

FILM ON TELEVISION

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FACTS IN FOCUS

Over 97% of UK individuals spent time watching at least one of over 11,000 unique film titles shown on British television in 2020. Across platforms, multi-channel broadcasts had the greatest film reach (93%) followed by terrestrial (91%) and pay TV (57%).

- ▶ There were 11,189 unique film titles on television in 2020, including 1,161 on terrestrial television, 1,800 on pay film channels and 9,467 on other multi-channels.
- ▶ *The Grinch* attracted the highest audience for a single transmission on non-film subscription multi-channels in 2020, with 1.2 million viewers on ITV2.
- ▶ There were 1,620 film transmissions on terrestrial channels (up from 1,331 in 2019). Of these, 486 were UK films (up from 390 in 2019).
- ▶ *Toy Story 4* attracted the highest single audience on pay TV film channels, with 1.8 million viewers on Sky Cinema Premiere.
- ▶ There were 51,280 film transmissions on pay TV film channels and 57,851 film transmissions on other multi-channels.
- ▶ In 2020, 58.8 million people (aged 4+) watched at least one film on a broadcast television channel.
- ▶ The most popular film on terrestrial television in 2020 was the independent UK production *Darkest Hour*, attracting an average audience of 5.3 million viewers for its May Bank Holiday weekend premiere on BBC One.
- ▶ The estimated value of feature film to UK broadcasters in 2020 was £738 million (down from £873 million in 2019).

Film on television

Programming on the terrestrial channels

In 2020, 91% of all individuals (aged 4+) in the UK watched at least one film on a terrestrial television channel. (Terrestrial television is used here to describe the previous national terrestrial analogue services, all of which have some degree of public service obligation.) Table 1 shows the total number of feature films broadcast on the five terrestrial channels in 2020 and the number of UK titles broadcast in that time. UK films are broken down into recent titles (films released theatrically between 2011 and 2020) and older titles (released pre-2011).

There were 1,620 film transmissions on terrestrial television in 2020, up from 1,331 in 2019. The increase is primarily due to the broadcasters' need to fill scheduling gaps caused by production pauses and a lack of live sports and entertainment programming resulting from the COVID pandemic. Three in 10 (30%) films shown were UK titles. Channel 5 broadcast the greatest number of films overall (505), BBC Two showed the greatest number of UK films overall (136) and Channel 4 showed the greatest number of recent UK films (74).

In total, the terrestrial channels broadcast 1,161 unique film titles, a slight increase on the 1,101 unique titles shown in 2019.

Table 1 Feature films broadcast¹ on terrestrial television 2020

	Number of films broadcast	Number of UK films ² broadcast	UK films as % of total	Number of recent ³ UK films broadcast	Recent UK films as % of total films broadcast
BBC One	199	75	37.7	60	30.2
BBC Two	365	136	37.3	68	18.6
ITV	131	54	41.2	19	14.5
Channel 4	420	87	20.7	74	17.6
Channel 5	505	134	26.5	41	8.1
Total	1,620	486	30.0	262	16.2

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

¹ Includes repeat broadcasts of individual title.

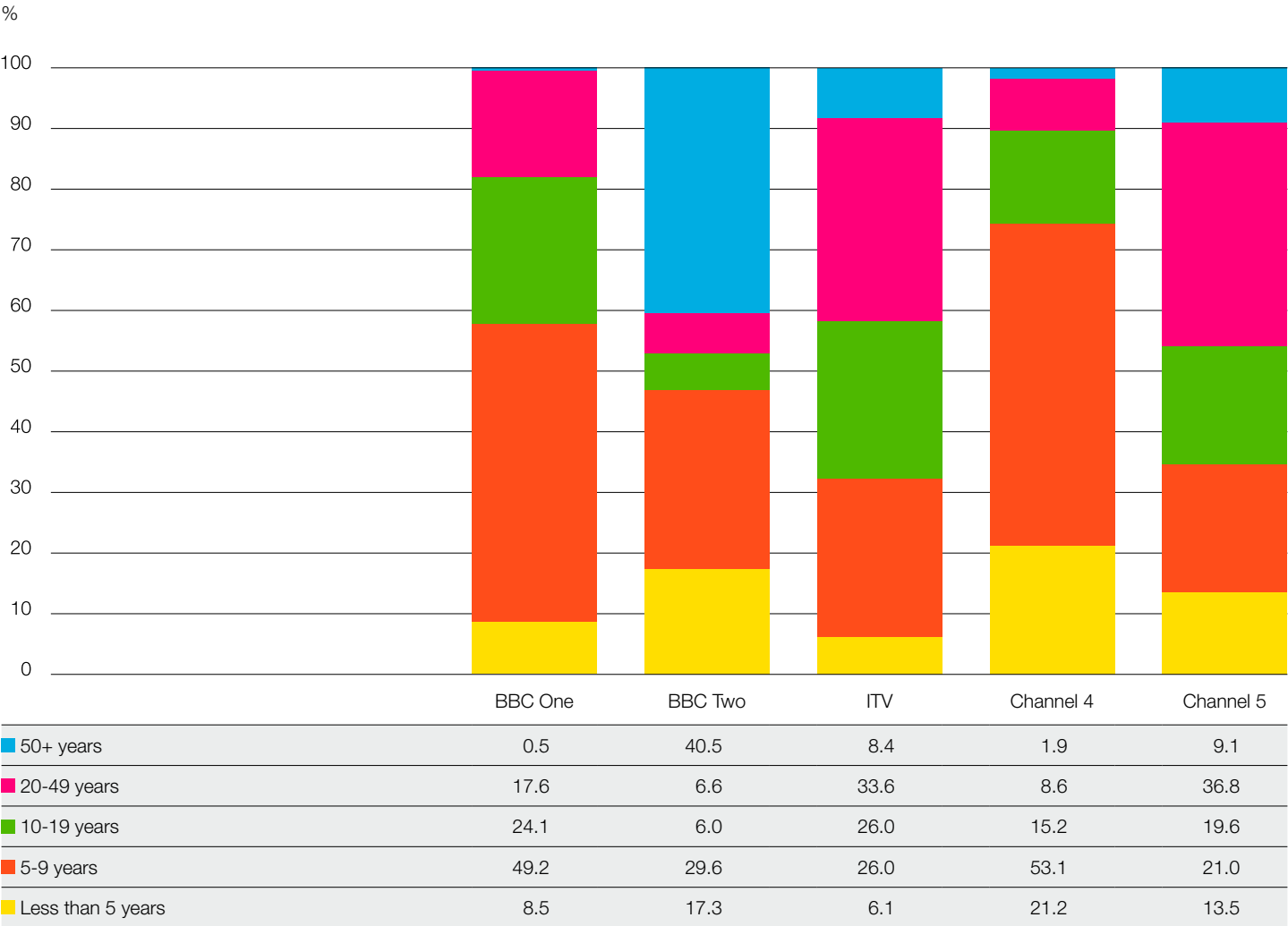
² UK films are defined as those which have been certified as such by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under Schedule 1 of the Films Act 1985, or under one of the UK's official bi-lateral co-production agreements, or a film which is a de-facto UK film by virtue of being made in whole or part in the UK by a UK production company.

³ A recent film is one which has been theatrically released, or intended for release, in the UK since 2011.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of films broadcast on the terrestrial channels in 2020 across five age-range categories. (For this analysis, the age of a film is determined by its year of release in the UK, not production year.)

Newer titles made up a larger share of Channel 4’s film output than of the other terrestrial channels. Just over one fifth (21%) of the films shown on Channel 4 in 2020 were less than five years old at the time of their broadcast, while 74% of its films were less than 10 years old. In contrast, over 40% of films broadcast on BBC Two (47%), Channel 5 (46%) and ITV (42%) had been released theatrically at least 20 years before 2020.

Figure 1 Percentage of feature film by age on terrestrial channels, 2020



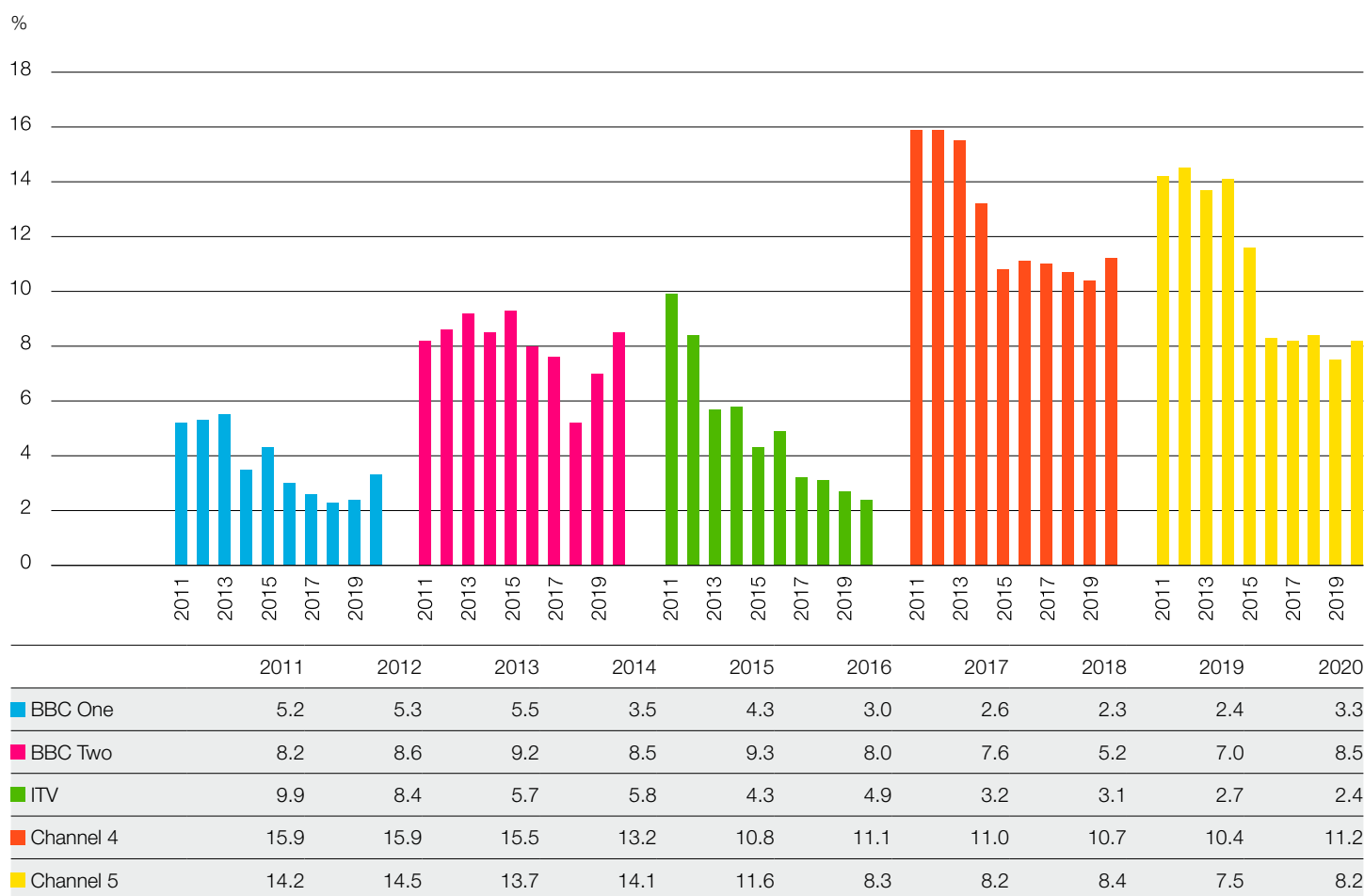
Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

Film on terrestrial television, 2011-2020

As Figure 2 shows, the share of total programming time dedicated to feature film varied widely across the terrestrial channels between 2011 and 2020. (The data in this chart has been recalculated on the basis of a new methodology used by BARB to categorise programme content which has identified a greater number of feature film transmissions on terrestrial television than would have been included previously.) In most years, Channel 4 had the largest proportion of film hours in its schedule, while BBC One generally had the smallest. In 2020, however, while Channel 4 had the greatest share of film hours (11%), ITV had the smallest (2%).

As the chart shows, the trend to 2019 had been for an overall decline in the proportion of programming time allotted to film but this was reversed in 2020, with four of the five terrestrial channels showing a year-on-year increase in their schedules. In large part, this is explained by the need to fill programming gaps caused by the pandemic. The total share of airtime devoted to film across the five channels increased from 5% in 2019 to 6% in 2020. Despite the increase, the figure for 2020 is almost one third less than the average share between 2011 and 2015.

Figure 2 Film as a percentage of total programming hours by channel, 2011-2020



Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

Programming hours: 06:00-27:00. (For reporting purposes, the BARB broadcast day runs for 24 hours from 6:00. Times beyond 24:59 are reported using a thirty-hour clock.)

Film duration includes commercial breaks and promotions within broadcast on commercial channels.

Figures are for all network broadcasts; they exclude regional-only broadcasts.

Figures have been revised since publication of the 2020 Statistical Yearbook.

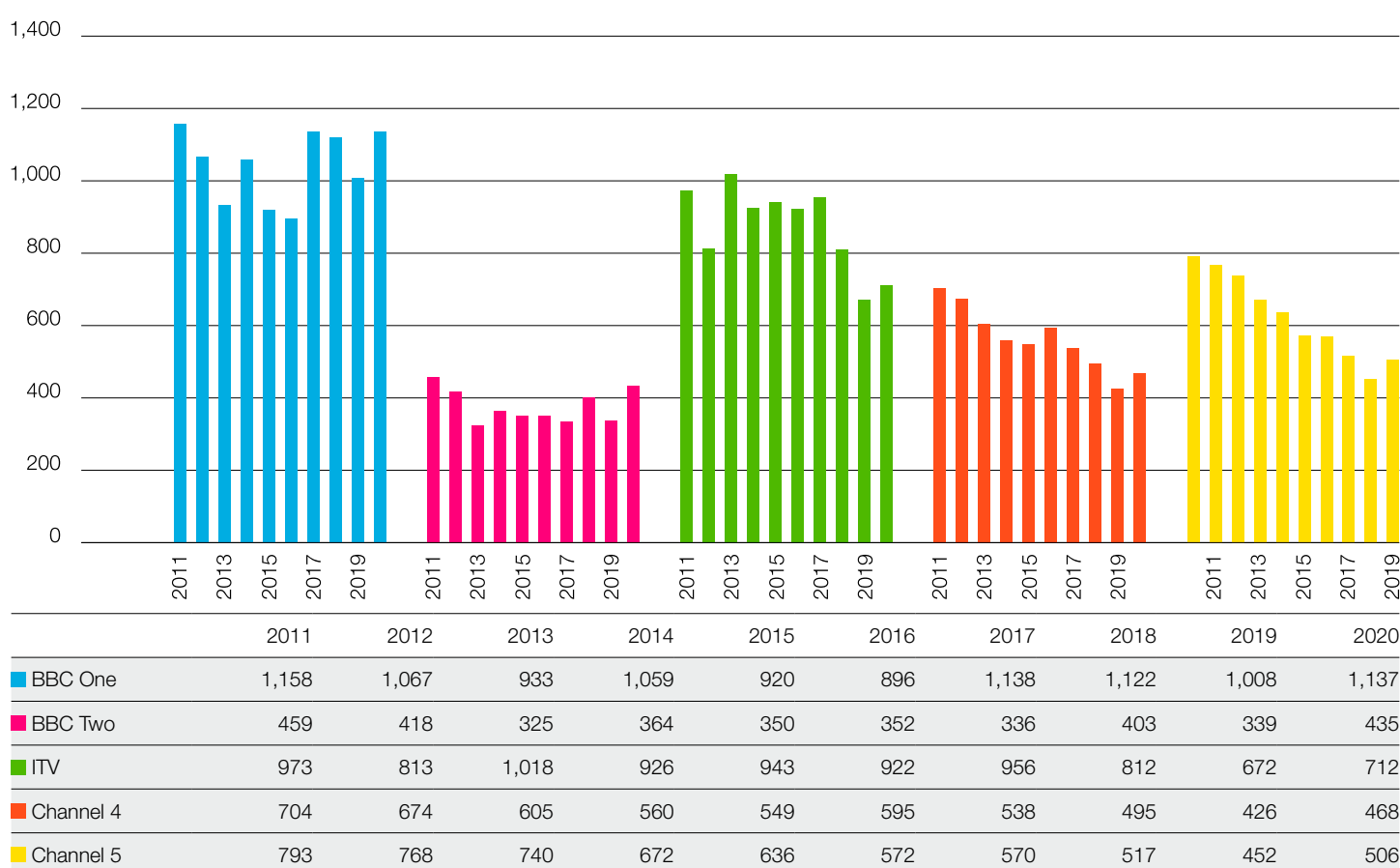
Audience for film on terrestrial television, 2011-2020

As Figure 3 shows, there was an overall decline in the average audience for feature film across all programming hours on the five terrestrial channels from 2011 to 2019 which is partly attributable to changing screen habits, particularly among younger viewers, and the growth of competition from on-demand services during the period. In 2020, however, all five terrestrial broadcasters saw an increase in the average film audience compared with 2019. In large part, this was due to a surge in overall screen viewing during periods of lockdown in the year. (For more on the audience for film on television, see the Audiences chapter.)

BBC One and ITV had the highest average audiences between 2011 and 2020, while BBC Two had the lowest. In 2020, the average audience for film on BBC One was 1.14 million (up 13% on 2019), on ITV it was 712,000 (+6% on 2019), on Channel 5 it was 506,000 (+12%) and on Channel 4 it was 468,000 (+10%). BBC Two's average film audience in the year was 435,00, a 28% increase on 2019, and the biggest year-on-year rise in average audience across the five terrestrial channels.

Figure 3 Average audience for film, 2011-2020

Audience (000)



Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

See notes to Figure 2.

Figures have been revised since publication of the 2020 Statistical Yearbook on the basis of a new methodology used by BARB to categorise programme content.

Top films on terrestrial television

The most popular film on terrestrial television in 2020 was the independent UK production *Darkest Hour*, which attracted an average audience of 5.3 million viewers for its May bank holiday premiere on BBC One during the first national lockdown (Table 2). *Darkest Hour* was one of five network premieres in the top 10 in 2020 and is the only UK qualifying title.

Nine of the year's top 10 most popular film transmissions on terrestrial television were shown on BBC channels; the remaining title was shown on Channel 4.

Table 2 Top 10 films¹ on terrestrial television, 2020

Title	Channel	Country of origin	Year of release	Audience (million)
1 <i>Darkest Hour</i> *	BBC One	UK/USA	2018	5.3
2 <i>Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull</i>	BBC One	USA	2008	4.4
3 <i>Grease</i>	BBC One	USA	1978	4.1
4 <i>Sully</i> *	BBC Two	USA	2016	3.9
5 <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>	BBC One	USA	1981	3.6
6 <i>Spider-Man: Homecoming</i> *	BBC One	USA	2017	3.6
7 <i>The Greatest Showman</i> *	Channel 4	USA	2017	3.5
8 <i>Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom</i>	BBC One	USA	1984	3.5
9 <i>The Sound of Music</i>	BBC Two	USA	1965	3.4
10 <i>Coco</i> *	BBC One	USA	2018	3.4

Source: BARB, RSU analysis

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.

* Film shown for the first time on terrestrial television.

The most popular UK qualifying film on terrestrial television in 2020 was the only title to appear in the overall top 10 list of films on terrestrial channels. *Darkest Hour* is one of five network premieres in the top 10 UK films list and one of only two titles not backed by the Hollywood majors. The other independent UK title, *Paddington 2*, was the overall most popular film on terrestrial television in 2019 and appears in this and the following table for the second consecutive year.

As with the overall 2020 top 10 list, the majority of the top 10 UK films on terrestrial television were shown on BBC channels. Two titles were shown on Channel 4 and two were shown on ITV.

Table 3 Top 10 UK qualifying films¹ on terrestrial television, 2020

Title	Channel	Country of origin	Year of release	Audience (million)
1 <i>Darkest Hour</i> *	BBC One	UK/USA	2018	5.3
2 <i>Dunkirk</i> *	BBC One	UK/USA	2017	3.4 [#]
3 <i>Paddington 2</i>	BBC One	UK/Fra	2017	3.3
4 <i>Murder on the Orient Express</i> *	Channel 4	UK/USA	2017	3.0
5 <i>Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again</i> *	ITV	UK/USA	2018	2.6
6 <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	BBC One	UK/USA	2017	2.5
7 <i>The Jungle Book</i>	Channel 4	UK/USA	2016	2.5
8 <i>Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom</i> *	ITV	UK/USA	2018	2.5
9 <i>Cinderella</i>	BBC Two	UK/USA	2015	2.2
10 <i>Guardians of the Galaxy</i>	BBC One	UK/USA	2014	2.2

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.

* Film shown for the first time on terrestrial television.

[#] The actual audience for *Dunkirk* is smaller (3.37 million) than both *The Sound of Music* (3.42 million) and *Coco* (3.41 million) which appear in Table 2.

Seven of the top 10 most popular UK independent films on terrestrial television in 2020 were shown on BBC channels while three were shown on Channel 4 (Table 4). Two of the films, *Philomena* and *Victoria & Abdul* were BBC Film (previously BBC Films) productions, while *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* was a Film4 production. Seven of the films were network premieres.

Table 4 Top 10 UK independent films¹ on terrestrial television, 2020

Title	Channel	Country of origin	Year of release	Audience (million)
1 Darkest Hour*	BBC One	UK/USA [#]	2018	5.3
2 Paddington 2	BBC One	UK/Fra	2017	3.3
3 Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*	Channel 4	UK/USA [#]	2018	2.1
4 The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*	BBC Two	UK/Fra/USA [#]	2018	2.0
5 Early Man*	BBC One	UK/Fra	2018	1.8
6 Red Sparrow*	Channel 4	UK/USA [#]	2018	1.8
7 Philomena	BBC One	UK/Fra	2013	1.6
8 Victoria & Abdul	BBC Two	UK	2017	1.6
9 Finding Your Feet*	Channel 4	UK	2018	1.6
10 Whisky Galore!*	BBC Two	UK	2016	1.5

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.

* Film shown for the first time on terrestrial television.

[#] Film made with independent (non-studio) US support or with the independent arm of a US studio

Film on multi-channel television

In 2020, 93% of UK individuals watched at least one film on multi-channel television (Freeview/satellite/cable). For the purposes of this section, multi-channels include all free-to-air and paid (non-film subscription) channels, with the exclusion of the traditional terrestrial channels. It should be noted that the new methodology used by BARB to standardise the categorisation of broadcast output has identified a greater number of feature film transmissions on multi-channels than would have been included in previous years, so the data in this section are not directly comparable with those published in previous Yearbooks.

Table 5 shows the number of film transmissions, the average film audience, the top film and the average audience for the top film, for all channels which broadcast 30 or more feature films in 2020. The list is headed by 14 dedicated film channels led by the Sony branded channels Sony Movies Classic (5,448 transmissions), Sony Movies Action (4,989 transmissions) and Sony Movies (4,957 transmissions). Outside the leading film-only channels, the greatest number of films was screened by the general entertainment channels Paramount Network (1,958 transmissions) and London Live (1,927 transmissions). However, the largest average audiences for film were generated by ITV2 (305,000 viewers) and ITV3 (237,00).

In total, 9,467 unique film titles were broadcast on non-film subscription multi-channel television across 57,851 slots in 2020. The most popular film in terms of cumulative audience was the James Bond feature *Spectre*, which attracted over 7.5 million viewers across five transmissions on ITV2.

Table 5 Feature film on other multi-channels, 2020

Channel	Number of films broadcast	Average audience (000)	Top film ¹	Audience for top film (000)
Sony Movies Classic	5,448	17	Awakenings	157
Sony Movies Action	4,989	39	Midway (1976)	234
Sony Movies	4,957	54	Die Hard with a Vengeance	477
Talking Pictures	3,851	39	The Likely Lads	200
Rok TV	3,483	3	Something Special	48
Utsav Gold	3,328	3	War	91
Sony MAX	3,155	3	Pati Patni Aur Woh	60
Sony MAX2	3,103	2	Ghulami	35
TCM	3,030	16	The Dead Pool	142
B4U Movies	2,931	2	Jab We Met	38
Film4	2,845	158	Hidden Figures	838
Zee Cinema	2,688	3	The Accidental Prime Minister	69
Colors Cineplex	2,462	2	Namastey London	42
Horror Channel	2,143	41	Exorcist: The Beginning	236
Paramount Network	1,958	78	The Good, the Bad and the Ugly	525
London Live	1,927	5	Mother Lode	59
SAB	1,718	2	Mardaani	55
5STAR	1,607	101	Bridget Jones's Baby	510
ITV4	1,371	168	Diamonds Are Forever	680
Syfy	962	16	Matilda	138
ITV2	929	305	The Grinch	1,189
Zee TV	791	3	Uri: The Surgical Strike	42
Comedy Central	564	65	Pretty Woman	296
5SELECT	347	27	Stephen King's Thinner	155
Movies 24	334	7	The Secret Ingredient	53
E4	309	224	Independence Day	714
Kanshi TV	245	<1	Kanoon Apna Apna	13
Sky Arts	196	23	Freddy Mercury: The Great Pretender	297
Sky One	188	128	The Polar Express	758
PBS America	149	11	Sammy Davis Jr: I've Gotta Be Me	50
ITV3	117	237	Carry On Camping	591
BBC Four	108	233	Billy Elliot	632
Sky Comedy	82	27	Ali G Indahouse	89
Sky Atlantic	81	34	The Godfather: Part II	137
W	63	53	Groundhog Day	155
Comedy Central Extra	63	9	See No Evil, Hear No Evil	97
5Spike	51	76	The Battle of Britain	236
Dave	47	180	The Da Vinci Code	348
4seven	42	58	Den of Thieves	143
MTV	41	29	The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2	95

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.

Excludes channels with <30 unique cinema film titles broadcast during 2020.

The 2018 animated feature *The Grinch* gained the year's highest average audience for a single transmission on multi-channel television, attracting 1.2 million viewers for its late December broadcast on ITV2 (Table 6). Interestingly, the second most popular film was the 2011 pandemic thriller *Contagion*, which was shown (also on ITV2) directly following the Government's announcement of the first nationwide lockdown in March. The only top 10 film not shown on ITV2 in 2020 was the biopic *Hidden Figures* which attracted an average audience of over 800,000 for its early May transmission on Film4.

Five of the top 10 films were UK qualifying titles, all of which were produced in collaboration with the major US studios.

Table 6 Top 10 films¹ on other multi-channels, 2020

Title	Channel	Country of origin	Year of release	Audience (million)
1 The Grinch (2018)	ITV2	USA	2018	1.2
2 Contagion	ITV2	USA	2011	1.2
3 Spectre	ITV2	UK/USA	2015	1.2
4 Justice League	ITV2	UK/USA/Can	2017	1.0
5 The Legend of Tarzan	ITV2	UK/USA	2016	1.0
6 Uncle Buck	ITV2	USA	1990	1.0
7 Skyfall	ITV2	UK/USA	2012	0.9
8 Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom	ITV2	UK/USA	2018	0.9
9 Hidden Figures	Film4	USA	2017	0.8
10 Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2	ITV2	USA/NZ/Can	2017	0.8

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.

In 2020, 57% of all UK individuals watched at least one film on a pay tv film channel. (Currently the pay TV category only includes the additional subscription TV film channels operated by Sky.) These channels showed 1,800 unique titles across 51,280 slots during the year, with an average audience of 11,000. In 2019, they showed 2,015 unique titles across 48,663 slots (the average audience was the same at 11,000).

Table 7 shows the top 10 titles on pay TV film channels in 2020, ranked by the highest average audience for a single transmission. All of the top 10 films were shown on Sky Cinema Premiere. *Toy Story 4* achieved the year's highest single audience, with an average of 1.8 million viewers, followed by *Frozen II* (1.6 million viewers) and *Aladdin* (1.4 million viewers). All top three films are Disney or Pixar features. This is likely to be the last time Disney-owned titles will feature in this list as Disney content began to be removed from these channels following the launch of the Disney+ streaming service in the first half of 2020.

Aladdin is one of three UK qualifying films in the list (the others are *Four Kids and It* and *Rocketman*). *Four Kids and It* is the only UK independent film in the top 10. *Aladdin* gained the largest cumulative audience on pay TV in 2020, with a total of 6.4 million viewers over 210 transmissions across six of Sky's dedicated film channels.

Table 7 Top 10 films¹ on pay TV film channels, 2020

Title	Channel	Country of origin	Year of release	Audience (million)
1 Toy Story 4	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA	2019	1.8
2 Frozen II	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA	2019	1.6
3 Aladdin	Sky Cinema Premiere	UK/USA	2019	1.4
4 Jumanji: The Next Level	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA	2019	1.2
5 The Secret Life of Pets 2	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA/Fra/Jpn	2019	1.2
6 Four Kids and It	Sky Cinema Premiere	UK/Ire	2020	1.1
7 Rocketman	Sky Cinema Premiere	UK/USA	2019	1.1
8 The Angry Birds Movie 2	Sky Cinema Premiere	Fin/USA	2019	1.0
9 Trolls World Tour	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA	2020	1.0
10 Shazam!	Sky Cinema Premiere	USA/Can	2019	0.9

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

¹ Films with the highest average audience (individuals aged 4+) for a single transmission, excludes repeats of the same title.



Image: Frozen II ©2019 Disney. All Rights Reserved

Film broadcasts and audience for film on all television channels, 2011-2020

Table 8 shows the total number of films broadcast on terrestrial and pay TV channels from 2011 to 2020 and data for other multi-channels for 2020 only. (Historical data for film broadcasts on other multi-channels prior to 2020 are unavailable due to the change in methodology used by BARB to categorise broadcast output.)

The annual number of film transmissions on terrestrial television had been in steady decline up to 2018. However, there was a year-on-year increase in the number of films shown in both 2019 (+3%) and 2020 (+22%). The annual number of film transmissions on Sky's pay TV film channels was fairly static for most of the period but increased by 5% in 2020, due primarily to the July launch of additional film channel, Sky Cinema Animation.

In terms of unique film titles available to television viewers in 2020, 1,161 films were shown on terrestrial television, 1,800 on pay TV and 9,467 on multi-channel television. Overall, 11,189 individual film titles were shown across all television channels in 2020. (The overall total is less than the sum of individual categories, as some titles were shown on multiple platforms across the year.)

Table 8 Total number of film transmissions on television (except pay-per-view), 2011-2020

Number of transmissions	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Terrestrial	3,092	3,004	2,566	2,280	2,128	1,832	1,666	1,298	1,331	1,620
Pay TV film channels	45,611	45,913	47,216	47,081	47,850	47,274	48,221	47,791	48,663	51,280
Other multi-channel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57,851
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	110,751

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

Table 9 shows the reach of feature film broadcasts on television between 2011 and 2020. The table shows both the total number of individuals who have watched at least one film in a calendar year and this value as a percentage of the total UK population. It should be noted that this is a different audience measure to those used in previous Yearbooks. (As with the annual number of film transmissions, historical data on other multi-channel viewing is not available due to the change in the methodology used by BARB to categorise broadcast output.)

In 2020, 58.8 million people watched at least one film on a broadcast television channel, which represents 97% of all individuals in the UK. Across platforms, multi-channel broadcasts had the greatest film reach (56.3 million; 92.9%) followed by terrestrial (55.4 million; 91.3%) and pay TV (34.6 million; 57.0%).

As Table 9 shows, while there was a general decrease in film viewing on terrestrial channels between 2011 and 2019, film viewing on pay TV increased significantly over the period. Both platforms saw increases in 2020, however, although the rise for terrestrial channel film viewing was small. (In percentage terms, terrestrial reach recorded a decline between 2019 and 2020 primarily due to a 0.5% year-on-year increase in the size of the UK population.) The greater rise in viewing on pay TV film channels was partly due to the launch of Sky Cinema Animation.

Table 9 Total film viewing reach on television in millions and % of all individuals aged 4+, 2011-2020

Reach (million)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Terrestrial	57.1	56.6	57.0	57.4	56.6	57.3	57.0	56.7	55.3	55.4
Pay TV film channels	17.3	18.3	21.4	26.8	29.3	31.1	29.0	27.7	29.5	34.6
Other multi-channel										56.3
Total										58.8

Reach (% all individuals 4+)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Terrestrial	99.4%	98.6%	98.7%	98.1%	97.2%	97.0%	95.7%	94.1%	91.7%	91.3%
Pay TV film channels	30.1%	31.8%	37.0%	45.8%	50.3%	52.7%	48.7%	46.0%	48.8%	57.0%
Other multi-channel										92.9%
Total										97.0%

Source: BARB, BFI RSU analysis

Note:

The reporting metric in the table differs to those used in previous Yearbooks. The current data now represent the total number and % of individuals (4+) who have watched at least 3 consecutive minutes of a film in a given calendar year.

The value of feature film to broadcasters

We estimate the value of feature film to UK broadcasters to have been £736 million in 2020, down from £873 million in 2019 (the latter value has been updated since publication of the 2020 Statistical Yearbook). However, the value attributed to UK films increased in 2020, rising from £190 million in 2019 to £221 million.

Television values are based on a model developed by Ampere Analysis. Values are estimated by dividing broadcaster revenues (from subscriptions, advertising spend and licence fee share) by the percentage of content spend attributed to film.



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