsible for commissioning Channel 4 content and programmes from producers right across the UK. The new bases are at the heart of a new plan '4 All the UK' to ensure that Channel 4 better represents all the UK, on and off-screen – and they will help catalyse the increased Nations and Regions production spend.

The decision to select Leeds as the new National HQ and Bristol and Glasgow as new Creative Hubs follows an extensive pitch process in which shortlisted cities were carefully assessed against Channel 4's vision and objectives for the National HQ and Creative Hubs set out in the [pitch entry guidelines](#). Over 30 pitches from cities and regions across the UK were received, which were shortlisted to 13 – with three cities taken forward for advanced negotiations for the National HQ or Creative Hub option (Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester), and three further cities for the Creative Hubs (Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow).

Following a rigorous process which was set out publicly in April, detailed discussions were undertaken with all six cities over the last three months, led by Channel 4's Chief Commercial Officer Jonathan Allan, alongside Chief Executive Alex Mahon. Reed Smith were external advisors to the Channel 4 process to ensure it followed best practice and Deloitte LLP provided support to provide an objective framework and data for use in Channel 4's assessment of the cities based on good practice. Following these discussions, a recommendation was made by Alex Mahon and the Channel 4 Executive team, which was today approved by the Channel 4 Board.

The Channel 4 Executive team and Channel 4 Board's view was that all six cities taken forward for consideration as a National HQ or Creative Hub delivered exceptionally high quality pitches and all demonstrated that their cities would be excellent locations for

Channel 4 and would be able to offer high levels of innovation, creativity, and support for the corporation and the wider creative industries.

In this highly competitive field it was their view that Leeds was best able to deliver against Channel 4's vision and objectives for a new National HQ. The Leeds City Region put forward a comprehensive, compelling and ambitious strategy to partner with Channel 4 and the wider sector to support growth in the production and creative industries, and to nurture new talent from diverse backgrounds – in the region and across the UK.

Locating the National HQ in Leeds will enable Channel 4 to capitalise on a strong and fast-growing independent production sector across the North of England – and further unlock the potential for growth in the underserved East and North-East of England. It is extremely well-positioned to be a base for collaboration with producers and creative talent across other cities including Bradford, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield.

Leeds is home to a thriving digital industry and a strong digital talent pool and this will help support Channel 4's new Digital Creative Unit, which will be established in the National HQ to grow the Corporation's impact across digital and social media platforms.

Leeds also demonstrated a passionate commitment to work with Channel 4 to bring diverse new talent into the industry, working in partnership with other organisations and educational establishments – and through harnessing the diversity of different communities across the wider West Yorkshire region, such as Bradford.

The Channel 4 Executive team and Channel 4 Board believed that Bristol and Glasgow best delivered against the vision and objectives set out for the new Creative Hubs.

In Bristol there is the opportunity to build on a thriving television production sector in the City, which has world-renowned factual producers and also has strengths in areas such as animation and digital production.

Locating in Bristol will also enable Channel 4 to work closely in partnership with Cardiff and its production sector – with the opportunity to further accelerate the growth of the creative cluster around South West England and South Wales – and also connect with indies across the West of England, Birmingham and the Midlands.

Bristol put forward exciting proposals to establish new social mobility initiatives to work with diverse communities across the city and bring through new talent into the industry.

Glasgow has an incredibly well-established and vibrant independent production sector with strengths across a number of different programme genres. Establishing a new Creative Hub in the city will bring Channel 4 commissioners even closer to key production partners in the Glasgow and help develop the production and creative sector across Scotland. There is also the opportunity to exploit the strong connection with Belfast and develop deeper links with the production sector in Northern Ireland.

Locating a Creative Hub in Glasgow also enables Channel 4 to harness the city's rich cultural diversity, to further improve on-screen representation, and to work with the sector and the region's educational establishments to grow the pipeline of new talent into the production and broadcast industries.

Following discussions between Channel 4 and ITN, it has also been decided that a major new Channel 4 News hub will be established in Leeds, following the decision for Channel 4

to be located there in a new building including a studio with the capability to regularly co-anchor the programme.

Alex Mahon, Channel 4 Chief Executive said: "Diversity and inclusion have always been at the heart of Channel 4's mission and the launch of our 4 All the UK plan is the biggest and most exciting change in the organisation's 36-year history – as we open up Channel 4 to people from across the UK and supercharge the impact we have in all parts of the country.

"We will be spending up to £250m more on programming produced in the Nations and Regions and to catalyse that spend I'm delighted to confirm that we will be establishing a new National HQ in Leeds and new Creative Hubs in Bristol and Glasgow.

"We undertook a rigorous process over the last seven months and the high calibre of all the pitches meant those were incredibly difficult decisions to make. However, I know that Leeds, Bristol and Glasgow will best deliver our objectives to grow the production sector across the UK, build the pipeline of creative talent outside London and support our increased investment in programming produced across the Nations and Regions.

"Leeds put forward a compelling and ambitious strategy for how they could work alongside Channel 4 to further build the strong independent production sector in the city and develop new diverse talent from across the region. Locating our National HQ in Leeds enables us to capitalise on a strong and fast-growing independent production sector in cities across the North of England – and also has the potential to unlock growth in the North East and East of the country, an area without a major presence from other national broadcasters.

"Establishing a Creative Hub in Bristol gives Channel 4 the opportunity to build on thriving production communities in the city and to partner with Cardiff and harness the power of the wider creative industry across the South West and Wales. The city also put forward exciting social mobility proposals to develop talent across the wider region.

"Glasgow has a well-established production sector across multiple genres, and locating a Creative Hub in the city will give Channel 4 the opportunity to tap into the rich cultural diversity of Scotland and also allow us to exploit the city's strong connectivity with Belfast and the Northern Ireland production sector.

"The quality of pitches from all the cities involved in the final stage of the process was exceptionally high and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all those involved for the effort and passion they put in – particularly Andy Street for Birmingham, Huw Thomas in Cardiff, and Sir Richard Leese in Greater Manchester. I hope we can continue discussions with all of them about how we can develop new partnerships with each of their cities – particularly since we will be spending up to £250m more in the Nations and Regions over the next five years and want to work with producers and talent in all of these areas."

Charles Gurassa, Channel 4 Chair said: "I'm delighted that the Channel 4 Board has today unanimously agreed that Channel 4 will establish its new National HQ in Leeds and two new Creative Hubs in Bristol and Glasgow.

"We were very impressed by the high quality of all the pitches delivered by the shortlisted cities and I'd like to extend my thanks to all the many people involved. The Board reviewed and was satisfied that the selection process was carried out in a thorough and rigorous manner with the appropriate level of external assurance.

"We are very much looking forward to working with our new regional partners and more broadly with the production communities across the UK to further enhance our creative contribution nationwide."

The establishment of a new National HQ in Leeds and two new Creative Hubs in Bristol and Glasgow in addition to Channel 4's London HQ will ensure that Channel 4's people and creative decision makers are well dispersed across the UK. This will help catalyse the significant increase in Nations and Regions content spend, help support growth in the production and creative sector right across the UK, and ensure greater representation of people from different backgrounds and parts of the UK on and off-screen.

Channel 4 has communicated its decision to all of the six cities involved in advanced negotiations today and discussions will continue with Birmingham, Manchester and Cardiff about how Channel 4 can develop new partnerships to help support the creative sector and new talent in all of those cities on a long-term basis.

Further detailed work will now continue to identify locations and property within the National HQ and Creative Hub locations. It is envisaged that staff will begin to move to the new locations in H2 2019.

-ENDS-

**For further information:**

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Notes to editors:

Channel 4 launched its 4 All the UK strategy in March 2018. The strategy had the following key elements:

- A significant voluntary increase in Channel 4's Nations & Regions production spend, from 35% to 50% of main channel UK commissions, by 2023 – over £250m more in total over the next five years.
- A National HQ to be established outside London alongside two new smaller Creative Hubs in the Nations & Regions in 2019, home to 300 Channel 4 jobs including key creative decision makers.
- A significant increase to Channel 4 regional representation with new studio and new Channel 4 News bureaux in Nations & Regions
- A reduction of Channel 4's London footprint with space in Horseferry Road office made available to Nations & Regions production companies doing business in the capital.

A pitch process was launched by Channel 4 in April 2018, setting out the vision and objectives for the new National HQ and Creative Hubs and Terms and Conditions for the pitch process. It is available [here](#). Reed Smith were external advisors to the Channel 4 process.

Over 30 submissions were received from cities and regions across the UK in the first round of the pitch process which were reviewed and assessed – and a shortlist agreed by Chief Executive Alex Mahon and Chief Commercial Officer Jonathan Allan. Seven cities were

shortlisted for consideration as a National HQ and a further six for a Creative Hub, as follows:

<b>National HQ or Creative Hub</b>	<b>Creative Hub only</b>
Bristol	Belfast
Cardiff	Brighton
Glasgow	Newcastle-Gateshead
Greater Manchester	Nottingham
Leeds	Sheffield
Liverpool	Stoke-on-Trent
West Midlands	

Over a second stage of the pitch process teams visited all shortlisted cities and regions for presentations for discussions, and following a careful assessment against the pitch entry guidelines, a shorter list of cities was taken forward for advanced negotiations, as follows:

<b>National HQ or Creative Hub</b>	<b>Creative Hub only</b>
Birmingham	Bristol
Greater Manchester	Cardiff
Leeds	Glasgow

Advanced discussions and negotiations between each city and Channel 4 took place over August, September and October and a recommendation by the Channel 4 Executive team was approved by the Channel 4 Board on October 31<sup>st</sup> 2018.