



2027/28

PODCAST COMMISSIONING BRIEF

BBC SOUNDS/BBC RADIO WALES

Podcast Commissioning Brief 2027-28

Welcome to the BBC Wales 2027/28 Podcast Commissioning Round!

Firstly, a huge thank you to those of you from the independent sector and within BBC Cymru Wales who have created our recent successes. The impact they have made underlines how podcasts have become one of the most powerful ways for BBC Cymru Wales to tell brilliant stories.

They give us the freedom to investigate deeply, to surprise audiences with new voices and formats, to build loyal communities around shared interests, and to create content that can travel across platforms and borders. Our best podcasts deliver distinctive public service journalism, unmissable storytelling and cultural conversation.

Recent successes demonstrate the breadth of what is possible. Investigative storytelling laced with quirky humour continues to thrive, with crime caper ***Fool's Gold*** from **BBC Studios Audio** recognised in the prestigious 2025 Rose d'Or Awards. **BBC Wales News' *Secrets of the Salt Path*** brought a similarly distinctive tone and evocative sense of place as it examined a story that had gripped public attention. **BBC Investigations' *Swingers*** demonstrated how a podcast can tackle a taboo subject with integrity and become the centrepiece of a major multi-platform journalism project, driving significant discussion and impact across news output.

Overcoat Media's *Crime Next Door: The Anglesey Vampire Killer* proved the continuing power of compelling true-crime storytelling, becoming one of BBC Cymru Wales' standout podcast successes. Building on the established *Crime Next Door* brand, it showed how podcasts can revisit significant stories with depth, sensitivity and fresh journalistic insight - helping audiences better understand the people, communities and circumstances behind crimes that continue to resonate decades later.

Within Radio Wales, *Checkout Confessions* delivered something fresh to our slate, using a fun format and tone to introduce listeners to stories and experiences they may not encounter elsewhere. **Radio Wales Sport brought us *Golden Boy: Finding Gavin Henson***, combining an offbeat and deeply personal style of narration with cultural nostalgia and sporting insight. A Celtic Media Festival Award winner, *Golden Boy* demonstrated the appetite for premium, narrative-led sports content.

These podcasts have succeeded for different reasons. Some have uncovered new truths. Some have extended trusted brands. Some have introduced completely new ideas to our audiences. Others have delivered awards, sparked national conversations or created impact across multiple BBC platforms. Together, they illustrate the ambition we have to captivate audiences, make a lasting impact and tell incredible stories.

With this commissioning round, we are looking for our next slate of standout podcasts – and we're really looking forward to receiving your ideas. **We're looking for premium podcast box set commissions (limited series of 6-8 episodes) and higher volume factual entertainment podcasts to launch between April 2027 and March 2028.**

(Please note that titles that would fall within the BBC Sounds Crime Next Door brand have a separate commissioning round).

Podcast Commissioning Brief 2027-28

Making an impact

As the podcast market has grown so has the challenge to cut through in this ever more congested marketplace. In a world of massive choice only a minority of podcasts capture our attention.

So, our strategy is very much **fewer, bigger, better**. We have a very limited number of commissions available for this 2027/28 period so please focus on quality over quantity when submitting your proposals – **give us a maximum of five** of your biggest and best ideas and make them as compelling as possible.

Be bold and ambitious. Whatever the subject – investigation, true crime, history, culture, society or powerful personal stories – it will be expressed in gold standard production values, involve creative audio treatments and will be led by superb narrative storytelling.

Wales and the World

Remember the importance of strong portrayal. Our podcasts should be authentically rooted in Wales while having universal appeal – **The Anglesey Vampire Killer** is a great example of storytelling that achieves these dual aims.

Aligning with BBC Sounds Brands

To maximise discoverability, we will be prioritising commissioning into key BBC Sounds brands. Here are the **key brands** we're working with for premium boxset narrative podcasts – if you're not familiar with them have a look on Sounds to get a sense of the kind of podcasts that already fall under them.

In Detail

The In Detail brand houses narrative documentary podcasts which explore and explain significant news stories, taking a deep dive into events with enduring impact and complexity.

An In Detail podcast is structured as multi-episode series, with each run focusing on a single story, unpacking it over time through investigation, testimony and context. Topics range from major historical incidents and public controversies to social issues, often revisiting events to understand their lasting consequences and unresolved questions.

In tone, In Detail is serious, immersive and investigative. The storytelling style is documentary-led, combining first-hand accounts, archive and narration to build a layered, chronological understanding of each subject.

Podcast Commissioning Brief 2027-28

Assume Nothing

The Assume Nothing podcast brand is built on a simple but powerful idea: that no story is ever fully told, and no assumption should go unchallenged. It's a documentary brand presenting what have been described as "factual audio thrillers". The approach is forensic, and deeply investigative - revisiting cases that are unresolved, disputed, or thought to be settled, and looking at them again with fresh eyes.

The storytelling is driven by journalism first: original reporting, first-hand testimony, archival material, and careful re-examination of evidence, all woven into narratives that build tension without slipping into sensationalism. Again and again, the series returns to themes of justice - where it's failed, where it's been obscured, and where institutions or investigations haven't stood up to scrutiny. The tone is serious, respectful and immersive, allowing the complexity and human stakes of each story to unfold at a measured pace.

Mud, Sweat & Tears

We're working with our Nations and BBC Local colleagues on a new Sounds brand for sport. Mud, Sweat & Tears will be the home of great sporting stories, celebrating the people, communities and moments that define sport in Wales but can have universal resonance. Rich in passion, drama and humanity, these are stories that go beyond results and reveal the true impact of sport.

For anyone who believes sport can change lives - from grassroots heroes to iconic figures, we tell stories that resonate across Wales and beyond.

A spotlight on athletes, coaches, volunteers and unsung champions. Where dedication matters more than reward, community is at the heart of every achievement, and every story deserves to be told.

Entertainment Podcasts

We are seeking bold, distinctive light entertainment podcasts that capture the candid, confessional and culturally relevant tone of titles such as *Miss Me?* and *Situationships*. These ideas should be talented, with strong, authentic voices at their heart, unafraid to be funny, messy, insightful and occasionally provocative.

Formats should be simple, scalable and repeatable, rooted in conversation, lived experience and audience relatability, with clear hooks that invite listener interaction or community-building. We're particularly interested in ideas that feel contemporary, socially aware and digitally native, able to cut through with personality rather than production scale and deliver high impact on a lower tariff. We are also interested in ideas that could be visualised.

Podcast Commissioning Brief 2027-28

What to include in your proposal

Proposals on Proteus are formatted to include a very short ‘headline’ summary that you would consider suitable as a public facing billing for your podcast, then a longer synopsis in which you can outline the idea, treatment and tone of the podcast. Succinct pitches are appreciated. Aim for around 600 words maximum and please focus on submitting your very best ideas.

Narrative Podcasts

Answer the two classic commissioners’ question: “What will we hear?” and “Why now?” We need to get a real sense of how your podcast will sound and the detail of its narrative so we could maximise its reach and discoverability within the genre brands of BBC Sounds. We also want to know why you consider this podcast just has to be made!

The narrative: Give an episodic breakdown with ball-park durations. Outline how the beats of the story will unfold, the reveals and jeopardy, how each episode will finish with the listener craving the next instalment.

Tone and Treatment: Will you be using straightforward voices or an immersive soundscape? Is the tone factual and informative, dark and foreboding or quirky and comedic? Will there be dramatised elements? What part will music play?

Narrators and Contributors: Who is telling your story? Is it a distant narrator, a personally invested investigator – or both? What other voices will we hear? If there a high-profile talent who would be perfect for your podcast, please ensure you have secured their agreement in principle.

Entertainment podcasts

Strength of talent and chemistry is key here. Big Welsh names or authentic Welsh personalities who will make the podcast feel rooted here, but whose appeal can be enjoyed by audiences beyond our borders. Again, you must have secured their agreement in principle before you attach their name to the proposal.

The other essential factor is format. Give a sense of how a typical episode will be structured and, if it is intended to be visualised, how it will look as well as sound.

The linear offer

In line with the BBC’s wider Digital First strategy, we are aligning our podcast commissioning strategy with our strategy for BBC Radio Wales, encouraging listeners from our linear platforms to embrace Sounds.

So, some podcasts commissioned for Sounds may be asked to edit to BBC Radio Wales durations.

Podcast Commissioning Brief 2027-28

Key Dates and Guide Prices

Here are the key dates in this year's commissioning timetable:

TUESDAY 11th AUGUST - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

w/c Monday 24th August: notification of shortlisted ideas

w/c Monday 7th September: interviews with shortlisted suppliers

Proposals need to be submitted via BBC Proteus, the BBC's pitching and commissioning system.

If you don't have a Proteus log-in, contact ryan.angrove@bbc.co.uk for more information on creating an account.

Guide Prices:

Our ambition is to commission the best ideas. We also have to consider cost and value for licence fee payers. You will also be aware from our recent communication with the independent sector that BBC Cymru Wales – alongside the wider BBC - is currently facing a significant savings challenge which has reduced our commissioning budget. Therefore, we negotiate price on a case-by-case basis and budgets for shortlisted ideas will be subject to close scrutiny.

Here are the guidelines:

Box Set (a limited season of 6-8 episodes) approx. £3k - £8k per episode.

Entertainment Podcasts (8 -24 episodes) budget discussed on a case-by-case basis.

The following people may be involved in the evaluation of your proposal:

Carolyn Hitt, Head of BBC Radio Wales.

Neil Sloan, Managing Editor, BBC Radio Wales.

Bridget Curnow, Head of Commissioning, BBC Radio Wales.

Rebecca Campbell, Head of Marketing, BBC Cymru Wales.

Sian Harris, Commissioning Editor, BBC Cymru Wales.

Subject matter experts (e.g. production experts, network management, finance, etc.) may also be consulted.

It's always a privilege to invite you to collaborate with us and we're really looking forward to receiving and discussing your ideas.

Carolyn Hitt,

Head of BBC Radio Wales and BBC Cymru Wales Sport