



Meeting of the BBC Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee

MINUTES

18 January 2024

Boardroom 3028, Broadcasting House, London

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Ofcom Session
2. Minutes of the 16 November and 12 December Meetings and Matters Arising
3. Thematic Reviews
4. Senior Editorial Policy Advisor: Workplan and Report
5. Complaints Reporting
6. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues
7. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Members:

- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director (Chair)
- Tim Davie Director-General
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive director
- Deborah Turness CEO, BBC News and Current Affairs

With

- Adam Baxter Director, Audience Standards and Protection, Ofcom (item 1)
- Siobhan Walsh Director, Content Policy, Ofcom (item 1)
- Madeliene Sumption Co-Chair, Thematic Review of Migration (items 3a and b)
- David Grossman Senior Editorial Policy Advisor
- Caroline Daniel Editorial Advisor
- Michael Prescott Editorial Advisor
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Standards and Policy
- Peter Johnston Director, Complaints and Editorial Reviews
- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Committee
- Rizwana Rahmani Executive Lead, Editorial Policy and Standards
- Jonathan Munro Deputy CEO News and Current Affairs (item 3 onward)
- Helen White Project Manager; Serota Implementation Project (item 3)
- Simon Coates Senior Advisor, Thematic Reviews (item 3)

APOLOGIES

None

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Ofcom Session

- 1.1 The Committee welcomed Adam Baxter, Siobhan Walsh and Natalie Rose for its regular six-monthly session with Ofcom. Matters discussed included preparations for the coverage of this year's domestic and international elections; Ofcom's review into politicians as presenters on GB News; coverage of the Middle East; the Mid-term Review and an upcoming mystery shopping exercise on the BBC's complaints handling.

2. Minutes from the 16 November and 12 December Meeting and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings on the 16 November and 12 December were approved.
- 2.2 The Committee noted that Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, Nations had been invited to attend future meetings.

3. Thematic Review Updates

Thematic Review of Migration: Process Update

- 3.1 Following the appointment of Samir Shah as Chair of the BBC, the Committee agreed that Madeleine Sumption would finalise the drafting of the thematic review of migration, given that it was close to completion. The finished review would come to EGSC on 7 March, together with recommendations.

Thematic Review of BBC Coverage of Migration

- 3.2 Madeleine Sumption joined the meeting to brief the Committee on the review's methodology and key themes arising from the findings. Committee members discussed the tendency for stories on the topic to be prompted by political debate; the breadth of coverage and the range and expertise of voices used; the use of language and images; coverage of the topic on local services; the prominence of stories on the topic and internal editorial culture.

Third Thematic Review

- 3.3 The Committee discussed next steps with regard to the third thematic review and the need to narrow the scope of the terms of reference.

- 3.4 The Committee agreed that Peter Johnston would gather the views of members offline ahead of submitting a narrower scope to its March meeting.

Thematic Review of Tax and Spend: Autumn Review

- 3.5 The Committee noted the autumn review of the implementation of the recommendations arising from the thematic review of BBC coverage of taxation and public spending.
- 3.6 The Chair would send a letter of thanks to Andrew Dilnot and Michael Blastland

4. Senior Editorial Policy Advisor: Report and Workplan

- 4.1 The Committee noted and discussed the Senior Editorial Policy Advisor's report.
- 4.2 The Committee discussed and agreed the workplan for the new Senior Editorial Policy Advisor and the approach of the Committee to raising requests for research in future. The Committee requested that an assessment of news alerts should be included in the next tranche of work.

5. Complaints

Analysis of Editorial Complaints Stage 2

- 5.1 The Committee considered a paper providing a full account of the findings of ECU and the status of Ofcom complaints during the previous period. The report set out performance against KPIs, a list of the upheld or resolved complaints, with links to the published summaries of the findings, and highlights key themes and significant not upheld cases.

Complaints Reporting

- 5.2 The Committee noted the Stage 1 complaints reports for November and December and the Ofcom monthly reports covering the same period.

6. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues

Emerging Issues

- 6.1 The Committee discussed some of the key areas of risk in BBC coverage over the coming period and how they were being addressed.

News Coverage Update

- 6.2 The Committee noted an update from the CEO, News and Current Affairs.

7. AOB

- 7.1 The Committee requested an update on the implementation of the social media guidance and a briefing on the application of editorial standards to the BBC's Tik Tok content.