



**ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2020 FOR
ITV BORDER & THE ENGLISH REGIONS
AND
STATEMENT FOR 2021**

ITV REGIONAL NEWS AND COVID

ITV's regional news programmes are crucial to ITV and our viewers are at the heart of our programmes. ITV increased its regional news service in 2014 and now provides 18 regional and sub-regional services covering the whole UK and the Channel Islands, except for those covered by STV in Scotland. We provide news seven days a week with bulletins throughout the day on weekdays including a half hour flagship programme at 6pm.

The last year has been extraordinary in the history of the UK and of the world. ITV has done its utmost to support and inform people through trusted, accurate and impartial news, information and often important reassurance during this extraordinary period in all our lives.

Audiences have turned to broadcast news in the COVID crisis, and nations and regions news in particular has been of particular importance. ITV News teams right across the country have worked hard and in innovative ways to ensure that they could continue to provide viewers with a strong news service covering the coronavirus pandemic.

The programmes have attracted big audiences over the last year. ITV News had a strong year in 2020 across all three national weekday bulletins, seeing year-on-year increases for volume and share. Even before the audience spike caused by the crisis, the number of people watching our regional news programme at 6pm had increased by nearly 10% since 2015 and the number watching our national news programme at 6.30pm had grown by nearly 5%.

Throughout periods of lockdown our news teams have kept our national and regional public service news programmes and digital services on air, providing viewers with clear public health information and accurate and impartial news. The feedback we have had on these programmes has suggested that an understanding of what is happening close to home has been a particular public priority.

We are at the forefront of innovation in our gathering of the news making extensive use of digital and wireless technology for reporting and editing in the field and all our journalists are multiskilled. For example, we use LiveU's paperback sized 4G enabled devices that allow a reporter to quickly go live with video without a satellite truck. Much of this investment in technology and multiskilling has enabled us to shift to more agile working based even more out of the office during the current Covid-19 crisis. We have also maintained our invaluable contribution of political interviews during the lockdowns with interviews conducted virtually.

Our regional political programmes returned to air in September and during COVID has limits on the amount of studio guests for social distancing and we are trialling Zoom participants whilst we are in lockdown.

Our top priority has been to ensure the safety, health and well-being of our employees and those who work with us on a freelance basis. From mid-March 2020, we rapidly put in place plans to ensure that our news and morning programmes could remain on air safely with appropriate COVID production protocols. As lockdown eased and then returned, we have continued to review our processes and protocols in line with government guidelines.

In making all our programmes, we are guided by health and safety concerns for staff, freelancers, contributors and members of the public and will work within government and ITV guidelines.

Keeping the programmes our viewers value on air is hugely important and although there are huge challenges, we will keep playing our vital role to provide viewers with news, information and important reassurance.

1. MAJOR NEWS STORIES

ANGLIA

Of course the coronavirus pandemic dominated programmes from March to December. Coverage concentrated on areas with the highest case rates, including Essex and Northamptonshire, and featured the “front lines” of hospitals and care homes. There was a focus on the leading role played by scientists in the Anglia region, with regular insights from the Universities of Cambridge and East Anglia.

The team worked hard to find positive stories to tell - none more so than that of Captain Sir Tom Moore. Anglia reporter Rebecca Haworth was the first journalist to visit his Bedfordshire home and subsequently ITV News was consistently given great access by his family. The team also featured many other fund-raisers, young and old, who were inspired by his extraordinary efforts.

Anglia News reflected the varying impact of Covid across diverse communities in the region. The team featured emotional appeals from bereaved families from a range of ethnic backgrounds and also highlighted faith leaders encouraging their communities to have a vaccine.

The team listened to feedback from viewers, who made it clear they also wanted news and features unrelated to the pandemic and the team ran a special multi-part series on body image, online gambling and dementia among former professional footballers.

BORDER

Coronavirus dominated regional news for most of the year with public service at the heart of our output. The team reported on the regular briefings from the UK and Scottish governments, with clear infographics about rules and guidance on both sides of the border. The team charted the impact of the pandemic on the farming and hospitality industries in the industry. They also reported regularly on local infection numbers and clusters but we also endeavoured to provide uplifting features, including outdoor activities like wild water swimming and people turning to art and crafts as an antidote to the lockdown. A special programme was broadcast on 100 days of lockdown and all that week individual stories of shielders were profiled - people who had not been able to leave their homes the whole time.

In addition to the above, the Scotland political programme *Representing Border* reported on the unfolding situation in care homes, including a powerful interview with the widower of a care home resident who died after contracting Covid-19.

With the exit from the European Union taking place on January 31st, Border dedicated the whole programme to looking at the impact this would have on the region, coming live from both the port of Cairnryan and Belfast to talk about movement between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. The team also reported from Holland on the impact on the flower industry, Carlisle Airport on travel and Scotland on growing calls for a second independence referendum.

The Border region is no stranger to extreme weather events and the news teams were quick to react to yet more as Storms Ciara and Dennis brought significant flooding and snowfall to Cumbria and the south of Scotland. Using satellite and Live-U capability we were able to broadcast live from some of the worst affected areas across the region.

The team also ran a series of features across Black History Month, including teenagers talking about their experiences of racism and microaggressions, footballer Dean Walling reflecting on racism in the game in the 1990s, when he played for Carlisle, and several reports with the newly-formed group Anti-Racist Cumbria (ARC) were conducted. The team also contributed to ITV News' online strand "Black Voices in Conversation", with a half-hour interview with Marcia Reid Fotheringham, Cumbria's first black High Sheriff.

CALENDAR

Through the year ITV News Calendar reflected the impact of Covid-19 across the region. Public service information about lockdown rules was communicated through graphics and interviews during the spring. In the summer the programme reported on the new restrictions in the Bradford, Kirklees and Calderdale areas. Later, with the introduction of the tier system, the programmes closely followed the political debate on calls for additional funding to support businesses in South and West Yorkshire and in Hull.

The impact of the virus on personal finances has been reported through a series of special reports in areas which already had high unemployment rates, including Hull and parts of South Yorkshire.

In April, ITV News Calendar took part in a wider ITV initiative to celebrate the work of health service workers. The programme has also reported from the front line at Airedale Hospital in Keighley, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Hull Royal Infirmary and with staff at the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust.

In May there was coverage of the opening of the Nightingale Hospital in Harrogate which was officially opened by Captain Sir Tom Moore.

At the start of the year there was coverage of the flooding which affected the Calder Valley following storms Ciara and Dennis, with live reporting from Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge.

The sale of British Steel's Scunthorpe site was a story closely followed from the start of the year, through to when a deal with Chinese firm Jingye was announced in March.

CENTRAL

Covid dominated the headlines this year. The team reacted strongly to the different outbreaks across the East and West Midlands, most notably the extended Leicester lockdown, major individual spikes in Birmingham, Solihull, Black Country, Stoke and Nottingham and parts of Northamptonshire. The team also followed the commissioning, build, opening and decommissioning of the Nightingale Hospital at the NEC in Birmingham. The programme reported on how different minority ethnic communities have been disproportionately devastated by Coronavirus. The Midlands has been

significantly affected by the economic fallout of the pandemic, particularly in the cities and towns where many familiar High Street names have disappeared. A major blow for Birmingham was the flagship John Lewis closing down its department store at the heart of the Grand Central shopping centre. Tourist areas have also suffered, although there was some welcome good news to report from the increased numbers of stay-at-home visitors. There were many vaccination firsts in the Midlands, including the first Covid vaccination in Coventry. In May the team produced a special programme looking at the mental health effects of Covid and Lockdown.

The pandemic also affected preparations for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Organisers had to abandon plans for a single bespoke accommodation centre because of hold-ups to the building programme. The programme also covered more positive milestones for Birmingham 2022 throughout the year.

Away from Covid, the team covered the Black Lives Matter protests. As part of a longer-term approach the team commissioned a "True Colours" series looking at representation in different areas of British life - the Police, Health, Education, the Arts.

In February parts of the West Midlands had the worst flooding the region had ever seen. A lot of live programming was produced around this event and a special at the end of the first week. This has now been viewed more than 283,000 times on YouTube.

Special coverage on the day Britain left the EU was produced and through the rest of the year examined the progress of the Brexit trade deal, including a giant car park near Birmingham Airport on standby to become a customs site in the event of a no-deal.

ITV Central also combined with ITV Wales and northern ITV regions to commission a survey on our audiences' different attitudes to how the Government was delivering on its "Levelling Up" pledges. ITV News Central gave particular focus to the Economy, Health and Education.

The team also closely followed the on-going investigations into the Shropshire maternity scandal. They started the year with a week-long series of features on the families whose lives had been shattered by their experiences at the maternity hospital. In June West Mercia Police opened an investigation into whether criminal charges should be brought.

The team continued to follow the response to the Nottinghamshire child abuse scandal. The programme on the day the report was published (in Summer 2019) won the 2020 Midlands Royal Television Society award for best regional news programme.

CHANNEL

ITV Channel's pandemic coverage included daily stories that told of the experiences of people within the community and the pandemic's impact on businesses, families and individuals. The regional team gained access to Jersey's hospital to hear first hand accounts of the difficulties faced by front-line medical staff and highlighted the exceptional work being done by other front-line services. The programme covered the differences in approach to the pandemic by the separate governments in Jersey and Guernsey and in addition, ITV Channel ensured that throughout, they were able to highlight and celebrate the remarkable things that islanders were doing to help each other within the community and celebrate uplifting moments, initiatives and events throughout the community.

Whilst much of 2020 was dominated by the coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic, ITV Channel TV also provided comprehensive coverage of other important issues and stories. One of the notable stories to affect the Channel Region at the start of the year was the collapse of the airline, Flybe, which had

an immediate and wide-reaching impact on the Channel Islands. On the day of the breaking story, ITV Channel was live from Jersey and Guernsey airports with reports and analysis from Southampton, one of the major hubs serving the Channel Islands. Throughout the week ITV Channel covered every angle of the story including analysis of the long-term effects on vital travel routes to the region.

During the summer, ITV Channel covered the Black Lives Matter movement in the Channel Islands, with comprehensive coverage of demonstrations across the region and, in a special 3-part series, exploring in-depth issues of racism and the debate over the portrayal of local memorials to historical figures.

Later in the year, ITV Channel covered Guernsey's General Election which had been delayed from the Spring because of the pandemic. With travel restrictions preventing a live on-location Election Results Special from Guernsey, ITV Channel produced a Jersey studio-based results special programme with bespoke titles and a specially commissioned Guernsey background for the programme. ITV Channel brought the story of the election alive with on-the-day reports and location lives from its Guernsey-based reporters.

ITV Channel's news agenda was, like every other region, dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic throughout much of the year and pandemic coverage included daily stories that told of the experiences of people within the community and the pandemic's impact on businesses, families and individuals. The regional team gained access to Jersey's hospital to hear first hand accounts of the difficulties faced by front-line medical staff and highlighted the exceptional work being done by other front-line services. The programme covered the differences in approach to the pandemic by the separate governments in Jersey and Guernsey and in addition, ITV Channel ensured that throughout, they were able to highlight and celebrate the remarkable things that islanders were doing to help each other within the community and celebrate uplifting moments, initiatives and events throughout the community.

GRANADA

Covid 19 dominated 2020 and the North West was among the first parts of the UK to come under severe restrictions. Parts of Lancashire and Greater Manchester were put into tight restrictions as infection rates rose sharply. In October the imposition of 'tiers' resulted in a row with Labour's Metro Mayor Andy Burnham and the government. Granada's political correspondent, Hannah Miller, spoke to Andy Burnham after the row to ask him if he had any regrets or if his profile got in the way of securing a deal. She also challenged the Prime Minister Boris Johnson about more severe restrictions in Oldham where even the council were left confused even the PM was unable to answer their questions offering just a 'general answer' recommending the public refer to local websites for more information.

The mass testing of people in Liverpool was hailed as a success in helping to control the spread of coronavirus and identify asymptomatic people. However the trial did raise questions over the accuracy of the lateral flow tests which has shown a 70% accuracy in the lab but when used in Liverpool the accuracy rate dropped to approximately 50%.

One of the issues the team were able to identify was with warehouse workers who felt unprotected and who were able to show us photographs of how social distancing was not possible in their workplace. Many felt there was a lack of support from their employers to keep them safe at work. We raised the case of a blind warehouse worker denied furlough by his employers despite being identified as vulnerable and unable to observe social distancing. Hannah Miller was the first regional broadcast journalist to get to ask a question in the daily Downing Street briefing extracting a promise from Matt Hancock that he would look again at the guidance for people with disabilities.

The Manchester Arena inquiry began on 7th September 2020 , the purpose to investigate the deaths of the victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena attack. Granada has a dedicated reporter covering the inquiry, Amy Welch - she is working solely on the inquiry as the team did with the Hillsborough inquests which began in 2014 concluding in 2016.

The aftermath of the death of George Floyd saw marches across the North West. As part of the aftermath the team were able to start a fresh conversation with our viewers on racism, hearing their lived experiences and adding context to the ripple effect from the US here in our region. People brought their stories to us helping us to better understand the differences and commonalities between communities across the region.

The cladding crisis has been a big story with so many people and families left living in unsafe high rise flats across Manchester and Liverpool - post Grenfell there's been a huge lobby for the government to fund work needed. It has exposed how many leaseholders have been left facing huge rises in service and insurance charges.

In December the Chief constable of Greater Manchester Police resigned after a highly critical report into the force's performance. The force has been put into special measures with urgent work going on internally to ensure that crimes are recorded and actioned correctly.

LONDON

Covid dominated 2020 of course - with ITV News London reflecting the reality of the virus on health, families, businesses and the West End.

Other important stories from 2020 that were covered included the trial of the men charged with killing 39 migrants, who were found dead in the back of a lorry in 2019. The death of a police officer in Croydon and the Black Lives Matter protests were comprehensively covered by our news team here in London too.

MERIDIAN

It has been a challenging year for the team but everyone has felt a great sense of responsibility to ensure we help get vital information to viewers. The team has made sense of government advice, with a series of informative graphics that have explained everything from help for businesses to the tier system. These have been shared thousands of times online too. The programme has also heard from those locally who've had the virus and those who have lost loved ones. Rica Faltado spoke to the team about her mother Justina, a care home worker in Farnham, Surrey, who died in May. The team also heard from Michael Tun the son of Dr Peter Tun, a neuro-rehabilitation Consultant who worked at Reading's Royal Berkshire Hospital for 21 years. The team also followed the stories of those who have survived like Donna Morgan from West Sussex who spent 91 days in ICU, her husband Toby kept us and viewers informed on her progress and our cameras were there when she finally left hospital.

In April ITV celebrated the NHS with a day of coverage across the entire channel. In the programme the team heard from local hospitals, doctors, paramedics and patients but we also focused on those in essential support roles like the cleaners, porters and the mechanics, who service ambulances.

During the pandemic the team also reported from inside ICU units at some of the regions hospitals, The Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, Southampton General Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital in Kent. One patient in the Kent ICU wanted to be interviewed to warn others to be careful.

Stephen Marfleet sadly passed away 48 hours later but his family still wanted the report to air with him included.

ITV Meridian has also reported on the impact of the pandemic on universities, schools and exams, plus shown the challenges of homeschooling. They have reflected the financial struggles facing individuals, families and businesses, from small independent shops and pubs, to huge industries in our region, like tourism and aviation. They have also had special reports on the cruise industry in Southampton and the impact of the pandemic on places like Crawley, a town heavily dependent on Gatwick for employment.

The team also tried to give viewers reasons to be cheerful with uplifting stories that they call 'lockdown lifts,' celebrating, amongst other things, local heroes and community spirit.

Meridian's political Correspondent Phil Hornby has been live on the programmes almost every night with the latest lines from the government, plus reaction and analysis from local MP's and opposition leaders. During 2020 there were over 1300 appearances by MPs across our output.

Other big stories for the South East have been migrants being rescued from dinghies in the channel, a baby death inquiry at East Kent hospitals Trust and preparations for Brexit in and around Dover.

The team also covered the Reading terror attack, which saw three local men stabbed to death, and the trial of three men who were found guilty of killing PC Andrew Harper. He died whilst on duty in 2019.

In the South of the region, one of the most memorable images was in June last year when thousands of visitors flocked to Bournemouth beach, causing the local authority to declare a major incident

TYNE TEES

The first cases of coronavirus diagnosed in the UK were discovered and treated in the Tyne Tees region when the first patients were taken to Newcastle's RVI hospital which has one of the few high level isolation units for infectious diseases in the country. Reporters from the region covered the story for our programme, network news and digitally until the couple were discharged from hospital.

As the virus became more widespread, Tyne Tees showed public service broadcasting at its best, and continued to do so through 2020, giving detailed information about the virus and how to stay safe from it. The team used graphics each night to inform viewers about all aspects of safety such as social distancing as well as using them to keep viewers up-to-date with lockdown rules and other essential information. The team reported on the terrible toll the virus had on families, hospitals, health workers and in care homes and held the government to account on its record.

When the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, said the rates were relatively low in the North East, Tyne Tees looked at government figures and was able to report that in fact rates in the area were higher than anywhere else in the country.

Tyne Tees was also at the heart of one of the biggest political stories relating to coronavirus when it became known that Dominic Cummings had driven to his family's home in County Durham after his wife became ill.

The team also showed the lighter and more positive sides of the story, reporting widely on the appreciation for NHS workers, as demonstrated by 'Clap for Carers' and by focussing on those who were helping their communities.

The programme did its best to contribute to the positive mental health of its viewers, detailing ways that people could look after their minds as well as bodies and bringing them relaxing segments of beautiful pictures of the region set to music.

On the day the UK left the European Union, the government chose to hold its cabinet meeting in Sunderland, the first city to vote to leave the Union. This led a special programme in which the team detailed how Brexit was likely to impact the region, travelling also to the Netherlands to see how our nearest neighbours viewed our departure.

The team reported on how the Black Live Matter movement was being supported locally and also reported from Newcastle when counter-protests turned violent and targeted police with bottles and other objects, leading to multiple arrests.

Along with other ITV regions, the programme celebrated Black History Month with a series of features including pieces looking at racism and one television and digital piece celebrating the life and success of Britain's first professional black footballer.

In July 2020, the England and Leeds United footballer Jack Charlton died. The team reported on his life and career successes, location broadcasting from his beloved home town of Ashington in Northumberland. Tyne Tees presented the programme from there on the day of his funeral when thousands of people lined the streets of the town to see his funeral cortege pass by.

WEST COUNTRY

ITV West Country started the year with an in depth look at the viability of our High Streets focussing on Falmouth, Taunton, Bath.

In February storms Dennis and Ciara left communities in Gloucestershire under water and the team produced a special 6pm programme live from the communities affected.

The team reported on the collapse of Flybe in March as the airline was based in Exeter. The team scrambled to film the final touch down and followed staff made redundant and the impact of passengers.

The team were at the Black Lives Matter protest in Bristol where the statue of Edward Colston was toppled, with the team nominated for a national RTS Award for their coverage of this. The team also covered Black Lives Matter protests and gatherings from Cornwall to Gloucestershire.

The team also conducted an investigation into claims the South Gloucestershire hunt was illegally killing foxes.

2. INNOVATION, EXPERIMENT AND CREATIVITY

ANGLIA

Anglia developed Covid secure work practices and work places. This included the roll out of PPE, sanitising people and kit, rigorous social distancing, and a huge upturn in home working. The team introduced elevated Risk Assessment protocols, constantly reviewed and adapted for interior and exterior locations ranging from football ground to intensive care units.

The team also developed remote working skills and technology at pace, including the NoMachine remote editing facility, video access to the studio gallery, and closed talkback to presenters via an iPhone app. All this allowed producers to output whole bulletins from their kitchen tables.

BORDER

Although most of Border's reporters were already able to edit remotely on laptops, within weeks of the lockdown, 100% of colleagues were doing this.

Border's technical team also devised an ingenious method to allow 'workers-from-home' to access editing machines in the newsroom, which allowed non-reporting journalists to be able to edit and allowed reporters improved access to head office servers and material. We called this technique 'No Machine'.

Newsgathering and work meetings were transformed as the team quickly refined best practices for video calls. Advances in technology and connectivity meant the team were able to routinely broadcast decent quality interviews and UGC, catapulting progress in this emerging field to it being used in anger more quickly than would otherwise have happened.

The lockdown of Holyrood meant the team were not able to access their office and production centre inside the Scottish parliament. Despite this, they managed to continue production with the Series Producer, Presenter and two reporters all working from home, except when out filming, and the picture editor assembling the programme from the news studio. It presented very challenging conditions for programme making but the team pulled it off.

CHANNEL

The team moved quickly to split the workforce into groups that could work separately as far as possible and ensured the right technology was provided for remote working, including remote access to edit stations and use of mobile phone technology for lives. The station operated with reduced numbers and very strict health and safety measures to ensure those who were required to work on station were protected and safe. Strict measures were applied on location to protect staff and any contributors.

CALENDAR

Following the initial lockdown in March 2020 and the introduction of social distancing, the programme adapted to new Covid secure ways of working.

On-Screen Journalists have been based at their homes across the region since last March, and continue to edit their reports at home. During the lockdowns, interviews have been conducted through both web based technology and also on location.

In addition any member of the team working at home can use No-Machine technology to access material and edit on the ITV News server and production systems. Web and Social Media output is all produced by journalists working from home.

Political Correspondent Harry Horton used Live-U technology on his mobile phone to enable him to report live into the programmes from home during the lockdowns.

All camera crews are now equipped with 360 cameras to help support ambition for high production values. The cameras allow them to take high wide shots giving the audience an overview of the area being filmed and allow the operator to maintain social distance.

Our offices in Hull, Lincoln and Sheffield have fixed cameras which work remotely to enable reporters to broadcast live into the programmes and the use of the offices for lives has helped to maintain safety protocols for reporters.

CENTRAL

ITV News Central for the East Midlands was offered on HD on satellite for the first time. This was an all ITV regions initiative. Now every region is available on satellite HD bar Channel.

At the start of Lockdown the team were able to keep the programmes on air with the majority of people working from home. Our reporters and camera crews have long been able to file from remote locations, and we used similar technology to allow our technical and office-based teams to link into our edit systems from home.

With fewer people in the office we were able to maintain 2-metre social distancing, helped by a lot of signage and occasional one-way systems. The team had to remove the person in charge of Studio Vision from the Gallery at the start of lockdown and built a new station in a second edit suite. This allowed the team to opt the programme from outside the Gallery. Eventually perspex screening allowed the Vision role back in the gallery.

All training stopped during the first lockdown, but the team were able to introduce socially distanced training again to all roles in the second half of the year. They also managed to train the new camera trainee who joined two weeks before lockdown.

At the start of lockdown they invested in a 360 degree camera to better show the viewers, confined to their homes, what life was like on the streets of their villages, towns and cities.

Viewing figures saw a major spike. In March viewing figures went up 27%, and there were 115,000 more viewers at 6pm each night compared to the same period in 2019. Across the whole of 2020 viewing figures grew in both share and volume, the fourth successive year-on-year increase. The average nightly figure is now more than 505,000. That's 23.5% of audience share.

The team were also delighted to be finally accredited with Albert sustainable production certificate. It's something the team at ITV News Central had been working towards for two years. All regional news now have this.

Central bulletins remained opted - separate East and West - throughout. We had a single joint programme for the East and West Midlands, with occasional opted segments until the end of Summer.

The ITV Graphics Hub, which makes graphics for all the nations and regions, is based in Birmingham. Because of its advanced connectivity, team members were immediately able to switch to home working when Lockdown was first introduced. More recently, the Hub upgraded all its computers and software ready for when the team can return. They will still be able to work from home as well.

LONDON

Safety of staff and our interviewees has been paramount during the pandemic. All staff were equipped immediately with appropriate PPE, and many staff worked from home to keep the numbers low in the office. Many reporters learned how to self edit from their own homes, and many more interviews were conducted on online platforms like Zoom and Skype. The Live U app meant the team were able to go live to reporters' homes from last March.

MERIDIAN

Since the pandemic the team have limited the number of people who come into the newsrooms to those whose role is deemed transmission critical. Reporters are working from home, having had the technology to allow them to edit their reports remotely, for many years. This capability enabled them to carry on with the operation during the lockdowns. The team has used technology to curate the website from home too and all forward planning roles are away from the office.

On site in the newsrooms and offices robust Covid safe measures have been put in place, including one-way systems, socially distanced work stations and screens where needed. The team's Site Safety Guidance Document, that covers how we work, is updated as Government advice changes and regularly then re-issued to all staff. It covers everything from cleaning routines, to the use of sanitiser and wipes at work. Staff wear masks when walking around the office and from February 2021 Lateral Flow testing is available to all staff.

Many interviews are now carried out by zoom and those that take place in person are always conducted at a distance of 2 metres. When filming on location we have in-depth risk assessments and protocols for newsgathering during the pandemic.

TYNE TEES

As coronavirus took hold, the team changed how they worked. The majority of staff began to work from home, necessitating radical changes in our processes:

- Newsroom changes: the newsrooms were emptied of our staff and the team retained the very basic number to produce programmes, ensuring that desks were placed sufficiently far apart for people to be able to maintain 2 metres' distance from each other. Stringent safety measures were enforced, with one way systems, strict cleaning regimes in place etc.
- Editing: Reporters used laptop computers to edit and send their reports from home and the team introduced new technology to allow all staff to access newsroom editing systems remotely.
- Meetings: All meetings were held via video conferencing, incorporating people working from home and even with people working in the newsroom joining the meetings from their desks on video calls to save them grouping together in person.
- On air changes: For the first time, the team routinely included Skype, Zoom and other types of video calls in programmes to ensure safety. Reporters and crews were also asked to make a point of showing that they were socially distanced from interviewees and others on screen. The team also reduced the gallery team and number of presenters in the first lockdown so that we could work on ensuring that our teams could be COVID secure.

WEST COUNTRY

In March, just ahead of the COVID pandemic shutting down the majority of the country, the team managed to complete a planned refurbishment of the Truro office, with the project taking approximately eight weeks to complete. The work included a full upgrade of all technical facilities that included adding a sound booth facility as well as new servers and an upgraded remote camera facility. The refurbishment also included a comprehensive upgrade to the office facilities, adding a very welcome teapoint and storage facility, new carpets, furniture and improved wifi connectivity. The project brought the office up to the standard and look of the ITV News office model that has been rolled out over the past few years.

The team continued to use drones in both planned and on the day pre recorded shoots as well as very regularly going live into the programme, enhancing both stories and weather production in the East and West of the patch.

By introducing No Machine to our Newcutters, and training our Technical and Editorial staff on its use remotely, a number of roles that had previously been carried out at our main studio in Bristol, or in one of our more remote offices, were able to be either completely undertaken at home or partly carried out enabling us to minimise the time on site to crucial programme record times for a considerable number of our staff.

3. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ANGLIA

Diversity Panel meetings have if anything been more inclusive since the pandemic forced them online. The team have combined East and West panels, allowing a wider range of input, discussion and feedback. The team has also been able to invite guests who have featured on our programmes, eg Paralympian and disability rights campaigner Anne Wafula Strike. Anne featured in one of the online in-depth interviews conducted as part of the ITV News digital initiative supporting Black History Month.

BORDER

Border's Diversity Panel has managed to meet up virtually during the pandemic and have even introduced new members, following the team's connection with Anti Racist Cumbria.

Border's Managing Editor led a project to overhaul work experience with a view to both seeking out people from under-represented communities and to carrying out virtual work experience in a 'covid world'. The project is continuing through 2021.

CALENDAR

The team have continued to work virtually with Calendar's Diversity and Inclusion Panel (established some years ago) for the programme covering North, West and South Yorkshire.

In December a second panel was also established with members from East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, again meeting online.

ITV News Calendar is supporting a wider ITV project to increase the number of female experts appearing on the programme. In early 2020 this included a day in which experts from around the region were given a chance to experience what it's like to work with ITV News in a day-long event at our headquarters in Leeds.

To mark Black History Month in October, ITV News Calendar worked with other national and regional ITV outputs to launch a new series of digital interviews called Black Voices In Conversation. It aimed to connect viewers with innovative, inspiring, and remarkable people from the black community. Calendar's key interview for this project was with Sharon Watson, CEO and Principal of the Northern School of Contemporary Dance.

CHANNEL

ITV Channel TV continued its strong focus on diversity during 2020 and its nightly diversity analysis of the 6pm programme as part of the news debrief. Whilst it was not possible to hold in-person meetings with the regional Diversity Panel through the whole year, ITV Channel arranged regular digital meetings via Zoom with the panel which proved highly successful.

CENTRAL

Central continued to recruit for ITV News trainees and this year's place was secured by our apprentice Cree-Summer Haughton.

Central's main presenter Sameena Ali-Khan produced a TV and online series "My Britain" interviewing inspirational people from across the Midlands talking about what their country means to them. Early presenter Pablo Taylor produced a podcast for ITV's Black Voices series in which he interviewed Birmingham cleric Rev. Eve Pitts.

ITV has introduced a number of measures to improve Diversity and Inclusion. Under the umbrella label "Accelerating Change", one of the initiatives was a reporter attachment to the Content Hub, a unit that supplies tailored content to the opted ITV regions. A Production Journalist from ITV Central, Amrit Gahir, was the first to secure this opportunity.

Production Specialist **Mandip Mehat** was chosen to be on ITV's first "Rise" management programme which is designed to build race confidence, promote minority ethnic talent progression and accelerate inclusive cultural change.

Also under Accelerating Change, other colleagues have been seconded on to recruitment panels and offered shadow shifts in areas where they'd like to develop.

At the start of the Covid crisis the team initially had to suspend our Diversity Panel meetings, where viewers give feedback on the programme, but we were able to resume them remotely. The team paid particular attention to accessibility issues so that all panel members could join.

GRANADA

Each quarter Granada holds a diversity panel meeting and these continue as online discussions and debriefs. The panel has been really useful in identifying issues like the questions and reluctance to take up the vaccine among the black and asian communities including the amount of mis-information being shared on social media. They were also able to highlight how people living with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

As part of ITV's Diversity Acceleration Plan, we decided to improve the way we attract people into our team. The team decided to rewrite the copy for any new job adverts and this resulted in a much more diverse shortlist of candidates and resulted in three people joining the team from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. Feedback from applicants told the team that they decided to apply because they felt the advert was written in such a way that made them feel it was attractive to them.

The team has also looked to offer opportunities within the team to look at what they can do with the talent they already have. As a result a member of the camera crews who studied journalism last year has moved in front of the camera to report. This has been supported by the team who've given feedback and advice to ensure a successful transition.

Within content, the team has ensured our contributors are from a range of different backgrounds ensuring there are experts in a range of topics - in February the team ran a 'Confidence on Camera' workshop day for female experts. The team also took part in a national series called Black Voices, a digital project that saw prominent black people from the North West interviewed in the wake of the George Floyd killing.

The sports team has also been able to amplify the voices of athletes from mixed race and black heritage who're still suffering racist abuse. Among them Lauren James, a young player with Manchester United women's team who explained how she's just used to it much to the disgust of her coach.

LONDON

The team ensured that their Diversity Panel was still able to speak to them about our coverage and the Panel met remotely throughout 2020 and continue to do that in 2021. The team ensured that there was a focus on mental health in these meetings - and was a chance too to get stories from the Panel from their own communities and how they were coping with Covid.

MERIDIAN

Through-out 2020 the team has continued to engage with their Diversity Panels through online meetings. The Panels have given valuable feedback on the programmes, flagged up potential stories to cover and helped the team to find case studies and experts. One member alerted the team to a Police misconduct hearing in Hampshire, in which officers were recorded making racist, homophobic and sexist remarks. The team's panels have been a great source of case studies and stories for key events in our diaries, such as Windrush Day and Black History Month.

Like all other areas of ITV, ITV News has accelerated our Diversity & Inclusion strategy. Colleagues from ITV Meridian took part in a project called 'Shine a Light,' which involved colleagues from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, sharing their experiences of working at ITV. There was a lot to celebrate but it also raised areas for improvement for leaders, managers and teams.

ITV Meridian is taking the lead on an ITV News Schools Outreach Programme that is currently being developed. The aim is to visit (whether in person or virtually) schools in our region with a diverse student population and give them an insight into TV News and journalism. The working group for this project includes colleagues from different backgrounds and our aim is to show pupils that our industry is inclusive and that a career within ITV News is open to everyone.

ITV Meridian was delighted that this year one of our team Ravneet Nandra was awarded Outstanding Young Journalist, at the Asian Media Awards. The judges praised Ravneet for being a team player and for her range of skills, from producing to news editing and reporting.

TYNE TEES

The ITV News Tyne Tees Diversity Panel met online for the first time during 2020, resorting to Zoom rather than face-to-face meetings. The panel advises on diversity issues, offers contacts to the communities panel members are from and gives feedback on the work the team does.

In February 2020, ITV Tyne Tees ran a 'Women In News' day in which local women were invited to come to our studios to learn the processes involved in making television. This was done with the aim of encouraging them to be confident about appearing on television news and helping improve the rates of women experts appearing on our programmes.

The Head of News is a member of the local RTS committee which works to extend opportunities in television to students and young people

Before the first lockdown in March, the team regularly brought students into our offices to enable them to have work experience in a television newsroom. They are currently working on an improved virtual programme to ensure this can happen in a more consistent way in the future.

ITV WEST COUNTRY

2020 has been a challenging but ultimately transformative year for ITV West Country. The team began the year with much of our focus on gender balance in our programmes and digital output. For

example, we have developed a database of female experts, and continue to move towards a better reflection of the gender balance within our community.

But the death of George Floyd and the subsequent growth of the Black Lives Matter movement was the defining Diversity and Inclusion experience of the year. It made the team look at their output, recruitment and internal structures in a new way. The team moved quickly from simply covering BLM events to a more reflective and in depth coverage of the issue of race and identity in the region - for example, talking to people from a BAME background about their experiences. These ranged from former Bristol football manager Leroy Rosenoir, retired midwife Plymouth Faye Doris and Wiltshire based 'the black farmer', Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones. Linked to this, our BAME on screen representation has moved to 9% on our East programme (against a census total of 5.8%) and 7.3% on our West programme (against a census total of 2.4%).

Some of those contributors have now joined the Diversity and Inclusion Panels, offering a fresh and challenging perspective to those meetings. The meetings moved from face to face to Zoom due to the pandemic. The team will continue to develop those relationships and look to broaden internal involvement in the panels, as well as working with members outside of the quarterly meetings.

ITV's own Diversity Acceleration Plan will be a focus of our work in 2021 - as the team looks to develop staff, broaden recruitment and engage with BAME communities around our region.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

ANGLIA

Interaction with viewers and the wider public has never been more important than during the Coronavirus pandemic. Social media platforms are now a primary source of newsgathering; a direct channel for feedback which often features in our broadcast output; and an important element of the team's content dissemination.

CHANNEL

At the start of the pandemic and again towards the end of 2020, ITV Channel produced a special online blog demonstrating how the news team was operating and newsgathering describing in detail how programmes were being made in a safe environment and ensuring the safety of contributors was assured at all times.

CENTRAL

The team began the year with a major onscreen five-part investigation into our national identity. As part of this they featured schoolchildren explaining what being British means to them. At the conclusion of the series, Presenter Sameena Ali-Khan gathered viewer questions and hosted a live YouTube interview with cultural critic Dr Robert Beckford about Britishness.

The team continued to focus on their Instagram Account and experimented with bespoke videos for that platform. They started a "Let's Talk About It" series in June with a feature on Colourism. It had more than 65,000 views and they now have 55,000 Followers on Instagram.

As part of VE Day commemorations, the team traced those who'd appeared in celebration photographs 75 years ago.

The programme also featured a young woman from Leicester whose feet were too small to get the steel toe-cap shoes she needed for her college course, sparking a lot of viewer response. Thanks to one of our viewers we were able to get her two free pairs of specially made "size one" boots.

GRANADA

The team have produced a couple of series both online and within Granada Reports to showcase the positive community news through the pandemic. In Homefront, a weekly online bulletin the team included the stories sent in by the audience of events, issues and people they want to celebrate. Throughout December the team ran a series on TV and online called Advent heroes each day between 1st and 24th December and heard from an individual who'd made a difference within their community. Both of these series were generated by our audience and included footage sent in by them.

The team held an open day in February aimed at demystifying what we do in the news at our studios at Media City UK. The idea behind the day is to encourage more women professionals/experts to contribute to our news agenda. It was hugely successful with over 30 women joining for the day to take part in practical sessions aimed at boosting their confidence on camera.

In terms of charitable coverage, the team have produced content worth in kind in excess of £677k. They have offered student placement; we were able to host 6 in January and February 2020 before lockdown was introduced.

LONDON

Social media continues to inform the team and deliver stories and case studies for the programme - the team often shout out for people who, for example, may have lost their job during the pandemic.

MERIDIAN

Hearing from the public continues to be vital to ensure a range of perspectives on air and feature people from different communities. Whether the team are covering national or local issues, they engage with viewers in a number of ways. For many stories, they will do this using a vox pop or by communicating with the public on our social media channels and sharing views on air. They often harvest case studies this way too. Most recently when the team covered the vaccine roll out and the disparity between areas in terms of appointments, they were contacted by hundreds of viewers with their own experiences to share.

In their programmes the team continues to give our direct email address and viewer phone line details. Stories and feedback on what they do on the shows is regularly received this way. In particular during the first lockdown the team had had a constant flurry of correspondence from those tuning into our programmes. With Fred Dinenage broadcasting live into the programme from home, the team also created a section of the show called 'Daily Dinenage' which became a way of engaging directly with viewers. Fred shared their stories, read out special messages and celebrated local community heroes. During this time many talked about taking great comfort from their local news service, saying they appreciated us as a source of trusted information and how they appreciated hearing uplifting stories during a period of great uncertainty.

Citizen journalism continues to grow and viewer generated content regularly appears in output. It could be mobile phone footage of a fire in a bulletin or on our website, or viewer photographs of wildlife used in our weather segment or on our weather instagram page.

TYNE TEES

The team invites public contributions via email, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and regularly find case studies for stories via these means and occasionally read viewers comments out on air. They are very active in posting stories on social media and use a moderation service to remove inappropriate comments from users.

WEST COUNTRY

The West Country website took on a different look in 2020 when the team adopted a new operating system at the end of June. It now feels much more interactive and gives the opportunity to showcase much more of our content on the Home page.

Previously users were only able to see seven main stories, but now the content is much more accessible. On scrolling down, there is a themed section below latest stories. There, the user can read about a popular recurring subject, getting the latest news and information on themes such as Coronavirus.

Accessing video content online remains one of the team's key priorities and in their 'Must Watch' section they are able to show the best picture stories of the day. Frequently the picture stories seen here contain images the team has been sent by the audience.

The team also took the decision to put the latest editions of our political programme, The West Country Debate, on the Home Page. During a year when the decisions of politicians impacted every part of our lives this seemed an obvious choice.

On important issues, such as a change in Tiers, the team can provide even more information online than on air. They are also able to use the programme to refer people to our website through a web promo. This has become a regular feature of the lunch news and 1800 programme.

Sometimes it might just be a way of pointing people to an article with much more information on a particular story, on other occasions it may be a story that we haven't covered on the programme.

Making sense of complex issues like Brexit or the weather can often be challenging. On those occasions we sometimes use the expertise of our correspondents and weather forecaster to write a blog for our website.

5. MEDIA LITERACY

ANGLIA

The team point viewers towards their website almost every night. They regularly highlight extended versions of set piece interviews and links to support networks on a wide variety of mental and physical health and other issues. In February, they ran a day-long workshop called Women In Media - Competence On Camera. A diverse group of women from a wide variety of backgrounds were given hands-on experience of television interviews, both on location and the studio. These were followed up with detailed advice and feedback, to develop the confidence of potential interviewees. Several of those on the course have since appeared on the programmes.

BORDER

The Border Managing Editor works pro bono for the NCTJ on its Broadcast Journalism module. ITV News sponsors the NCTJ Student Award for Broadcast Journalism.

CALENDAR

Before the lockdown in March 2020, ITV News Calendar staff gave a number of talks about careers in ITV News, some of these continued virtually since then.

CHANNEL

Whilst it was not possible to host groups or conduct tours on-station during 2020, a number of editorial and technical staff delivered a number of talks to schools and organisations online. The regional team also provided a full online experience for attendees of a special 'Virtual Jersey Careers Fair', through specially edited films on all the different roles within the editorial and technical teams.

CENTRAL

Colleagues from ITV News Central worked in partnership with a number of Midlands Universities offering talks, mentoring and assessing journalist students' work on "news days". Earlier in the year they also had a group from Coventry University visit the newsroom.

The team had two representatives on the Broadcasting Council for the Training of Journalists. The team also helped with mentoring for the Media Trust.

Normal amounts of visits to school were curtailed because of Covid, but the team still managed a few at the beginning of the year, including as part of the "Speakers for Schools" initiative.

Many from ITV News Central helped with ITV's Women In News initiative in January which aimed to raise awareness of the opportunities available to females in broadcast journalism and on the technical side. The event was held in London and attracted national newspaper coverage from media specialists.

As part of International Women's Day, Reporter/Presenter Yasmin Bodalbhai hosted a hustings for West Midlands Women's Voice (set up as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority to ensure women have a loud and clear voice).

In October, a group from Central helped organise the RTS Midlands Careers Fair and hosted some of the online sessions.

GRANADA

The team are now hosting sessions online with students for them to gain work experience with us. The team have a virtual open day planned for March 2021 aimed at people living with a disability who are keen to know more about how the media and new works.

The team has also done a lot of work to improve journalism online providing a service that is more accessible and useful to people in the 16-35 age group. The team host regular podcasts under the brand name From the North. The online site itv.com/granada carries blogs from specialist reporters and takes the audience into Granada TV reports in more depth.

LONDON

The team continues to work with schools in London and where possible, staff try and keep in touch with schools to give regular talks. At ITV News London work experience applicants have joined virtual meetings online, which still gives them an opportunity to experience life in a newsroom.

MERIDIAN

Content is available to view on multiple platforms and we cross promote this on air and online. The website allows viewers to find out more about a story that might only be a 2 minute report in a programme. The team often use extended interviews from experts on the website, to give the viewer information about a subject, articles can have quotes and stats embedded in them to add value and also include links to other articles on the subject or story.

Many of the stories Meridian covers provoke a range of views and when they are posted on Facebook or twitter it allows viewers to see a range of perspectives on a story.

Recently the team covered the death of a much loved local teacher on our programme but the time restraints of the 30 minute show meant the team were limited by how much detail they could go into and how many tributes could be included from students and colleagues. The accompanying online article on this story was not subject to the same restrictions and allowed the team to go into much more detail on the story and use dozens of tributes.

As part of the schools outreach programme being developed by ITV News to inform students about a career in the TV News industry, the team are in talks with the Literacy Trust to try and build media literacy into our presentation. This will hopefully be around fake news and trusted news sources.

TYNE TEES

At the beginning of lockdown in March, the team broadcast a report which showed how their journalists were working safely while out filming and also in the newsroom. During the second lockdown, one of the presenters filmed a report showing how news teams transmitted our programme safely from the studios.

WEST COUNTRY

Women in News: At the end of January the team organised our first 'Confidence on Camera' training day, which was part of ITV's Women in News initiative based in the Bristol newsroom.

The day gave guests a well-rounded insight into the newsgathering process, invitees took part in mock television interviews in the studio and down-the-line.

During the day the group also got to chat to senior members of the team, both technical and editorial in a formal and informal setting about the production process and to give them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

The group also got to spend time in the production gallery with the technical team helping them to demystify the process behind the scenes.

A further three sessions were planned for the remainder of the year but unfortunately due to the COVID pandemic they were unable to go ahead. However towards the end of the year the team organised a remote workshop session which worked very well.

Work Experience: COVID meant severe disruption to the Work Experience and Placement programme. However, before the pandemic hit the team were able to offer a placement to a member of the Armed Forces through our relationship with the Forces Media Academy. They shadowed a range of roles from editorial to technical to gain a full overview of how a TV newsroom operates.

STATEMENT FOR 2021

The ITV Regions will continue to deliver the news to their audiences, to support and inform people through trusted, accurate and impartial news, information, as well as offering often important reassurance.

Of course, COVID will continue to dominate not just how the teams deliver the news to audiences in their region but also the stories they will seek to cover, keeping audiences updated with the latest news and information for their areas.

The teams hope to cover the following stories in their regions.

ANGLIA

The news team will cover the expected Local, District, Metro Mayor and Police Commissioner elections in May.

The team will also be covering climate change and issues around it in the run up to COP26 in the autumn.

And of course, there will be lots of sport to cover with the European Football Championships, the Olympics and Paralympics.

BORDER

There are a number of political events to be covered this year. The team will be covering the election of the new Scottish Labour Leader. With the Scottish Parliament Elections taking place this year, the team will be covering these, including in current affairs show Representing Border. The team will also be covering local Elections taking place in the region.

The team will also address the 20th Anniversary of Foot and Mouth, which had a big impact on the region.

Finally, COP26 means climate change will be a prominent issue for the team to cover.

CALENDAR

ITV News Calendar will continue to follow the economic impact of Covid-19 on individuals and businesses with a particular focus on the region's hospitality and tourism industries.

At Westminster and in the region, the Political Correspondent Harry Horton will analyse the progress of the government's commitment to levelling-up the north and south, alongside how Labour plans to win-back "red-wall" seats lost in the 2019 General Election.

The programme will continue to examine how changes as a result of Brexit affect the region's businesses.

In April and May there'll be coverage of local council elections, elections for Police and Crime Commissioners across the region, the election of a West Yorkshire Metro Mayor and the election for the Mayor of Doncaster.

In a year that includes the United Nations Climate Change Conference, there'll be a focus on the impact of climate change in the region along with how local communities are working to make a difference.

The programme will reflect a wide range of voices to examine the change in attitudes and experiences following the death of George Floyd.

The programme will follow the region's Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls ahead of the games in Tokyo.

CHANNEL

Whilst Covid-19 is still dominating the news agenda, ITV Channel will be bringing viewers vital public information about the roll-out of the vaccination programme across the Channel Islands and the two governments' plans to exit lockdown and relax restrictions.

The news team intends to focus on stories about economic recovery in the islands and specifically the future for travel links and tourism across the region.

Away from the pandemic, ITV Channel will also be planning to cover ongoing debate and controversy surrounding the building of Jersey's new hospital and the Government of Jersey debate on Assisted Dying. In Guernsey, the team will focus on the high profile debate over changes to the island's secondary education system.

CENTRAL

Covid will undoubtedly dominate in 2021 as the team continues to report on the progress of the vaccination programme and any variants. The team will also be marking significant first anniversaries - the lockdown, first death, Leicester going into lockdown, first vaccine.

The team will also be covering the economic fallout, in particular its impact on the High Street and small businesses, plus people who have fallen through the support net.

Central will also be looking at the wider health implications of cancelled operations, plus the effect of Covid on mental health.

Central will report on the local elections, including the postponed Metro Mayor elections for the West Midlands. In addition, there will be whole County Council elections in all counties - Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Whole unitary elections in North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire and Shropshire. Part (third) unitary elections in Derby, North East Lincolnshire and Peterborough. Part (third) elections in the Metropolitan Boroughs of Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Part (half or third) elections in Cheltenham, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Amber Valley, Cannock Chase, Lincoln, Redditch, Rugby, Tamworth, Worcester and Wyre Forest. The team will also be covering the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands.

The team will be examining Government plans to present an Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, in particular the HS2 Phase 2b stage, via the East Midlands Hub. They will also follow the progress on Phase 1, from Euston to the north of Birmingham.

Coventry becomes the UK City of Culture in 2021 and the team have a number of special items and lives planned throughout the year to celebrate events there.

Central will also be producing a number of features on the build-up to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Central will also be following Leicester City's progress through the Europa League.

GRANADA

For 2021 Granada Reports will continue to cover the Manchester Arena Inquiry where we expect the first part of the inquiry to publish its first set of findings in May with regard to security at the venue. The team has a full-time arena reporter, Amy Welch and she is assisted by Elaine Willcox as Deputy Editor.

In order to give viewers an insight into the lives of key workers, bus drivers, GPs, teachers the team has a series of self-authored reports - Life under lockdown which follow a day in the life of different key workers.

Granada has a series planned to look in more depth as the inequalities exposed and worsened by the pandemic - these begin in February looking at babies being born into deprivation. This follows on from the team's work in 2017 looking at child poverty that was nominated for an Orwell prize for journalism.

Ahead of COP26 in November Granada are taking an indepth look at climate change across the North West. The team are now able to use attribution data to look at back at extreme weather events such as the moor fires at Saddleworth to show our audience how climate change is responsible for heat and flooding.

LONDON

In 2021 the team will continue to report on the impact the pandemic is having on the capital. They will focus on businesses that have been hit hard by Covid and how the city will 'pick itself back up' after the vaccine roll out. We also plan to chart how the transport network will be affected by the lower numbers coming into the city. Politically, it's a big year with a Mayoral election (currently) scheduled for May. And there is an important ten year anniversary programme we are planning this summer - ten years since the London riots.

MERIDIAN

It goes without saying that the team will be monitoring how local health services are fairing throughout the year. The effect of Covid on the aviation industry will continue to be a focus, including the start of new quarantine measures for those travelling into the UK in mid February. Tourism will feature heavily in coverage as with travel restrictions likely for some time, local seaside resorts and local tourist attractions could benefit from a staycation boom. With the end of the latest furlough period the team will watch for local industries and businesses that do not survive and possible job losses. They will also look to celebrate local success stories too.

The team will continue to cover the education story. Key moments will be the return of students to school & University after lockdown three and how changes to exams will play out.

The team plans to reflect FGM awareness day in February and speak to local community groups who are keen to raise awareness of the crime.

In April the team will have in depth coverage of the inquiry findings, into baby deaths at the East Kent Hospitals Trust.

Meridian will continue to follow the Brexit story in and around Dover in terms of the transportation of goods and in July will reflect the 6 month anniversary since we left the EU.

2021 will be a big year for sport with the Olympics set to go ahead, albeit behind closed doors at this stage. Meridian will follow local athletes as they train for the event and then compete.

May is scheduled for local elections with dozens of County Councils, Unitaries and District Councils up for election, as well as Police and Crime Commissioners.

Other national stories that the team will look to find regional angles include The Climate Change conference in Glasgow, or 'COP26'.

TYNE TEES

Of course, COVID will continue to dominate and the team will provide regional coverage of this ongoing major story.

The team will also provide coverage of local elections coming up in the region, with insight and analysis.

It is also the 20th Anniversary of Foot and Mouth which impacted the region so the team will provide cover for this.

The team is also planning climate change coverage to coincide with the COP26 Conference.

In sport, the team also plans to follow local athletes who travel to Japan for the Olympics - if the games go ahead. Similarly, if the Rugby League World Cup tournament goes ahead, some of the games will be held in the region and Tyne Tees will cover the buildup to them as well as the matches themselves.

WEST COUNTRY

The biggest focus for West Country will be the ongoing effects of the COVID pandemic, and how it impacts the South West. The team will continue to seek out and speak to a wide range of contributors, from those working on the front line in our hospitals and other health settings, to patients and families, including those in care homes. They will also look at the economic impact on individuals, businesses and the South West region as a whole.

A big theme for West Country will be the impact on young people, particularly those due to take public exams. As events unfold, the team will be returning to some of the same pupils and teachers throughout the year to get their reaction.

Other themes will be mental health, and the efforts of communities and individuals helping others. In all of the coverage of the pandemic, they will have a balance of personal stories, and also the views of experts.

With the recent announcement that the G7 summit will be held in Cornwall, West Country will be looking at this from every local angle, from policing to the boost it will give local businesses.

Throughout the year, the team will be reporting on the impact of Brexit. Amongst others, they will be talking to the large farming and fishing communities in the region, as well as ports, airports and other businesses that deal directly with Europe.

The team are planning live broadcasts and "special" programmes on the vital South West tourism industry, looking at how it has been affected and how it plans to recover. Similarly, they will have full and varied coverage of the region's big events, if and how they go ahead, and the impact if they are cancelled.

West Country will be giving full coverage to ongoing stories, and to some major anniversaries. They will be reporting on the court cases resulting from the “toppling” of Colston’s statue in Bristol, and talking to a range of people about the legacy of that event, and the Black Lives Matter protests around the region.

The team will be giving extensive coverage to the election of Bristol’s Mayor, and Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as local council elections.

Finally, West Country will be reporting on Cornwall hosting the Tour of Britain; Falmouth hosting the start of the Tall Ships Race; delayed events marking 400 years of the sailing of The Mayflower from Plymouth; and twenty years since the Eden Project opened to the public in Cornwall. In addition, the team will be doing some special investigations and strands - one of note is a series on hate crime.