

# Mandatory Referrals

## Impartiality

Mandatory Referrals are to Chief Adviser, Politics

See **2.3. [Mandatory Referrals](#)**

## Accuracy

**3.3.1** Any proposal to rely on a single unnamed source making a serious allegation or to grant anonymity to a significant contributor making a serious allegation must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice

## Conflicts of Interest

**4.3.1** News and current affairs presenters should not front campaigns for charities or campaigning bodies as this could compromise the BBC's reputation for impartiality. Any proposal that would not comply with this must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**4.3.2** Individuals involved in the production or presentation of BBC news and current affairs and factual journalism output – including freelances known primarily for their BBC role – should not normally undertake external media training work, including for commercial companies, charities and campaign groups. Any proposal to carry out such work must be referred to their line manager in advance and referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**4.3.3** There may be circumstances where it is not possible to produce content about a specific personality, or area where the personality has unique access or expertise, unless it is produced by an independent production company owned by, or as a co-production with, that talent or an associated agency. Any such proposal will require strong editorial justification and must be referred to the relevant divisional director and Editorial Policy. Director Editorial Policy and Standards must also be consulted.

## Harm and Offence

**5.3.1** Any proposal to show the real moment of someone's death must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**5.3.2** Any proposal to publish or broadcast a depiction of the Prophet Muhammad must be referred to a senior editorial figure who must consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

## Fairness

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**6.3.1** Any proposal to broadcast a serious allegation without offering an opportunity to reply, must be referred to a senior editorial figure, or for independent production companies to the commissioning editor, and to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**6.3.2** Any proposal to create a website which conceals any connection to the BBC must be referred to a senior editorial figure, or for independent production companies to the commissioning editor, and Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**6.3.3** The portrayal of a real person in a significant way in a drama against their wishes or those of their immediate surviving family must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards for approval before a commitment is made to the production.

**6.3.4** Any proposal for BBC content producers to enter a country in a way that avoids visa restrictions must be referred to a senior editorial figure, or for **independent** production companies to the commissioning editor. Director Editorial Policy and Standards must also be consulted.

## Privacy

**7.3.1** Any proposal to gather material illegally outside the UK by disregarding privacy or other similar laws in the relevant country must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards. Programme Legal Advice must also be consulted.

**7.3.2** Director Editorial Policy and Standards must approve any proposal to employ and/or pay someone known to have a criminal record or background of illegal activity to work on a BBC investigation.

**7.3.3** Any proposal to use secret recordings made by others must be referred to Editorial Policy prior to approval by a senior editorial figure or, for independent production companies, by the commissioning editor. If the BBC would not have considered it justifiable to gather the material under similar circumstances, the proposal must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**7.3.4** Any proposal to broadcast, without consent, recordings originally made for note-taking purposes must be agreed by Director Editorial Policy and Standards. Permission to broadcast material gathered in this way will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

**7.3.5** Any proposal to equip third parties with body-worn cameras and microphones, where to do so might infringe the privacy of an individual or where the third party is entering private premises without permission, must be referred in advance to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

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**7.3.6** Any proposal for unmonitored recording equipment on private property without consent of the occupier must be referred to Programme Legal Advice and Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**7.3.7** Any proposal to use a tracking device where it would infringe the privacy of an individual must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**7.3.8** Any proposal for a private investigator acting for the BBC to breach the Editorial Guidelines or, exceptionally, to break the law in pursuit of an investigation must be approved in advance by a senior editorial figure, who must consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards prior to approval, and Programme Legal Advice must also be consulted where it is believed laws may be broken.

**7.3.9** If during the course of making programmes or content, it is believed laws may be broken by someone working for the BBC, it must be referred to a senior editorial figure, or for independent production companies to the commissioning editor, who should consult Programme Legal Advice and Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**7.3.10** Any proposal to engage in hacking or commission hacking activities by third parties must be referred in advance to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**7.3.11** Any proposal to secretly record a doorstep must be agreed with Director Editorial Policy and Standards. Permission to gather material in this way will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances and must be in the public interest.

## Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

**8.3.1** Content likely to encourage or incite crime, or lead to disorder, must not be included in BBC output. Any proposal to publish or broadcast content which risks inciting crime or disorder must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.2** When investigating criminal activity, content makers may want to record a specific crime or the planning of a specific crime. Where that might raise questions about their relationship with the criminal, or involves witnessing criminal activity, it must be referred to a senior editorial figure or, for independent production companies, to the commissioning editor, and to both Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice.

**8.3.3** Any proposal to contact or interview a criminal active in, or wanted in, the UK must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.4** Any proposal to contact or interview escaped prisoners or others wanted by the UK police must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice.

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**8.3.5** Any proposal to pay a fee or to make a payment in kind to criminals, former criminals, their families or their associates (directly or indirectly) for interviews or other contributions relating to their crimes, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.6** Any proposal to enter a UK prison to conduct an interview with a prisoner without permission of the prison authorities must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.7** Any proposal to publish or broadcast the name or picture of a convicted paedophile or other sex offender, when their name has not been made publicly available by the police, the courts or other tribunal, or if their conviction is spent, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.8** Any proposal to interview a paedophile or other sex offender who has been convicted of serious offences, who is in prison or on release from prison, should be referred to a senior editorial figure, or for independent production companies to the commissioning editor, who should consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.9** Any proposal to grant anonymity to someone seeking to evade UK law, where there is an ongoing investigation, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.10** Any proposal to interview a witness or potential witness about their evidence once criminal proceedings are underway, or to pay them, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice.

**8.3.11** Director Editorial Policy and Standards must approve any proposal to employ or pay someone known to have a criminal record or background of illegal activity to work on a BBC investigation.

**8.3.12** Any proposal to inform the police or investigatory authorities of any wrongdoing uncovered during an investigation, unless part of a right of reply process or after publication or broadcast, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.13** When considering whether material from a discontinued investigation should be made available to the police or any other appropriate authority, content makers must consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**8.3.14** Any intention to supply material of any sort from a discontinued investigation to the police, or any other third party, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice.

## Children and Young People as Contributors

## Mandatory Referrals

Referrals are to the Safeguarding Team, Head of Safeguarding and Legal

See [9.3 Mandatory Referrals](#)

## Politics and Public Policy

Mandatory referrals are to Chief Adviser Politics

See: [10.3 Mandatory Referrals](#)

## Statistics, Polls, Data and Surveys

**11.3.1** Any proposal to engage in the unauthorised accessing of computer systems or accounts by hacking or commissioning hacking activities by third parties must be referred in advance to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

Other referrals are to Chief Adviser Politics.

See: [11.3 Mandatory Referrals](#)

## War Terror and Extreme Violence

**12.3.1** Any proposal to attend an event staged for the media by organisations proscribed under UK law, or groups known for extreme violence in pursuit of political or ideological objectives, must be referred to a senior editorial figure or, for independent production companies, to the commissioning editor. Referral must also be made to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**12.3.2** Any proposal to broadcast material recorded at a staged event in the UK or overseas, where threats are made against UK citizens, must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**12.3.3** Any proposal to broadcast content made by perpetrators of a siege or mass killing, hijacking, kidnapping, assassination or hostage-taking must be referred to a senior editorial figure or, for independent production companies, to the commissioning editor and must also be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**12.3.4** Any request from the police or others for a complete or partial news black-out must be referred to a senior editorial figure, who must consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**12.3.5** Official Secrets legislation affects the BBC's ability to report on some matters relating to confidential security and intelligence issues. Content makers must consult Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice when handling material that falls, or might fall, within its terms.

## Mandatory Referrals

**12.3.6** Any approach to or from the Secretary to the Defence and Security Media Advisory Committee<sup>[2]</sup> must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**12.3.7** Any situation where BBC staff or anyone else engaged in content production for the BBC may have obligations under the Terrorism Acts must be referred promptly to Director Editorial Policy and Standards and Programme Legal Advice.

**12.3.8** Any proposal to approach an organisation (or an individual member of an organisation) designated a 'terrorist group' by the UK Home Secretary under the Terrorism Acts, and any proposal to approach individuals or organisations responsible for extreme violence in pursuit of political or ideological objectives, to participate in BBC output whether in the UK or internationally must be referred in advance to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

## Use of Content after Publication

**13.3.1** All requests for unpublished, unbroadcast or otherwise unused material – including notes – from the police or in connection with court proceedings, possible court proceedings or other procedures in which the material may be regarded as evidence (such as disciplinary hearings by regulatory bodies), must be referred to Programme Legal Advice and Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

## External Relationships

**16.3.1** Any proposal to enter a partnership with any government must be referred to Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

**16.3.2** Any proposal for the World Service or Media Action's democratic governance content to be externally funded must be approved by the relevant director after taking advice from Director Editorial Policy and Standards.

## Competitions Votes and Interactivity

Referrals are to Editorial Policy and ITACU

See [17.3 Mandatory Referrals](#)