

Statement of Programme Policy: 2025 Review document

1 July 2026

1. Purpose of this report

5 is required by regulation to monitor delivery of its licence conditions and the wider PSB remit outlined in the 2002 Communications Act. This report is based on the legislation prior to the Media Act 2004 and therefore summarises the performance of the main 5 linear channel only for 2025. A forward looking statement on 5's 2026 strategy, including the role of its streaming service, can be found here: [LINK](#).

This SoPP Review assesses 5's delivery of its Statement of Programme Policy for the previous year, including how 5 as a licensed PSB has fulfilled its individual remit and made an adequate contribution to the overall PSB remit. It follows a similar structure to the SoPP Plan to enable comparison, and draws on qualitative assessment, audience data, performance against relevant quotas and objectives, and other data already provided to Ofcom for different purposes.

2. 5's linear service

In 2025, the licensed 5 linear channel, Channel 5, continued to provide a trusted, accessible and high-impact service for audiences across the UK. It delivered a broad mix of original British content across drama, factual, news and current affairs, and children's programming, with a strong emphasis on regional representation and stories that reflect the lives and interests of viewers across the country.

Channel 5 reached 24 million people per month in the UK in 2025, equivalent to 61% of the population. The channel also delivered share gains in Scotland and London during 2025, while maintaining strong audience shares in Yorkshire, the West of England and Wales. This performance underlines Channel 5's role as an important platform for content that resonates with communities which are often underserved by other broadcasters.

Between 2021 and 2025, 5 commissioned an average of 282 original programmes each year, or 245 excluding reversion, across a wide range of genres. This reflects our continued commitment to British storytelling and public service values. Top-performing genres included drama, factual entertainment, consumer programming, and documentaries, all of which continued to deliver strong ratings and meaningful audience engagement.

3. PSB Remit delivery

Availability

In 2025, 5's licensed linear channel was widely available to audiences across the UK through all major television distribution platforms. Viewers could access 5 via Digital Terrestrial Television, including Freeview and YouView; satellite services, primarily Sky and Freesat; cable television, principally through Virgin Media; and IP-delivered services. This included 5's owned and operated streaming service, as well as third-party platforms such as Freely, Sky Glass, Sky Stream, Virgin Media Flex and EE TV. This broad availability ensured that audiences could continue to watch 5 through the platform or delivery method that best suited them.

Accessibility

Category	Licence requirement	2025 delivery
Subtitles	80%	99.96%
Audio Description	10%	13.47%
Signing	5%	6.07%

In 2025, subtitles were delivered across 99.96% of programming hours against a target of 80%. Audio description reached 13.47% against a 10% target and visual signing achieved 6.07% against a 5% target. These results demonstrate 5's ongoing commitment to ensuring content is accessible to all audiences.

News and Current Affairs

Category	Licence requirement	2025 delivery
News (total)	280	317
News (peak)	20	48
Current affairs (total)	130	906
Current affairs (peak)	10	19

In 2025, 5 delivered strongly against its news obligations, providing 317 hours of news programming against a regulatory requirement of 280 hours, including 48 hours in peak time against a requirement of 20 hours. 5 News also continued to reach significant audiences, attracting 4 million viewers each month.

5 also substantially exceeded its current affairs requirements in 2025, delivering 906 hours across the year against a requirement of 130 hours, including 19 hours in peak time against a requirement of 10 hours. This output supported civic understanding and provided audiences with fair, well-informed discussion of the issues shaping people's lives.

Jeremy Vine remained a central part of 5's current affairs performance in 2025. The programme delivered a 6.0% share of viewing, matching its joint highest annual performance on record, with 5 ranking as the third biggest channel while it was on air. Its editorial focus continued to centre on issues of direct relevance to viewers, including national and international politics, the NHS, and government use of public funds.

Educational programmes for children and young people

Category	Licence requirement	2025 delivery
Kids (total hours)	N/A – 600 hours voluntary	749
Kids (UK originals, hours)	N/A – 40hours voluntary	47

In 2025 Milkshake! attracted an average of 2.5 million individuals each month, including 15% of all UK children aged 4–6, reinforcing the strand's role as a vital part of the UK's PSB landscape. In 2025, Milkshake! continued to provide a trusted, safe and carefully curated pre-school environment for children and families on 5's main linear channel, with age-appropriate programmes designed to support early years learning, emotional development, creativity and co-viewing. The strand delivered 47 hours of UK-originated programming, exceeding 5's

voluntary commitment of 40 hours, with just over 60% produced outside London. Programme highlights included Milkshake! Story Den, which encouraged storytelling and literacy; Odo, which supported confidence, friendship and understanding of the natural world; Milo, which introduced children to different jobs and everyday role models; Mixmups, which helped children feel seen and represented through inclusive storytelling; and Tweedy & Fluff, which offered gentle, slower-paced stories with clear structure and humour for younger viewers.

Indie and Regional programmes

Category	Licence requirement	2025 delivery
Regional (spend)	10%	34%
Regional (hours)	10%	18%
Indie production (1 st run hours)	25%	36%

5 plays a crucial and unique role within the UK's PSB ecosystem which remains the lifeblood of the UK independent production sector. 5 continues to work successfully with a number of smaller indies to produce highly acclaimed and award winning factual, drama and kids programming.

In 2025, 5 significantly exceeded its regional and independent production requirements, with regional spend, regional hours and first-run independent production all comfortably above the licence thresholds. Excluding reversions, news and Vine - in 2025, 45% of content spend - was allocated to production companies based in the Nations and Regions, resulting in 43% of total regional hours.

Range of programming that informs, educates and entertains

Category	Licence requirement	2025 delivery
Original programming hours (total)	50%	63%
Original programming hours (peak)	45%	83%

In 2025, originated content accounted for 83% of 5's peak-time schedule, demonstrating the strength of our commitment to distinctive, UK-focused programming. Our content strategy is centred on British storytelling that is relevant, accessible and impactful for audiences across the country. We delivered a broad mix of high-quality programming across the main public service genres, with particular strengths in factual and unscripted content, drama, news, sport and children's programming.

Factual and unscripted: In 2025, 5 continued to build on its reputation for premium factual and unscripted programming that speaks directly to the interests, experiences and concerns of audiences across the UK. Our factual slate combined scale, accessibility and public value, offering programmes that explored real lives, national institutions, consumer issues, history, crime, health and the natural world. Key programmes in 2025 included: Murder Suspect: Number1; Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild; Reuben: life in the Dales and Prince Andrew: Where Did All the Money Go?

Drama: In 2025, 5 continued to deliver high-quality, cost-effective British drama that resonated with viewers across the UK. By commissioning distinctive, audience-focused series, 5 has challenged the traditional UK drama model and demonstrated that compelling, popular drama can be delivered efficiently while still reflecting British stories, places and characters. Key titles

in 2025 included: All Creatures Great and Small; Murder Before Evensong; The Feud and The Game.

Sport: In 2025, 5 strengthened its position as a free-to-air destination for live and inclusive sporting moments, expanding its portfolio of premium sport in line with our ambition to make major events available to the widest possible audience. During the year, 5 partnered with DAZN to broadcast 23 matches from the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup and announced a new agreement to bring NFL coverage to UK audiences. Alongside this, 5 continued to offer a broad mix of cricket, boxing and football, as well as exclusive snooker content. The value of this approach was demonstrated by 5's live coverage of the FIFA Club World Cup Final on 13 July 2025, in which Chelsea beat Paris Saint-Germain and which drew a peak linear audience of 2.4 million viewers.

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