

[GB] The BBC sets a requirement for current affairs programming in peak hours on its main channel

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The BBC Trust, the apex of the BBC's system of self-regulation, issues a service licence for every BBC UK public service channel. The licence defines the scope, aims, objectives, headline budget, and other important features of each service and states how performance is assessed by the Trust. Each BBC service is reviewed against its licence at least once every five years.

Previously, the service licence for the main BBC channel, BBC One, did not contain any requirement as to the amount of current affairs programming to be shown in peak time on this channel. BBC One has the highest share of viewing of any UK channel. Earlier this year, the BBC Trust conducted a review of BBC News and Current Affairs. The review found that audiences rate BBC current affairs highly for quality and for keeping them informed; every week four out of five adults got news from the BBC. They rated its journalism as more trustworthy and better informed than that of any other provider. However, they expected more and the review considered that BBC current affairs programmes should be securing wider recognition and impact, particularly because the BBC makes the most significant investment in current affairs programming in the UK. One conclusion of the review was that the BBC should find ways to increase the impact of its current affairs output, and that programming aimed at informing national and international debate should be promoted and signposted to audiences in a way that maximises its potential impact.

The amended licence thus includes a commitment that BBC One should broadcast at least 40 hours of current affairs in peak time each year. This will be measured on an annual basis, and the definition of peak time is defined as between the hours of 6pm and 10.30pm.

BBC Trust, 'Current Affairs on BBC One', 23 September 2014

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/news/press_releases/2014/bbc_one.html

BBC Trust, 'BBC One Service Licence', Issued September 2014

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/tv/2014/bbcone_sep14.pdf

