Silvermouse for production paperwork

Independent production companies: Get started

Silvermouse is the system the BBC uses for completing post-production paperwork for its TV and audio programmes and non-linear content, including the Programme as Broadcast or Programme as Completed, On-Air Sustainability and Music Reporting information.

This helpcard will show you how to login, find your way around the system, locate your paperwork, and show you the basic process to complete it, and when it should be done.

Please note: The data in this helpcard is for training purposes only. Please click in the Table of Contents below to navigate to a specific section quickly.

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What is Silvermouse?

The BBC, as a broadcaster, uses Silvermouse so production teams can complete their production reporting. Silvermouse is used by several other broadcasters, but each broadcaster may have bespoke forms.

The production reporting must be **detailed**, **accurate** and **robust**, and completed in a **timely** manner as:

- It is the official record of the programme or content and fulfils the BBC's financial and legal obligations to other organisations, such as the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)
- It is used to record clearance rights for material and contributors
  - so future productions can determine if any of the content can be exploited as extracts
  - so BBC Studios Distribution can determine if the content can be resold
  - so BBC Archives can catalogue the content for possible reuse
  - to determine if the content can be repeated
  - so residual payments can be made if any or all of the content is repeated or sold
  - so the BBC can pay contributors accurately and quickly when residuals are due
  - so Programme Acquisitions can complete Sequence or Purchase Programme agreements using total durations
- It links to other systems to
  - publicise the content, for example in magazine listings, web searches and on BBC platforms
  - to report the usage of music to the collecting societies so payments can be made
- It is used by the BBC for reporting purposes

Content data is key to powering content discovery. Good quality Silvermouse data provides other systems with richer understanding enabling better audience experiences. It is essential that this data is not only included in descriptions but also captured in a structured way within the appropriate content data capture fields in the forms. This allows systems to understand the data accurately and maximise its value for audiences.

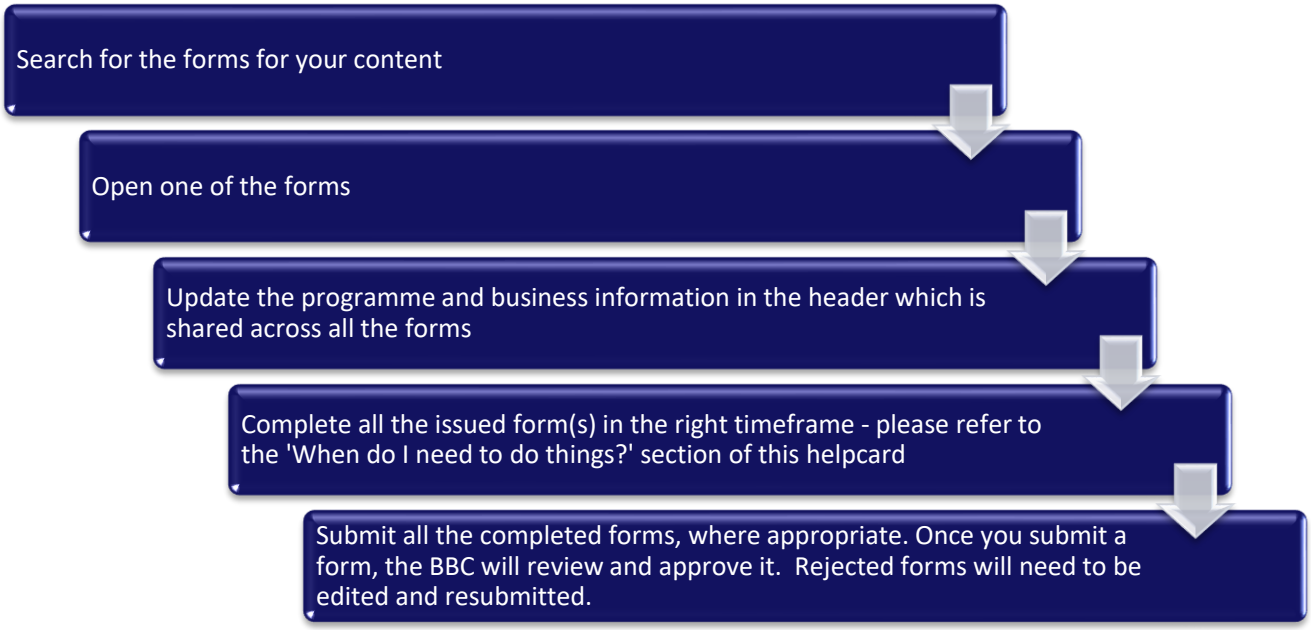
When completing the paperwork, please ensure it will make sense to someone who might look back at it in 50+ years' time.

Other systems related to Silvermouse reporting

- **BBC MusicBox**
  BBC MusicBox is used to source and clear music during pre-production rather than to report it. However, it holds the metadata required for each cue, and you can create playlists to view every track you sourced alongside the metadata you will need for reporting
- **Soundmouse Auto Recognition**
  Silvermouse is integrated with the Soundmouse Auto Recognition system. Upload your programme or content to Soundmouse Auto Recognition and it will attempt to identify the metadata for each piece of music and enter it into the Cue Sheet. You will need to review each cue, amending or updating it where necessary, and can submit the Cue Sheet from there. The Cue Sheet and its status are reflected in Silvermouse
- **dira!**
  dira! is used for live playout in radio. Because music must be entered into dira! before it can be played in a live programme, Cue Sheet reporting for live programmes is done there

What do I need to do?

You need to:



Silvermouse will automatically forward approved forms to other systems:

- Approved Cue Sheet forms are automatically sent via Silvermouse to the BBC Music Reporting team who forward the information to the music collecting societies so royalty payments can be made to composers, performers and other copyright holders

  This is required for all linear programmes and non-linear content published on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds
- Approved Programme Descriptions forms are automatically forwarded to the relevant magazine listings, the BBC's playout service provider, BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds

The Silvermouse forms

The forms the BBC uses for its production reporting in Silvermouse are, in order of likely use:

- **Programme Descriptions**
  The Programme Descriptions form is used by listings magazines such as the Radio Times, for digital programme guides, BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds and the BBC's programme websites, and increasingly by algorithms, recommendation and search functions. This form should only include audience-facing billings; the full list of contributors should be entered into as part of the Contributors form
- **Non-linear**
  The Non-linear form is used to record where non-linear BBC content has been published and what rights have been agreed for publication
- **Contributors**
  The Contributors form is one of the key elements of the BBC **P**rogramme **as B**roadcast (PasB) or **P**rogramme **as C**ompleted (PasC) paperwork and details all the people used and their contracts and agreements. Examples include actors, choreographers, commentators, experts, interviewees, musicians, stunt arrangers or writers
- **Cue Sheet**
  The Cue Sheet is used to report all the music in the content, so the correct parties can be paid

- **Copyrights**
  The Copyrights form is another key element of the BBC PasB or PasC and details all the copyright works used and how it was cleared for use. Examples include script, poems, stills, artistic work, and commissioned or archive footage
- **Front Page**
  The Front Page is the cover form for the BBC PasB or PasC and provides all the key information about the programme or content
- **On-Air Sustainability**
  The Silvermouse On-Air Sustainability form captures important sustainability information for TV and audio productions commissioned by the BBC

When viewing older content in the Library, other legacy forms and fields may be displayed which are no longer used.

If you believe the forms that were issued for your content is incorrect, please speak to your BBC Contact.

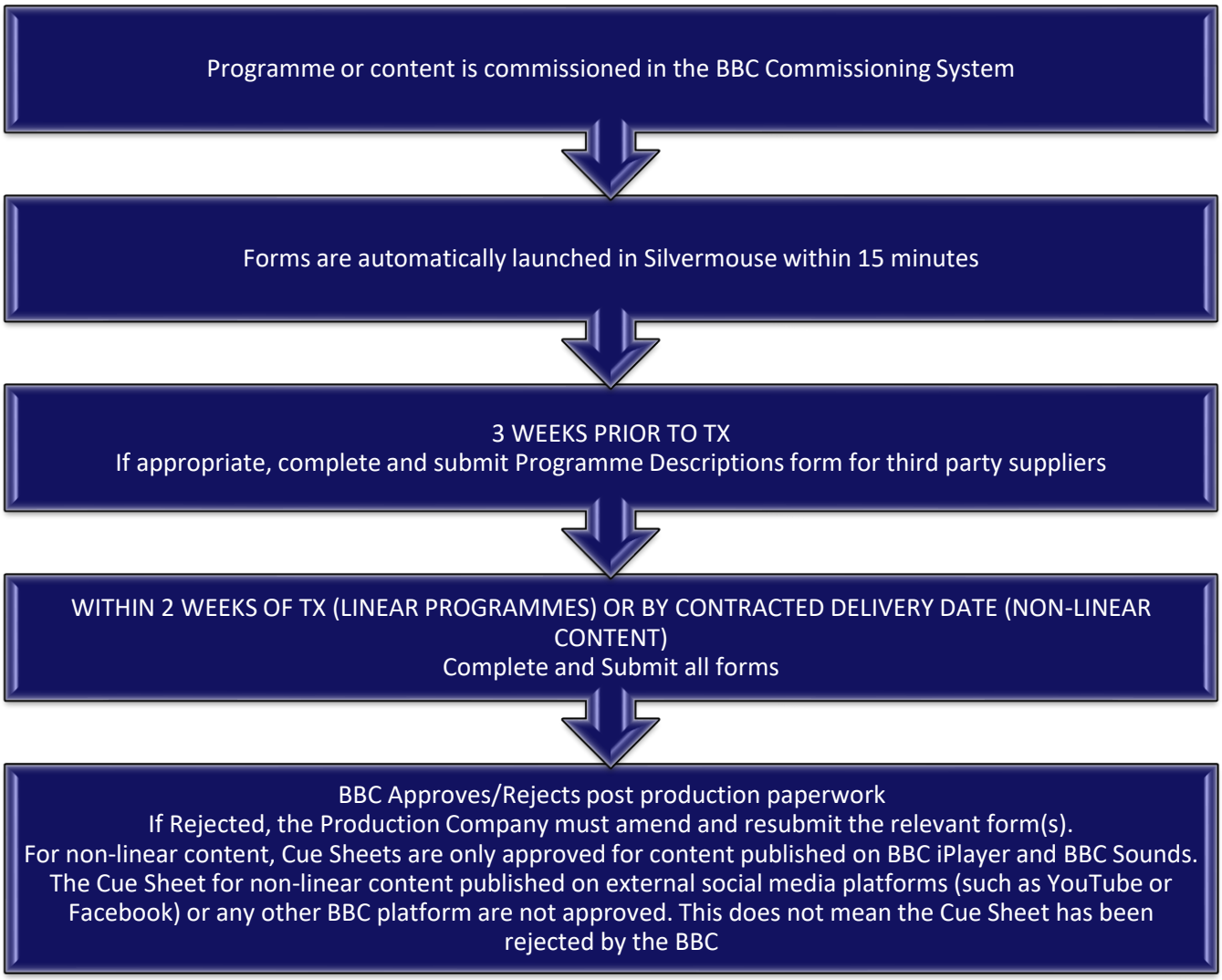
Please refer to the individual helpcards for each form on the BBC Academy's Silvermouse for production paperwork site for further details.

Silvermouse is only used for the post-production reporting of the content. All clearance must be sought in the pre-production phase.

Failure to provide robust, accurate and detailed reporting of items or people used in the programme or content will put the BBC in breach of its agreements or contracts.

When do I need to do things?

It is important that the relevant forms are approved in a timely manner. Please use this diagram as general guidance; your contractual paperwork provides your definitive timeline requirements.



Non-linear content reporting

BBC: Content which is formally commissioned will automatically have forms created in Silvermouse, whereas 'Non-linear content' is not formally commissioned and has an identifier for online use only.

All the issued forms must be completed and approved, except the Cue Sheet. The Cue Sheet for music reporting should only be completed and approved for non-linear content published on BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds. For all other external social media platforms, such as YouTube or Facebook, and any other BBC platforms, the Cue Sheet must be completed but **NOT** approved. An Approved Cue Sheet is automatically sent to the Music Reporting team who send the details to the Collecting Societies for payment. The BBC isn't obliged to report music used on social media, so Cue Sheets for this content should be completed but left unapproved. Completing them still matters, as it ensures the music is logged in case the content is reused later in output that does require reporting.

Please refer to the **Report Non-Linear Content section of the Commercial Rights and Business Affairs' Production Toolkit** for the requirements for reporting non-linear content.

Content which is formally commissioned will automatically have forms created in Silvermouse, whereas 'Non-linear content' is not formally commissioned and has an identifier for online use only.
Please refer to the **BBC Commissioning** website or your BBC contact for further details. All the issued forms must be submitted by the dates shown in **When do I need to do things?** section of this helpcard.

If you are unsure about your reporting requirements, please speak to your BBC contact.

What forms can I see?

Only your Production Company and the relevant Broadcaster can view the forms for your programmes or content.

Access Silvermouse

To request a login and access Silvermouse for the first time, please refer to the **Set up** helpcard.

For subsequent access, please use the link for Silvermouse in your web browser:
https://www.silvermouse.com/web/login

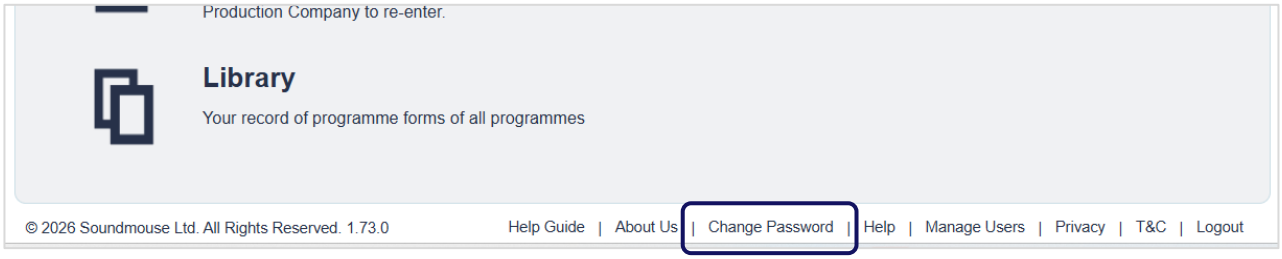
Your login only remains active for 90 days. If you don't log in to Silvermouse within those 90 days, you will need to contact Silvermouse directly to ask for your account to be reactivated. For this reason, consider setting a calendar reminder to log into Silvermouse every two months.

Silvermouse frequently uses pop-up windows, so you may need to approve pop-up windows in your browser's security settings; please only allow these for the Silvermouse website only.

Manage your password

To manually change your password at any time:

- At the bottom of the homepage, click on **Change Password**

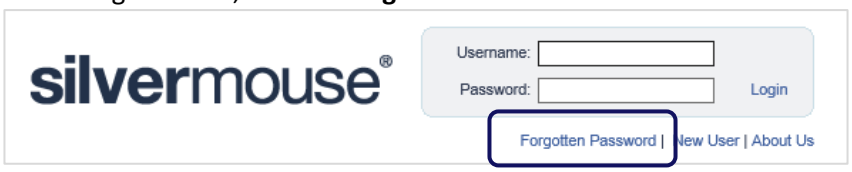


Any new password must be different from the current and previous six passwords, and must contain at least 9 characters which must be a combination of letters (it is not case sensitive), numbers and the following symbols:

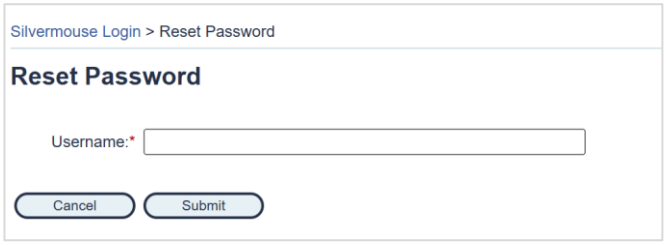
! # $ % & ( ) + - / : < = > ? _

If you have forgotten your password:

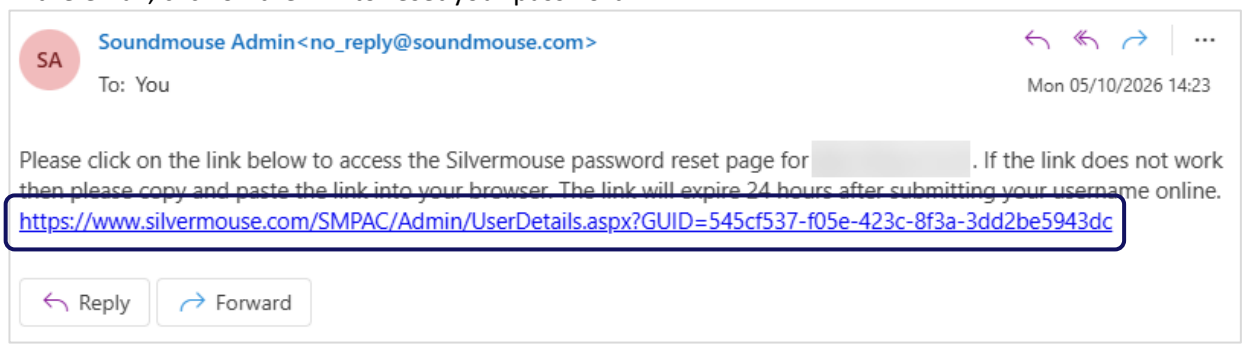
- On the login screen, click on **Forgotten Password**



- **In Username**, type your username and click on **Submit**; an email will be sent to your registered email address



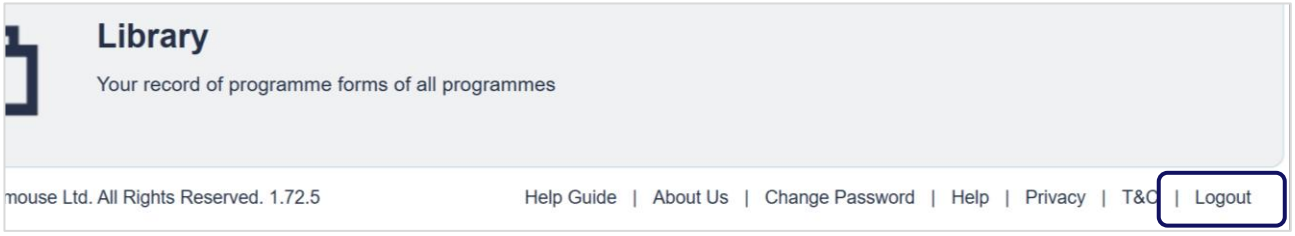
- In the email, click on the link to reset your password



Log out

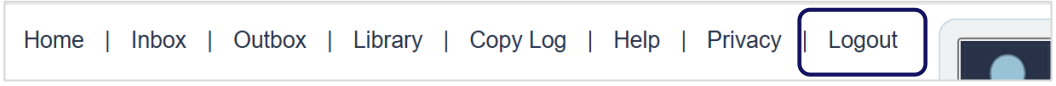
If you are on a public or shared computer, you MUST remember to log out of Silvermouse when you are done:

- At the bottom of the homepage, click on **Logout**



or

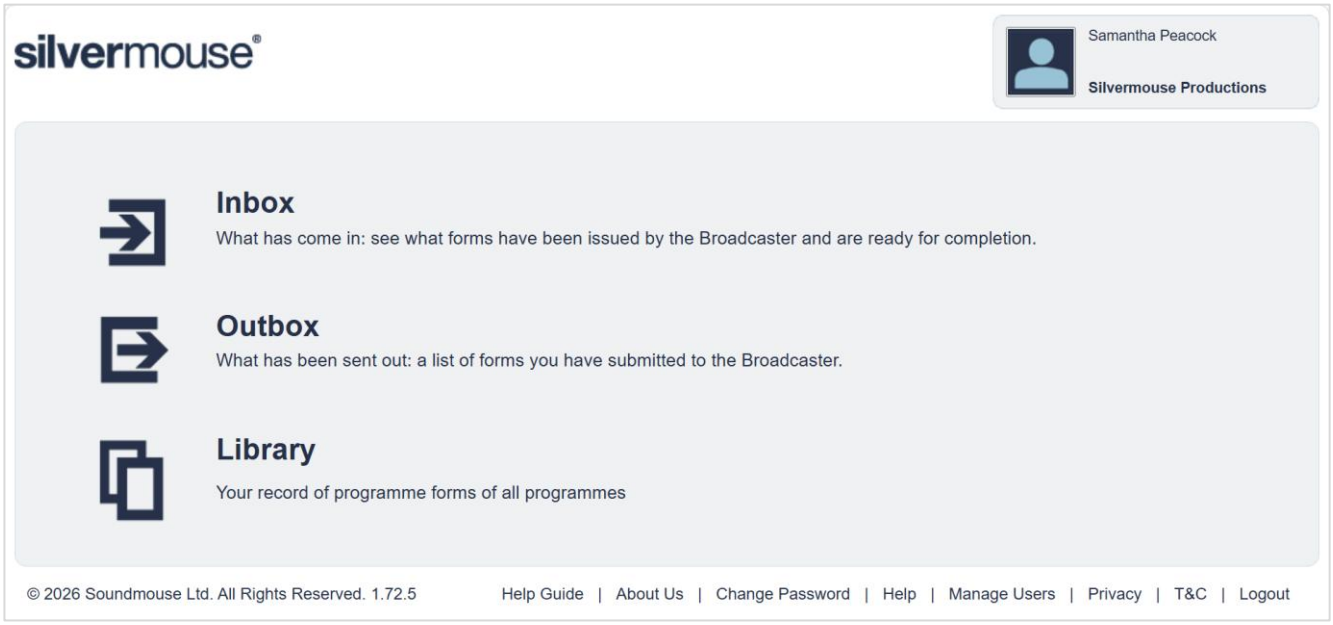
- At the top right of the Inbox, Outbox or Library, or when you are viewing any form, click on **Logout**



Silvermouse will automatically log you out of the system if you have been idle for 120 minutes.

The Silvermouse homepage

The homepage shows your name and the production company you are logged in with (top right), as well as the Inbox, Outbox and Library. Links are available at the bottom of the page to change your password, to log out, and to view Silvermouse's Help pages.



Silvermouse holds all the forms in three main locations:

- **The Inbox**
  Displays all forms which need to be actioned by your production company; these might be Issued, currently In Progress or Rejected by broadcasters you have commissions with. They remain visible in the Inbox until they are 'Submitted' to the broadcaster
- **The Outbox**
  Displays any forms which have the Submit to Broadcaster status; these cannot be edited until the broadcaster rejects them
- **The Library**
  Does not display any forms by default until search criteria or a filter is applied; this is to increase system performance as the Library will contain an extensive number of forms. Once search criteria or a filter has been applied, the **Library** will display all forms for your production company irrespective of the form status, across all broadcasters

Find and open forms

Silvermouse provides a Simple search, an Advanced search, and Filters. You can use a combination of the search criteria and filters, as required. You can also mark your content as a Favourite so you can quickly locate its forms next time.

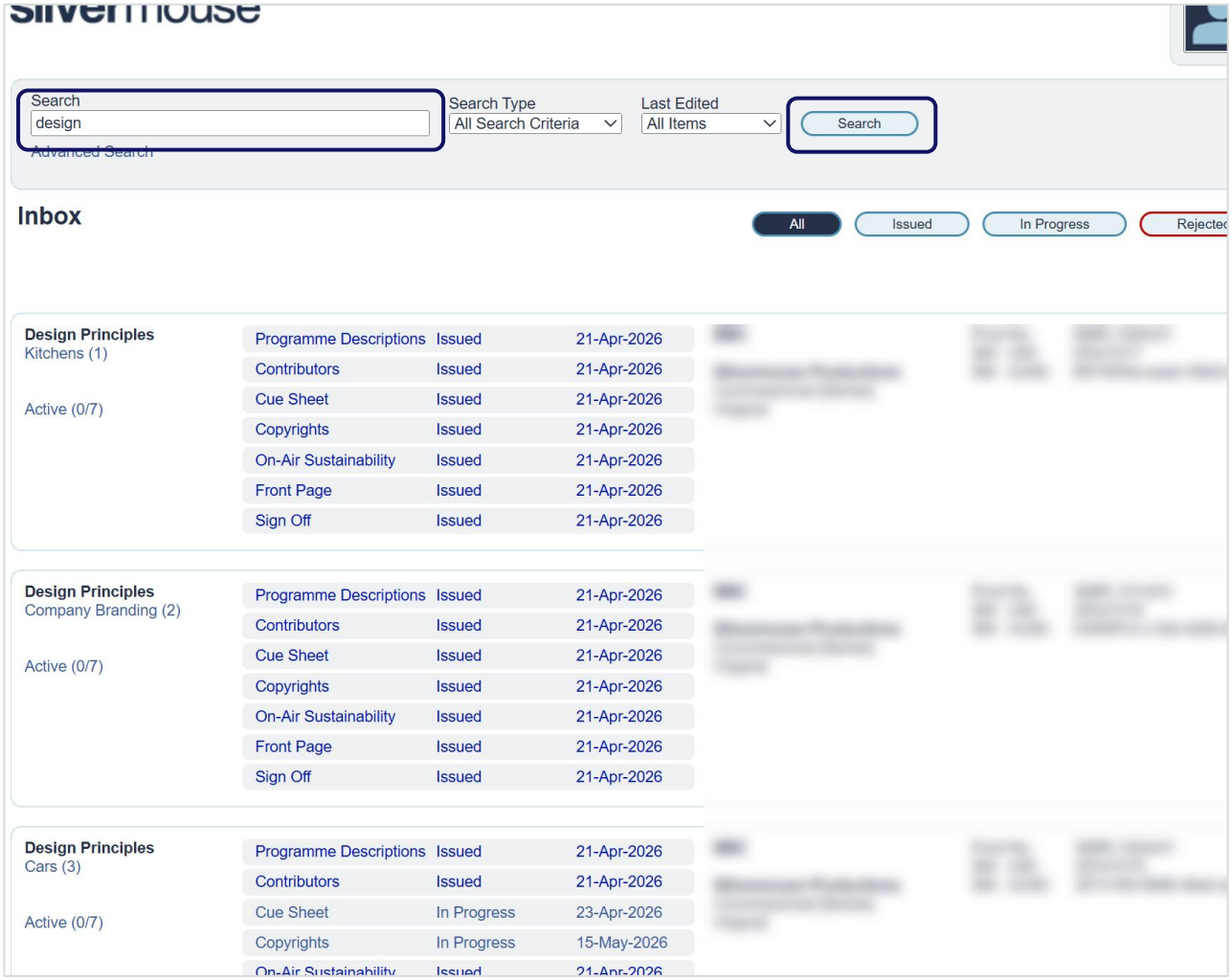
Once a search has been performed, the search results are **not** automatically cleared when a form is viewed or another destination is selected. The search criteria will only be removed if the search is run again with no criteria, if you click on 'Clear Fields' in the Advanced Search, or if you log out.

Search

Simple search

To run a simple search in the Inbox, Outbox or Library:

- In **Search**, partially type the name of the programme or content; the search is a Begins With search and is not case sensitive
- Click on **Search**

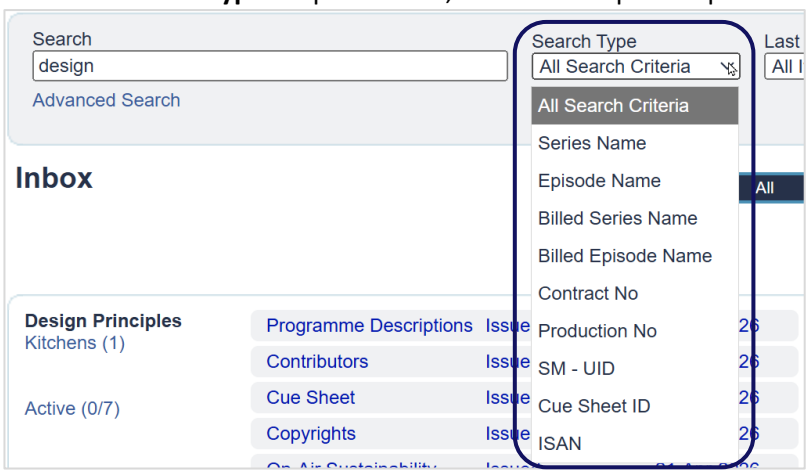


Although you can specify a particular field to search, the simple search will search for your criteria in the following fields by default:

- **Series Name**
- **Episode Name**
- **Billed Series Name**
- **Billed Episode Name**
- **Contract No.** This field has been removed from BBC forms
- **Production No.** This is the BBC programme Unique ID
- **SM – UID.** This is the Silvermouse Unique ID
- **Cue Sheet ID.** As the Cue Sheet can be viewed within the programme or content, this option is redundant
- **ISAN** (The International Standard Audiovisual Number). The BBC does not use this option

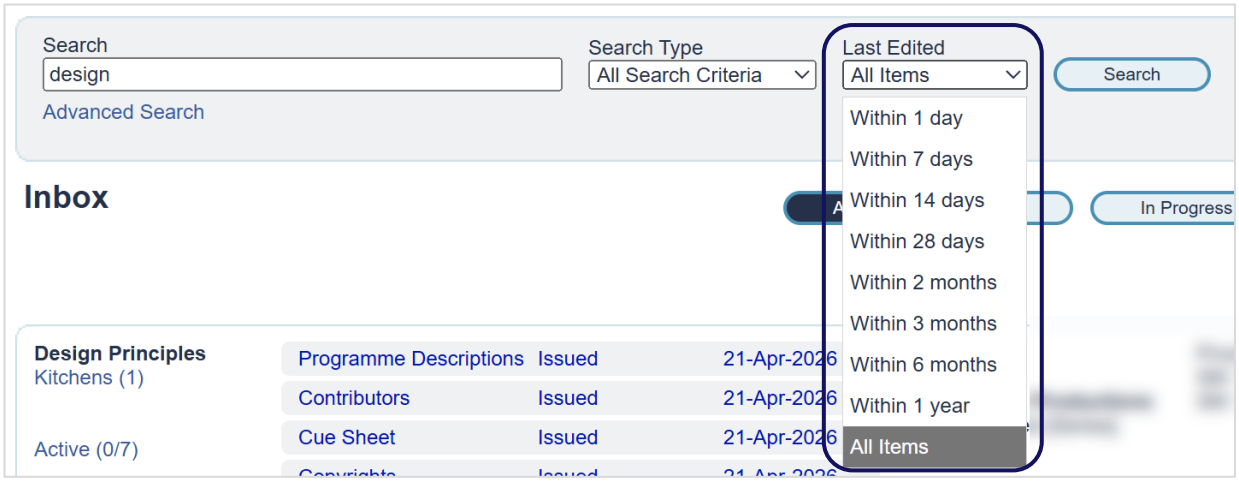
To specifically search one of these fields:

- From the **Search Type** drop-down list, select the required option



In the Simple search, you can also specify a time when a form was last edited, for example, edited in the last 7 days or the last 3 months:

- From the **Last Edited** drop-down list, select the required option



Non-linear content may not have a BBC UID assigned if it was formally commissioned via the commissioning system. In these cases, you will be solely reliant on the name used in the Series or Episode name.

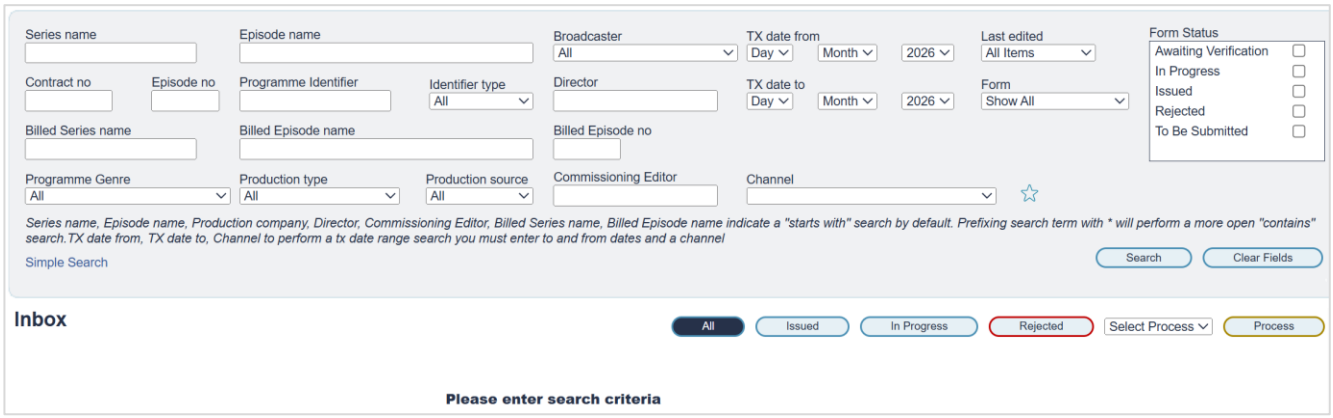
Advanced search

To access the Advanced search:

- Click on **Advanced Search**



The Advanced Search provides more fields to search against:



- **Series name**
  This uses a Starts With search by default
- **Episode name**
  This uses a Starts With search by default
- **Broadcaster**
  This allows you to search for content that was created for a specific broadcaster
- **Contract no**
  This has been removed from BBC forms so will not return any search results
- **Episode no**
- **Programme Identifier**
  This is the BBC programme UID, the Silvermouse UID, the Cue Sheet ID, or the ISAN; some non-linear content may not have a UID. The BBC does not use the ISAN
- **Identifier type**
  This specifies which Identifier should be used in the search with the Programme Identifier text
- **Director**
  This has been removed from BBC forms so this will not return any search results
- **Billed Series name**
  This uses a Starts With search by default
- **Billed Episode name**
  This uses a Starts With search by default
- **Billed Episode no**.
- **Programme Genre**.
- **Production type**
  Select whether the content is a One Off Programme or part of a Series. Other options may be displayed for other Broadcasters
- **Production source**
  Select how the content was sourced or created
- **Commissioning Editor**
  The person who commissioned the content on behalf of the BBC; this uses a Starts With search by default
- **BBC: Version name**
  This is the Version Title from the scheduling system, and is only for audio content
- **TX date from** and **to,** and **Channel**
  These search the post-TX data recorded in the Programme History in Silvermouse, which is the ‘As Run’ data received from the scheduling system. These fields can only be used for searches after the programme has transmitted. No search results will be displayed if the TX date range extends beyond three months

- **BBC: TX/Publication date from** and **to**, **Preset TX Ranges**, and **Transmission Channel**
  These search the TX/Publication date from the header of a programme in Silvermouse; they can only be searched on after the programme has transmitted
- **BBC: Publication date from (Non-linear)** and **to (Non-linear), Publication Platform (Non-linear)** and **Publication ID (Non-linear)**
  These search the publication details in the 'Add Publication' section of the Non-linear form
- **Last Edited**
- **Form**
  Select the form you wish to search for. The Form drop-down list displays all Silvermouse forms for all broadcasters, as independent production companies will need to search for forms for various commissions. The BBC only uses some of the listed forms; please refer to **The Silvermouse forms** section of this helpcard for more information
- **Form Status**
  Select the status of the form you wish to search for
- **Star** ☆
  Select this to search for the paperwork for programmes and content that you previously marked as favourites; please refer to the **Favourites** section of this helpcard for further details

The Advanced search wild card *

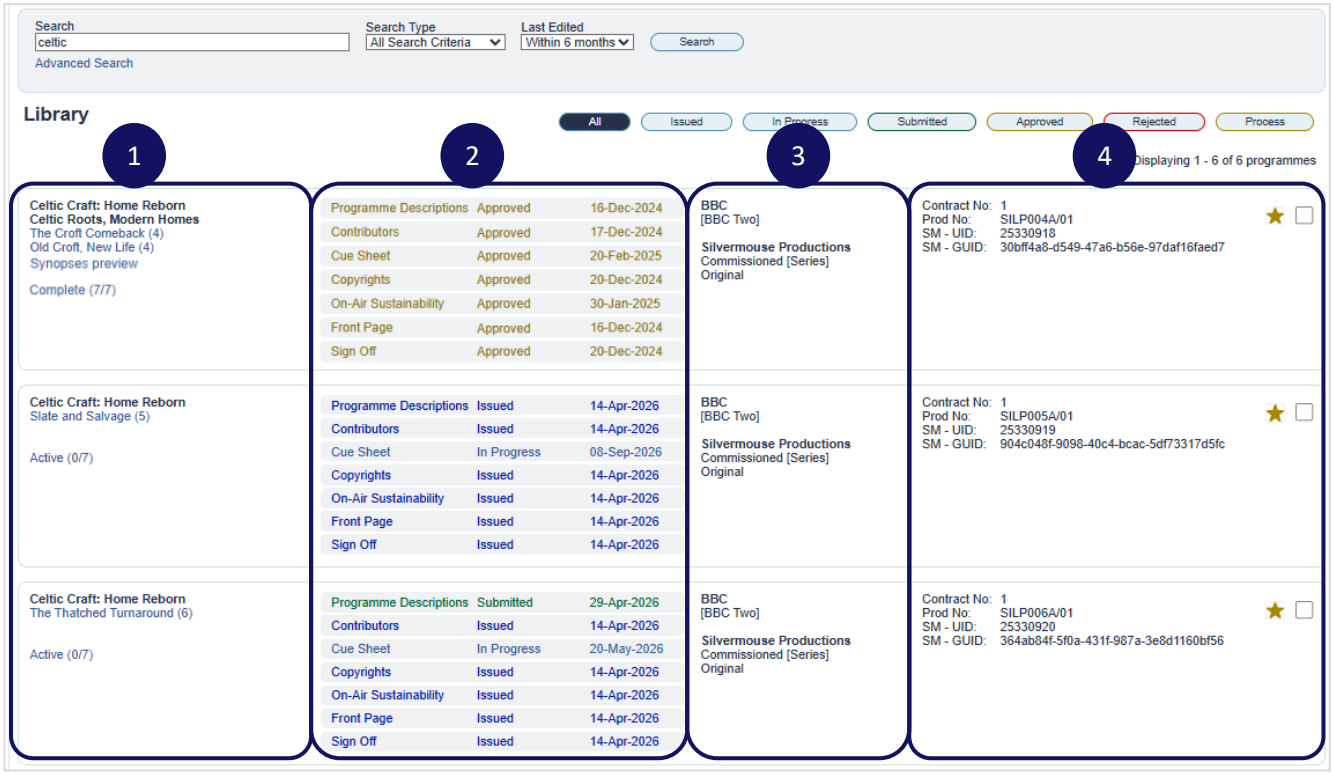
By default, all Advanced Search fields use a 'Begins with' search, but you can use an asterisk as a wild card in some fields. For example, if you can't remember the correct title of the programme 'Big Cats about the House', you could type in ***cats**.

The asterisk wild card can be used in the following fields:

- Series Name
- Episode Name
- Billed Series Name
- Billed Episode Name
- Commissioning Editor

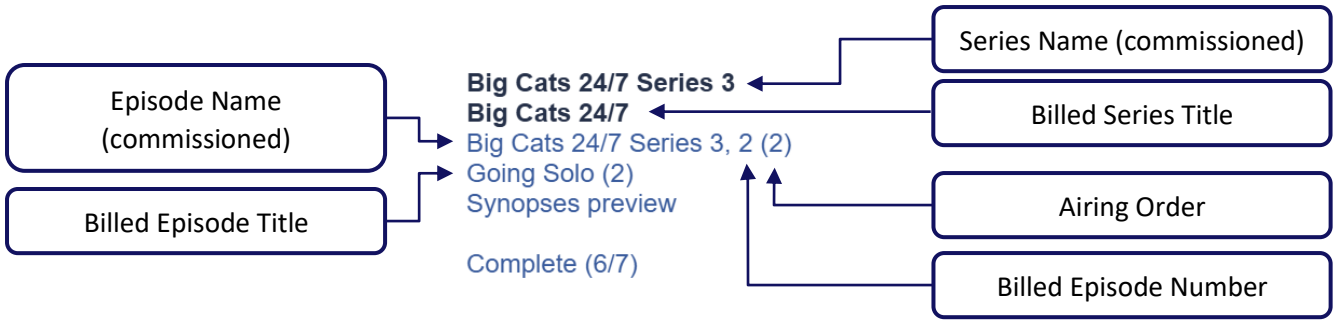
The search results

When search criteria is applied, production paperwork will appear in the search results. The screenshot below is an example of a linear programme.

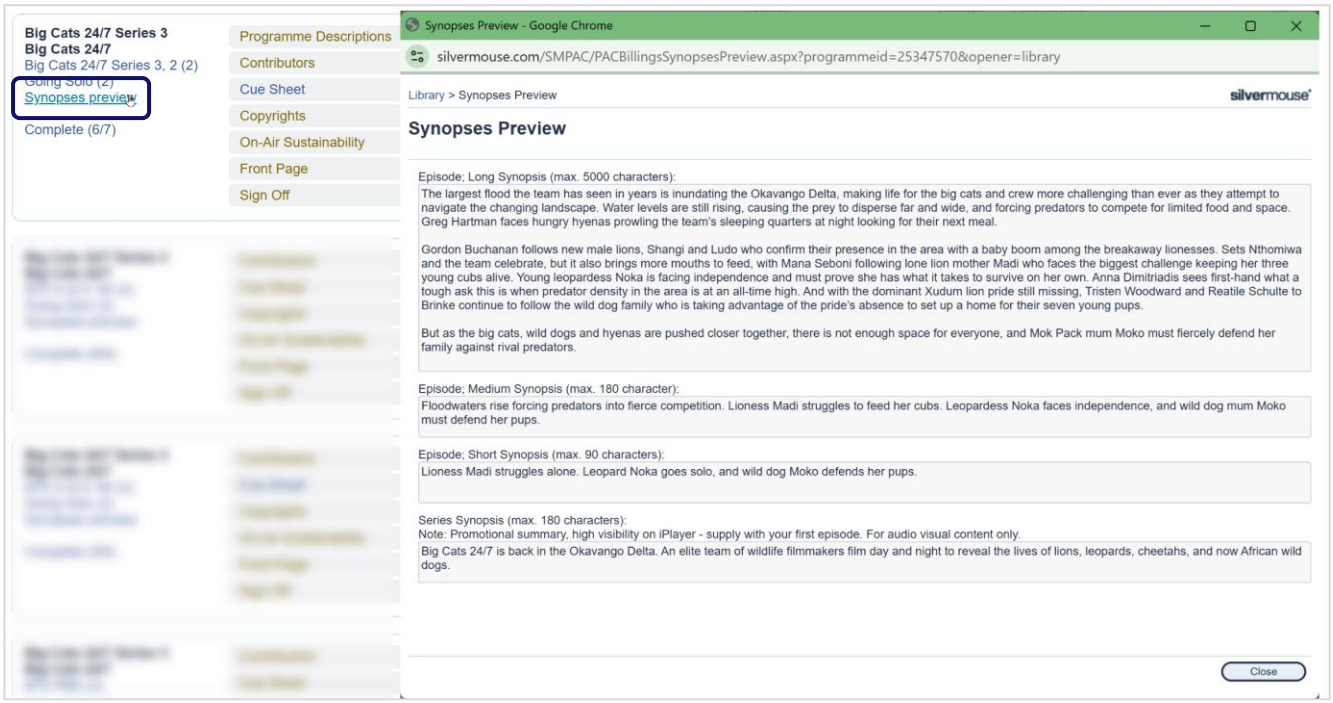


Column 1 displays:

- Series Name as entered in the commissioning system or when the forms were created
- Billed Series Title taken from the header
- Episode Name as entered in the commissioning system or when the forms were created
- Billed Episode Title taken from the header
- Episode Number, shown immediately after the Episode Name
- Billed Episode Number, shown in brackets after the Billed Episode Name
- Version Title as entered in the commissioning system or when the forms were created; this is for audio content only, and are not audience facing
- Synopses Preview
- The number of Issued forms, and how many have an Approved status; if six forms were issued for the content and one was approved, it would show **(1/6)**



The Synopses preview opens the synopses from the Programme Descriptions form in a new window:

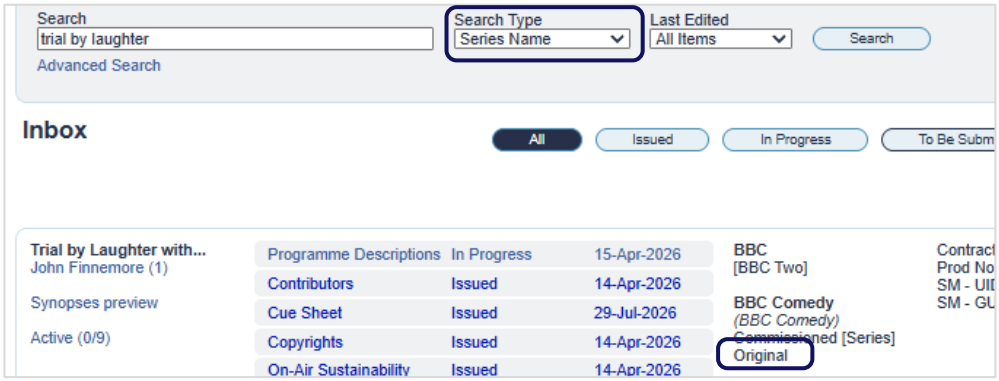


Column 2 displays all the forms, their status, and the date action was last taken on them. Click on any form link to open the form.

Remember, Approved forms will not be displayed if you are viewing the search results in the Inbox.

Column 3 displays:

- Broadcaster
- Transmission Channel, Date and Time, if appropriate
- Production Company for the programme
- Production Source and Production Type
- If a search was performed on the Series Name for audio content, the Version Type (Original or Reversion) will also display if this data has been added to the scheduling system



Column 4 will display different information, depending on whether the programme or content was created by the commissioning system or if it was created manually. Generally, it displays:

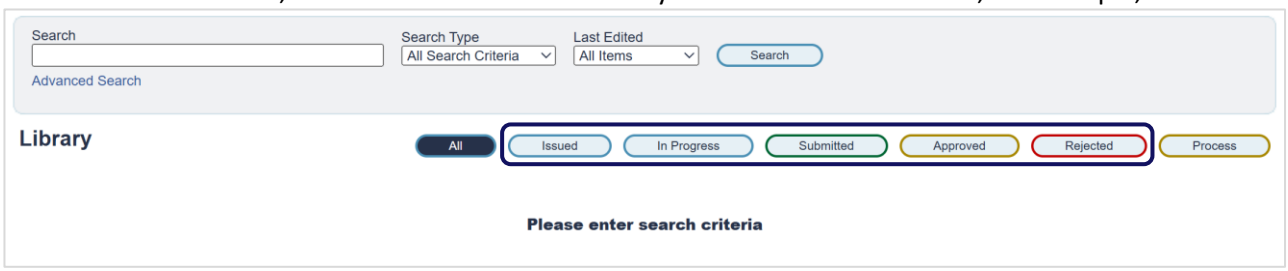
- **Contract No.** This will only display if the Series number has been manually updated in the header
- **Production No.** This is the BBC Programme ID or Unique ID (UID)
- **SM – UID.** This is the unique UID within Silvermouse

- **Internal System Reference.** This is a pre-transmission reference for the programme from the commissioning system
- **Version Internal System Reference.** This is a pre-transmission reference for the programme from the commissioning system with version number

Filters

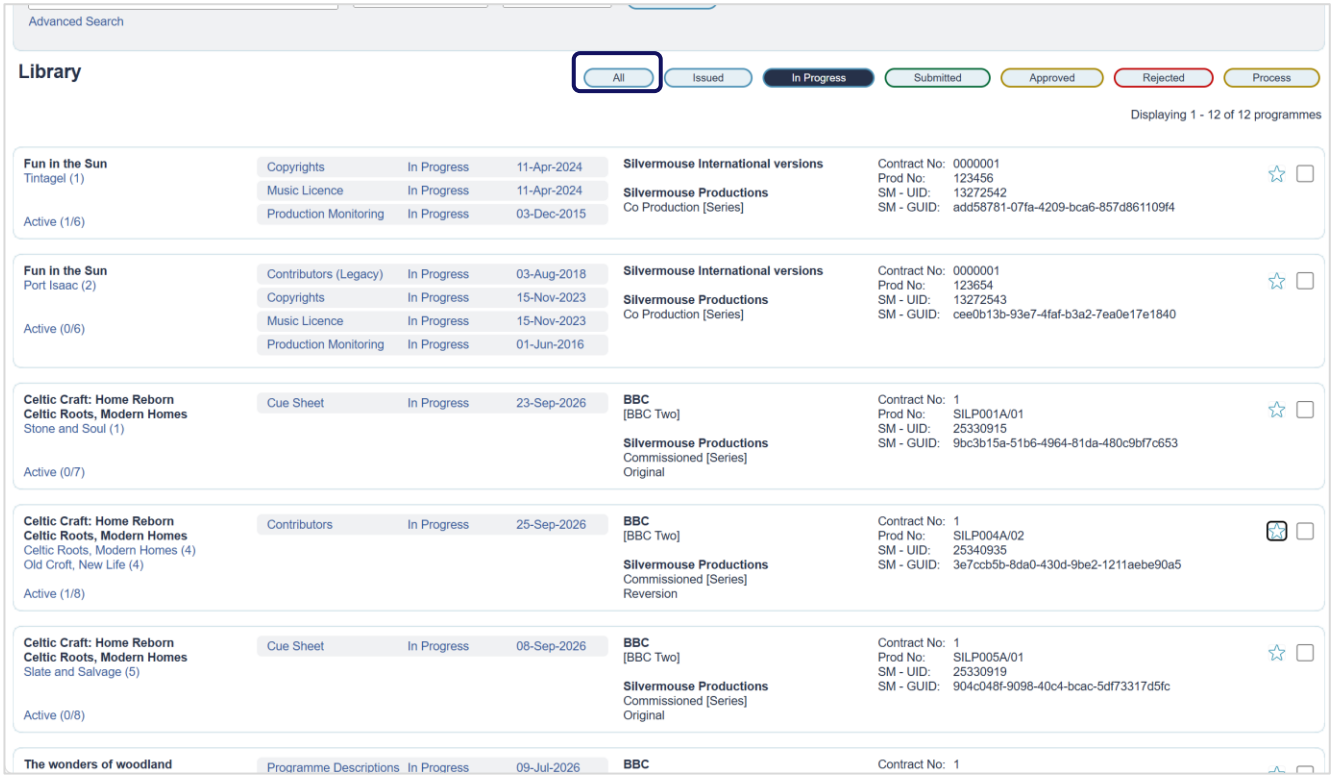
To apply a Filter:

- Beneath the search bar, click on the status of the form you wish to amend or view, for example, Submitted



To clear a filter:

- Click on **All**



Filters can also be applied within the Advanced Search.

Favourites

Once you have located the paperwork for your programme or content, you can mark it as a Favourite, so it is easy to search for later.

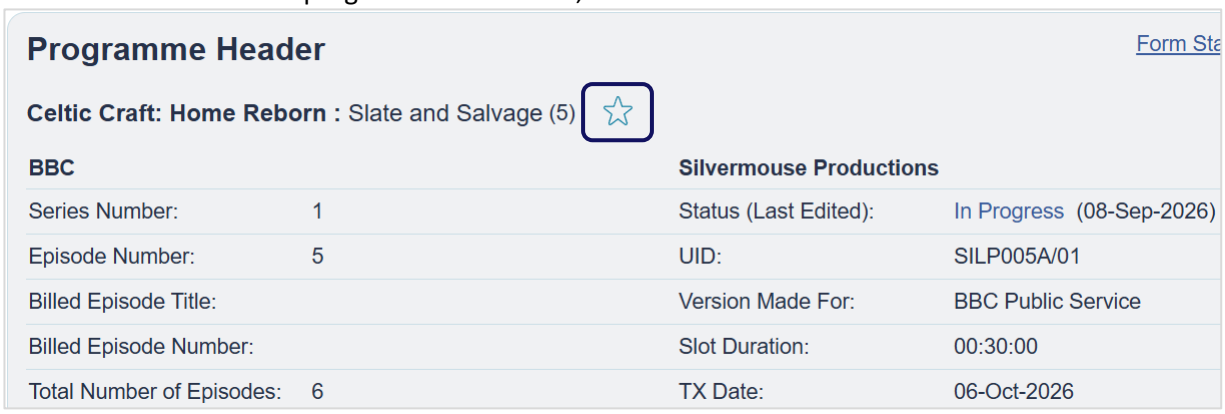
To mark your paperwork as a Favourite:

- In the search results, click on the star



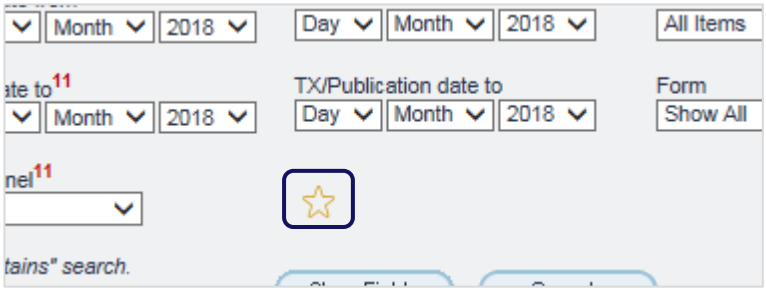
or

- Within the header of the programme or content, click on the star



To locate paperwork that has been marked as a Favourite:

- Click on **Advanced Search**
- In the search criteria, click on the star



- Click on **Search**

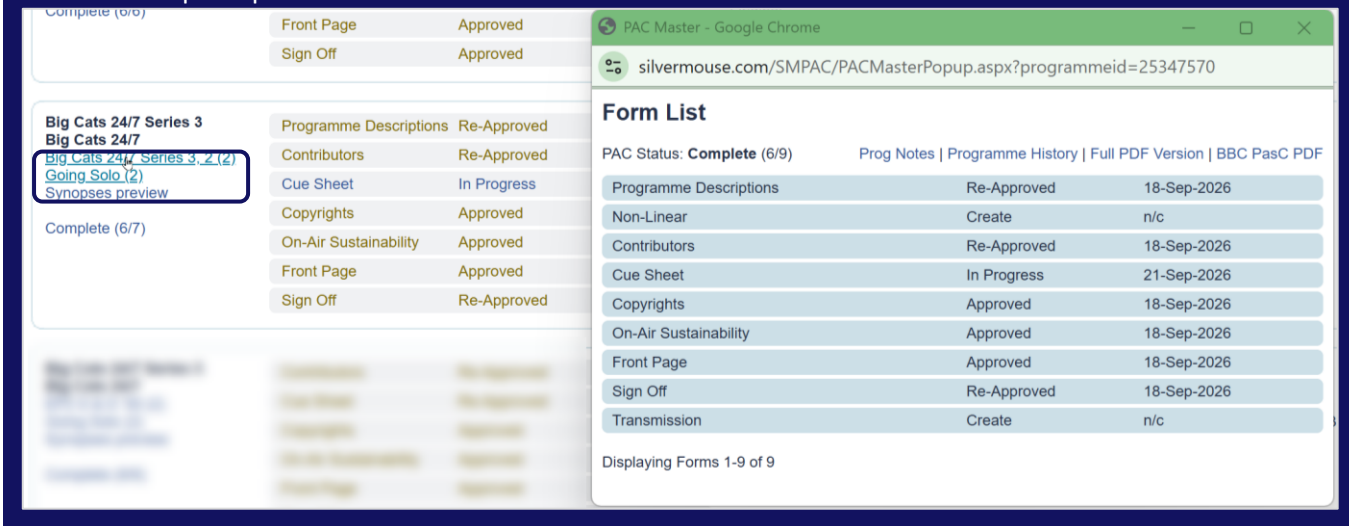
Open a form

To open a form:

- Click on the form, its status or its last edited date in the search results

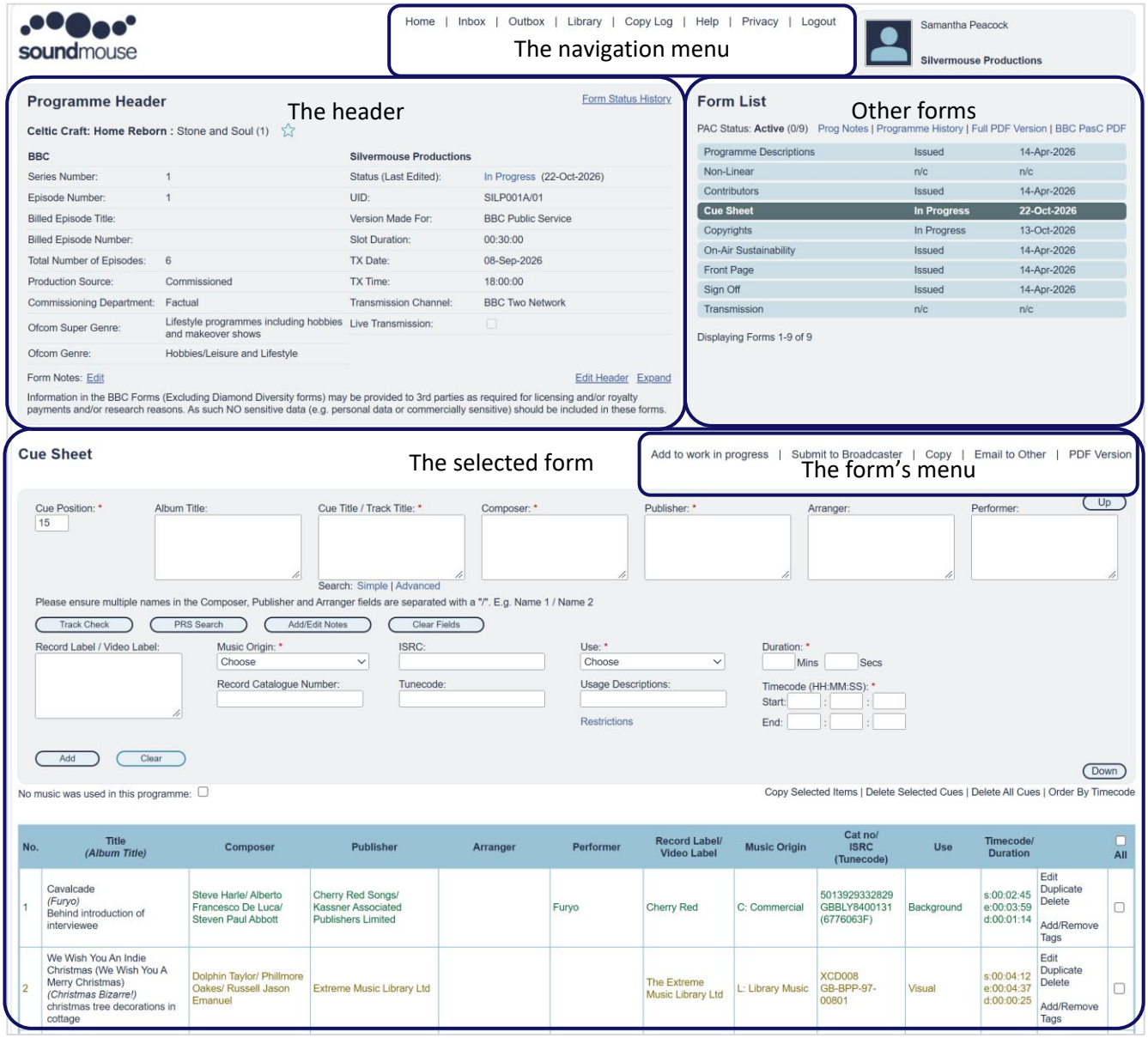


The Episode Name and Billed Episode Title links open the Form List in a separate window, but this creates an additional step to open a form:



The general layout

The following screenshot shows the general layout of a form:



The header

The header contains the common business and programme information about the programme or content, such as Series Name, Episode Name, Programme UID if the content has a UID, and transmission dates, times and transmission channels. As the data within the header is common for all forms, it will always be displayed when a form is viewed.

The header MUST ALWAYS be edited and updated as necessary. Please refer to the **Header** helpcard for further details of what needs to be updated.

When you open one of the forms, the initial view of the header displays only part of the header data. To view all the details in the header:

- Click on **Expand**
- To return to the default view, click on **Collapse**

The Form List

The Form List shows the other associated forms for the programme or content. The Form list is always displayed when a form is viewed.

To switch to an associated form:

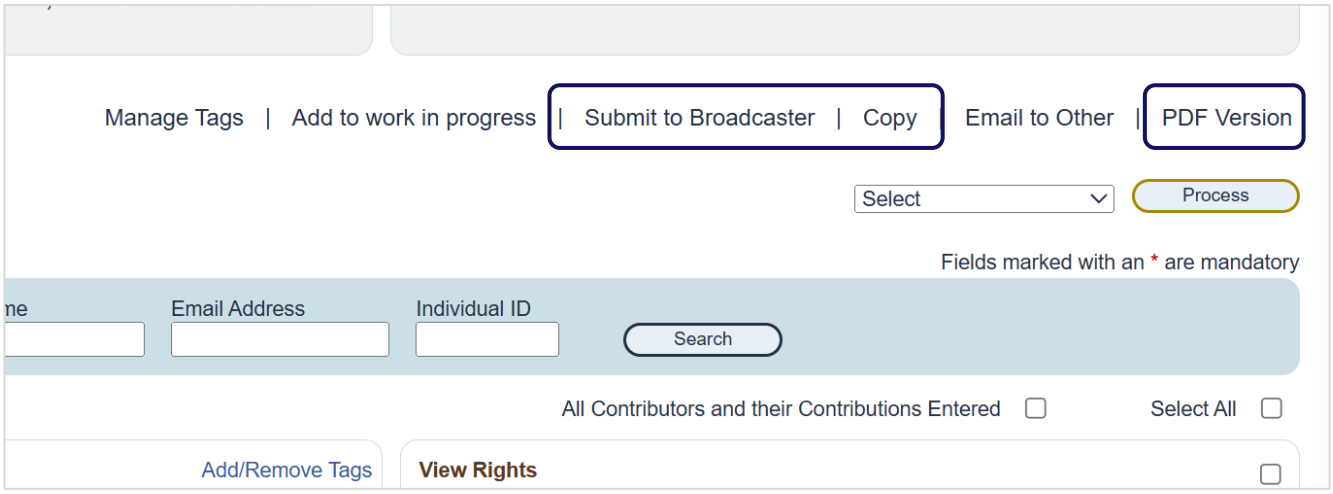
➡ Click on the name of the form you wish to open

Some forms save as you enter data, but others show an Update button; click this to save any changes in the form before you move away from it. For more details, please refer to the **Save a Form** section of this helpcard.

All BBC forms will be listed even if they have not been created for your programme or content. In the example above, the Non-Linear form displays 'n/c' to show it is 'Not Created'.

The form

The selected form will be displayed beneath the header and the Form List. The form's menu is shown on the top right of the form. Some of the common commands across all forms are **Submit to Broadcaster**, **Copy**, or **PDF Version**.

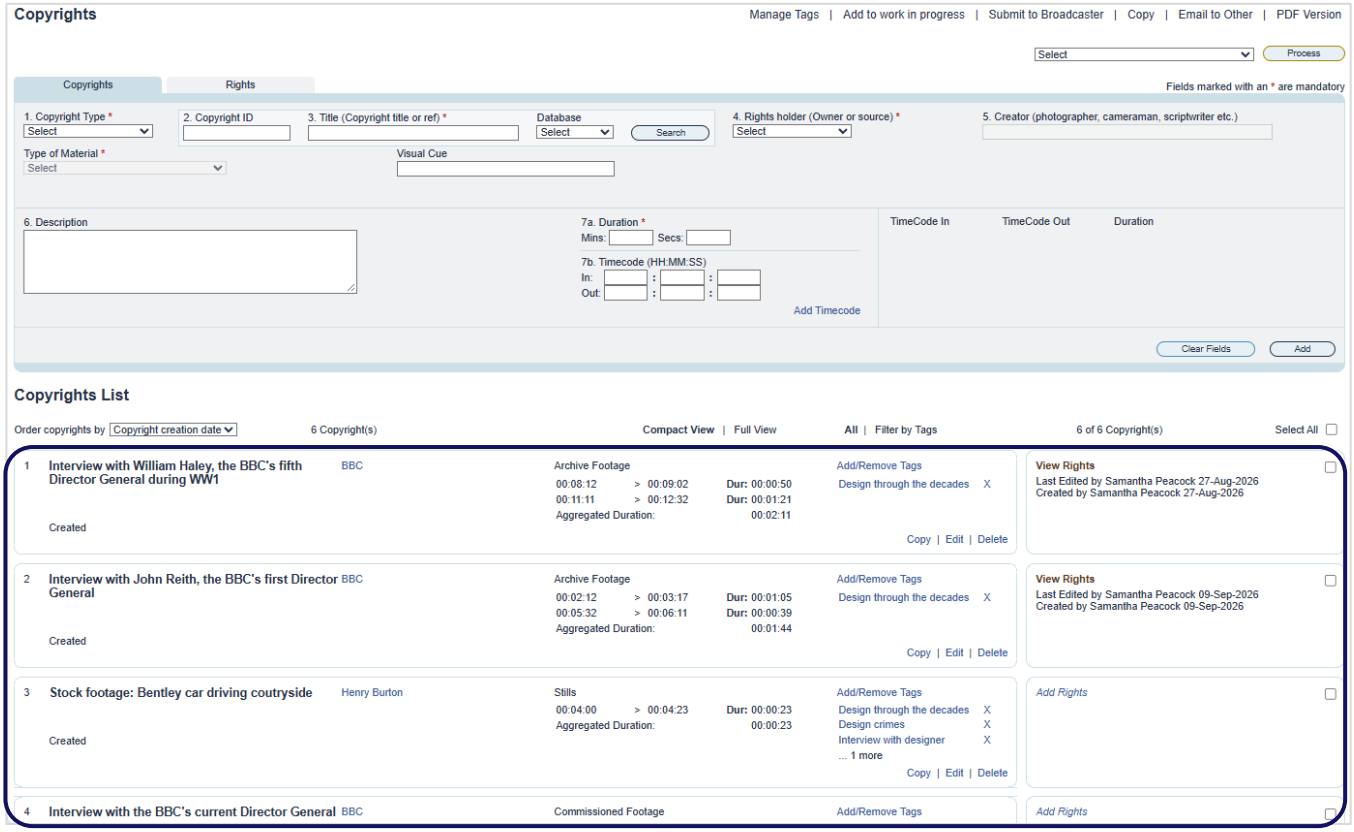


Enter data into a form

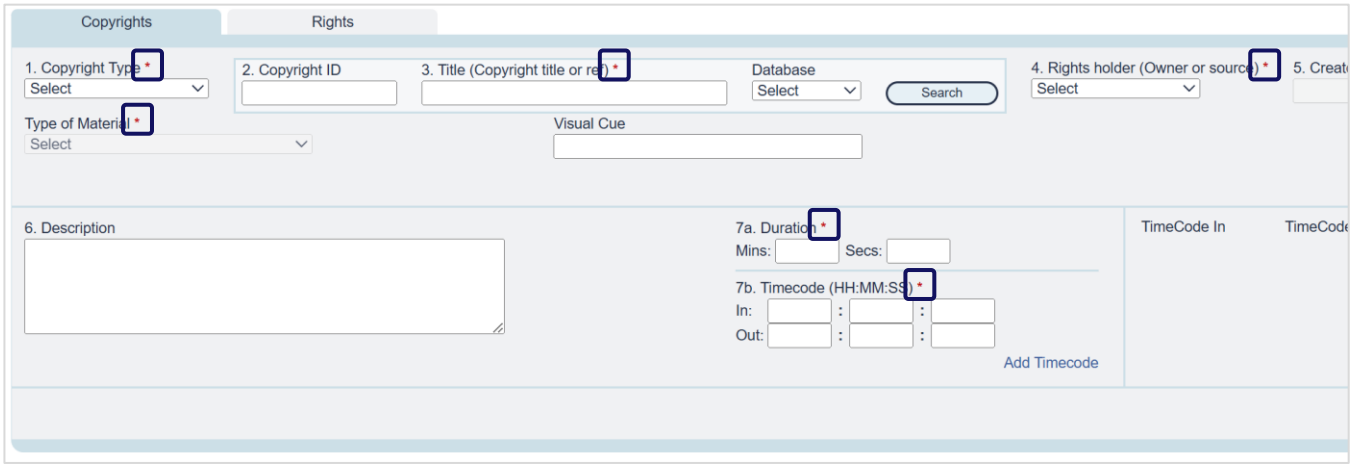
Although many of the fields in the BBC Silvermouse forms are not mandatory, please ensure you complete all the relevant fields to ensure your reporting is **robust**, **detailed** and **accurate** for future exploitation by other productions; otherwise, the BBC may reject the form. Please also ensure you enter data into the correct fields rather than into free text boxes; Silvermouse automatically feeds data from certain fields to other systems.

It is important to consider data protection when entering information into Silvermouse, especially when using free text fields. **No personal or financial information** should be included.

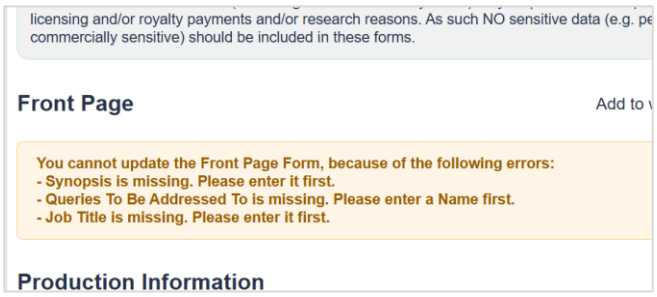
The Contributors, Copyrights, and Cue Sheet forms display an edit area above the form. Any items that have already been entered are shown beneath the edit area:

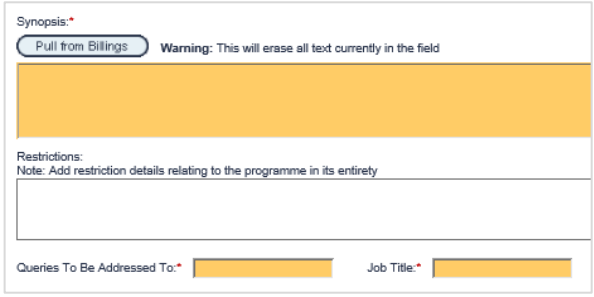


Mandatory fields are marked with a red asterisk next to the heading of the field:



The form cannot be saved or Submitted if a mandatory field is incomplete. A banner will be displayed at the top of the form, and incomplete fields will turn orange:





Quick keyboard shortcuts to enter data in a form

The following keyboard shortcuts may be useful when completing a lot of data entry in Silvermouse; however, there may be exceptions from the list below and practice may be required.

- Press **Tab** to move from one field in the form to the next, or press **Shift** with **Tab** to move in the opposite direction
- With Timecodes, the cursor automatically moves to the next timecode field; you do not need to press Tab
- Following a navigation move with the Tab key, press **Enter** to activate a link or button
- Following a navigation move with the Tab key, press the spacebar to activate a checkbox

Sometimes a combination of the above shortcuts with mouse clicks can be quicker.

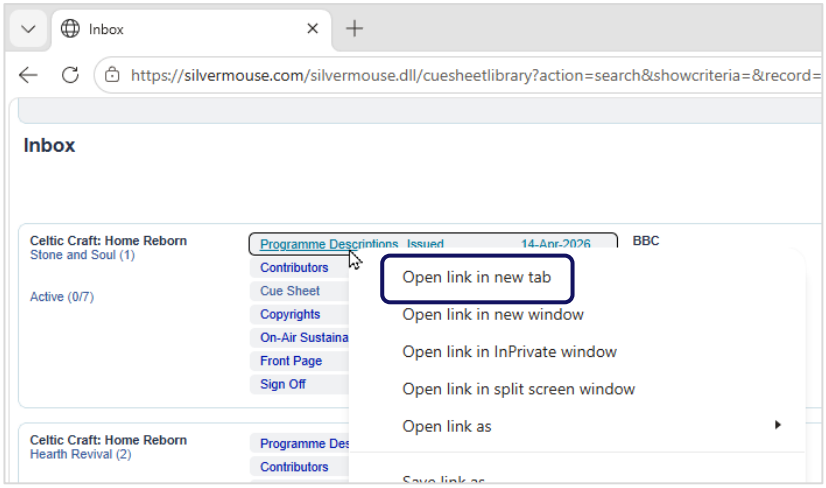
Please note, this is not a full list of accessible shortcuts.

Work with forms in multiple tabs

It can be helpful to open two instances of Silvermouse when viewing or copying data across different programmes. However, you can ONLY do this when logged in with the same account or username. If you have multiple accounts or usernames, you will need to use different browsers.

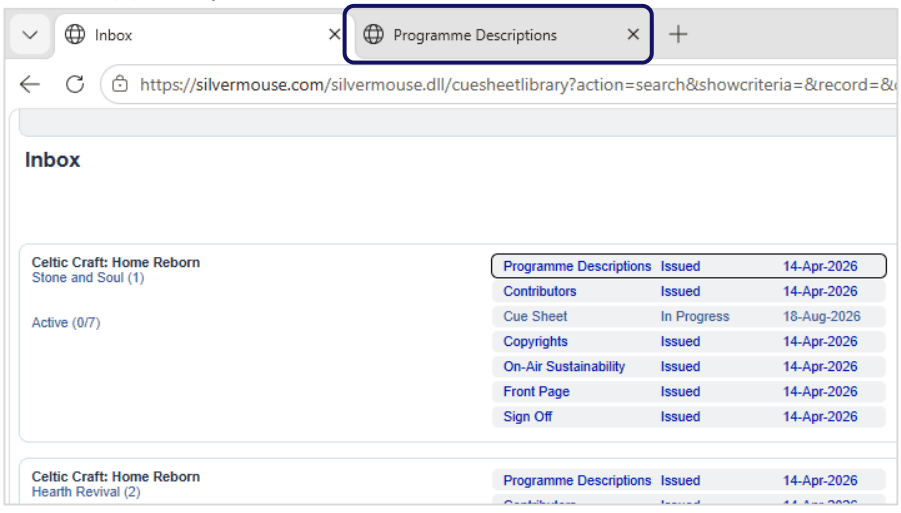
To open multiple forms:

- In the Inbox or Library, right click over a form link and select **Open link in new tab**



- If required, repeat for other form links

The form(s) will open in a new tab in the browser:



Save a form

The following forms do NOT automatically update as you edit them:

- Programme Descriptions form
- Front Page form
- On-Air Sustainability form

To save these forms:

➡ Click on **Update**

If you move away from these forms without clicking Update, any changes will be lost.

The form will not save if a mandatory field is missing.

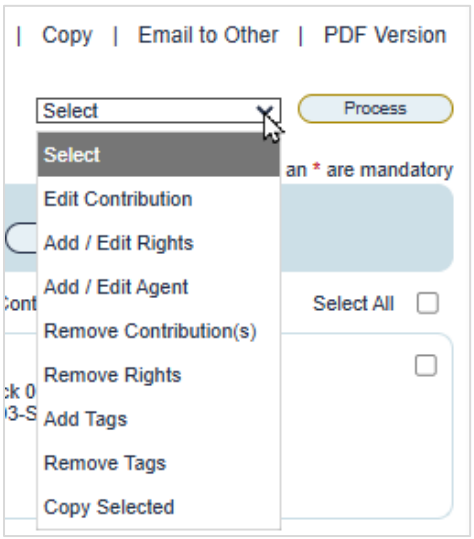
Working with forms

The Process menu

The Process menu is available in the Contributors and Copyrights forms. You can use it to complete tasks on single or multiple rows within a form. This might include removing a contribution or copyright item, the associated rights, or both.

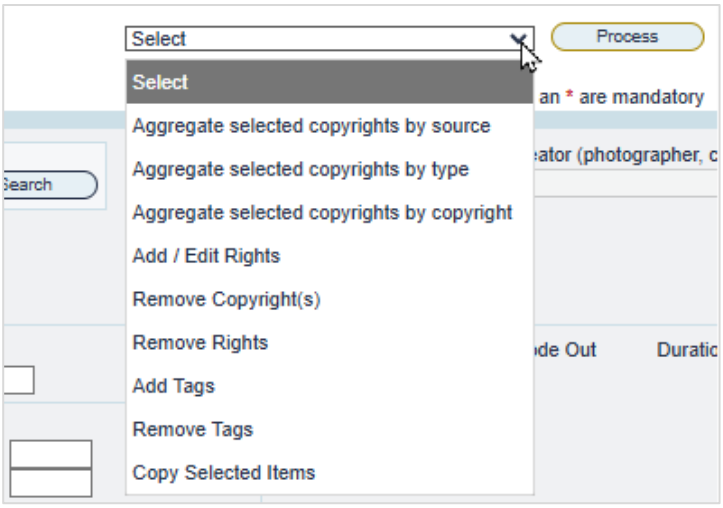
The Contributors form's Process menu:

- Edit contribution
- Add / Edit Rights
- Add / Edit Agent
- Remove Contribution(s)
- Remove Rights
- Add Tags
- Remove Tags
- Copy Selected



The Copyrights form's Process menu:

- Aggregate selected copyrights by source
- Aggregated selected copyrights by type
- Aggregate selected copyrights by copyright
- Add / Edit Rights
- Remove Copyright(s)
- Remove Rights
- Add Tags
- Remove Tags
- Copy Selected Items



To apply the required action:

- Select the checkbox of the row you wish to process
- From the **Process** drop down menu, select the action you wish to take
- Click on **Process**

Add to Work in Progress

If the form has not been started, but you wish to change its status to In Progress:

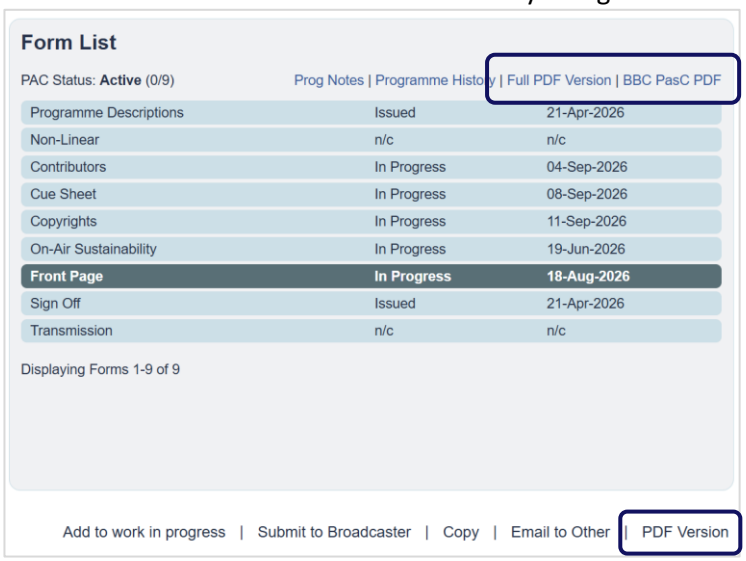
- Click on **Add to work in progress**



Create PDFs

There are three PDFs that can be created:

- **Full PDF Version**. This will PDF all the issued Silvermouse forms
- **BBC PasC PDF**. This will PDF the forms the BBC considers as the PasB or PasC which is the Front Page, the Contributors and the Copyrights forms
- **PDF Version**. This will PDF the form currently being viewed



Form Status History

The history of the form is tracked, so you can see when the form was issued, when it was last updated, when it was submitted or approved, and by whom.

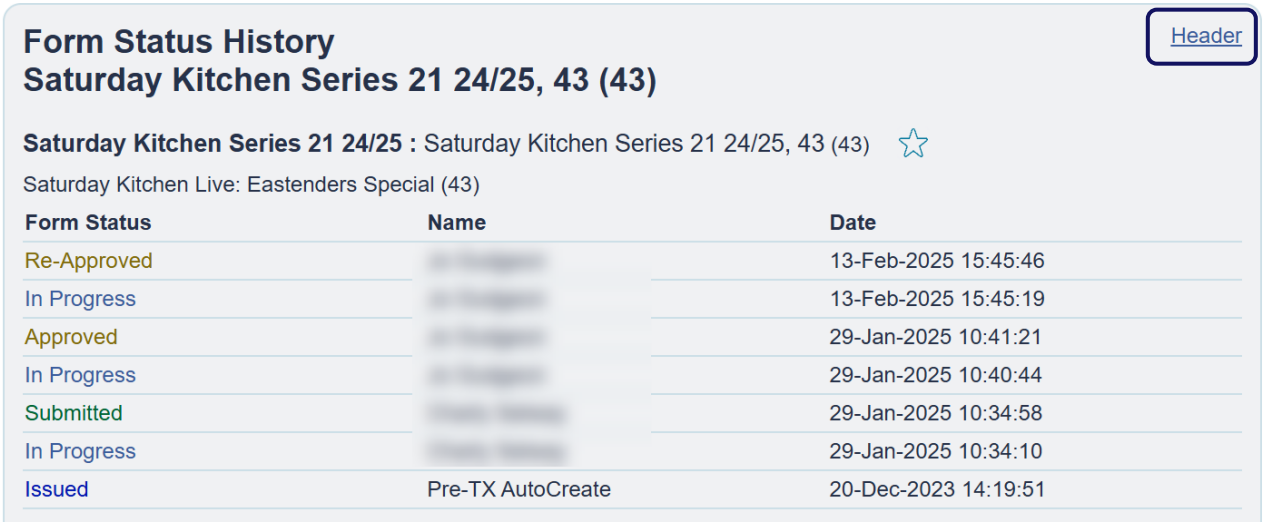
To view the history of the form:

- In the header, click on **Form Status History**



To return to the header:

- Click on **Header**

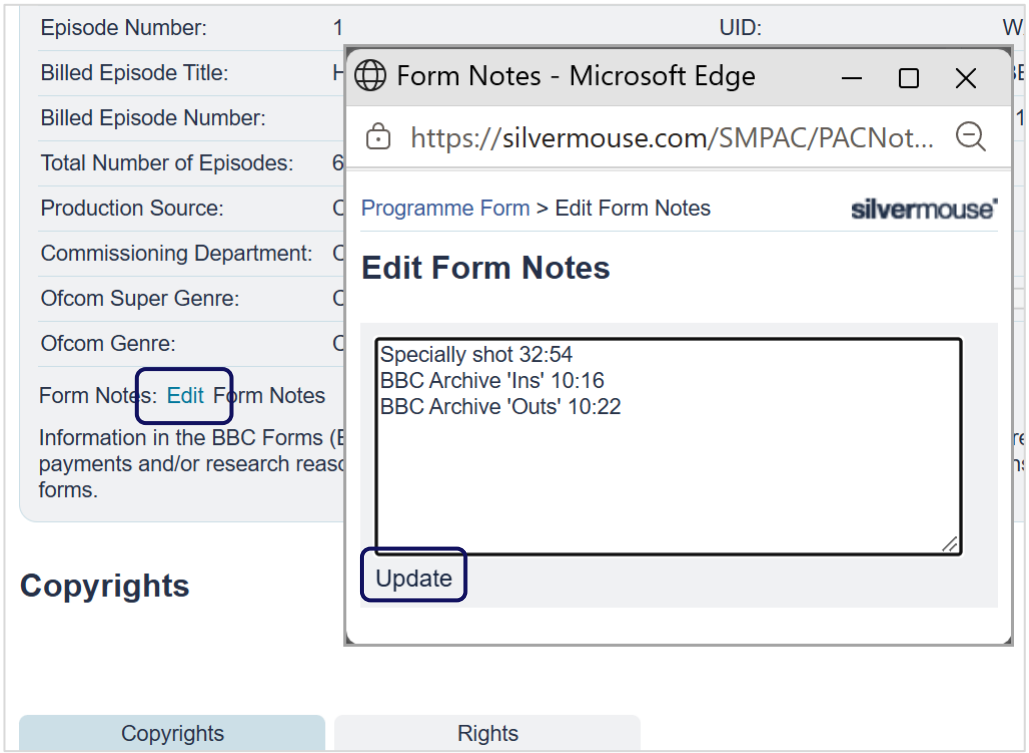


Form notes

Although the header contains common data which can be viewed within every form, Form Notes appear in the header, but any notes typed here ONLY applies to the form being viewed. Form notes will be included if the form is PDF'd.

To add notes for a specific form:

- Open the form you wish to add notes for
- At the bottom of the header, next to **Form Notes**, click on **Edit**
- In the **Form notes** window, type the notes for the current form, and click on **Update**

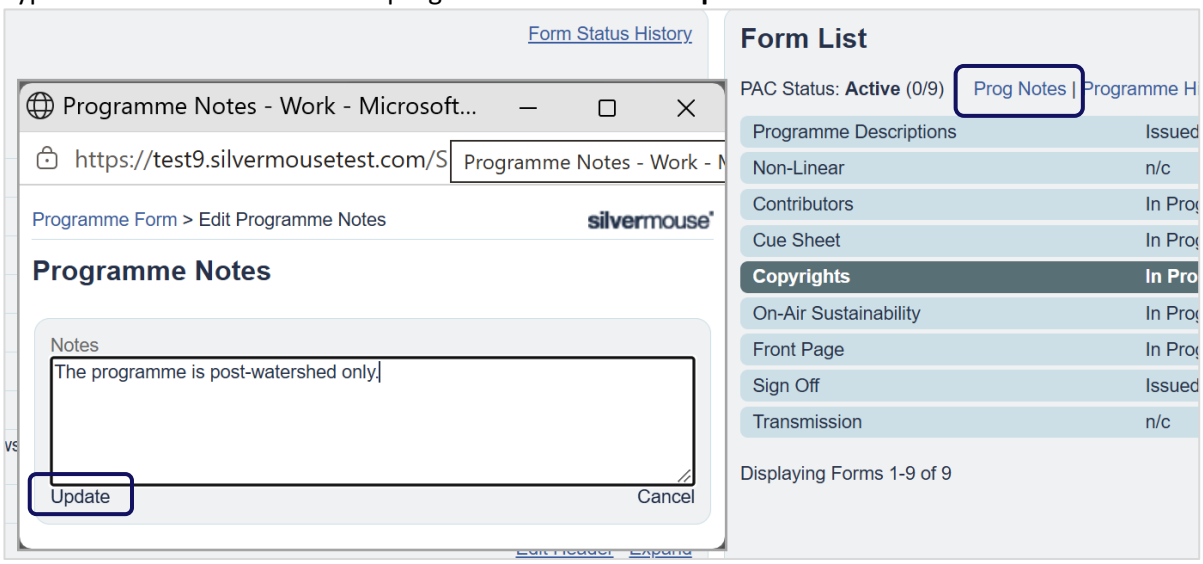


By default, only the first 104 characters of the Form Notes are displayed. To view all the form notes, click on **More** at the end of the displayed text.

Programme Notes

Programme Notes are relevant to every form for your programme or content and should be used to make notes about the entire programme, for example to note restrictions for the transmission by typing 'This whole programme is cleared for UK transmission only'. They will show at the end of the header section on page 1 when any of the forms are PDF'd.

- Above the form list, click on **Prog Notes**
- Type the notes about the entire programme and click on **Update**

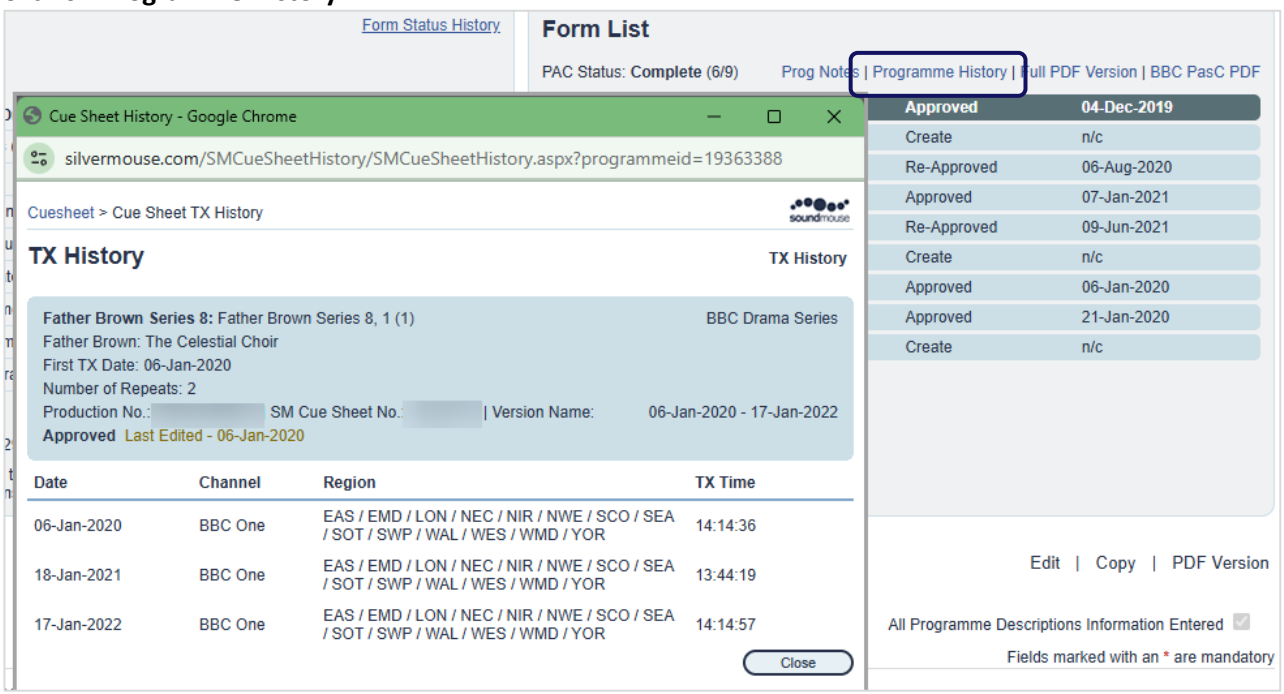


Do NOT rely on **Form Notes** or **Prog Notes** for music reporting, as this information is not sent to the BBC's Music Reporting team.

Programme History

If a linear programme is repeated, you can view details of its previous transmissions:

- Click on **Programme History**



- Click on **Close**

If the forms for a piece of non-linear content exist in Silvermouse and the content is republished, the Non-Linear form will be updated by the BBC to include a new publication identifier row to identify where the content has been newly published.

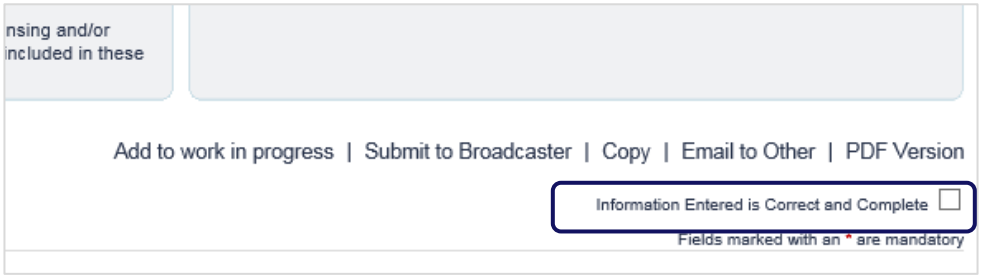
If the existing non-linear content is edited, a new set of forms would need to be created.

Submit a Form

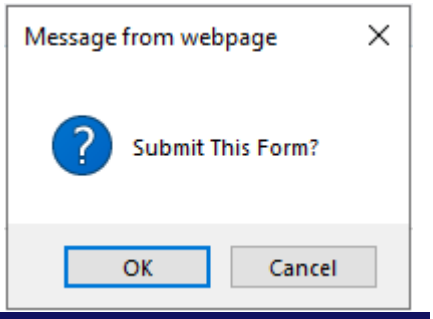
Independent Production Companies will need to submit the forms to the BBC for approval. Once a form has been submitted, no further changes can be made unless the BBC rejects the form. For this reason, please double check your form(s) and its entries before you submit the form; once submitted, you will not be able to make further changes unless the BBC rejects the form.

To submit a form:

- Click on the checkbox beneath the form-specific commands, if displayed. This example is for the Front Page form:



- Click on **Submit to Broadcaster**
- In the pop up confirmation window, click on **Confirm**



The form will close and you will be returned to the **Inbox**.

Submitted forms are not displayed in the **Inbox**, but you will be able to find them in the **Outbox** or **Library.** Unapproved forms for your Production area will also display in the Library.

The form cannot be submitted if the 'Information Entered is Correct and Complete' checkbox has not been selected, or if mandatory fields are empty.

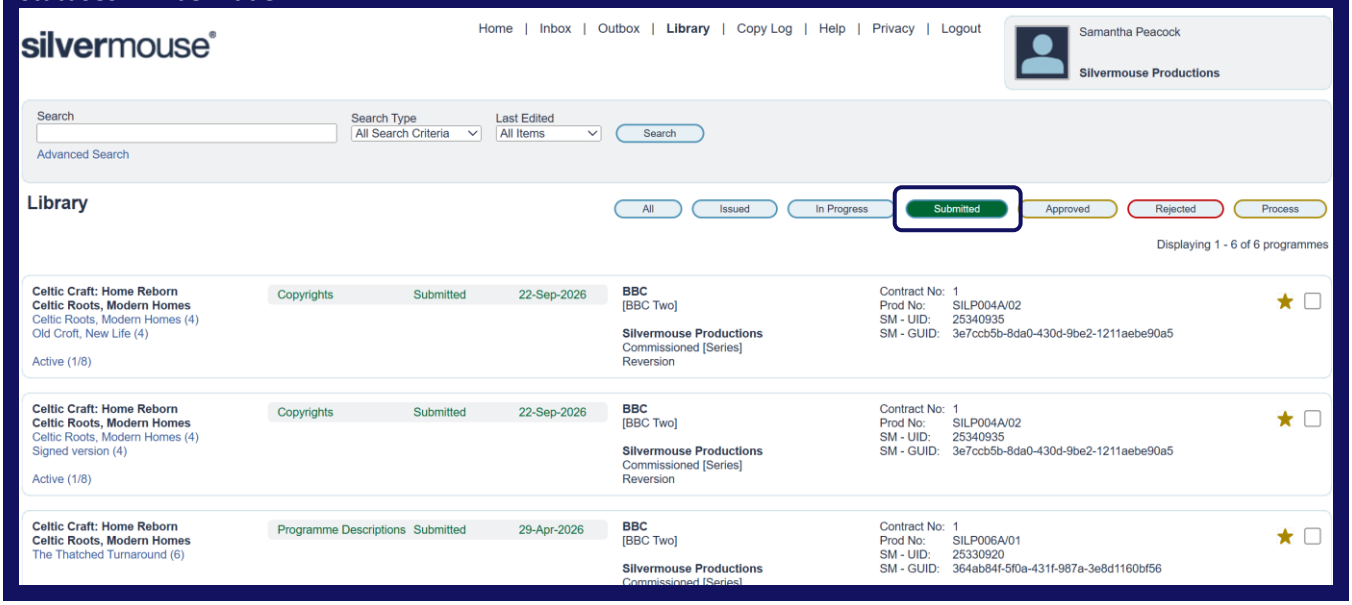
Locate a Submitted form

It is not possible to edit a Submitted or Approved form; you will need to ask your BBC contact to reject a form so you can make changes to it.

To locate a submitted form:

- Search for your programme or content in the **Library**
- Click on the submitted form you wish to view

To reduce the number of forms displayed in the Library, click on the **Submitted** filter. Forms with other statuses will be hidden:



Rejected forms

If there is a problem with a form and it has been rejected, your BBC contact will email you with their feedback. You will find the rejected form in your Inbox.

To re-submit the form:

- Deselect the checkbox beneath the form-specific commands
- Make the required changes
- Click on **Submit to Broadcaster**
- In the confirmation window, click on **OK**

Databases in Silvermouse

Several databases are searchable within Silvermouse:

- **Silvermouse database**
  The Silvermouse database is built up over a period of time by you and your colleagues. As soon as a new entry is created, it is added to and searchable within the Silvermouse database. Therefore, it is critical that new entries are entered accurately and with as much detail as possible

  If using copyright items which already exists in the Silvermouse database, please refer to the **Copyrights form** helpcard which contains critical information you must be aware of
- **Getty Images**. Getty images is a database providing stock photography, royalty-free photos and the latest news pictures and can be searched within the Copyrights form

  For further details, please refer to the **Copyrights form** helpcard
- **PRS for Music**. PRS is the collecting society for songwriters, composers and music publishers. Musical works can be searched for in the Cue Sheet form

For further details, please refer to the **Cue Sheet form**helpcard

If a Getty or PRS search result is used to create a new entry, the new entry is added to the Silvermouse database for your Production Company.

Data in Silvermouse

Due to the migration of old data, and subsequent changes to Silvermouse, historical programmes may have a varying selection of forms:

- TV programmes entered into the commissioning system after **15 November 2016** will display all the forms
- TV programmes prior to **04 March 2017** will include a Transmission form which was used by the BBC's playout service provider to ensure the programme and its associated services were transmitted correctly
- Forms for TV programmes **pre-1997** or P4A (the BBC's previous production reporting system) can be accessed as normal via BBC Archives
- The facility to report on non-linear content in Silvermouse began on **29 November 2018**. Any reporting for non-linear content prior to this date was managed locally and was not a mandatory requirement until **03 August 2020**
- Reporting sustainable content within BBC On-Air programmes began on **06 January 2025**, as part of the BBC's commitment to Climate Content Pledge and supporting its Royal Charter remit to inform, educate and entertain audiences
- The production reporting for radio programmes migrated from the BBC's Proteus system into Silvermouse in **January 2027**