



OUR LIVES

INVITATION TO PITCH

BRIEF

November 2023

THE BRIEF

BBC Content is looking to commission 3 stand-alone 30 minute documentaries focusing on England, from England based providers. They will run as part of the OUR LIVES series on BBC ONE in 2024 (likely to be 8 / 8.30pm) (Please note the other nations have separate commissioning processes for this strand.)

WHAT IS OUR LIVES?

OUR LIVES celebrates bold and captivating stories about people doing extraordinary things, set against iconic backdrops across the UK.

Each of our films should have the ability to drive broad appeal across the UK, whilst celebrating life and the beauty of England. These observational documentaries are character led, usually based around a main protagonist, often with a small cast of supporting characters.

We want stories that explore timeless and timely universal human challenges and reflect the diversity of modern England. Uplifting and inspirational, they should have a keen sense of place with stunning visuals throughout.

WHO IS OUR LIVES FOR?

OUR LIVES appeals to a heartland BBC1 audience. We are looking for stories that are awe inspiring – offering hope, escapism, or fascination. They may provide an intimate view of a lesser-known part of England, or showcase an iconic landmark. Audiences will want to talk about these films to their friends and family.



Image: Our Sea Forest: Our Lives, September 2023

KEY EDITORIAL

Our stories should have an epic narrative at their heart. They can be bold and daring but should also appeal to a broad audience. They will often feature a main character who is on a journey that will inspire. Relatable, universal themes – such as love, hope, and determination work well. They should feel relevant, reflecting contemporary life in England. They may help viewers to feel more connected to communities, without being worthy. Avoid niche topics, history, straight current affairs and stories that will date quickly.



Image: My Life Saving Dog: Our Lives, July 2023

tone

We are looking for:

Epic, daring, emotional and empathetic, curious, honest and hopeful.

We are not looking for:

Down-beat, worthy, intense, or edgy.

DRIVING BROAD APPEAL

These stories should have a strong sense of place but they should also drive broad appeal across the UK. Our research shows content that does this successfully often does 1 or more of the following:

- Portrays characters as nuanced individuals
- Reflects values and beliefs
- Shows people in a variety of family or work dynamics and hobbies
- Tells universal stories beyond specific demographic markers
- Reflects shared experiences

WHAT'S WORKED WELL

Some of England's most impactful and successful films from the last 2 series have been:

Our Sea Forest: (September 2023)

Ex-lorry driver Eric helps rescue a vital habitat under the sea off his Sussex Coast. With his determination and the help of the community, there is hope.

Supergran and the Garden of Justice (June 2022)

93 year-old community hero Dena, takes ex-convicts under her wing on her allotment, giving them a chance to change their lives for the better.

My Life Saving Dog: (July 2023)

Mei grew up in care. As she reaches adulthood, she and her assistance dog Koda have to overcome huge challenges if Mei is to live a full and independent life.

Cornwall's Wildest Wave (October 2022)

Revealing the hidden world off the coast of Cornwall, through the eyes of Cornish surfer Tom, as he undertakes a daring and personally significant quest.



Image: Cornwall's Wildest Wave: Our Lives, October 2022

PITCHING AND TASTERS

Please submit your idea through BBC pitch. We will accept several ideas from one company but ideally will be looking to commission 1 film from each of 3 different companies. We are keen to encourage new / first time directors, provided they are well supported by an experienced Exec.

In the initial submission a taster to give a flavour of location and main character is preferred but not essential. Should your film be shortlisted, a taster will be compulsory at that stage.

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EDITORIAL CONTACT

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DEADLINES

Submission of your idea via BBC Pitch to be received by 20.12.23.

Shortlisting is anticipated in the first week of January 2024.

Deadline for delivery of all final films mid July 2024 (please note – we will not accept films that cannot be delivered by then).



Image: Supergran and the Garden of Justice: Our Lives, June 2022