



Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources
Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Náúúrtha

Public Service Broadcasting Charter

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PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING CHARTER

A statement of principles that clarifies what is expected of RTÉ as the national public service broadcaster, including RTÉ's accountability to its audience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Public Service Remit

- RTÉ, as the national public service broadcaster, shall reflect the democratic, social and cultural values of Irish society and the need to preserve media pluralism
- RTÉ shall, at all times, strive to reflect fairly and equally the regional, cultural and political diversity of Ireland and its peoples
- no editorial or programming bias shall be shown in terms of gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or membership of a minority community

Regional Emphasis

- news reporting and public affairs coverage shall be undertaken from a variety of perspectives; events should not be assessed and reported upon from a Dublin perspective alone
- RTÉ programming shall reflect regional diversity and include a significant range and proportion of indigenous programming made outside the greater Dublin area

Children

- in its programming, RTÉ shall ensure that children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own
- RTÉ acknowledges the strong influencing powers of broadcasting, particularly on children and young people. In its programming RTÉ shall have regard to the responsibilities associated with this.

An Ghaeilge

- in reflecting the bilingual nature of Irish society, RTÉ shall actively support the use of the Irish language in everyday life through the production of suitable programming

Social Inclusion

- RTÉ programming shall be socially inclusive and shall reflect the lives and concerns of all social strata in Ireland

Physical, Sensory and Intellectual Disability

- RTÉ shall take into account the needs of those with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability. RTÉ shall take measures to increase the accessibility and relevance of programming to such audience

Gender

- in its programming and editorial content, RTÉ shall strive to resist gender stereotyping

Other

➤ in its programming, RTÉ shall respect the sanctity of an individual's private life, unless a compelling public interest demands otherwise

PROVISION OF SERVICES

In terms of services RTÉ commits to:

- broadcast schedules on all its channels which establish a benchmark for quality, range and diversity in broadcasting on the island of Ireland
- broadcasting schedules which include the key genre categories of local, national and international news and current affairs (including coverage of the Oireachtas), arts, business, children's programmes, drama, education, entertainment, features, history, music, religious, science, technology and sport
- sports programming that reflects the demands for national, regional, minority, amateur and local sports in Ireland today
- schedules which provide significant original content and which provide a showcase for home production. In particular, RTÉ will encourage an approach to production, which recognises originality of idea and techniques
- recognise the bilingual nature of Irish society
- recognise the special needs of children as part of the audience
- recognise the particular contribution of regional and local character
- develop content, which can be available to its audience across all delivery platforms
- national and international news of high quality journalism and impartiality as a cornerstone of its schedule. RTÉ's news coverage shall be accurate, impartial and objective: this will help set the agenda for informed democratic debate in Ireland
- programming that reflects Ireland's role in the EU and in an international context
- as Ireland's national public service broadcaster, through its programmes and its public activities, encourage and equip its audience to play an active and constructive role in their communities. In so doing, it has a responsibility to reflect the full range and diversity of cultures within Ireland

- continue to honour its commitment to independent producers and to encourage the creativity of independent productions and maintain an appropriate balance between in-house and independent productions
- maintain and develop the RTÉ website to the highest standard
- continuing to nurture its performing groups so that their music can be widely heard and appreciated through broadcast, public performance and recording
- ensuring a well managed and easily accessible audio-visual archive which can enrich the Irish national heritage
- in the case of its programming, maintain and cherish its freedom from political control or influence and from all other vested interests, whether commercial, religious, social or cultural
- measures to provide access to services in areas not currently receiving signals and will publish reports of progress in its Annual Report

In the delivery of its services, RTÉ will have regard to the manner in which it addresses the requirements of people with disability, specifically striving to meet the needs of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons who are blind or partially sighted.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In terms of accountability RTÉ shall:

- publish, in advance, broad frameworks for its schedules with commitments as appropriate for the individual channels
- at the end of each year, report on its performance against targets set, and these reports being subject to independent review
- provide details in its annual report of the cost and revenues associated with each of its services
- keep detailed financial records in a manner that will enable the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, or a party appointed by him, to evaluate RTÉ's performance in fulfilling its statutory remit
- recognise, encourage and welcome the public's expression of views on RTÉ's performance and shall, through its Audience Council, enhance communications and shall also ensure that all complaints are logged, acknowledged, investigated and responded to

- through its Code of Fair Trading, publicise how its activities shall operate in a broadcasting landscape which has competing interests
- pledge to deliver to its audience the highest level of value for money in return for the public investment in its programming. It shall offer value in terms of its quality schedule and the efficiency with which it conducts its business
- provide details of its Irish language programming and other Irish language services in its Annual Report
- safeguard its editorial independence through an effective Code of Ethics for employees and contractors. The Code of Ethics will contain provisions to ensure no conflict of interest exists in relation to the performance of its employees and contractors.

RTÉ's Statutory Mandate

Under the Broadcasting Authority Acts (1960 – 2001), RTÉ is required to provide a comprehensive range of programmes, in Irish and in English, which reflect the cultural diversity of the whole island of Ireland. RTÉ is specifically mandated to provide:

- programmes that entertain, inform and educate
- programmes of news and current affairs
- coverage of sporting, religious and cultural activities
- coverage of the Oireachtas and the European Parliament

In fulfilling this mandate RTÉ is required to cater for the expectations of the community generally as well as the expectations of members of the community with special or minority interests and, in every case, to respect human dignity.

RTÉ is also mandated to facilitate or assist contemporary cultural expression and to encourage or promote innovation and experimentation in broadcasting.

While RTÉ can decide whether programmes are to be produced in-house, commissioned or acquired, it has a statutory obligation to commission a prescribed value of programming from the independent production sector.

In addition to the obligations provided for in national legislation, RTÉ also has obligations set down under European legislation, most notably

- the Television Without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC as amended) which requires RTÉ to ensure, among other things, that at least 50% of its programming on television, excluding news, sports events and games, is reserved for European works, and,

➤ the Transparency Directive (80/7223/EEC as amended), which requires RTÉ, among other things, to maintain separate accounts in relation to costs and revenues associated with its public service and commercial activities.

➤ RTÉ recognises the importance of news and information about Ireland for the Irish abroad in maintaining contact with Ireland and preserving an Irish dimension to their identity.

About the Charter

The purpose of the Charter is to provide an understanding to the people of Ireland of what is expected of RTÉ in return for the significant public funds provided to RTÉ from the proceeds of the television licence fee.

Broadcasting law requires RTÉ's radio and television services to have the character of a public service, to be offered free-to-air and to be universally available, where practicable, to the whole community on the island of Ireland.

Building on RTÉ's statutory remit, the Charter is a statement of principles that clarifies what is expected of RTÉ as the national public service broadcaster, including RTÉ's accountability to its audience.

Changes to the Charter

The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources shall keep the Charter under review so th at it continues to reflect change in the nature of Irish society along with changes in the broadcasting environment. A formal review of the Charter shall be carried out within five years



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