

3.5 Do you agree with Digital UK's proposed amendments to Section 5.1 of the LCN Policy?

Yes, as a default this is fine.

4.4 Do you agree with Digital UK's proposed method and implementation plans for creating a slot for BBC Four in the first 24 LCNs

No. There are less disruptive ways to free up an LCN for BBC4, which would also provide it with a lower LCN than 24.

A new genre could be created for one of the below groups. Section 4.2 of the Digital UK LCN Policy v6.0 allows for the addition of new genres. This would free up low LCNs as well as helping to keep the EPG organised. There is plenty of space in the high 100s (ie. the upper end of the General Entertainment overflow block) for a new genre block. Being situated next to the HD channels and with channels of similar type, as well as retaining their existing order, should mean these are not negatively impacted, as well as becoming a destination for viewers looking for this content.

Shopping

A new genre created for shopping would free up two LCNs in the 1-24 range, which is sufficient for both BBC4 (in Scotland) and BBC3 if that returns as a linear channel. Shopping genres are common on other platforms so moving these channels into their own section is not without precedent.

This would displace the 12 channels below, the ones in the 1-24 range are marked in **bold**.

LCN	Channel
16	QVC
22	Ideal World
35	QVC Beauty
36	QVC Style
43	Gems TV
49	TJC
73	Jewellery Maker
74	Shopping Quarter
85	Hochanda
90	TV Warehouse (Manchester only)
94	Ideal Extra
95	Create & Craft

More could be added to this genre group if the actual broadcast content of the channel is considered, as many of the channels that broadcast for a couple of hours overnight only contain teleshopping.

As the owner of a non-shopping channel which is also within the first 24 LCNs, Ideal World should be permitted under normal LCN allocation rules to swap with CCXTV and instead free up LCN 23.

Movies

Freeview contains an increasing number of film channels. Creating a genre for these would free up one LCN at 14. Again, film genres are common on other platforms.

Below are channels identified where the primary content is movies, but Digital UK would be responsible for defining this unambiguously. This would displace approximately 8 channels:

LCN	Channel
14	Film4
32	Sony Movies
40	Sony Movies Action
45	Film4 +1
50	Sony Movies Classic
60	Sony Movies +1
62	Sony Movies Classic +1 (Manchester only)
81	Talking Pictures TV

Due to the LCN above TG4 being freed, this should also ensure TG4 is promoted slightly.

When the genre is created the +1 channels could potentially be moved next to their non-timeshift counterparts.

As the owner of the lowest LCN and other channels that do not fall under this genre group, Channel 4 should be permitted to swap More 4 and instead free up LCN 18. The other providers may also want to channel swap to retain the lowest LCN for their non-film channels. Due to the LCN swapping rules it is possible that Channel 4 could swap Film4 with one of their other channels on a higher LCN than 24 prior to this genre being created. To be FRND it is probably not possible to prevent this, so creating a Movies genre for the purposes of freeing up a lower LCN would need the support of Channel 4. However, even if these swaps were agreed ahead of the new genre being created it would still reduce the number of channels being moved under the default allocation policy – eg. if Channel 4 were to swap Film4 with More4+1, and Sony were to do similar swaps, the gap would be created at LCN 45 which would mean 21 (non-film) channels affected under the default allocation policy, instead of the 44 specified in the consultation.

Timeshift

The timeshift “plus one” channels could be moved into their own group. In addition, a “red button” functionality could be added to the non-timeshift version of the channel to jump directly back one hour. This would mean prominence in the EPG for these channels is less necessary. Many of these channels appear to be used by broadcasters as “placeholders” (some only broadcasting for a couple of hours overnight) to retain the LCN until they launch a new channel, at which point the timeshift ends up back at the end of the EPG until the next channel launch. Creating a new genre for timeshift channels would stop this practice.

This would displace 20 channels, which is still less disruption than the 44 in the proposal and would free up a lower LCN:

LCN	Channel
15	Channel 4 +1
27	ITV2 +1
28	E4 +1
33	ITV +1 (regional variations)
44	Channel 5 +1
45	Film4 +1
58	ITV3 +1
59	ITV4 +1
60	Sony Movies +1
61	Sony Channel +1 (Manchester only)
62	Sony Movies Classic +1 (Manchester only)
72	Quest Red +1
76	Quest +1
79	Dave Ja Vu
80	Blaze +1
86	More 4+1
89	Together TV +1
92	Pick +1
93	PBS America +1
97	ITVBe +1

When this genre is created, the timeshift PSB channels could be promoted to the top in the usual order, if it is considered appropriate to do so.

As the owner of the lowest LCN and other channels that do not fall under this genre group, Channel 4 should be permitted to swap More 4 and instead free up LCN 18. The other providers may also want to channel swap to retain the lowest LCN for their non-timeshift channels. Due to the LCN

swapping rules it is possible that Channel 4 could swap Channel 4+1 with one of their other channels on a higher LCN than 24 prior to this genre being created. To be FRND it is probably not possible to prevent this, so creating a Timeshift genre for the purposes of freeing up a lower LCN would need the support of Channel 4. However, even if these swaps were agreed ahead of the new genre being created it would still reduce the number of channels being moved under the default allocation policy – eg. if channels were to swap all their timeshifts into their highest LCNs, the gap would likely be created at LCN 29, which would mean 5 (non-timeshift) channels affected under the default allocation policy, instead of the 44 specified in the consultation.

In conclusion, creating a new genre group would free up an LCN for BBC4 (in Scotland), as well as having multiple additional benefits:

- * BBC4 (in Scotland) could get a better LCN than that in the original proposal.
- * A new genre would make it easier for that type of content to be located by viewers.
- * The additional gaps in the “General Entertainment” section could provide opportunities for tidying up the EPG (putting commonly owned channels next to each other as per usual allocation rules).
- * TG4 could be shuffled to a slightly more prominent position in Northern Ireland (if able to do so following normal allocation rules).
- * Potentially an LCN for BBC3 could be freed without further disruption if required (if Shopping genre created).
- * Fewer channels are required to move than the original proposal.