

Editorial Complaints to the BBC, February and March 2005

The BBC handled over 17000 editorial complaints in the first two months of the new complaint handling arrangements. These ranged from a small number of complaints about potentially serious breaches of editorial guidelines through to a much larger collection of views about programme content and scheduling.

Key themes which emerged included:

Offence : The controversy about **Jerry Springer : The Opera** continued into February and accounted for a quarter of complaints about Offence. The issue was referred to the Board of Governors who published their findings in March. Other viewers complained about an inappropriate hand gesture in **Comic Relief Does Fame Academy**. The BBC's responses to these issues appear in the *Read our responses* section of its Complaints website.

Scheduling : The BBC receives many complaints about scheduling every month. This is partly a reflection of the reality that what suits one section of the audience may not suit another. However, we know that last minute schedule changes can be particularly annoying to the audience and we take these decisions with great care. Some viewers were annoyed when we brought **Match Of The Day** forward by one day in February to show highlights of Arsenal v Manchester United, for which we obtained the rights at short notice. People also complained that Act 1 of **Wagner's Ring : The Valkyrie** was not broadcast as billed – a decision taken when Bryn Terfell was unable to sing because of illness. Others expressed concern that **Britain's Streets of Vice** was not appropriate for a pre-Watershed (daytime) slot. The BBC has published its responses to scheduling issues in the *Read our responses* section of its Complaints website.

The other main cause of complaint in this period was the payment of a fee to Brendon Fearon, a convicted criminal. The BBC's response appears in the *Read our responses* section of its Complaints website.

Further details of themes prompting complaint, and the BBC's responses, can be found on the BBC Complaints website at www.bbc.co.uk/complaints.