



Good afternoon everyone.

If you take your ID card and look at the back, you'll see the BBC's values listed there. Value number one is TRUST. 'Trust is the foundation of the BBC; we are independent, impartial and honest.' This is the most important value we have. It's the foundation on which all the other values are built.

But over the past few months and especially over the past few days, a number of incidents have happened or come to light which have called this value of Trust into question. It's been a disturbing, even a shocking experience for all of us.

This is an issue we have to address NOW. We have to address it with energy and toughness. We have to put our house in order.

### **Additional editorial problems**

Last week, we received a fine – a justified fine – from Ofcom over Blue Peter, the first time such a thing has ever happened at the BBC.

In the period since the Blue Peter and Saturday Kitchen incidents came to light, we have been looking to see if there were any other programmes which had suffered from similar failures. Even before the controversy about the footage of the Queen erupted last week, I had stepped this process up into a full-scale search across every part of the BBC looking back at our output over the past two and a half years.

It's a gigantic task, covering around a million hours of output. We are still sifting through the results of this search – and a few areas have still to complete their report – but it is now clear that there have been significant editorial failures on a small number of other programmes and serious causes for concern about the running of competitions in some parts of the BBC.

We have identified competitions on three programmes – segments in Sport Relief and Comic Relief, and one children's programme, TMI – where either because of production issues or a lack of genuine participants – members of production teams posed on the phone as members of the public.

In a fourth programme, a BBC Scotland opt-out within Children in Need which included a segment called Raven: The Island, calls from the public did not get through and the name of a fictitious winner was read out on air.

A fifth programme, the Liz Kershaw show on BBC6 Music, was at times pre-recorded but presented as if it were live with a fake competition and calls which claimed to be from the public but were actually from members of the production team and their friends.

And in a sixth programme, White Label, a weekly pop music show broadcast on the BBC World Service, on more than one occasion a fake winner for the CD prize was announced when no winning entries had been received.



Those are the most serious editorial failures, but we have also discovered other examples of poor and unsatisfactory practice in the handling of games and competitions, phone-ins and other forms of interactivity in some parts of the BBC.

Now it's worth noting that all but one of the most serious problems happened before the incidents at Blue Peter and Saturday Kitchen came to light – and ALL of them before the management actions we announced in May. In all cases, the incidents seem to have arisen from a misguided attempt to rescue or improve a programme. The incidents represent a tiny fraction of the many tens of thousands of programmes we have transmitted over the past years.

But you have every right to be angry – as I am angry – that these and the earlier serious lapses have cast a shadow over the wider integrity of the BBC and the people who work for it. I joined the BBC in 1979 and spent years working in production. I have never been involved in a deception of the public. It would just never have occurred to me. I know that it would never occur to the overwhelming majority of the people watching me this afternoon either.

From the first time we were aware of a problem in March, we've tried to be as open as we can be with the BBC Trust and the public. We're being open once again this afternoon. I can't guarantee that we will not discover further examples: not only is there a vast amount of output to trawl but, unless the individuals involved come forward, it's hard to be certain that the list is complete.

What I AM certain about is that from now on we can have no tolerance, no level of acceptance of this kind of behaviour ever again.

### **The BBC Trust**

This morning I and some of my senior colleagues have had the deeply uncomfortable experience of responding to the BBC Trust's demand for a report on all these incidents.

The Trust have made it abundantly clear to me that they regard any deception or breach of faith with our audiences as being utterly unacceptable. They have insisted that I and the whole BBC do everything in our power to minimize the risk of these kind of failures happening again. Later in the year they will conduct their own independent review to assess whether the actions which I and Executive Board are about to put into effect are sufficient to achieve that and to restore public confidence in us.

### **The Queen**

Now, in a moment, I will turn to some underlying principles and to our plan of action. Before that, I want to deal with two other issues which have been much in the news over the past few days.

The first is last week's incident when, at a press conference to promote BBC One's autumn season, we erroneously implied that Her Majesty the Queen had walked out of a photo-shoot.

RDF, the independent production company who are making the documentary which was featured at the launch, have written to me accepting that they were guilty of a serious error of judgement in sending us a completely misleading edit of a particular sequence in the film. They have offered us and the Queen an unreserved apology.



Nonetheless, there are serious questions for us to ask about OUR role in this deeply regrettable incident. We need to get to the bottom of exactly what happened and how we came to publicise something which wasn't true – and we need to know what lessons we should learn from it. I am therefore commissioning an independent inquiry into the whole affair.

The other issue is a recent Newsnight film about Gordon Brown and David Cameron, in which some sequences were shown out of chronological order. There has been a complaint which is being handled through the normal processes. While I do not believe that the re-ordering of pictures in this way is good practice and I have asked colleagues to look at whether we should include new advice on this point in our editorial guidelines, there is no evidence at this stage of any intention to distort the overall substance of the film.

### **Deception**

But let's go back to first principles. We must never ever knowingly deceive the public. There is no excuse for deception. If you have a choice between deception and a programme going off air, let the programme go. It is far better to accept a production problem and make a clean breast to the public than to deceive.

We will regard deception as a very grave breach of discipline. It will normally lead to dismissal. And if you witness it, or if someone asks you to take part in it, you must let a senior manager know.

### **Editorial Guidelines**

That leads to a second point. For us, our values and our editorial guidelines must always take precedence over everything else. Never cut editorial corners to produce an artificially livelier show, or to help with publicity, or to deal with a budget issue. Accuracy, fair mindedness, fair dealing with contributors and with the public all matter much more than production value.

And if you're not sure, take advice. That's what our Editorial Policy team and the whole editorial chain of command is there for. Don't attempt to muddle through a difficult editorial or legal or production issue on your own. Seek help. We will make sure that every team leader knows that it is their responsibility to help and support you if you get into difficulties.

### **The Action Plan**

Let me turn now to what we're going to do to make sure that we stamp out the small, but totally unacceptable number of cases of REAL deception.

ONE: Communication with all BBC staff and content suppliers to emphasise the seriousness of these issues, the vital importance of maintaining trust with our audiences, and to make it clear that from now on there will be no tolerance for any further serious instance of audience deception. There will be meetings for every single person who works on content in the BBC – your chance to ask questions and make suggestions. We have to solve this problem together. To do that, I need everyone's help.



For editorial leaders and managers, there's another critical point: compliance with our values and our editorial standards is not voluntary or a nice-to-have. It is essential, and it is THEIR responsibility to make sure that the compliance system works.

TWO: The suspension from midnight tonight of all phone-related competitions across the BBC, and the suspension as soon as possible of all other interactive competitions until sufficient steps have been implemented to ensure that competitions are run fairly and honestly.

THREE: The launch of the most extensive programme of mandatory training the BBC has ever undertaken for all those working across BBC content. The programme will be called SAFEGUARDING TRUST and it will focus specifically on the issue of honesty with audiences as well emphasizing the absolute imperative to understand and comply with ALL of the BBC's values and editorial standards. It will be launched in the autumn and everyone from the most junior researcher to me will have to complete it.

Again, we'll make sure that these training materials are available to everyone who makes content for us, even if they're based in the indie or freelance sectors. If other broadcasters want to use them, we'll offer them to them as well.

FOUR: As I've said, I will commission this week an independent inquiry into the incident involving BBC ONE and the Queen. This inquiry will report back in the autumn.

FIVE: Even before that inquiry is complete, we will review our procedures for clearing promotional materials like trails, press releases and season launch tapes to ensure they meet the high standards we expect from our broadcast content.

SIX: We will work with RDF to understand the steps they propose to take to ensure there is no chance of a repetition of anything like the Queen incident. Until that is clear and we have the findings of the independent inquiry, we will pause in commissioning any new programmes from them.

SEVEN: We will revise the standard contracts both for BBC staff and BBC suppliers and make changes to ensure that responsibility for upholding the BBC's editorial standards and the consequences of breaching those standards are understood by everyone.

EIGHT: We are not going to have a witch-hunt. I am grateful that so many of you have helped us, and are continuing to help us with this trawl. Openness and honesty are critical in addressing the problem. Nonetheless, we need to understand why it has taken so long for some of these editorial failures to come to light, given that we started asking questions about phone-related problems back in March. In some cases, the relevant editorial leaders may be asked to stand back from their duties, while these further inquiries take place.

NINE: We will continue to implement the detailed plan of action around telephony which we announced in May.

TEN: Well, as you've heard, we have plenty of issues to tackle ourselves. But, as Ofcom's report on premium phone lines which is also published today makes clear, there seem to be problems across the industry. I intend to talk to my colleagues at ITV, Channel 4, FIVE and the other UK



broadcasters to see if they believe it would be useful for us all to come together to focus on training and editorial standards across the industry. But let us be clear – OUR top priority is to put our own house in order.

### **Conclusion**

Fundamental public trust in the BBC is very high and rightly so. But recent events show that we can't take that trust for granted. Nor can we be certain that everyone who works on BBC content – not just our own staff, but colleagues in the indie and freelance sectors – understands our editorial guidelines and our values.

The BBC Trust has charged me and my senior colleagues with working with all of you to put this right and to reduce the risk of a recurrence to an absolute minimum. It's going to take a lot of work, a lot of humility, a lot of determination.

We have to do it. But with your support, I am certain that we CAN do it. Thank you for listening.