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The BBC Editorial Guidelines apply to all of our content whoever creates or makes it and wherever and however it is received. The guidelines help BBC content producers, whether in-house or Independent, public service or commercial, to navigate their way through difficult editorial issues and produce distinctive and sometimes controversial programmes and other material to the highest ethical and editorial standards. The guidelines are approved by the Board of Governors and are kept under constant review by the BBC's Editorial Policy team, who also develop other editorial policy.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Editorial Policy team are available to offer advice to all content producers on how to interpret and work within these guidelines 24 hours a day. The earlier a potentially contentious programme is referred the better.

Editorial Policy also produces guidelines dealing with specialised policy areas, for example, Conflicts of Interest, Online Services and the National Lottery, as well as advice notes.

The guidelines and advice notes can all be found on the BBC Editorial Guidelines website at www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines.

REFERRALS

In-house production departments and Independent production companies carry the main responsibility in the referral system. Content producers should refer first to their manager or editor and in the case of Independents to their BBC commissioning editor. The more important or contentious the issue, the higher the referral needs to be.

Editorial Policy should always be consulted on:

- mandatory referrals
- queries on how to interpret the Editorial Guidelines
- any proposal to step outside the Editorial Guidelines

All mandatory referrals to Controller Editorial Policy are printed in red throughout these guidelines as well as being summarised near the beginning of each section. Other referrals to Editorial Policy, senior editorial figures in the divisions, commissioning editors for Independents and other relevant representatives are shown in bold.

Any request from output areas outside BBC News for interviews with, or exclusive appearances by, members of the **Royal Family** must be discussed with the BBC's Royal Liaison Officer.

BBC CHARTER AND AGREEMENT

The Agreement accompanying the BBC's Charter specifies that we should do all we can to treat controversial subjects with "due accuracy and impartiality" in our news services and other programmes dealing with matters of public policy or of political or industrial controversy. It also states that we are forbidden from expressing our own opinions on current affairs or matters of public policy other than broadcasting. The Accuracy, Impartiality and Politics and Public Policy sections of these guidelines constitute our code as required under section 5.3 of the Agreement, and give guidance as to the rules to be observed under section 5.1 (c) of the Agreement.

In addition, the Agreement forbids any BBC service funded by the licence fee or grant-in-aid from carrying advertising or sponsored programmes. To protect our editorial integrity and independence we have drawn up our own guidelines on standards for advertising and sponsorship for our commercial television and online services.

THE LAW

Broadcasting is now the subject of many different laws ranging from defamation and contempt to obscenity, incitement and health and safety. Legal problems may therefore arise not just with what we publish but with how we create our content. The BBC has its own programme lawyers, the Programme Legal Advice department (PLA) who should be consulted as early as possible about content which may run legal risks. **Any decision to proceed with a programme despite legal advice must be referred to the most senior editorial level and Controller Editorial Policy.**

When considering the issues raised by these guidelines it is often necessary to distinguish between the law and the BBC's ethics. There may be occasions when a programme is legally safe to transmit but raises editorial issues, for example, when

children are involved or privacy matters arise. In these circumstances the BBC seeks to behave ethically. While lawyers can therefore offer legal advice, the final decision remains an editorial one. See Section 16 – The Law.

NATIONS AND REGIONS

In the UK there are different national and regional sensitivities which we should respect and reflect. There are differences in the powers of Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and the assemblies of Wales and Northern Ireland. There are also big differences in the legal systems in the nations, as well as in the provision of education, health and social services. We must be both accurate and consistent in our coverage and avoid stereotypes or clichés.

Any content producers intending to produce programmes about Northern Ireland or significant projects involving the Republic of Ireland, should discuss their proposals at an early stage with Controller Northern Ireland. Similarly, content producers outside Scotland and Wales should inform the controller of the relevant nation in writing of their plans to produce programme material which deals significantly with national issues or themes, or which is based in the relevant nation. In Nations and Regions, the relevant controller must be informed of any issue that is a mandatory referral to Controller Editorial Policy.

BBC OCCUPATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Occupational Risk Management (ORM) advises on occupational health, safety, security and environmental issues affecting the BBC. ORM has specialists on call 24 hours a day for urgent operational enquiries and to respond to emergencies.

OTHER ADVICE

The BBC is a source of its own specialist advice and expertise. These include, but are not confined to, the language services of the World Service, the specialist editors in Newsgathering, the Political Research Unit, the Religion and Ethics Department, the Science Department, and Natural History Unit.

BBC FAIR TRADING GUIDELINES

The BBC Editorial Guidelines are concerned with editorial issues and any on air references to commercial products and organisations. Advice on the BBC's commercial activities and commercial exploitation of the BBC brand – including

its use in association with third parties – can be found in the BBC's Fair Trading Guidelines. They cover questions such as the acceptability of BBC commercial ventures and how they should be undertaken, use of the BBC brand, off screen promotional activities and trading fairly.

OFCOM

The BBC's licence fee and grant-in-aid funded television and radio services are subject to the regulation of the Office for Communications (Ofcom) in the following six areas:

- Protecting the Under Eighteens
- Harm and Offence
- Crime
- Religion
- Fairness
- Privacy.

In addition, the BBC's commercial services, whether broadcasting to the UK, or from the UK to our international audiences, must comply with the whole of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

The regulator can impose a variety of sanctions on the BBC for breaches of the relevant sections of its Broadcasting Code including:

- broadcasting a correction or statement of finding
- ordering that a programme is re-edited before re-broadcast
- fines of up to £250,000 for serious or repeated breaches.

These guidelines reflect the relevant provisions of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code which is also set out in Section 18.

RE-USE AND REVERSIONING OF BBC CONTENT

When archive material is rescheduled and/or edited or otherwise reversioned it must comply with the BBC Editorial Guidelines whether for broadcast in the UK or overseas. Re-use of archive material should take into account any findings from the BBC Editorial Complaints Unit, the Governors' Programme Complaints Appeals Committee and Ofcom. The scheduling of a programme which has been the subject of an upheld complaint should be carefully considered or the programme edited in the light of the finding.

Any proposal to repeat a programme which has been the subject of an upheld complaint must be referred to the relevant output controller and Editorial Policy.