

Documentaries on BBC Two



Our goal on BBC TWO is to be recognised as the home of documentaries. This means that diversity and range of ideas, voices and tone are prerequisite across the slate.

Documentaries should make BBC TWO feel relevant and modern - populating the channel with compelling real lives, interests and concerns.

To manage our commissions, we split the slate into entertaining and immersive ideas that explore better ways to live your life on one side, and modern provocative, challenging and contemporary subjects on the other.

In particular, we're looking to strengthen our reputational docs about modern life. These one offs and series should simultaneously inspire and challenge viewers to reappraise their view on modern life and society.

Budget information

- In 11/12 there are opportunities for this programming within the In-House guarantee, the WoCC and the Independent quota.

Events and Formatted docs series for a broad audience

Shape

Series, flexible in terms of shape - from 4x60' to an event stripped over a week.

Requirement

Successful formatted docs and events on TWO are redemptive, inspiring and purposeful, exploring better ways to live our lives. They should have something important to say or explore at their heart and the experience has to feel real and meaningful for the people involved.

We were delighted with narrative-driven series like *Victorian Farm* and *The Choir* that engaged big audiences with high quality, distinctive output.

We're also very excited about formats with an event feel, like *Lambing Live*.

Both shapes provide drama that keeps audiences coming back episode after episode.

In particular, we're looking for new territories beyond singing, the countryside and food that have a real sense of immediacy and that might be tougher and/or more contemporary.

Experiential, presenter-led series

Shape

One and two-parters.

Requirement

Well-known faces with a story to tell, a personal passion or experience to share continue to draw audiences. However, this is an established form now, so uniqueness of talent, subject or preferably both, is key - eg. [Terry Pratchett: Living with Alzheimers](#). In addition, the upcoming title on [Care with Neil Morrissey](#) and Gareth Malone's [Dangerous School for Boys](#) are great examples.

Immersive, presenter led travel and adventure

Shape

Series, flexible as to shape.

Requirement

Experiential and not thesis-driven, Louis Theroux, Monty Halls, Kate Humble, Bruce Parry and recently Stephen Fry have all found very different ways of exploring a world that, distant or not, feels relevant to our own lives.

Who else can take us on journeys of discovery or lead us into new subjects? [Last Chance to See](#) was a distinctive take on this mini genre; how else can we innovate here?

Kate Humble's journey along the ancient [Frankincense Trail](#) was a tremendous success and we're particularly interested in more female and more diverse talent to add to the mix.

Modern, relevant and reputational series

Shape

Series and one-offs, of varied shapes.

Requirement

As the home of docs our output on TWO needs more ideas that push the boundaries in order to bring home piercingly relevant subject matter. Though ideas on TWO don't need to be driven by current headlines, they should illuminate and question key touchstones of modern life, making connections between personal experience and the modern world.

We want more high-end modern documentary of all forms which combine innovative ideas with great storytelling and ob-docs driven by access to modern institutions with a clear sense of purpose and proposition.

These ideas need a sense of immediacy and the ability to appeal to younger, more diverse audiences. Recently, [Welcome to Lagos](#), [Inside John Lewis](#), and [Great Ormond Street](#) have all played well in this space.

Striking single docs

[Wonderland](#) is the home for witty and relevant documentary on TWO and is now open to singles ideas from independents. *Wonderland* docs bring original, unexpected perspectives to everyday life, often with humour and always with ultimate relevance to the viewer - [The Alzheimer's Choir](#) and [I Won University Challenge](#) were the most successful episodes of the last run. Nick Mirsky is the Commissioning Editor.

Outside Wonderland, there is room for **high impact singles** driven by stories and ideas that generate penetrative new insights about modern life.

Gripping storytelling is absolutely crucial. [The Fallen](#) and [Why did you Kill my Dad?](#) are great examples of past successes in this area.

In both cases, it's important to realise that one-offs are easily missed in the modern TV landscape, so we need to help viewers find our work and engage with it quickly - so subject matter and title *must* feel relevant and intriguing.

In some cases, these will TX as part of a season.

Drama Docs

Key to bringing broad audiences to factual content, drama docs are a unique flavour on TWO. Covering iconic people (like [Best: His Mother's Son](#) or [Maxwell](#)) and extraordinary stories (like [The Thieving Headmistress](#) or [The Antiques Rogue Show](#)).

Which narratives simply demand to be brought to life and provide the opportunity to engage broad audiences?