

# The UK's leading public service broadcasters set to evolve free TV for the streaming age

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### **New service from UK PSBs will deliver live free TV via IP**

Britain's biggest broadcasters announce today their latest collaboration: the development of a new free TV service that will deliver live TV over broadband.

For the first time for free, British viewers will be able to easily browse and watch live TV channels together with on demand content streamed straight to their smart TV via the internet.

It's an evolution that puts the distribution of free TV at the centre of the streaming age. The new service will provide millions of broadband-only homes

with easy access to a single consistent experience for live free TV over IP. Viewers will be able to seamlessly browse channels through a modern and intuitive programme guide, and use innovative functionality designed to make it easier to find and explore new shows directly from live TV.

Set for launch in 2024, the new service, called Freely, will be built-in to the next generation of smart TVs and feature a line-up of public service broadcaster content and other free-to-air channels. It will replicate the terrestrial TV experience, building on the heritage and popularity of the Freeview TV platform, currently used in 16m homes.

As viewers increasingly consume content online, this next phase for free TV is about the distribution and availability of the PSBs' live channels for a streaming age. It will help ensure the availability of PSB services into the future and complement the new provisions for on demand and streaming prominence, set out in the draft Media Bill.

Freely is being developed by Everyone TV, the organisation which runs free TV in the UK and is jointly owned by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

Jonathan Thompson, CEO, Everyone TV, said:

“We are delighted to be working with the public service broadcasters on the next phase of free TV’s evolution. This new development is a reflection of the fact that a growing number of UK viewers are watching content online, but still want easy access to the shared experience of live TV.

Our aim is to ensure that all viewers have access to a free, aggregated live TV experience that champions British content and is delivered in a way that suits audience needs and preferences. Every one of us should be able to share in the best of British ideas and creativity on TV.”

Director General of the BBC, Tim Davie, said:

“Ensuring the universality of public-service television is sustained into the future is of paramount importance to the UK and all its public service broadcasters. We are delighted to be deepening our collaboration in helping viewers access our content, ensuring that, in a digital age, we deliver value for all audiences and that no one is left behind.”

Dame Carolyn McCall, CEO, ITV, said:

"As more and more UK households use internet-connected TVs, it's critical that the public service broadcaster channels remain available and easy for them to find. This new collaboration enables the UK public to continue to get all of their favourite British TV channels, for free - just as Freeview did at the advent of digital TV. Alongside the important reforms set out in the draft Media Bill it will help PSBs to continue to thrive for years to come."

Alex Mahon, CEO, Channel 4, said:

Streaming TV is increasingly the new normal for audiences, particularly young viewers, so it has never been more important for trusted PSB content to be readily available to everyone, for free. We look forward to working closely with our PSB partners so that when the Media Bill's prominence provisions become law, the technology to make Britain's favourite TV shows easy to find will already be in place."

Maria Kyriacou, President of Broadcast & Studios, International Markets at Paramount, said:

"We know that British audiences continue to have a strong appetite for the high quality, relevant and impartial content provided by our UK public service broadcasters such as Channel 5. This new collaboration across the PSBs will ensure that, as these viewers continue to shift to IP enabled televisions, they continue to have an easy way to access the channels and content they know and love."

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Notes for Editors:

- Live TV delivers over half of all viewing in the UK. On average, 57% of viewing time is live broadcast per person per day, across all devices.

(Source: BARB viewing data 2022)

- 15% (around 4m) of UK TV homes are currently IP-only (broadband-only homes).

(Source: BARB Establishment Survey)

- The TV guide remains the most common navigation tool for all UK audiences.

(Source: ETV proprietary consumer research Spring 2023)

- Currently in draft form, the Media Bill aims to modernise broadcasting legislation and introduce wide-ranging reforms to the regulatory environment for public service broadcasters (PSBs) and video-on-demand services. It includes proposals to update the prominence regime for PSB services for a digital world.
- The broadcasters' IP channels are also available via dedicated linear TV subscription services, such as Sky Stream and Virgin Stream, as well as within broadcasters' VoD apps such as BBC iPlayer and ITVX.

### About Everyone TV

Everyone TV is responsible for the day-to-day running of the UK's free-to-view TV platforms - Freeview and Freesat - as well as leading free TV's evolution for a streaming age.

Formerly known as Digital UK, the organisation is a joint venture owned and supported by the UK's leading public service broadcasters - BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5. Having merged with Freesat in 2021, and with the UK's two free-to-view TV services now under the leadership of one organisation, Digital UK updated its name in January this year to better reflect its mission - to champion free TV for all.

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