

BBC to axe 450 newsroom jobs

29 January 2020, by James Pheby



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The British Broadcasting Corporation on Wednesday said it will axe 450 newsroom jobs as part of plans to adapt "to changing audience needs" and meet its savings target.

The job cuts come just a week after BBC boss Tony Hall said he would step down, and as the corporation grapples with a equal-pay demands and questions about its future funding model.

"The BBC has to face up to the changing way audiences are using us," Fran Unsworth, director of news and current affairs, said in a statement.

"We have to adapt and ensure we continue to be the world's most trusted news organisation, but crucially, one which is also relevant for the people we are not currently reaching," she added.

The BBC, which has an £80 million (\$104 million, 95 million euro) savings target, said it was spending too much on "traditional linear broadcasting and not enough on digital".

One morning news magazine programme will be axed, with other job losses coming from a

reduction in the number of films produced by flagship political news programme "Newsnight".

Other jobs will be lost at national radio station 5 Live, and there will be a review of the number of presenters working for the broadcaster.

It noted that audiences for traditional television broadcasts continued to decline, especially amongst 16 to 34-year-olds.

"The BBC newsroom will be reorganised along a 'story-led' model, focusing on news stories more than on programmes or platforms," said the statement.

"This is designed to reduce duplication and to ensure that BBC journalism is making as much impact as possible with a variety of audiences."

More BBC journalists will be based outside London in future, added the corporation, following criticism that it had lost touch with the rest of the country.

Licence fee threat

Like many media organisations, the BBC, which is the world's largest news broadcaster, is battling new ways to win audiences, as news and entertainment consumer habits change.

Tony Hall, who leaves in six months after seven years at the helm, said it needed new leadership before talks with the government in the middle of the decade over its future funding.

Unsworth insisted that "Auntie", as it is informally known in Britain, had "a vital role to play locally, nationally and internationally".

"In fact, we are fundamental to contributing to a healthy democracy in the UK and around the world," she added.

"If we adapt we can continue to be the most important [news](#) organisation in the world."

The corporation is facing the fallout from a recent equal-pay ruling in which it was found to have discriminated against female presenter Samira Ahmed, paying her one sixth of the amount given to Jeremy Vine for hosting a similar show.

The ruling opens the door to many other claims and could end up costing the corporation many millions of pounds.

It is also facing pressure from Britain's new government headed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, which accuses it of bias in reporting during the recent general election.

Tory leader Johnson told parliament on Wednesday the BBC was "a cherished institution and not a mortal enemy of the Conservative party".

The government has previously committed to maintain the BBC's licence fee model until 2027, which earned it £3.7 billion in funding in the last financial year to April 30.

A standard licence costs each British household just over £154 (\$202, 182 euros) a year, and is legally needed to watch any [live television](#).

But Johnson has said that "you have to ask yourself whether that kind of approach to funding a TV media organisation still makes sense".

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