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The BBC's global reputation is based on its editorial integrity and independence. Our audiences need to be confident that our decisions are influenced neither by political or commercial pressures, nor by any personal interest. We must not undermine these values by any actions which could bring the BBC into disrepute.

## **EDITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE**

### **EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES**

- We must be independent of both state and partisan interests.
- We must not endorse or appear to endorse any other organisation, its products, activities or services.
- We should not give undue prominence to commercial products or services.
- There must be no product placement in programmes.
- We should ensure that on air and online credits are clearly editorially justified.
- We must not unduly promote BBC or BBC related commercial products and services on our public service outlets.
- The outside activities of people working for the BBC, including presenters, must not improperly influence BBC programmes or corporate decision making.

There are specific issues concerning BBC commercial services for audiences in the UK and around the world.

### **PRODUCT PLACEMENT**

We must never include a product or service in sound or vision in return for cash, services or any consideration in kind. **This is product placement. It is illegal to make any such arrangements in the EU.**

### **PRODUCT PROMINENCE**

We need to be able to reflect the real world and this will involve referring to commercial products, organisations and services in our output.

**We must avoid any undue prominence or giving the impression that we are promoting or endorsing products, organisations or services.**

**To achieve this we must:**

- ensure that references to trade names, brand names and slogans are clearly editorially justified.
- not linger on brand names or logos and use verbal references sparingly unless there are very strong journalistic reasons for repeated references to a brand.
- not accept free or reduced cost products or services in return for on air or online credits, hotlinks or off air marketing.
- take particular care to minimise product references in output designed to appeal to children.
- only use material from advertising campaigns or promotions when clearly editorially justified. Generally, it will only be acceptable to use a short extract. There may also be copyright considerations.

### **PRODUCT PROMINENCE IN TRAILS**

**We should normally avoid references to commercial products or services in programme trails or BBC programme marketing material. If any reference to a branded product or service is made we must ensure it is clearly editorially justified.**

**We should not normally use third party advertising in programme trails.**

**Any proposal to include commercial products or advertising clips in programme trails should be referred to Chief Adviser Editorial Policy.**

### **PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL/STORIES SUPPLIED BY OUTSIDE BODIES**

**We must select and cover stories for our own independent editorial reasons.**

**We must be on our guard for “spin” from outside bodies and commercial companies who may also try and place stories across our services in a short space of time.**

**We must ensure that when a product, service or organisation is named in a news report or factual content it is clearly editorially justified.**

### **REVIEWING PRODUCTS OR SERVICES**

**We must ensure there is no element of plugging when we review products or services. We should review a range from different suppliers, normally without giving details on air of how and where to obtain them.**

### **PRODUCTS USED AS PROPS IN DRAMA, COMEDY OR ENTERTAINMENT**

**We must ensure the use of, or reference to, branded products, services or organisations in our drama, comedy and entertainment programmes is clearly editorially justified and that a wide range are used over time to avoid undue prominence.**

**We should normally ensure that branding is not clearly visible, and close ups are avoided when real products are used as set dressing. When brands are shown it is normally difficult to justify editorially a verbal reference in addition to the visual one.**

**We must ensure that when props are accepted free or at a reduced cost there is a clear editorial justification. We must also use a range of brands and keep accurate records of the details of such arrangements.**

### **USE OF FREE AND REDUCED COST FACILITIES, PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND PROPS**

**Under no circumstances should anyone working for the BBC receive personal benefits from suppliers, or accept goods or services as inducements.**

**We should normally pay for travel, accommodation and most other facilities we use.** Only a few specific output areas may accept free or substantially reduced cost facilities, products, services or props. Consumer and lifestyle programmes which review or feature a wide range of products may occasionally accept free or reduced cost products or services. In the case of drama and some entertainment programmes, productions may sometimes take free or reduced cost price props. In the rare cases where we accept such arrangements we must:

- keep accurate departmental records of what has been accepted.
- only accept discounts if they are in line with those offered to other large organisations.
- not guarantee any product or service will be featured and if featured that it will be in a favourable light.
- inform suppliers that they cannot refer to the BBC's use of their products or services in any advertising or promotions.
- only give on air and online credits if clearly editorially justified.
- not allow suppliers an editorial say in the programme or a preview of it.

### **MEDIA FACILITY AND FACT FINDING TRIPS**

**We should not normally accept expenses paid trips unless they are the only way to cover a significant event, such as an inaugural flight or voyage or military operation.**

**Any proposal to accept an expenses paid trip must be referred to a senior editorial figure or for Independents to the commissioning editor. We should also consider whether to make a contribution towards the cost.**

**We should not normally refer on air or online to the commercial operators offering the facility. Any proposal to do this must be referred to a senior editorial figure or for Independents to the commissioning editor.**

**We must ensure that any on air or online reference to any other organisation which has facilitated a trip, for example a charity or lobby group, is clearly editorially justified.**

### **UNDUE PROMINENCE AND CONTRIBUTORS**

**We must avoid undue prominence when contributors appear on chat shows and other programmes where they are promoting a product, for example, a film, album or book.** Although proper editorial discussion is perfectly acceptable, the related product should not normally be used as a prop. Any visual references, particularly close ups of an album cover or pages of a book should be clearly editorially justified.

### **ONLINE LINKS TO THIRD PARTY WEBSITES**

Part of the BBC's role is to act as a trusted guide on the web. When we create content on a BBC site we should consider which external sites it may be editorially justifiable to link to. We offer external links from the BBC public service site and from the editorial pages of the commercial site, for example, to provide additional information, source material or informed comment. We should be seen to be impartial. BBC sites which cover controversial subjects or public policy matters should normally offer links to external sites which represent a reasonable range of views about the subject. See Section 10 Politics and Public Policy.

**We must never include a link on a public service website or within the editorial content of a commercial site in return for cash, services or any other consideration in kind.**

**We must check the contents of third party websites before installing a link on a BBC page.** The same check should be repeated regularly after the link is established. We should not link to an external site if it is clearly inappropriate for us to recommend a visit. It may be appropriate to add a disclaimer and additional information if the links are to controversial material.

**The links we make must be editorially justified** and should lead to sites which are:

- clearly relevant to the content of the BBC page where the link is placed.
- suitable for the likely audience which in some cases may be children.

- regularly updated and refreshed.
- normally free to access.
- normally factually accurate.

We may link to external sites which give particular views of a person or organisation significant to a current news story and in such cases we may not be able to guarantee their factual accuracy. But we should not support the message, information or promotions on third party sites.

**We must not give the impression that we are unfairly endorsing a commercial product or service when linking to a commercial site.**

### **BBC COMMERCIAL CHANNELS AND SERVICES**

**We must not use our publicly funded channels or services to promote any BBC commercial services.** All references to commercial services such as websites, international channels or any international or UK-based joint venture channel must be clearly editorially justified on publicly funded output. Publicly funded services should not run trails for commercial channels, services or programmes.

### **REFERENCES TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS RELATED TO BBC PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES**

The BBC and independent companies working for the BBC produce and license commercial products and services to enhance and complement our output. However, we must never give the impression that we are unduly promoting any commercial product on air or online. Any references to BBC related products must be for clear editorial reasons and there should be no element of plugging.

There are legal and regulatory constraints in this area, including undertakings to the Office of Fair Trading. We must take particular care not to promote BBC magazines and we must ensure that:

- no BBC programme or online site mentions a BBC magazine in a way which could be deemed promotional or an encouragement to buy.
- any interviews with BBC magazine editors or writers are clearly editorially justified and such interviewees are not used too frequently.

- no mention is made on air or online of any off air support given by BBC publications. For example, if entry forms for competitions appear in BBC magazines we must not refer to this on air or online.

### **TRAILS FOR COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS RELATED TO BBC PROGRAMMES**

We must not make any promotional mentions of BBC related products in programmes, although we may broadcast specially prepared trails for some BBC related products in junctions after relevant programmes.

BBC related books, recordings, DVD, CD and CD Roms are the type of products which may be trailed. We do not produce trails for any other type of merchandise. **BBC magazines must not be trailed on BBC radio, television or bbc.co.uk.**

Any product which is trailed must be under the BBC's editorial control and must have been commissioned, licensed or developed directly in conjunction with the associated programme. Material which is trailed may be published by BBC Worldwide or by an outside organisation. Trails or announcements after programmes should give simple factual information without any element of hyping.

**Any proposal to trail commercial products related to BBC programmes on BBC Radio must be referred to Chief Adviser Editorial Policy.**

### **GAME SHOWS**

**We must conduct our game shows with integrity and be seen to be free of commercial pressures.**

**We must also ensure the contestants are treated fairly and with respect, prizes are appropriate and clear rules are published.**

See Section 15 Interacting with our Audiences – Competitions and Prizes.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Conflicts of interest can arise for anyone who appears on air or has responsibility for the content of a programme or service. There must never be any suggestion that personal, commercial, business, financial or other interests have influenced the BBC's editorial or financial decisions.

Presenters, reporters, producers, editors, researchers and managers are all affected. The higher someone's level of editorial responsibility, the greater the need to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. There may be particular sensitivities concerning the activities of on air talent.

Conflicts of Interest Guidelines are available on the Editorial Guidelines website. For most people there is a BBC contractual requirement to comply with these guidelines which include advice on:

- non-BBC writing commitments.
- public speaking/public appearances.
- media training.
- connections to charities and campaigning organisations.
- political activities.
- hospitality and personal benefits.
- financial and business interests.
- on air talent and commercial advertising.
- independent production companies owned by talent or their agents.

Production and editorial staff are required to declare any personal interest or relationships which may affect their work. They should discuss any possible conflicts of interest with their line manager.

Freelance presenters, reporters, producers and researchers are normally contractually required to declare any personal interests or relationships which may affect their work with the BBC.

**There are particular constraints on those involved in financial journalism.** If a financial or consumer advice programme or website makes a direct recommendation by a BBC person to buy a particular financial product or service it is essential that the item is produced in accordance with the BBC Financial Journalism Guidelines. It will be necessary to make clear on air or on the website that these guidelines have been followed and where our audience can refer to them.

## **ADVERTISING AND THE BBC BRAND**

**We should ensure that the BBC brand is not used to endorse outside companies or organisations. We can achieve this by ensuring that:**

- commercial advertising or promotion by an outside company does not give the impression of BBC endorsement.
- advertising does not “pass off” BBC programmes.

**We will not normally allow the BBC name, logos, titles, channel names, programme titles, formats or characters to be used by commercial advertisers.**

Any exception, for example for a joint promotion of a BBC commercial product, must be formally agreed in accordance with the BBC Advertising and Joint Promotions Guidelines and the BBC Fair Trading Guidelines.

## **SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMMES**

- **We must not lobby on matters of public policy when raising awareness of important social issues.**
- If our social action programmes or campaigns coincide with a government campaign or lobbying initiative it is important we retain an arm’s length position.
- We must ensure that our output does not embrace the agenda of any particular campaign groups and that we treat groups objectively and do not favour one above another.
- News reporting of BBC social action campaigns must be impartial.

**Any BBC public service initiative involving any element of fundraising must be referred to Chief Adviser Editorial Policy.**

See Section 14 External Relationships – PublicValue Partnerships.

### **PROGRAMMES ABOUT CHARITABLE INITIATIVES**

**We must retain our impartiality and independence when we cover charitable initiatives and report charity appeals.** We may use the expertise of charities where appropriate (for example wildlife programmes about conservation) but we should avoid promoting them.

**We should not appear to endorse a charity or charitable initiative in our dramas.** There may be exceptions for BBC charitable initiatives such as Children in Need or Comic Relief: Red Nose Day. See Section 14 External Relationships – Charities.

### **BBC SUPPORT SERVICES**

We offer support services to complement our output which include help lines, information lines, fact packs, information online and via mobile devices.

There are editorial principles that apply to these support services:

- they should be free or cost recovery and therefore not designed to make a profit.
- we must not appear to endorse third party campaigns when we produce support material in conjunction with other organisations.
- we should not distribute third party fundraising material unless it is for BBC approved charity appeals.
- we may sometimes accept outside funding for off air support material or services, for example in the form of sponsorship from a third party who would usually be a not-for-profit organisation, such as a charity or educational establishment. In certain limited circumstances funding may be acceptable from commercial organisations.
- we may credit organisations who have contributed to our support material on the material itself. We must not credit on air sponsors who have simply made a financial contribution.
- we must ensure we can cope with any likely demand for our support services.

### **JOINT INITIATIVES**

**We may produce support services with an appropriate partner, such as a professional body, charity or educational institution. In such cases it may be editorially acceptable to credit the involvement of the partner on air, and/or credit them on support material. See Section 14 External Relationships – Partnerships.**

### **TRAILS FOR SUPPORT MATERIAL**

**We may trail relevant support services as long as they are free or cost recovery or priced to raise funds for a BBC charity appeal.**

### **HELPLINES**

**We should consider whether it is appropriate to provide a helpline offering further information or support following a programme that raises difficult or distressing issues. BBC Audience lines should normally be consulted.**

**We must not use premium rate numbers for helplines.**

**We must provide impartial and objective information and give details of a wide range of agencies, charities and statutory organisations. No agency should be promoted at the expense of others.**

**We must ensure that a helpline provided by an outside agency is capable of offering a robust service.**

**We should not normally trail help lines run by other organisations, except where they offer a specialised service, for example the Samaritans and the National Missing Persons helpline.**

### **AUTOMATED INFORMATION SERVICES**

**We must ensure that recorded “dial and listen” information services are simple, factual, and directly relevant to our output. The duration of calls should be kept to a minimum. The service must not be used to promote any commercial product, retailer or supplier.**