

Radio 2 “Between Friends” Podcast Round

Commissioning Brief Number:	104030
Commissioner:	Will Wilkin
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Guide price:	<i>£10-13k per ep (including presenter costs). 24 week initial run. If multiple eps a week from one record, budget would be amended Additional funding will be linked to transparent performance metrics for the title</i>
Anticipated duration/number of episodes/slots:	Episode structure for a 24-week run (inc 30-40min primary episode)
Anticipated release period:	March 2027 onwards
Production location:	Proposals which support the BBC’s strategic rebalancing of production away from London, either from the outset or with a credible transition plan in the first year of the contract are encouraged.
Deadline	Proposals and completed production eligibility questionnaires must be submitted via PiCoS by midday Wednesday 23 rd September.

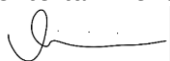
Commissioner Note

Radio 2 is one of Britain’s great entertainment brands, every week over twelve million people choose to spend time with the personalities, stories and music that have made it a unique part of the UK’s cultural life. At its heart, Radio 2 has always been about brilliant talent and the relationships audiences build with them across platforms. Those relationships create loyalty, conversation and a feeling of belonging that extends well beyond a single episode, becoming a part of life.

In the podcast market the appetite for personality-led entertainment has never been stronger. Today’s audiences discover and engage with great entertainment in a multitude of different ways. They might watch a full episode on iPlayer, listen on BBC Sounds, discover a clip on YouTube Shorts, see a favourite moment shared on social media or follow conversations around a show throughout the week. People move effortlessly between platforms, becoming part of a brand long before, and sometimes without ever, watching or listening in full. That doesn’t change what great entertainment looks and sounds like, it simply changes how audiences find it, share it and become part of it. This visualised companion podcast commission is an opportunity to create the next great BBC entertainment brand that has the spirit and uniqueness of Radio 2 woven into its DNA.

We’re looking for ideas built around exceptional personalities and genuine chemistry. Ideas that can become part of people’s weekly routines, create memorable moments, inspire conversation and community and build lasting affection for the talent at their heart. The episode is only the beginning, the strongest entertainment brands create a world that audiences want to spend time in, whether that’s through full episodes, memorable clips, audience participation or the communities that naturally form around them. These brands and the talent behind them don’t simply reflect popular culture, they become part of it, driving conversations and inspiring audiences to share, discuss, and recommend their content across platforms and across their lives.

We’re deliberately leaving space for suppliers to surprise us. We aren’t looking for a single format or formula. We want bold, ambitious ideas, that understand what makes Radio 2 special and have the potential to become a defining entertainment brand across BBC Sounds, iPlayer and beyond.



Will Wilkin
Commissioner for Music Podcasts

A: THE COMMISSIONING OPPORTUNITY

We're looking to commission a new personality-led entertainment brand for Radio 2, designed for BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds, with YouTube and social platforms playing an important role in audience growth, discovery and engagement. This is not an extension of a linear programme or an adaptation of an existing format. We want an original proposition with its own identity, capable of becoming a distinctive long-term entertainment podcast within the wider Radio 2 family.

The proposition should be conceived as a video-first entertainment brand from day one. We are not looking for an audio podcast adapted for video, but a format that feels native to contemporary visual podcast consumption. We're looking for exceptional personalities with genuine chemistry, and a format created around them. Audiences will actively choose to spend time with the brand because of the people at its centre and the world we've created around them. The strongest ideas will feel effortless, funny, warm and authentic, balancing entertainment with the optimism and humanity that have always been hallmarks of Radio 2.

We're deliberately open about format. Whether built around conversation, storytelling, audience participation or another original editorial idea, the proposition should begin with brilliant talent, creating moments audiences want to share, talk about and return to. Music should feel like a natural part of the world rather than the editorial engine. It might provide shared memories, cultural reference points or moments of conversation, but the personalities and relationships should always remain at the heart of the experience. The format should work for audiences with busy lives who could be watching/listening alongside other activities.

We are looking for a brand that can live throughout the week, not simply during episode release windows, using social content, audience participation and community activity to create an ongoing relationship with audiences.

Above all, we're looking for ideas with the ambition to become enduring entertainment brands that audiences return to week after week, wherever they discover them.

A1: What We're Trying to Achieve

This commission has four clear ambitions.

- **Build a future facing Radio 2 entertainment brand:** We're looking to create an original format capable of growing into a long-term franchise, with a distinctive identity that audiences immediately recognise and actively seek out.
- **Reach audiences wherever they choose to engage:** BBC Sounds and BBC iPlayer are our primary destinations, but we want ideas that naturally create opportunities for discovery, participation and conversation across social platforms and YouTube. The strongest brands recognise that audiences move between platforms, often discovering a show long before they experience a full episode.
- **Build lasting relationships through brilliant talent:** Great entertainment brands are built around personalities audiences genuinely enjoy spending time with. We're looking for ideas that create loyalty, familiarity and affection through authentic relationships, humour and shared experiences.
- **Create communities, not simply audiences:** The most successful personality-led entertainment extends beyond the episode itself. We want propositions that inspire participation, generate conversation and give audiences reasons to remain connected throughout the week.

Success for this title will not be measured through viewing and listening figures alone. We are equally interested in evidence of loyalty, repeat consumption, participation, conversation and community building.

A2: Who We're Looking To Reach

- Radio 2 is aimed at all audiences aged 35+, an audience target that has not changed in decades.
- The audience for this commission are busy, socially connected and are increasingly consuming personality-led entertainment across podcasts, YouTube and social media alongside traditional media. They value authenticity over polish, humour over spectacle and personalities who feel relatable, generous and genuinely enjoyable to spend time with.
- They aren't looking for experts talking at them. They're looking for people they want to spend time with, and who they can see their own lives and experiences reflected in.
- They're drawn to conversations that feel spontaneous rather than overly produced, and entertainment that reflects everyday life with warmth, optimism and honesty. They enjoy stories, shared experiences and cultural moments that feel recognisable, while offering an opportunity to laugh, switch off and feel connected. They often consume visual/audio podcasts while busy with other elements of their lives (cooking, chores etc)
- Many already have favourite podcast hosts or creators they return to every week. Our ambition is to create a new Radio 2 brand that earns that same place in their lives.

A3: Talent

Talent and the relationship between the talent is the defining ingredient in this commission. We're not looking for talent to fit into an existing format, we're looking for formats that are inseparable from the people at their heart. The strongest ideas will be built around personalities (two or more people) with genuine chemistry, whether that's lifelong friends, family members, creative collaborators, unexpected pairings or groups whose relationships create natural humour, warmth and compelling conversation. We're open to a mix of performers, musicians, writers, comedians, creators, established broadcasters or emerging voices or untapped talent (i.e. a family member or friend), as well as combinations that bring together different backgrounds, perspectives and audiences.

We're particularly interested in hosts who are:

- Naturally warm, generous and curious.
- Funny without feeling performative.
- Comfortable sharing real experiences with honesty and humour.
- Brilliant storytellers and conversationalists.
- Deeply connected to communities, places or shared experiences.
- Capable of building lasting relationships with audiences over time.

We're keen to see hosts who reflect the breadth of contemporary Britain and welcome ideas from across the UK. Production approaches that bring distinctive regional voices and perspectives are encouraged.

Above all, the talent should feel impossible to separate from the format. The strongest submissions will clearly demonstrate:

- Why this talent is uniquely placed to front the proposition.
- Why audiences would choose to spend time with them every week.
- Why the format wouldn't work in the same way with different people.

A4: Marketing & Promotion

Responses to this section do not need to be considered for the written Full Proposal stage, but we would like to see it included if invited to full pitch stage.

We see marketing as an extension of the editorial proposition rather than activity that begins once episodes are delivered. BBC Sounds and BBC iPlayer are the primary destinations for the full experience, supported by YouTube and social platforms as key drivers of discovery, participation and audience growth. We recognise that audiences increasingly move between platforms rather than following a single path through content. Some people will become dedicated weekly viewers or listeners, while others may first discover the brand through short-form video, talent social channels or recommendations shared between friends. The strongest proposals will understand these different audience journeys and build them into the editorial thinking from the outset.

The successful supplier will work collaboratively with BBC Editorial, Marketing, Communications and Social teams throughout development and production, launch and ongoing growth of the brand. They will also identify opportunities to create moments that travel, support talent activation and maximise audience engagement across BBC and partner platforms. They will work proactively with presenters and contributors to identify opportunities for social activation, promotional filming, publicity, partnership activity and audience engagement throughout production, rather than after delivery. We're particularly interested in suppliers who can demonstrate how every recording can generate a rich ecosystem of content beyond the core episode, helping to build anticipation, conversation and community between releases.

We welcome suppliers who bring ambitious ideas for how the brand can grow beyond the episode through partnerships, live experiences, talent activations and wider cultural moments.

A5: IP, Commercial & Licensing

This commission will be contracted under BBC Audio Terms of Trade. It is intended to create a long-term entertainment brand with the potential to grow across multiple platforms and experiences. The commission is conditional upon the grant of commercial distribution rights, including RSS distribution, to the BBC/BBC Studios, with commercial revenues treated in accordance with the BBC Audio Terms of Trade unless otherwise agreed.

A6: Distribution

The podcast should be UK focused and BBC-led, with BBC Sounds as the primary audio destination and leading the charge for music entertainment podcasts on iPlayer. The title should have the potential to extend globally through YouTube and RSS, while BBC social platforms build discovery, participation and community around the series.

- **BBC Sounds:** Primary destination for the podcast and audio consumption.
- **BBC iPlayer:** Anticipated to be the lead visual destination, with the ambition for this to help establish music entertainment podcasts on iPlayer, alongside opportunities for exclusive, special and bonus content.
- **YouTube & RSS:** Opportunities to extend the title beyond the UK and BBC ecosystem, with both providing a visual and international growth opportunity.
- **BBC Social:** The title will be championed across BBC social accounts, building an engaged community and driving discovery and conversation.

B: KEY DELIVERABLES

We're looking for a supplier who can deliver a complete entertainment brand, not simply a podcast.

The successful supplier should demonstrate the creative and production capability to develop the editorial proposition, visual identity and audience experience as a single cohesive brand across BBC Sounds, BBC iPlayer and supporting digital platforms, including talent socials. With a weekly episode(s) at the heart, the brand and community should feel alive week around, and the supplier should work closely with talent to keep them engaged and excited with the world being created together.

B1: Editorial Deliverables

- * Weekly visual episode(s) for BBC iPlayer and YouTube (suggested primary episode length 30-40 mins)
- * Weekly audio episode(s) for BBC Sounds and RSS.
- * Episode metadata (including options for optimisation, chapters etc), supporting editorial documentation and visual assets.
- * Editorial support for audience participation and recurring format development.
- * All associated paperwork across Audio & Visual deliverables

B2: Brand & Visual Deliverables

- * Visual identity developed in partnership with the BBC
- *.psd templates for brand and social assets
- * Set design and creative art direction.
- * Photography and artwork for marketing and platform use.
- * Brand toolkit and Tone of Voice doc for use across BBC platforms.
- *Weekly visual assets to support vis episodes on YouTube (ie 3 x thumbnail options, community posts)

B3: Social, Community and Audience Deliverables

For every episode, suppliers should deliver:

- * A suite of vertical social edits optimised for Instagram, YouTube Shorts and TikTok.
- * Presenter-led promotional and editorial content designed specifically for social platforms.
- * Additional platform-specific assets that extend the editorial proposition beyond the core episode.
- * Community-first content that encourages audience participation, conversation and repeat engagement.
- *Plus expectation to work directly with talent on their own native social posts

We're interested in suppliers who think beyond promotional clips and consider how social content and community tools can become an editorial product in their own right.

C: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

C1: In order to pitch your company must be an approved supplier and be registered on PiCoS. You can find more information on how to do this on the [BBC Radio Commissioning website](#)

C2: Music Policy Music rights details can be found in the 'Key Deliverables' section of this brief [Using Music in BBC audio programmes](#). We do not anticipate this title using any commercial music

C3: Your proposal should consider how the editorial and production methods contribute towards the BBC's [Sustainability strategy](#) and the BBC's [Diversity & Inclusion strategy](#).

C4: The [BBC Editorial Guidelines](#) set the editorial values and standards of the organisation. The guidelines apply to all BBC content wherever in the world it is broadcast or published.

C5: The BBC has issued [Information and Guiding Principles](#) to ensure the responsible use of Generative AI technology in BBC programmes. Note that if you intend to use Generative AI in the production and delivery of your programme, this will need to be discussed with the commissioner, who will consult Editorial Policy as appropriate.

C6: The BBC reserves the right, at any time prior to the award of a commission and without incurring any liability to affected producers to accept or reject any proposal or to cancel the commissioning process.

C7: Partnerships: If you plan to submit as part of a partnership, please include the following detail in the Production Eligibility section on PiCoS:

- Responsibilities each partner will take
- Personnel who will be responsible for the production and delivery of the programme
- Lead company with whom the BBC will contract

D: PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

In PiCoS you'll have 1250 words to show the editorial. The shortlisted suppliers will then be taken forward to in-person pitch stage, from which successful suppliers will progress to the pilot stage. This is a pilot-to-series commission: we'll work with a handful of selected suppliers to develop a funded pilot episode, including audience feedback, before committing to full production

Suppliers are welcome to put forward more than one proposal (but no more than three)

Please include:

D1. Editorial Overview

D1.1: Concept Overview & Format

Give us a clear, compelling summary of your proposed show:

- Who are the talent, what's the central idea that is built around them, and what are the format and world that you're creating?
- How will it connect with our audience and extend Radio 2's relatable humour, warmth and honesty, particularly in the visual podcast space?
- What's the week-to-week format (including the number of episodes per week), and how will it live week-round on social, including both BBC Radio 2 accounts and talent socials
- How does it drive talkability, shareability and recommendation?

D1.2: Hosts*

Hosts are central. We're looking for hosts (at least two) who feel authentic, funny, and make each other laugh as much as the audience. And we want a format that has been built around them, extending part of what audiences already know or love about them.

Please include:

- Why they make the perfect hosts for this brand and world, including their existing relationship
- Where relevant, expressions of interest or early conversations with hosts

*If approaching BBC talent please inform the commissioning team.

D1.3: Community & Social Strategy

This show should live beyond the episode. Tell us:

- The week-round social strategy (working with R2 social channels), including clips strategy, a standalone social format, and an episode editorial that builds the community in
- How you'll build and nurture a community around the show week-round
- How you'll work with the hosts to amplify the show across platforms
- Examples of past success in growing brands and communities around them

We're looking for strategies designed for discovery, not just promotion, and content that builds worlds and off-platform fans as well as routes back into the episodes. Success for this title will not be measured through viewing and listening figures alone. We are equally interested in evidence of loyalty, repeat consumption, participation, conversation and community building.

D1.4: Visual Approach

This is a visual-first commission. We want to understand:

- How you'll design the look and feel of the show and brand - set-up, style, energy.
- How this will work across platforms
- How you'll balance authenticity with visual quality.

Please feel free to include visual references, mock-ups, or mood boards if helpful.

D2: Culture, Production & Standards

Please provide a concise overview of how your team will deliver the show to the highest standard with regard to:

- How your company reflects diverse backgrounds and embeds inclusive casting, storytelling, and production practices.
- Your core creative and production team, their experience, and your capacity to produce consistent, adaptable, high quality content.
- Your understanding of BBC Editorial Guidelines, compliance, health & safety, and ability to meet evolving requirements while maintaining creative integrity.

E: EVALUATION PROCESS

STAGE 1: Full Proposal and Production Eligibility Questions

- Your Full Proposal must be submitted to the Between Friends Brief in PiCoS under Sounds OD Network - Brief Number: 104030
- Your written proposals will be evaluated against the Proposal Requirements outlined in this brief to determine the top scoring companies. The top scoring companies will be invited for an in-person pitch.
- Your Written Proposal should be no more than **1250 words** and summarise your specific ideas. It should demonstrate your ability to produce the programme and answer the editorial objectives and other requirements as set out in the Editorial Opportunity.
- Please provide a draft budget to demonstrate how you would utilise the provided fee. This can be attached as an additional document to PiCos and does not count towards the above written proposal word count.
- Enter your Production Eligibility Questionnaire and Proposal in the Full Proposal' section in PiCos before the deadline at noon midday on 23rd September 2026. **Please note the questions used in this brief may differ from those used in other briefs you may have received.**

Note: your proposal may be declined if the information provided in the Production Eligibility Questionnaire indicates you do not meet the criteria, so please answer these questions carefully. No feedback will be supplied for unsuccessful proposals at this stage.

Suppliers who satisfy the needs of the commissioners on their Production Eligibility Questions and Full Proposal, will be invited to Pitch.

Suppliers are estimated to be notified by end of day 2nd October if they are successful for in-person Pitch Stage.

STAGE 2: Pitch + Proposal discussion / Evaluation

Step 1: The top scoring suppliers will be invited to pitch in person. We will notify you which members of the evaluation team will be attending this meeting. **If there are any specific questions that the evaluation team have ahead of the pitch, you will be notified of these in reasonable time.** If applicable, these pitches will take place on the 21st and 22nd October.

Full requirements for the pitch will be sent to suppliers through to this stage.

Step 2: Following the pitches, the evaluation team will re-evaluate your Written Proposal against the Proposal Requirements outlined above, considering the responses given during the pitches, and any additional material requested.

Note: At any stage of the process, we may need to come back to you to seek clarification. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.

STAGE 3: Pilot

Selected suppliers will then be taken forward from pitch to pilot.

The evaluation team will re-evaluate your original proposal, pitch and pilot against the Proposal Requirements outlined above, considering the responses given during the pitches, audience feedback, and any additional material requested.

The commission will then be awarded or rejected accordingly.

G: TIMELINE OVERVIEW

Midday 23rd September 2026: Proposal Submission Deadline Outcome Decision: 2nd October	STAGE ONE: Full Proposal & Production Eligibility Questions Deadline Your Full Proposal must be submitted to the Between Friends Brief in PiCoS under Sounds OD Network – Brief Number: 104030 by midday 23rd September 2026. Your Written Proposal should be no more than 1,250 words and summarise your specific ideas. It should demonstrate your ability to deliver the proposition and respond to the editorial objectives and requirements set out in this brief. Please also provide a draft budget outlining how you would utilise the available fee. This may be attached as a separate document in PiCoS and does not count towards the proposal word count. Suppliers must also complete the Production Eligibility & Experience Questionnaire by the same deadline. Please note that the questions used in this brief may differ from those used in other commissioning opportunities. Note: proposals may be declined at this stage if the information provided indicates that the supplier does not meet the required criteria. Please ensure all questions are answered carefully. <i>No feedback will be provided to unsuccessful suppliers at this stage.</i> Written proposals and Production Eligibility submissions will be evaluated against the requirements outlined in this brief. The highest-scoring suppliers will be invited to take part in the Pitch Stage. Suppliers will be notified whether they have been successful in progressing to the next stage by 2nd October. Specific details of information requested for the full proposal will be provided by the commissioning team.
21st/22nd October 2026: In-Person Pitches Outcome Decision: 2nd November	Stage Two: Pitch Shortlisted suppliers will be invited to attend an in-person pitch with members of the evaluation panel (21st and 22nd October). We will notify suppliers which members of the evaluation team will be attending. If the evaluation team has any specific questions ahead of the pitch, these will be shared in reasonable time. Full pitch requirements will also be provided. At this stage, suppliers may be asked to provide additional supporting materials or clarification relating to their proposal.

	Following the pitches, the evaluation team will re-evaluate proposals, taking into account the written proposal, pitch responses and any additional material requested. Decisions on the pitch and which suppliers will be taken forward will be communicated to suppliers by end of day 2nd November. Note: At any stage of the process, we may seek clarification on information submitted. Any responses provided may be taken into account as part of the evaluation process. <i>Feedback will be available on request to unsuccessful applicants who reached the pitching stage. Requests must be made within two weeks of receiving the outcome.</i>
27th November: Pilot Delivery Deadline Outcome Decision: 18th December	Stage Three: Pilot Stage Selected suppliers will be invited to develop and deliver a pilot to be delivered by 27th November. Full pilot requirements and deliverables will be shared with suppliers progressing to this stage. The evaluation team will assess suppliers' original proposals, pitch performance and pilot delivery against the requirements set out in this brief, taking into account audience feedback (where applicable) and any additional information requested. Following final evaluation, a preferred supplier will be selected and the commission awarded by 18th December. All suppliers who reached the pitching stage will be notified of the outcome. <i>Feedback will be available on request for unsuccessful applicants who reached the pitching stage. Requests must be made within two weeks of receiving notification of the outcome.</i>
Early 2027	Stage Four: Launch Successful supplier delivers the first episode and associated content and deliverables for launch across BBC Sounds, BBC iPlayer and supporting digital platforms.

H: PRODUCTION ELIGIBILITY

In the production experience section of the create proposal page in PiCoS, please outline your relevant production experience, using recent examples, in the following areas (maximum 250 words per question). Please copy and paste the questions:

Relevant experience of working with talent to build formats and worlds.

Relevant experience of developing and producing a weekly visualised podcast.

Relevant experience of producing and delivering visual assets, including high-quality visualised podcasts and social assets.

Experience of building communities around brands.

An understanding of the importance of creating brand ecosystems (including visual and social output) as opposed to standalone audio.

J: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The BBC will assess proposals and pitches according to the criteria below.

Editorial	70%
BBC's strategic priorities including Across the UK and Diversity & Inclusion	10%
Value for money	10%
Risk	10%

More details on how the BBC will make its assessment will be given to shortlisted producers.