



PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES FOR BBC PICTURES AND IPLAYER





INTRODUCTION

Great pictures are essential for driving an audience to your programme. They must capture attention and sell the primary qualities of your show in a very competitive marketplace.

Impactful images tell a story and need to be of excellent technical quality.





YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY CONTACTS IN THE BBC

Photography Teams at The BBC

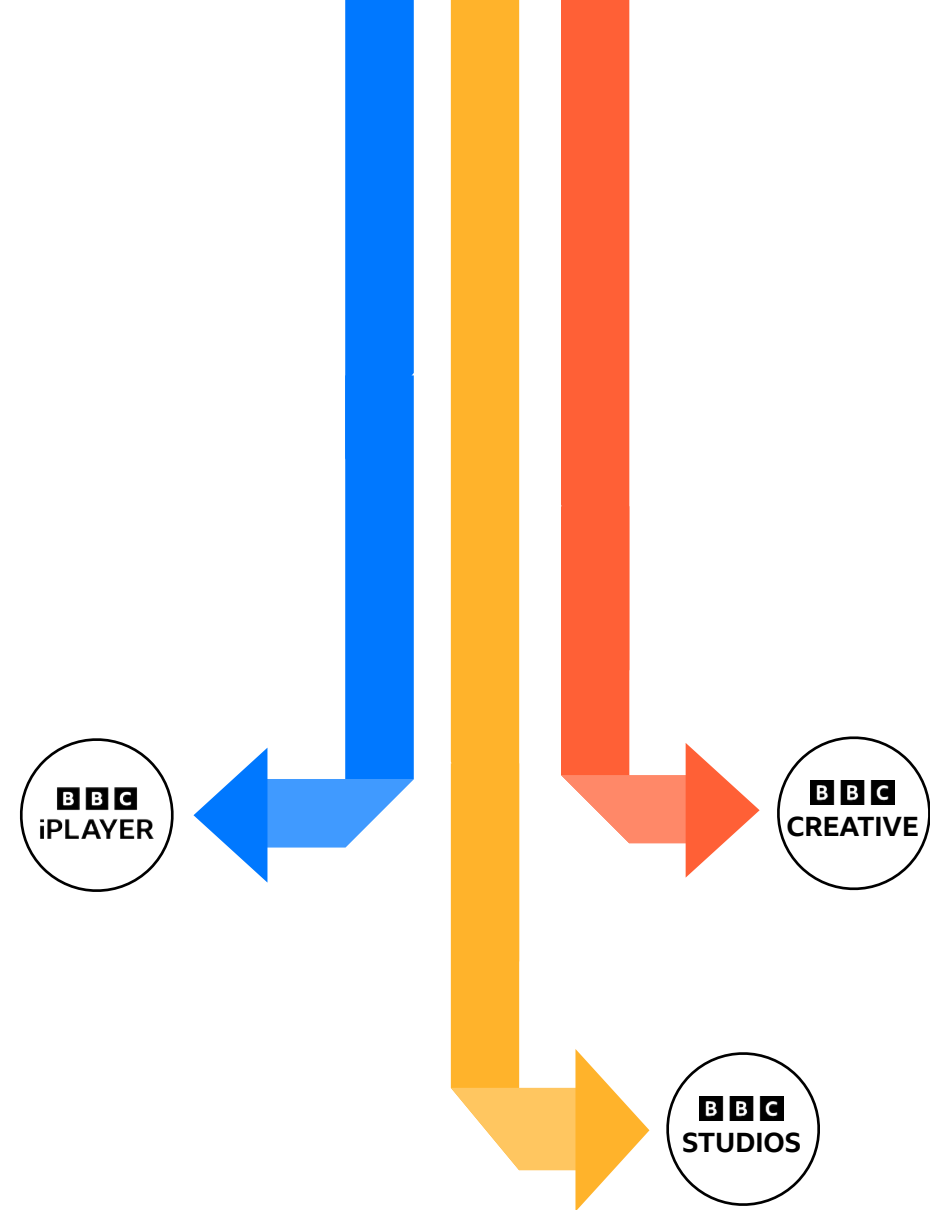
Although photography is used by many teams throughout the BBC, the responsibility of taking delivery, being involved in commissioning and creating Key Art is managed by 2 main teams.

BBC Creative is the home of BBC Pictures, this team should be the first and main point of contact regarding your stills delivery. The team have creatives who may work on your show to create Key Art and help manage the photography process. They also have Asset Managers who are primarily there to take delivery of photography but will advise on all matters regarding photography throughout the production process.

BBC iPlayer have an in-house design team who are responsible for taking images from BBC Pictures for use on iPlayer. The team create logo imagery and may also create key art imagery for certain titles that are being supported by the Asset Managers in BBC Pictures.

There is also a photography team in BBC Studios, if they are producing or distributing your show then they may be involved in the process alongside the BBC Pictures Creatives.

Contact BBCPictureDesk@bbc.co.uk as soon as your production is greenlit.



Delivery

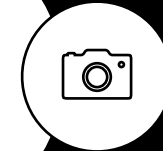
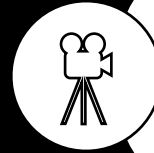
This is the journey that Photography Assets should take through the BBC.

On the most parts all photography assets should be funnelled through the pictures team, we then distribute to the rest of the business and press.

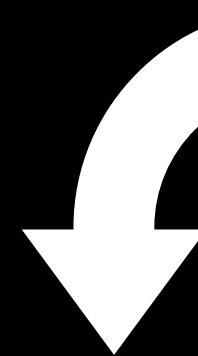
This ensures a focused edit of material is released that best represents the show. It also guarantees that the imagery has been approved and checked for editorial accuracy and against BBC Editorial Guidelines by the Commissioning Exec and BBC Pictures.

Contact BBCPictureDesk@bbc.co.uk

Production.



BBC Pictures.





WHERE DO YOUR IMAGES GET USED?

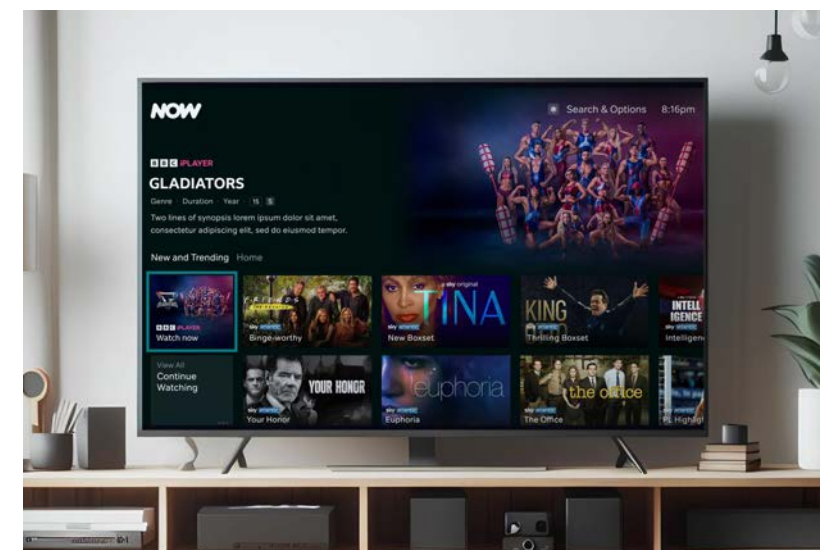
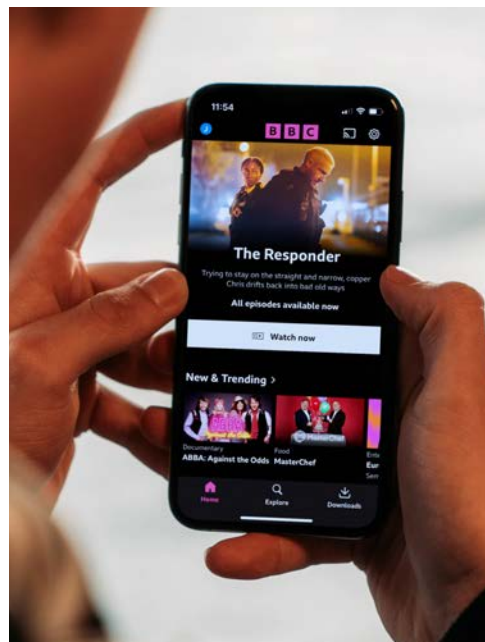
On Demand Platforms

Premium imagery is integral to driving reach to your show on BBC iPlayer and other streaming platforms delivering BBC shows.

Each of the different platforms have different needs but on a basic level they will need Key Art and unique images to represent each episode of your programme.

On iPlayer alone the Key Art for a programme will reach on average 40 million people a week.

If the images supplied to the BBC aren't of sufficient quality this will have a negative impact on the promotion and requests for your programme.

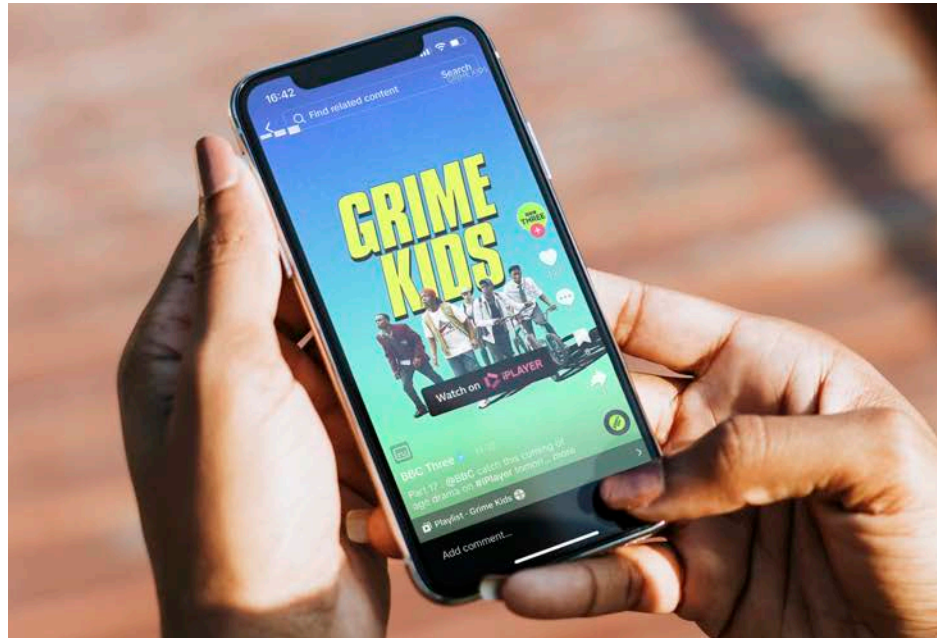




BBC Marketing platforms

BBC Pictures also supply images for the BBC's digital platforms, paid and organic social media activity, third party spaces and Out of Home paid-for media spaces.

The range of media spaces that promotional photography may occupy means it is vital that photography assets are delivered at the specification set out in the Delivery guidelines.



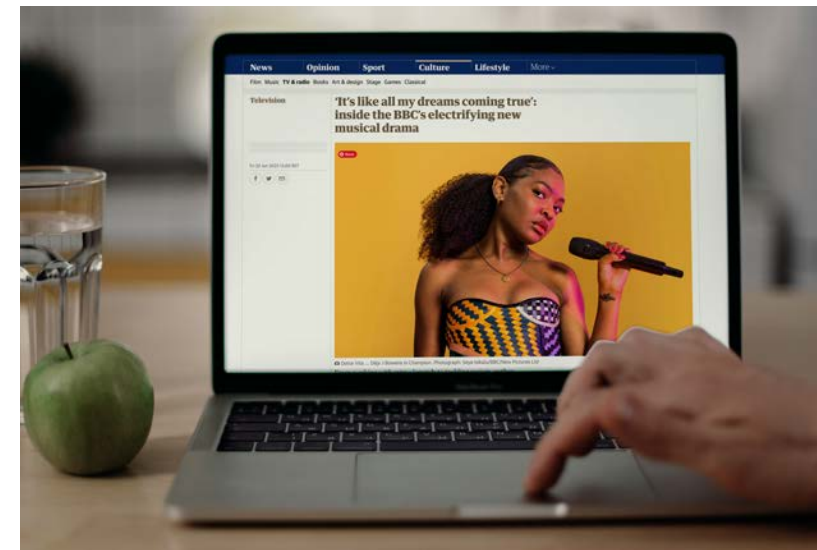
Press - online and print

BBC Pictures releases images for press use online and in print. The press use the widest range of the material we produce, using images throughout the whole run of a series from Pre-TX first look images through to post TX analysis.

Images we supply will often get used in money-can't-buy areas of the press such as front covers and double-page spreads of papers and magazines.

These images can be seen in newspapers (online and print) by 35million people a day and in TV magazines by 2.5 million people per issue.

Images have the longest life span of all promotional assets, staying on the programme pages of bbc.co.uk, on iPlayer and in press libraries/online pages for many years.

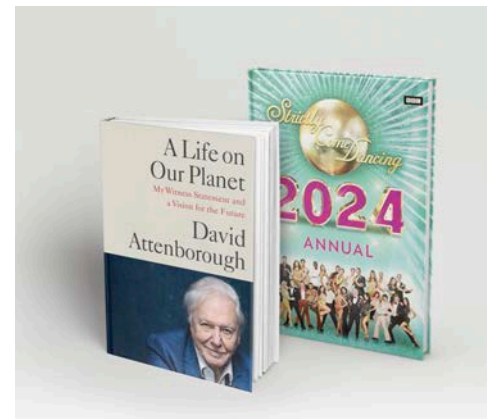
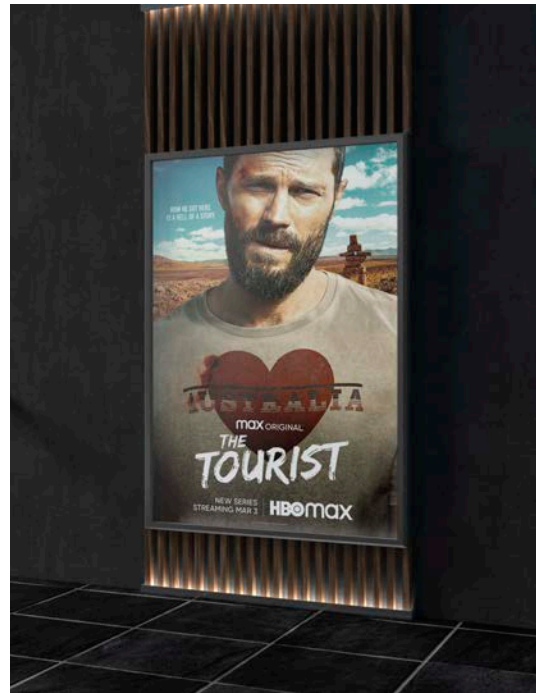




International Distributors, Books, DVDs and Merch

For some campaigns there can be associated books, DVDs and sometimes merchandise which will usually use the key art produced.

We also work closely with co-producers and distributors to share or deliver Key Art and photography assets for international use.





TYPES OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The BBC generally requires a range of images to be delivered including a Key Art image, portraits and unit (episodic) stills. However these requirements can alter depending on the programme format and genre, so please speak to your BBC Pictures contact before filming commences - [BBC Pictures](#).

01. KEY ART

An image that encapsulates the programme brand. Used as the lead image on iPlayer, in the press, across social media at the start of the series.



02. PORTRAITS

Portraits of key characters/ contributors used in editorial features, social media and programme pages.



03. EPISODIC

Key action shot from an episode, used on iPlayer to identify the episode, in the press on a weekly basis and on social media.



04. BTS

Candid shots from set, used by the press in editorial features and by social media throughout the series run.



Key Art (Iconic)



This is your show's lead image, encapsulating the programme brand and defining the content. A Key Art image needs to work in its own right, with no logo, strap-line or text.

Key Art has powerful promotional value at the start of a series, especially when used across multiple media platforms concurrently.

Key Art can be a purely photographic image captured on location, on a set or in a studio. You may choose to create a more conceptual artwork.



Conceptual images can help you be more explicit about the context and tone of your show which is hugely important for the audience, especially on new titles.

If submitting conceptual artwork please include a layered file and the original assets so that they can be optimised for all uses.

Portrait and Landscape versions of Key Art must be delivered.

Key Art On iPlayer

For iPlayer we can regard the Key Art as a suite of images as the user journey progresses through the platform.

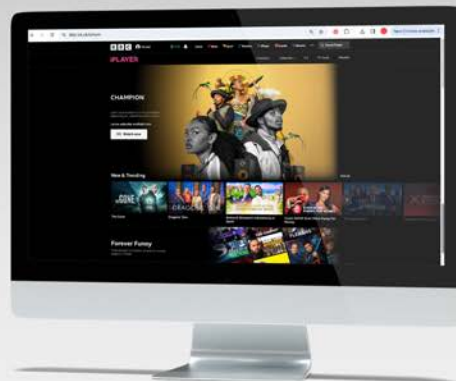
The linear journey takes the viewer from the Hero image on the front page, which will be the main Key Art through to the Brand or Series image and then through to the episode imagery.

Along the way you can build a picture of the show's content, illustrating different aspects of the narrative and giving greater insight into the production's context and tone.

HERO IMAGE

BRAND IMAGE

EPISODE IMAGE



Key Art On iPlayer

In addition to the linear journey, there are other areas where your Key Art image(s) will be used on iPlayer.

On TV the Hero image appears on rotation with 4 other titles, below the Hero image are thumbnails showing the 4 programmes being highlighted. The image used in the two spaces can be different, giving an opportunity to expand on the information the viewer is presented with.

Series Box sets use a portrait format of the Key Art, and of course the logo version of the Hero thumbnail appears in the Genre/Collection rails.





Key Art & Logos

To ensure that your Key Art can be used as the lead image on iPlayer please ensure that the composition allows room for the logo to be added within the iPlayer safe areas in both portrait and landscape versions.

The dark red areas should be left clear of important information, the transparent red areas should be treated with caution,

It may be that you wish to deliver two versions of your Key Art - a cropped version for editorial use and a wider version with room for the logo.

Please deliver the logo as a separate file.



Portraits



Please deliver a selection of portraits of each key character/contributor individually as well as in small groupings.

Recognisable close ups of talent are highly effective in drawing in audiences on BBC iPlayer and are used extensively in press features.

Shooting portraits on the set or location of your show is highly effective and shooting in the same style as your Key Art helps to create a cohesive campaign.



Portraits shot on a plain white or coloured seamless background are useful for magazine front covers and for our design team to use as a basis for Key Art, marketing and social imagery. Seamless image delivery should include full length, 3/4 and head and shoulders portraits.

However, plain background shoots should be delivered in addition to not instead of location based portraits.





Group shots

Care should be taken if creating a Key Art image featuring a group of people. Including more than 2-3 faces should only be done if the concept or narrative of the show requires it.

Ensuring that there is a clear focus point within a group image is important in order to capture the audiences attention and make them stop on the image.

This is particularly important as so much TV is consumed on iPads and phones where the images are relatively small.



Unit (Episodic) & BTS

Unit, or Episodic photography reflects a compelling moment in an unfolding storyline. The composition should be less posed and instead give the sense that something is happening or about to happen.

Each episode must have its own episodic so that the on-demand audience can clearly follow the series and the press can illustrate the programme on a week-by-week basis.

Behind The Scenes pictures should feature key cast and a unique filming story. Moments of humour and cast interacting are most compelling.

Whilst the press and our social teams use this type of imagery, the bulk of your stills delivery should be portraits and episodics.





WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL IMAGE?



Clarity

Be extremely clear in your proposition, understand your key sell, define your priorities and your message hierarchy, and know your audience.

But clarity in your proposition does not mean the image itself cannot be ambiguous. Ambiguity of meaning can of course elicit intrigue and engagement. “Let’s not tell the audience something, but rather, make them feel something. Let’s give them answers while simultaneously raising new questions. Let’s leave them wondering, longing to know more,” to click, and watch.





Content. Context. Tone

When looking at media content Audiences are on a mission. They are quickly scanning a huge amount of information. This could be on a variety of media platforms, from large screen TVs, magazines and papers to small mobile phones, and the duration of a singular image impression is likely less than a second.

In order to improve engagement, the content, context and tone of imagery need to work together to create an immediately clear and relevant message at any size that encapsulates the programme USP at almost a subconscious level.



Content

The key sell:

The talent. The presenter. The contributors.

Depending on the genre and categorisation, the lead character or contributor of the series should be at the forefront in the Key Art image. That human connection is incredibly powerful, the audience's gaze will focus and stop on a face quicker and longer than other subjects and the more famous and immediately recognisable the face, the better.

However, for some genres, across Factual programming for instance, viewers can respond better to key art without people, where the imagery intrigues and elicits questions more than it does answer them. This is the context of the programme.





Context

The key sell:

The world of the programme.

How the whole image is framed, and what appears in the foreground and background – such as any costume and clothing, props and scenery – communicates a huge amount and adds significant value.

Whilst context is important in all Key Art, it is even more vital if the subject in the forefront is not immediately recognisable, current or popular, the viewer could need more in order for them to engage with the image and watch the programme.

While 'low-risk', viewers are still more likely to respond to artwork where they know what to expect from the programme it is representing.



Tone

The key sell:

Tone is everything.



Energy. Expression. Mood. These are the things that will ultimately make an emotional connection between the audience and an image. The same elements of content and context can tell many different stories depending on the use of tone: colour, light, composition and choice of typography within the image.

The audience are significantly influenced by their mood and perception of value when looking at promotional imagery. Interestingly those images that users think best represent the content and the context of the show are not always the same as those they would most likely click on when browsing on-demand platforms.

Before the viewer makes a conscious decision based upon the artwork's imagery content, they are subconsciously responding to its emotional resonance – does it suit their mood? Does it look like it will be time well spent?





Quality

For viewers, low quality image = low quality programme.

To make your programme stand out the imagery you deliver must be of the best quality. Low resolution, badly lit and out of focus images won't be used by the press or by iPlayer.

As seen in this example, the low resolution area (Left) is dull, out of focus and is obviously poor quality - especially when compared to the higher resolution section on the right.

Quality

We always ask that you hire a professional photographer to shoot your publicity stills.

However if this impossible due to location/ filming restraints here are some technical tips:

The minimum image size for episodics is 4600 x 3450 pixels (45mb file size) and 5300 x 3975 pixels (60mb file size) for Key Art and Portraits.

Files should be delivered as high quality JPGs and RAW files. This size will work for everything from front covers to posters and pick of the days.

Use an SLR camera set on the finest setting available

Shoot RAW files if the option is available

Shoot lots and lots of frames to edit down from.

Try to keep shutter speeds above 1/100 second or faster to avoid blur and avoid movement in low light.

The best lighting conditions are good quality continuous light or daylight, as flash can be harder to control

Be aware that auto focus may focus on the background.



Unit Still



Grab

Quality (Grabs)

In some circumstances grabs can be useful, such as where a photographer can't travel or gain access, or if a key scene or character has been missed.

However, even if grabs are taken from the latest high resolution cameras the quality isn't comparable to true stills photography. The file sizes aren't big enough for our uses and the quality of the image in terms of sharpness, depth and clarity is inferior.

If grabs are being delivered this should be in addition to stills photography, and should never be used for the Key Art. Grabs should be sourced at edit at the highest resolution and saved without compression.



IMAGERY BY GENRE



Comedy

Content

In comedy imagery, clear use of talent and character is key.

Context

Use of context is perhaps the least prominent in comedy. Clues of their world are still present through costume and propping.

Tone

Colour: Bright bold colours signpost comedy well. Both as background and for title art.

Composition: Straight to camera where facial expressions and character are clear.

Typography: Fun expressive typesetting

Comedy imagery relies a great deal on presenting the correct tone. However, note that satirical or darker comedy subverts these expectations. The inclusion of actors well known for comedy roles is an indication of its genre, as well as almost a pastiche of darker genre motifs.



Drama

Content

Story in drama is absolutely key. However, if the cast has big names or interesting looking characters, of course that should most likely be the key sell.

Context

Story trumps. Audiences want to know the world they will be entering. This can be through clear scene setting, or more subtly such as a suggestion of space and relationships.

Tone

Colour: Bright and bold, dark and ominous. Colour palette is wholly dependent on the mood of the piece.

Composition: Tight headshots, oblique angles. Tension, adventure, humour, danger. Just as composition is crucial in film, so it is in its imagery.

Typography: Choice of font, colour, and effects, this offers another key signpost to the audience.





Entertainment

Content

Key talent is the most important sell here. Their brand is synonymous with the brand of the show. For competitive shows, inclusion of contributors can also have a powerful effect.

Context

In some regards, the context of the show is more important than even the key talent. For instance, if the genre itself is a bigger pull than the presenter, or perhaps if the show is something completely different to what that talent usually appears in.

Tone

As ever, it is the careful use of colour and expressive use of typography that makes clear the proposition to the audience.



DOCUMENTARIES

PRESENTER-LED & AUTHORED

Content

Key talent wins. Contributors can bring with them a whole new audience too.

Context

The critical element here is clarity of thought. A sincere portrait of the subject performs well. However, for presenters with a diverse portfolio, it can obviously add further value by visualising the new world around them.

Tone

Simple, clear, sincere, earnest, considerate use of colour and composition plays well here.





DOCUMENTARIES

OBSERVATIONAL

Content

Without known faces, the next preferred option is typically contributor-led imagery. However, it is still hugely important to have professionally taken photography when possible and lead with a concept. Even though we are not working with actors, try to lean into the drama and the tension. Conceptual imagery using stock photography or illustration can be extremely successful, ensure any stock imagery is licensed in accordance with our delivery requirements.

Context

Just as with drama, story is key. Documentaries allow audiences to experience new worlds and learn new things. Context is vital especially when the contributors themselves most likely will not bring their own audience. Strong good quality archival imagery is a recognised visual language for this genre and can be a huge draw as it gives immediate insight into the world or event.

Tone

One of the most important to get right here. A picture of an unknown surgeon is not enough. But choose the right colour, the right composition, it becomes a powerful image holding an audience captive. Think 'epic' for documentary key art.



DOCUMENTARIES

TRUE CRIME

Content

Perhaps the least important factor here. True crime as a genre is powerful and it is the dark world of crime itself that audiences engage with specifically. However, if the criminals or victim are famous, images including these characters perform well. Likewise, Contributors who are also seen as part of the crime world can be key drivers.

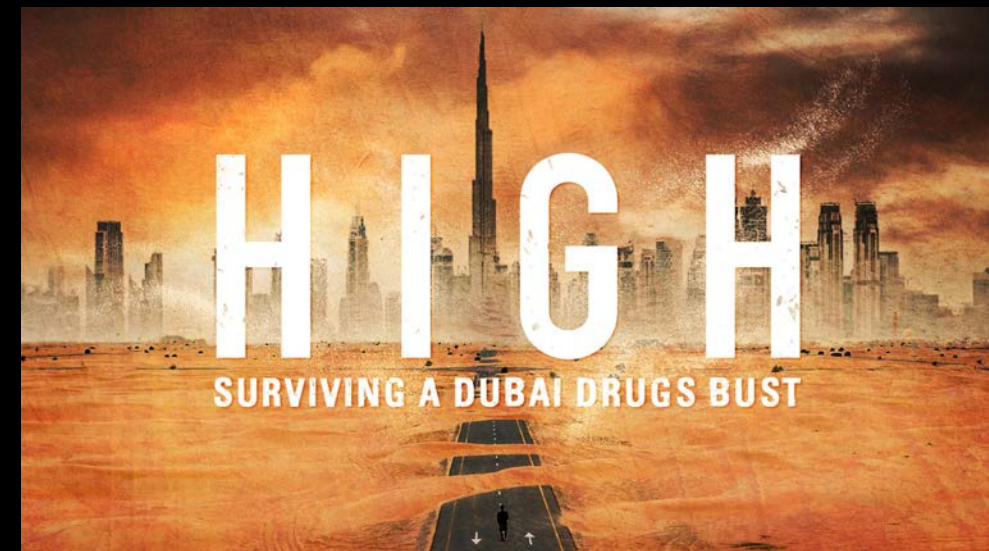
Context

More than any other genre, there is a great deal of room here to lead with conceptual routes, with intriguing imagery. Be imaginative. You do not need to lead with the obvious or over-tell the story. Consider use of stock imagery to build the world if you do not have particularly good imagery already. Strong good quality archival imagery is a recognised visual language for this genre and can be a huge draw as it gives immediate insight into the world or event.

Tone

For this genre Tone is absolutely pivotal. Colour palette can of course be dark and moody but if the subject matter allows it, the colour could be equally be bright and optimistic.

Play with light and dark, composition, layers, typographic clues.





EDITORIAL GUIDANCE

The following are some general points to think about when taking publicity images for your programme.

For full guidelines please visit the BBC Editorial Guidelines page [here](#).

Editorial Guidance



Some BBC programming contains challenging content that must be approached with sensitivity.

All images supplied to the BBC must be factually representative of the content of the programme but they must also abide by the BBC Editorial Policy guidelines.

Imagery that appears on screen may not be suitable to show in a still and caution should be taken when choosing which areas of your content to illustrate.

Further information on Editorial Guidelines for photography can be found [here](#).



You may need to get written permission from your subjects to use their image to promote your programme. If photographing children you must gain parental consent - more information on working with children can be found [here](#).

No images can be released to publicise the programme without written consent from the BBC Executive Producer and BBC Pictures.



COPYRIGHT + CLEARANCE



Copyright

Copyright law states that the photographer owns any images they take unless otherwise contractually agreed ahead of the photoshoot.

It is imperative that the copyright of all photography images are cleared so that the BBC has the right to use the images for non-commercial publicity and promotional materials across all platforms.

Buying out the copyright ensures the Intellectual Property Rights of the images remains with the Production Company and avoids any later unwanted exploitation of those images.



Clearance

When gaining clearance of archive imagery, again it is imperative that the images are cleared so that the BBC has the right to use and importantly, **distribute** the images as part of the non-commercial publicity and promotional campaign material.





AND FINALLY....

KEY POINTS

In Summary



Speak to BBC Pictures before filming starts



Hire a professional photographer



Ensure you have cleared the images for publicity and marketing use on all platforms.



Think about how to represent your programme through a Key Art image – landscape and portrait .



Ensure you deliver images that represent each episode



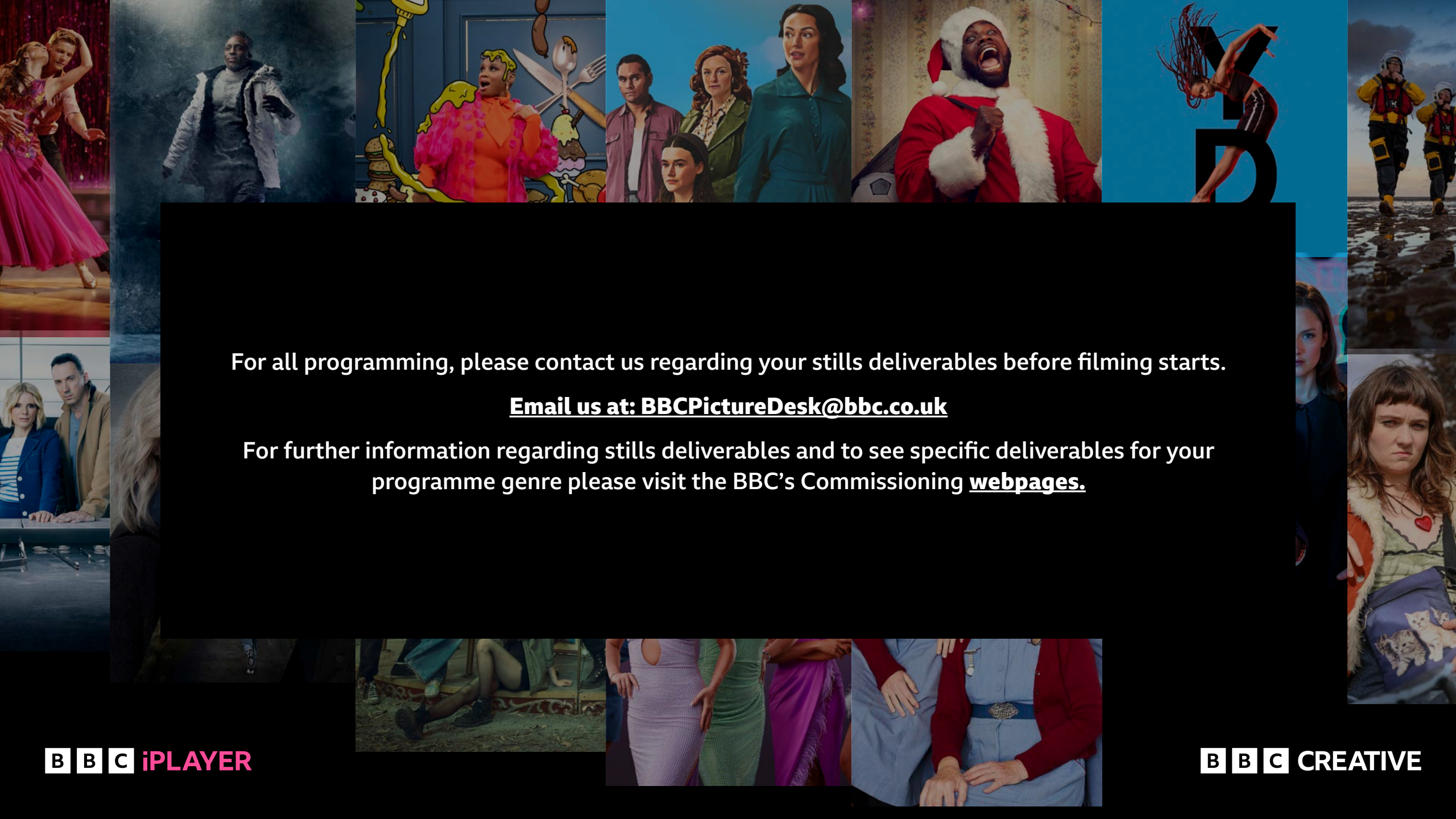
Be aware of BBC Editorial Policy



Ensure your images are of the best quality



Deliver your Logo as a layered file



For all programming, please contact us regarding your stills deliverables before filming starts.

Email us at: BBCPictureDesk@bbc.co.uk

For further information regarding stills deliverables and to see specific deliverables for your programme genre please visit the BBC's Commissioning [webpages](#).