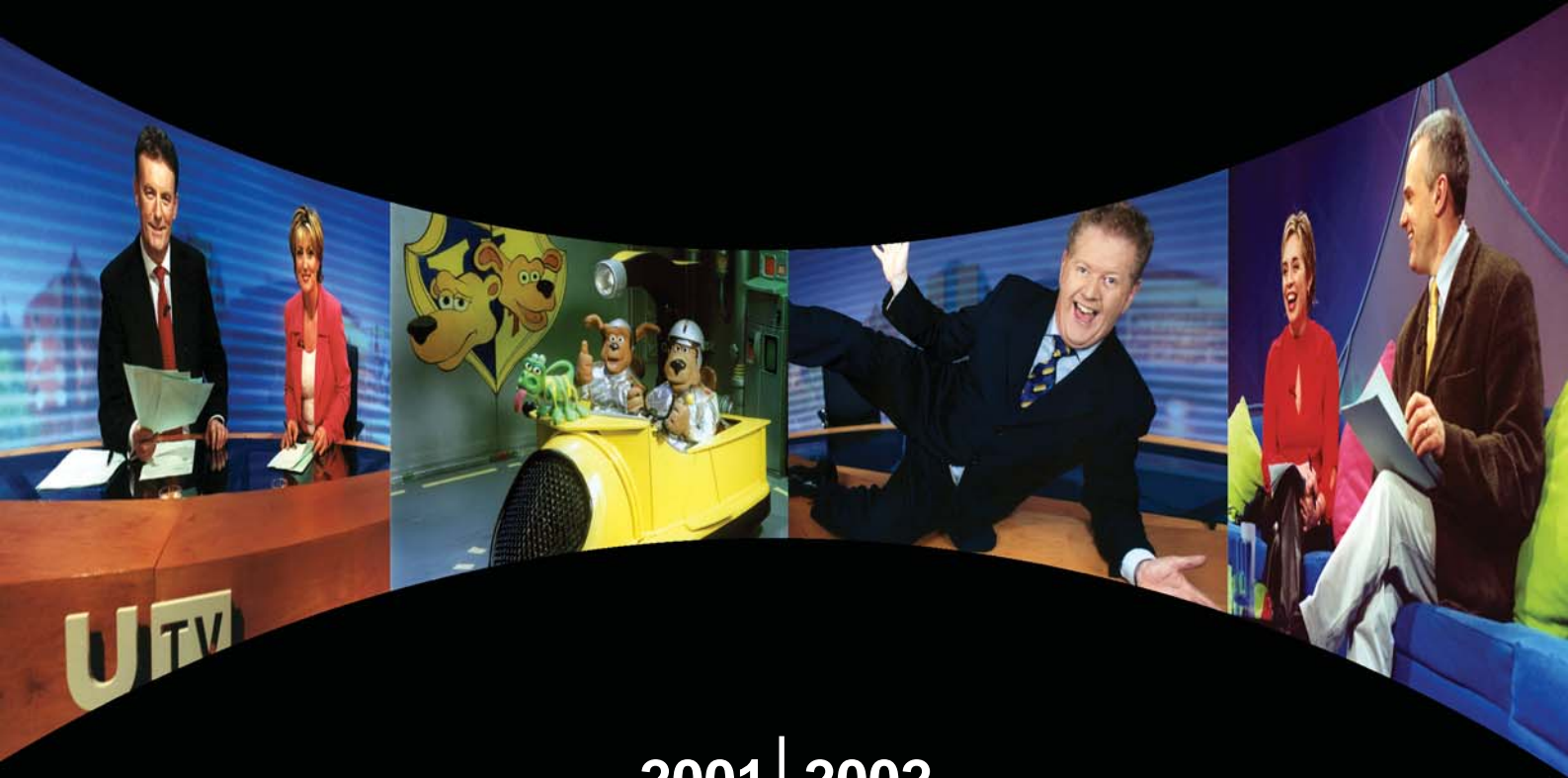


REGIONAL PROGRAMME STATEMENT



2001 | 2002

Introduction

This Programme Statement forms part of the new procedure introduced by the Independent Television Commission to modify its regulation of the public service programme schedule of Channel 3 Licensees in a television environment which is becoming increasingly competitive.

The Statement covers a two year period, and it sets out how we plan to produce a regional programme schedule of high quality which covers the diverse range of subject matter required to interest our viewers, and which accurately reflects life in our community. Television schedules must react to topical events and to changing tastes, and consequently we will not address the schedule in a detailed fashion. However this statement sets out our broad programme policy, and outlines our objectives in news, current affairs and the wide range of our other regional programmes in 2001 and 2002.

As one of the largest producers of regional programmes within the federal structure of ITV, UTV contributes significantly to the creative, cultural and economic life of our community. All of our staff contribute directly or indirectly to the production of domestic programmes, and in addition to our in-house production teams, 10 independent television production companies have been commissioned to produce programming for us in 2001.

We will broadcast more than 650 hours of regional programmes each year including news, current affairs, documentaries and entertainment series as well as sports, children's, arts and religious programmes. Where practicable, our regional programmes will be scheduled in or near peaktime, and in a slot where the programmes' audiences are most readily available. Our programme service will have a strong regional character, and our presenters will maintain both their authoritativeness and their friendly rapport with our audience. We recognise that their close and unaffected relationship with our viewers contributes significantly to the success of our regional programmes.



News

News programming remains the bedrock of our regional programme service; each year we will produce more than 230 hours of regional news. Our viewers require accurate, authoritative and trustworthy news and analysis, available throughout the programme day. To meet this need, we have increased our news gathering capacity, and we will use our new Foyle studio, our satellite uplink facility and “feeds” from local, national and international locations to deliver fast, reliable up-to-date news with our highly experienced teams of journalists and presenters. **UTV Live at Six** will continue as the weekday teatime news programme, attracting the majority of viewers across the Province with extensive coverage of the day’s news agenda. It will also include sport, the arts, health and education reports as well as contributions from national and international locations.

Daytime and weekend news coverage will be important elements in our news service, and where the network schedule permits, we will schedule news up-dates in peaktime on weekdays.

We will continue to report on the work of the Assembly with regular reports in our peaktime news and current affairs, and in 2001 we will provide extensive coverage of the Westminster and local elections. We will extend and enhance the subtitling of news and will provide appropriate support information for news and features programming on our website and through other media.

Current Affairs

We plan to broadcast more than 18 hours of regional current affairs in both 2001 and 2002. Our current affairs series **Insight** will be scheduled in peaktime, and it will cover a diverse range of subject matter. The programmes will rigorously investigate and scrutinise contemporary affairs, analyse major regional issues and conduct political debate. **Insight** will cover topics throughout Northern Ireland and beyond, and will produce programmes to the highest standard of journalism.



A Diverse Regional Schedule

In our arts programming we will continue to produce our successful **UTV School Choir of the Year Awards** which have contributed significantly to the growth of choral singing in our primary, secondary and grammar schools. We will increase the number of programmes in the series, and each school will be able to produce its biography on our website. We will follow the progress of our **Young Artist of the Year Awards** which we will introduce this year. We hope that these awards will be a stimulus for young artists, and that we can show some of their work as part of our exhibitions throughout Ireland. Photographs of all the paintings submitted will be placed on our website.



In 2001 we will introduce **The Holy Ground**, a new religious current affairs series which will deal with topical religious and moral issues, and analyse current religious debates and controversies. It will also celebrate religious events, include authored contributions, and will give proper prominence to the views of women and young people. **Witness**, our religious message series, will deal with themes rather than single subjects. At Easter 2001, for example, we showed six **Witnesses** in Holy Week dealing with the theme of women's suffering, concentrating particularly on the problem of domestic violence. A second themed week will be about vulnerable children in our society, and themes will be developed for Christmas and the New Year. We will continue to produce single documentaries to mark important religious festivals.

Our community programming will continue to form a vital part of our regional service. **UTV Life** is a popular mix of socially purposive programming and topical reports which reflects very fully the life of our Province. This daily magazine will contribute more than 100 hours of programmes each year. The **Family Show** and similar series will provide social action programming to help and inform our viewers. We will increase the number of **Community Service Announcements** (CSAs), and we will provide training in television production for the participating organisations. We have in place a training programme with the Youth Council for

Northern Ireland to support a short series of **CSAs** on the issues that matter to young adults. In late spring 2001 we will have a major social action campaign on the rights of young children, and towards the end of the year we will have a further campaign on the challenges facing life-limited children. In partnership with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf we will examine the needs of the deaf and the hard of hearing, and we will extend our coverage of people with disabilities and of their family and carers. We will give greater emphasis to members of ethnic minorities, and to older people in our society. Where appropriate, our community programming will continue to be supported by follow-up material. We will extend our subtitling and audio description provision and will exceed the regulatory requirements.

In factual programmes, we will broadcast further series of **Lesser Spotted Ulster** and cookery programmes with Jenny Bristow. We also have underway four new factual series – a total of 12 hours - dealing with the history, landscape and coastline of Ulster, and we will schedule these series in peaktime.

In sport we have broadcast rights for Northern Ireland's major sports: soccer, gaelic games, rugby, motorcycling and motorsport. In **UTV Live at Six** our distinctive sports coverage will provide up to the minute regional sports news and comment, reports on the international sports in which men and women from Northern Ireland are competing, and on the sporting achievements of people with disabilities, and of individuals and teams who are not so often in the limelight. We will continue our very successful **Sport on Sunday** programme, and will produce a number of documentaries on local sporting heroes.



Kelly has been the most popular programme in the UK in its regular Friday slot and we will continue to enhance and develop it. We will produce St Patrick's Day and New Year's Eve special programmes, and from time to time we will produce **Kelly** from location. **Kelly** will continue to deal with serious local matters in an accessible fashion as well as interview local, national and international guests. A mix of renowned popstars and emerging local bands and artists will continue to provide music of high quality.



We have commissioned further series of our game show **All Mixed Up** and of the comedy series **McKeever**. We will increase the production of children's favourites **Busker and Barney** and introduce more opportunities for children to interact with them. We will extend the new series of **School Around the Corner** including a Christmas special each year, and we will support schools with our website.

We plan to submit a range of proposals to the ITV Network including news, current affairs, documentaries, children's entertainment and religious programming. We are a partner in the consortium which will tender for the ITV network news contract.

Equal Opportunities and Training

We provide equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. All recruitment, promotion and training is based upon an individual's ability and job performance and excludes any consideration of religious beliefs, political opinion, gender, marital status, disability, colour, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin. We will continue to comply with the legislation and codes of practice governing Fair Employment, Equal Opportunities, Race Relations and Disability. We will also proactively review our Equal Opportunities policies and procedures, developing and implementing any appropriate affirmative action measures.

Our commitment to Equal Opportunities will include the training of Equality Advisors, annual update training for all staff on Equal Opportunities, membership of Opportunity Now and Network Northern Ireland, and the commitment to a Voluntary Agreement with the Equality Commission.

We are fully committed to training staff to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to meet business objectives. The development needs of both our staff and individuals from the independent sector of the industry will be met through a broad range of both on and off-the-job development activities. In addition, we will continue to work in partnership with the Northern Ireland Film Commission to provide support and practical training for the freelance, independent and broadcast production sector in Northern Ireland.

Technical Provision

In 2001 we will invest around £1m in technical equipment. The major project will be the move of our Central Technical Area (CTA) to an extensive custom-built facility on our upper floor. This new CTA will have a digital infrastructure. Comprehensive test and monitoring facilities will be fully integrated to provide a programme service of the highest technical quality. Our primary acquisition tape format is now DVC PRO, but we have a substantial library of Betacam SP material and consequently will use both systems for playout when necessary. A new transmission control room will control the new presentation studio. We have always recognised the importance of in-vision continuity and we are investigating the use of virtual sets to enhance its production. We will also install additional post-production equipment to provide non-linear editing.

Commitment

These staffing and resource commitments contribute to producing a popular programme service of high quality which – firmly rooted in its community – seeks to interest, inform and entertain our viewers.

Regional programmes are central to our whole corporate endeavour, and we are committed to ensuring that they remain the first choice of viewers in Northern Ireland.





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