



## **Meeting of the BBC Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee**

### **MINUTES**

2 July 2024

Boardroom 3028, Broadcasting House, London

### **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

1. Ofcom Session
2. Minutes of the 14 May Meeting and Matters Arising
3. The Role and Effectiveness of EGSC
4. Revision of the Editorial Guidelines
5. Senior Editorial Policy Adviser's Report
6. Thematic Review Updates
7. Complaints Reporting
8. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues
9. Papers for Approval/Noting
10. AOB

## ATTENDANCE

### *Members:*

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

### *With*

Adam Baxter	Director, Standards and Audience Protection, Ofcom
Cristina Nicoletti Squires	Group Director, Broadcasting and Media Group, Ofcom
Caroline Daniel	Editorial Advisor
Michael Prescott	Editorial Advisor
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Standards and Policy
Peter Johnston	Director, Complaints and Editorial Reviews
Jo Clarke	Secretary to the Committee
Rizwana Rahmani	Executive Lead, Editorial Policy and Standards
Jonathan Munro	Deputy CEO News and Current Affairs
David Grossman	Senior Editorial Policy Advisor
Helen White	Project Manager; Serota Implementation Project
Simon Coates	Senior Advisor, Thematic Reviews

## APOLOGIES

Rhodri Talfan Davies

## **EDITORIAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **1. Ofcom Session**

- 1.1 The Committee welcomed Cristina Nicoletti-Squires, the new Group Director, Broadcasting and Media Group at Ofcom and Adam Baxter, Director, Audience Protection and Standards, Ofcom, for its regular six-monthly session. Matters discussed included complaints and complaints handling over the election period; how coverage was allocated to new and emerging parties during the election period; Ofcom's review of politicians as presenters, and the responsibility placed on Ofcom for online content under the Online Safety Act.

### **2. Minutes from the 14 May Meeting and Matters Arising**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on the 14 May were approved.

#### *Matters Arising*

- 2.2 The Committee noted that the Board had approved a proposal from Nominations Committee that Samir Shah, Chair of the Board, should be appointed as Chair of the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee. Samir thanked Nicholas Serota, the outgoing Chair, for all his work as Chair, particularly in regard to the implementation of the Serota Review and the oversight of thematic reviews as a new and major part of the Committee's role.
- 2.3 The Matters Arising paper was noted.

### **3. The Role and Effectiveness of the Committee**

- 3.1 The Committee discussed the role and effectiveness of the EGSC, including its scope and remit, membership and areas of oversight.
- 3.2 The Committee discussed the two key responsibilities it had been delegated by the Board; which were to oversee, on behalf of the Board, the development of, and ensure compliance with, the BBC's editorial guidelines and to oversee and monitor the complaints framework. The Committee agreed that it was important to ensure that its role focus remained on editorial standards and values across all the BBC's output, rather than editorial operations.

- 3.3 The Committee discussed the role of the external editorial advisers and agreed that providing greater clarity regarding their responsibilities would enable them to contribute more effectively to the Committee. A clearer role description would be developed for each adviser.
- 3.4 The Committee discussed its responsibility for managing editorial risk and ensuring that the BBC's Editorial Guidelines were followed. Committee members agreed that the actions taken by the Executive management following breaches of the guidelines by staff would be reported to the Committee to ensure consistency across the organisation.

#### **4 Revision of the Editorial Guidelines: Public Consultation**

- 4.1 The Committee considered a paper proposing options for the timing of the public consultation on the revised Editorial Guidelines.
- 4.2 Given the announcement of the General Election on 4 July, the Committee agreed that the public consultation should be delayed. This option avoided the summer period. It also allowed for political parties to have time to reorganise, if necessary, following a General Election.
- 4.3 A paper on the public consultation of the Editorial Guidelines, and the main changes to be consulted on, would go forward to the Board.

#### **5. Senior Advisor Editorial Policy Report**

- 5.1 The Committee discussed the Senior Editorial Policy Advisor's report.
- 5.2 The Committee noted an update on progress with the most editorial research project. Committee members were asked to provide any comments offline.

#### **6. Thematic Review Updates**

- 6.1 The Committee received an update on the work of the third thematic review on portrayal and representation; it was planned that the co-Chairs of the review, Chris Banatvala and Anne Morrison would meet the Committee in the Autumn
- 6.2 The Committee noted an update on the implementation of the findings from the thematic review of BBC coverage of migration. Madeleine Sumption had been providing briefing sessions as part of the implementation of the thematic review of BBC coverage of migration: an all-staff webinar, presented by Sarah Montague, had been viewed by

over 900 staff; a briefing had been provided to news presenters, and a specialised briefing on local issues relating to migration had been provided to BBC South East.

- 6.2 The Committee discussed potential topics for future thematic reviews.

## **7 Complaints Reporting**

### *Analysis of Editorial Complaints Stage 2*

- 7.1 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 highlighted key themes and significant not upheld cases.

- 7.2 The Committee discussed a number of recent complaints and findings.

### *Update on Gaza/Israel Complaints*

- 7.3 The Committee noted an update on complaints relating to coverage of Gaza/Israel.

## **8 Emerging Risks and Issues**

- 8.1 The Committee discussed current and upcoming editorial risks; including the General Election in the UK; the election in France and the US Election campaign and election.

## **9 Papers for Approval/Noting by Exception**

- 9.1 The Committee noted the stage 1 complaints reporting for May and June.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the Ofcom monthly complaints reports.

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1 There was no other business.