# DOCTOR WHO PRE-SCHOOL ANIMATION

# Invitation to Pitch

## June 2025



The BBC is inviting UK producers to pitch for the opportunity to expand the Whoniverse and produce an animated pre-school series based on family favourite Doctor Who.

The Invitation to Pitch will select a single production company to produce an original series for the BBC based on submitted treatments and budgets. The BBC will evaluate proposals at all stages.

The BBC is looking for ideas that will engage the CBeebies pre-school audience on the CBeebies channel and on BBC iPlayer.

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## SECTION A: THE COMMISSIONING OPPORTUNITY

**Doctor Who Pre-School Animation:** CBeebies is looking to commission one series of 52 x 11’ episodes (26 episodes for transmission in 27/28 and 26 episodes for transmission in 28/29). We anticipate pre-production would therefore need to begin in January 2026.

**Guide Price:** Price will be indicative of a high quality animation. Information on the budget and financing for the series will be made available to verified production companies on receipt of a complete and signed NDA form.

**Supplier:**The Invitation to Pitch will select a single production company to produce the series, meaning that co-production partnerships are not eligible as part of this process. This does not prevent elements of production being sub-contracted during the course of production.

**Pre-existing format/ contract terms:**  Doctor Who is a pre-existing brand. The BBC is the beneficial owner of rights in and to the format in the series. The copyright in the format along with any changes to the format will vest with the BBC. As such, the commission is offered to producers by the BBC on a work-for-hire basis.

**Distribution*:*** BBC Studios Distribution are the Distributor of the show. Further commercial information will be provided as part of the process.

### Editorial Opportunity

As part of its Value for All strategy, the BBC has three essential roles to play in today’s society: pursuing truth with no agenda, backing the best homegrown storytelling and bringing people together.  In its relationships with suppliers, the BBC is focusing on: delivering value to all licence fee payers through unique, high impact content; connecting with audiences online; improving diversity and inclusion; building sustainable production; growing and maintaining production across the UK; and supporting plurality of content supply. The BBC is committed to reducing carbon emissions, with a particular focus on energy and travel, the highest impact areas of production. To build skills and bring new talent into the creative sector, you will be expected to support at least one apprentice on your production for the length of their apprenticeship.

This opportunity is for any UK production company, whether qualifying independent producers or non-qualifying independent producers who fulfil the Eligibility Criteria.

### Editorial Brief

**Doctor Who** is an iconic character with a 60 year history within British TV and culture, who is also known around the world. In addition to the flagship live-action series there have also been many Whoniverse extensions for both core audiences and those of a different demographic including **Class** for BBC Three and **The Sarah Jane Adventures** for CBBC.

We are commissioning a new animated **Doctor Who** series for CBeebies. This interpretation of **Doctor Who** should be appropriate for the CBeebies audience. We are keen to retain the following attributes. The Doctor:-

* is hugely intelligent, especially with scientific knowledge
* is aspirational for our audience
* travels through time and space saving individuals, civilisations, and planets
* is an alien with two hearts from the planet Gallifrey
* has a strong moral compass
* avoids physical combat, relying on intelligence, humour, and diplomacy to resolve conflicts
* has a TARDIS and a Sonic Screwdriver which should feature in the series

The Doctor will attract a range of friendly and relatable companions who join in on the adventures and provide additional points of view as they collectively solve problems.

It also wouldn’t be **Doctor Who** without villains and monsters, but these should be more mischievous or bumbling, rather than menacing, and provide the Doctor with challenges that can be overcome in a non-threatening way.  A list of existing villains and foes for you to choose from will be provided to suppliers who register to pitch.

We are open to your vision of animation style – or styles – that allow you to bring **Doctor Who** to life for a younger audience of 4- to 6-year-olds.  The order is for 52 x 11’ episodes but we are open to exploring 2-parters where this would benefit the narrative. When developing your proposal please also consider additional suggestions for new ways to engage the audience and strengthen brand loyalty.

We are looking for creative and talented producers who are passionate about **Doctor Who** and can re-envision the character and world for a younger audience.  The stories should be simple, adventurous, and energetic with empowering messages woven seamlessly into the plot.  Moral lessons and educational themes could also be introduced, but never to the detriment of fun, action, and age-appropriate humour.

### The Evaluation Team

The following people will be involved in evaluating your submission for the BBC:

* ***Kate Morton*** – Senior Head of Children’s Commissioning and Acquisitions 0-6
* ***Beth Gardiner*** *–* Commissioning Editor 0-6
* ***Lesley Bailey*** *–* Head of Franchise Brands, BBC Content
* ***Jo Wheatcroft*** *-* Business Partner, Children’s & Education
* ***Yinka Akano -***Commercial Rights and Business Affairs Manager

The process will be run using the BBC’s online portal for similar initiatives and interested producers will need to register on this portal [Bravo Solution](https://bbc.bravosolution.co.uk/) in order to submit their responses and communicate with the BBC. Instructions on how to sign up for Bravo are here: [Bravo User Guide document (Word)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/documents/bravo-user-guide-doctor-who-animation.docx).

The process will be overseen by **Raluca Albu**, Senior Procurement Manager.

The Evaluation Team may seek opinion from senior editorial colleagues and other subject matter experts to help inform their decision.

## SECTION B: THE INVITATION TO PITCH PROCESS

### Process

The Invitation to Pitch process consists of the following stages:

***1.* Eligibility and short proposal.** We will initially shortlist approximately 5 producers which score highest against our criteria.

***2.* ITP Response (paid development) and interviews.**The shortlisted producers will submit full proposals consisting of treatments and budgets and they will also be offered interviews with the evaluation panel to further discuss these proposals.

***3.* Award.** All shortlisted proposals and interviews will be evaluated against the award criteria and the producer with the highest scoring proposal will be awarded the commission.

The BBC reserves the right to introduce additional stages to the process outlined above. Production companies in the process will be notified of any changes.

#### 1. Eligibility and short proposal

Producers will be required to submit both eligibility information and a short proposal. Eligibility will be evaluated first with the strongest qualifying producers then having their short proposals evaluated.

##### **ELIGIBILITY**

Producers will need to fill in the eligibility response form, responding to the eligibility questions and criteria outlined within the form and summarised below. Participants will also need to sign and return an NDA.

###### **Pass/Fail eligibility criteria:**

* Signed NDA
* Insurance
* Environmental sustainability
* Real living wage
* Insolvency and bankruptcy
* Safeguarding
* Delivering the Programme as a UK production in line with Ofcom definitions: [OFCOM definitions (pdf)](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/152450/regional-production-and-regional-programme-guidance-from-2021.pdf) with a preference for productions delivered outside of London.

###### **Evaluated eligibility criteria**:

1. **Recent (past 5 years) and relevant production experience of: - 80%**
2. Producing and delivering animated adventure **series of scale,** i.e. a minimum- of 12 hours for a television broadcaster and/or SVOD service;
3. Experience of producing Children’s programming is essential;
4. Securing **production talent** with a successful track record in delivering **programming for younger audiences.**
5. **Production policies compliance (Editorial, E&O, H&S, safeguarding) – 15%**
6. **Conflict of interest – 5%**

###### **Eligibility scoring method:**

* The pass / fail eligibility questions will be checked first and only those producers that pass them will have the rest of the form or the short proposal evaluated.
* Each evaluated eligibility criterion will be scored on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest.
* Producers with the best answers will score the highest. Scores will be multiplied by the criterion weighting and the resulting weighted scores (one per question) will be added in order to determine the total score.
* Responses will be ranked in ascending order of scores and only the top scoring producers will have their short proposals evaluated.

##### **SHORT PROPOSAL**

Alongside eligibility, producers will also be required to provide a short proposal at this first stage. The proposal should be up to **two (2) pages of A4** (this can include a combination of pictures and text or just text),including:

* the proposed core character list
* character outlines
* ideas for locations and sets
* up to three story ideas
* the proposed animation style and design sensibility

Please also list the production talent and key team members you would put forward to produce this series. Ensure that your short proposal responds to the editorial brief and the criteria below.

###### **Short proposal criteria**

1. Ability to demonstrate a **vision for taking an existing brand and creatively repurposing** it for a younger audience whilst retaining the heart of the original show.
2. Ideas for an **engaging and appropriate approach** to creative storytelling and this audience.
3. Strategies for **delivering the style of production pitched**, including managing contributors and crews and working collaboratively with the BBC.

###### **Short proposal scoring method:**

* The top scoring producers following eligibility will have their short proposals evaluated against the criteria above and given a score of 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest. The best answers against the criteria will score the highest.
* Responses will be ranked in ascending order of scores. We will shortlist approximately 5 producers to the next stage of the process.

#### 2. ITP Response (paid development) and Interviews

**Secondary Information:** The shortlisted producers will be issued with Secondary Information which will include various production information they may need to complete their proposals.

**Full proposal submissions:** The shortlisted producers will be asked to prepare a full written proposal outlining their detailed ideas on how they will develop and produce the programmes for the BBC, responding to the editorial brief. Producers will be required to submit budgets supporting their treatments, production schedules and they would need to respond to the key contract terms issued at secondary information.

**Interviews:** All shortlistedproducers will be offered interviews with the evaluation panel to further discuss their proposals.

#### 3. Award

The ITP Response and information provided at interviews will be evaluated against the award criteria outlined below and a producer will be awarded the commission. More information about the award criteria and method will be provided as secondary information.

| **Award Criteria and Indicators** |
| --- |
| **EDITORIAL PROPOSAL & CAPABILITY** To include indicative elements such as:   * Ability to demonstrate a vision for taking an existing brand and creatively repurposing it for a young audience whilst retaining the heart of the original show; * Ideas for an engaging and appropriate approach to creative storytelling and this audience; * Strategies for delivering the style of production pitched, including managing contributors and crews and working collaboratively with the BBC; * Strategies to appeal to broader, underserved audiences across the UK, inclusion of diverse stories, and perspectives; * Strategies for identification and securing key Production Talent; * Strategies for identifying new voices to ensure diversity amongst the voice cast; * Suggestions for new ways to engage the audience and strengthen brand loyalty * Awareness of other BBC key priorities and strategies and how the Programme will contribute to those, for example authentic portrayal, diversity and sustainability on-screen. |
| **VALUE FOR MONEY**To include indicative elements such as:   * Price (including all costs) affordable within the available budget; * Financial plan, budget and sustainability of the budget beyond the term of the contract; * Demonstrable ability to produce shows of this type in an efficient way with the potential for additional value to the BBC; * Acceptance of key contract terms (which includes compliance with all applicable UK law). |
| **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**  To include indicative elements such as:   * Diversity and inclusion in the production of the Programme (off-screen) to meet the BBC’s diversity requirements: [25% diversity in production teams;](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/diverse-productions) * People development including training and other initiatives and support for an apprentice during the length of their apprenticeship; * Evidence of commitment to anti-bullying and harassment training for production (e.g. [ScreenSkills passport](https://www.screenskills.com/bookings/bullying-harassment-training/c826a9ab-75b5-4927-baff-69b992487967/)); * Environmental sustainability (off-screen) and how this will be achieved. All programmes will be expected to achieve albert certification as well as, where practical, have in place plans to reduce emissions, particularly from energy and travel/ transport. * Delivering the Programme as a UK production in line with Ofcom definitions: [OFCOM definitions (pdf)](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/152450/regional-production-and-regional-programme-guidance-from-2021.pdf) with a preference for productions delivered outside of London. (See also joint broadcaster guidance for application of regional production definitions [Joint broadcaster guidance (pdf)](https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/site/ofcom-out-of-london-definitions.pdf)). |
| **RISK**To include indicative elements such as:   * Production risk; * Business Continuity risk; * Risk to the BBC Reputation; * Conflict of interest risk; * Proven ability of working with children and young people and implementing and complying with safeguarding measures; * Production protocols and procedures and proven ability to manage compliance with policies, including but not limited to duty of care, complaints, information security, respect at work, diversity & inclusion etc; |

##### **Clarifications and queries**

All queries in connection to this process that producers wish to raise prior to submitting their response should be submitted via the Bravo/Jaggaer portal no later than 2 working days before the deadlines for submissions. If you have any questions about Bravo please email [Competitive Tendering](mailto:competitive.tendering@bbc.co.uk).

In the interest of fair competition, anonymised questions and responses may be circulated to all producers, where the BBC considers it is appropriate to do so.

At any stage of the process it may be necessary to seek clarifications from producers. Answers to these clarifications will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.

###### **Feedback**

Feedback is available to any eligible producer submitting a request within two weeks of receiving notification of the results. Requests for feedback should be made via the Bravo/Jaggaer portal.

###### **Indicative Timetable**

This is an indicative timetable; producers will be notified if there are any revisions to this timetable.

| **Process Stage** | | | **Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Eligibility and short proposal shortlist** | |  | |
| ITP Published | | | **12 June 25** |
| Producers return NDA, eligibility forms and short proposals | | | **10 July 25** |
| Shortlist selected (approximately 5) and all producers notified | | | **July 25** |
| **2. ITP Response (paid development) and Interviews** |  | | |
| Issue secondary information | | | **Late July 25** |
| Paid development starts | | | **Late July 25** |
| Producers return full proposals | | | **Mid-Late Sept 25** |
| Area of focus in interview | | | **Late Sept – Early Oct 25** |
| Interviews | | | **Oct 25** |
| **3. Award** | | |  |
| Award | | | **Nov 25** |

## SECTION C: OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Production

Producers responses should identify proposed key production talent (with evidence of in-principle agreement, on a non-exclusive basis, if not own existing staff).

Responses should also demonstrate efficient production management plans (including key production management talent) and plans for producing the Programme that ensure continuity of delivery.

The BBC is committed to maintaining and building on the sustainability of production across the UK and so if the Programme is required to qualify as an Out of London production this will be outlined in the brief.

As with all of our content we would expect the successful producer to deliver shows that are in line with the BBC editorial guidelines and to be able to adapt to BBC’s changing editorial and business needs during the life of the contract.

### Technical Delivery

We would expect producers to demonstrate they have the skills necessary to deliver to the BBC’s scheduling and delivery requirements.

The successful producer must deliver to the BBC in accordance with the [Delivery Items 2024 (pdf)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/documents/delivery-items-february-2024.pdf).

The Delivery Items must adhere to all specifications for BBC transmission as are set out in the BBC Technical Standards for Network Television Programme Delivery, which are contained on the [BBC’s Production and delivery website](https://www.bbc.co.uk/delivery/).

The successful producer will be required to complete all necessary diversity and inclusion information for Project Diamond. Project Diamond is a diversity monitoring initiative set up by the Creative Diversity Network to monitor the diversity of individuals participating in productions both on-screen and off-screen in the UK.Further information is available on the [BBC Production and delivery website](https://www.bbc.co.uk/delivery/portrayal).

### Financial

The full ITP Response should include a full budget and details of the total cost as well as per episode cost, highlighting how this funding breaks down between the price to BBC public service and any other sources of funding, if applicable.

BBC will provide a template for the budget as part of the Secondary Information.

If any other one-off costs are incurred, the budget should also include all itemised costs, such as start-up costs (for example connected to proposals on design, set or title sequence). The BBC assumes that any and all such costs will be affordable within the price range laid out in the ITP.

The contract is offered as a fixed price deal, with the successful producer responsible for any overspend and entitled to keep any underspend.

The fixed price shall be inclusive of all insurance requirements for the production.

The fixed price shall be inclusive of any payments that the BBC makes directly on behalf of the producer, and these shall be deducted from the BBC funding agreed with the successful producer, including, if applicable, DUK and Children’s Screenskills Fund charges.

As part of our strategic priorities the BBC has made a commitment to the real living wage (as described by the Living Wage Foundation). The cost of the programme should be budgeted to account for the real living wage and the full ITP Response should include details of how compliance with the real living wage will be achieved.

### Insurance

The BBC has in place a Television Production Insurance Scheme (“BBC Scheme”) which is made available to BBC commissioned independent producers in respect of BBC commissioned television productions. The BBC Scheme will be made available to the successful producer for the programmes at a cost of 0.5% of the ‘insurable amount’ of a production's costs (defined as the total budget minus production fee, overheads, royalties, insurance premium and contingency).

By joining the BBC Scheme, the successful producer will ensure compliance with the BBC insurance requirements (other than Errors & Omissions which will need to be purchased separately to the BBC Scheme). The successful producer will need to provide evidence of the BBC Scheme cover, Errors and Omissions insurance that they have put in place.

If the successful producer elects not to join the BBC Scheme, they will need to show evidence of comparable coverage including, without limitation, the following types of insurance prior to commencement of any filming and ensure that the BBC is named on the following policies to the extent required to protect the BBC’s interests in respect of the programmes:

* **Production Insurance** - including but not limited to cast, extra expense, negative and videotape/media loss, props sets and wardrobe, contract works (where applicable), miscellaneous technical equipment (including mobile plant and machinery), and Terrorism.
* **Employers Liability** with a limit of liability of at least £5m per occurrence.
* **Public Liability** with a limit of liability of at least £5m per occurrence.
* **Products Liability** (if applicable) with a limit of liability of at least £3m per occurrence and in the annual aggregate.
* **Film Union/Unit Travel Insurance** (if applicable).
* **Errors & Omissions Insurance** - the successful producer will need to hold at least £1m per occurrence and £3m in the aggregate of Errors & Omissions insurance (including, without limitation, cover in respect of defamation, confidentiality and Intellectual Property/Privacy rights infringement risks).

## SECTION D: ITP TERMS

1. Rights assignment *–* Thesuccessfulproducer will be required to assign their ideas for the programmes/format to the BBC.
2. Costs – Notwithstanding the invitation to eligible bidders to participate in paid development, all other costs incurred directly or indirectly in responding to this brief will be borne solely by the producers.
3. Confidentiality - Any information provided to the BBC by the producer in response to this brief will be treated as confidential, however, please note that the BBC may need to share information with their advisers to the decision-making process. Equally, any information provided by the BBC to the producers should be treated as confidential (except where indicated otherwise).  Information exchange is subject to the non-disclosure agreement (“NDA”) that producers have signed with the BBC as part of this process.

All requests for information should be submitted via the Bravo system. The BBC reserves the right to exclude from the ITP process any producer that is found to have breached this term.

1. Modification – The BBC reserve the right to accept or to reject any proposal (or part of a proposal) and to cancel the ITP process and reject all proposals at any time prior to award, without incurring any liability to any of the affected parties.
2. Validity – proposals must remain open for acceptance for 180 days from the closing date of the ITP (180 days from the award). The validity period should be confirmed by completing the Form of Tender. Responses must be signed by a representative of the organisation who must also have corporate authority to sign any resultant contract.
3. Publicity – producers shall not, without the prior consent of the BBC make any reference to the BBC in any advertising, promotional or published material, nor speak in public about the BBC or their affairs in connection with this ITP.
4. Use of Logos– Producers must not use or reproduce any BBC logos or otherwise make reference to the same without the prior consent of the BBC, other than to the extent required in order to prepare a response to the ITP.
5. Inducement - The offering of inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with the BBC will automatically disqualify a producer and may constitute a criminal offence.
6. Warranties - The producer warrants that the concepts submitted as part of the proposal (in whole or in part) do not infringe any third parties rights and agrees to indemnify the BBC against any and all claims resulting from the use of these concepts.
7. Freedom of Information - As a public authority, the BBC is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”), which came into force on 1st January 2005. FOIA is intended to deliver greater accountability for decisions and spending across the whole of the public sector. It requires public authorities to strike the balance between achieving transparency and protecting genuinely confidential or commercially sensitive information.

Producers should be aware that, under an FOIA request, the BBC may be required to disclose information contained within any of the responses or future contractual information. Following a request, the BBC may take the views of organisations submitting proposals into account when deciding on what information will be disclosed. Fund further information on the [Freedom of Information Act](http://www.bbc.co.uk/foi/).

1. Due Diligence - The BBC reserves the right to perform any appropriate due diligence (including but not limited to health and safety assessments and/or or financial due diligence) at any stage of the ITP process prior to the award of a final contract to a producer. The producer will provide all assistance required in order to achieve this.
2. Notifications - The BBC will notify the preferred producer(s) in writing. If agreement is reached with the preferred producer(s), then the BBC will notify the unsuccessful producers as soon as reasonably practical, and the contracts will be awarded to the successful producer(s).
3. BBC Contract Terms - The production contract is offered on a Code of Practice 3.9 work-for-hire basis and all rights in the programme will be assigned to the BBC. Any BBC contract resulting from the ITP will be between the BBC and the successful producer and will include the BBC key contract terms and any specific amendments requested by producers in the Form of Tender and subsequently agreed by the BBC (no subsequent variations will be accepted unless agreed by the BBC).

The contract template documents, including the BBC key contract terms, varied General Terms, Schedules and Commissioning Specification will be provided as part of the Secondary Information.

In awarding the contract, the BBC may request additions or modifications to the editorial proposition to incorporate any ideas, which may not have been included in the successful producers submission, provided that any such requests can be accommodated within the agreed contract price.

1. Form of Tender – By submitting their ITP Response producers confirm acceptance of the key contract terms and any other contractual documentation provided to them, subject to any specific amendments requested in the Form of Tender and subsequently agreed by the BBC. Requested amendments to the key contract terms or other contractual documentation will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria.