



Content guidelines

The following information is a general roundup of issues that most commonly affect material submitted to the BBC Big Screen. The same rules govern the Big Screen as govern all BBC output, be it on television, radio, online or within the field of live events. Editorial Guidelines in full can be viewed online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines> including a search facility for specific queries.

PLEASE BE AWARE THESE CONTENT GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND MUST ONLY BE USED AS A GUIDE.

Music Copyright

All work submitted must have full clearances for rights including music and other talent rights covered. Completion of the Contributor Consent form is usually sufficient evidence to this end.

Occasionally we may require further assurance (e.g. emails, written communication) to irrefutably confirm that copyright has been sought and cleared, and that that there will be no liability for payments to artists/ contributors/ authors/ directors etc. by showing them on the screen.

If the work includes a soundtrack you MUST obtain clearance for use in the work. This may incur a fee and details on how to do this are available from the MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society), tele-phone: +44 (0) 207 580 5544 or log on to www.mcps.co.uk

Music clearance is required as standard across all professional broadcast platforms; be it film, television, radio, internet and wireless, including transmission in the public realm on the emerging network of giant digital screens, BBC or otherwise. Galleries, museums and places of exhibition also register music use in art-works. News stories increasingly refer to copyright infringement in the field of digital music downloads. Anyone wishing to pursue artistic goals beyond the home or educational environment must address this need – please visit the MCPS website for further information.

Local bands or musicians are a good source of soundtrack material and whose consent can be sought/verified with the use of the standard BBC Big Screen consent form. This explains that any material used – be it music or the film clip itself – remains the ownership of the creator(s) at all times and will not be used elsewhere except upon the Big Screen within the dates agreed.

Similarly, if you require a general style of material, rather than a specific artist – for example, techno, ambient, classical – or even by mood (excitable, reflective, cinematic), we may be able to draw upon the local BBC record library who have access to a limited amount of copyright-free material.

Elsewhere, commercial companies sell CDs in stores and online of copyright free material that can be used indefinitely and without restriction. There are also websites (try a general search for audio libraries online), where music and sound effects can be purchased or downloaded for free.

Do not be deterred. If confused over the issue, get in touch.

Subject matter

Subsequent topics have been selected as the most common recurring issues based upon the first three years of submissions to the Big Screens. They are by no means comprehensive and intended as guidance only.

Links to third party websites (non BBC)

On screen web links are permitted as long as these are justified within the context of the screening. For example, to provide additional information or describe the project background. Any sites must be clearly relevant to the content of the video material, suitable for the likely audience (including children), be regularly updated and refreshed, free to access and normally factually accurate. No web links to commercial sites will be accepted.

Big Screen and the watershed

Television scheduling decisions need to balance the protection of young people and particularly children, with the rights of all viewers, particularly those without children, to receive a full range of subject matter throughout the day. They must also be judged against the requirements of the Watershed; a concept familiar to UK television viewers by which challenging, 'adult' content of a controversial nature is reserved for broadcast after 21.00. However, unlike watching television at home where the viewer retains the option of switching off or to another channel. The Norwich Big Screen will broadcast until 11pm Monday to Saturday and only until 10.30pm on Sundays

Additional video material that has been submitted and accepted will be shown throughout the day and night, so anything shown in the evening when children might be expected to be at home is also shown during day-time hours. For this reason the post-watershed, 'anything-goes' period does not apply. Another example might be that in the case of a gallery exhibition, a person makes a conscious decision to enter a building with some foreknowledge of the content; if not, they can always leave if offended. The BBC Big Screen is in the outdoor public realm, facing major transport exchanges and sited in the central shopping district.

Challenging content will be considered on its own merits – we strongly encourage you to submit material over which you feel unsure as to suitability so that we might view and advise. To summarise: contributors should remain aware that all types of people can be watching at all times and that a balance needs to be struck. Public realm programming is in its infancy and with your assistance we are leading the way forward.

Children and dangerous imitation

Children can be influenced by what they see, hear and read. Very careful judgments are required about material which might lead to dangerous imitation, including the use of domestic objects in violent acts (e.g. knives, hammers and scissors).

Violence

We should take care to ensure that material does not condone or glamorise violence, dangerous or seriously anti-social behaviour and is likely to encourage others to copy such behaviour. These include violence in places normally regarded as safe such as the family home, hospitals and schools; suicide, attempted suicide or self harm; violence without showing the effect on the victim or the consequences for the perpetrator.

Sex and nudity

Partial/full nudity must be justified by the context and will not usually be accepted given the always-on nature of the screen; likewise material broadcast in the public realm must not portray inappropriate sexual behaviour or contain explicit sexual discussion unless clearly editorially justified.

Language

Offensive language is one of the most frequent causes of complaint across the BBC. Judgments about its use are difficult because they depend on tone and context. There is no consensus about words that are acceptable, when, and by whom. Different words cause different degrees of offence in different parts of the world. So a person's age, sex, education, employment, belief, nationality, and where they live, all impact on whether or not they might be offended. Please avoid insulting terms or curses that may fall into the above categories.

We do not reject on the basis of single or infrequent use. Instead please submit your film so that we might advise.

Portrayal

We aim to reflect fully and fairly all of the United Kingdom's people and cultures across all BBC services. Content may reflect the prejudice and disadvantage which exist in our society but we should not perpetuate it. We should avoid offensive or stereotypical assumptions and people should only be described in terms of their disability, age, sexual orientation and so on when clearly editorially justified.

Alcohol, smoking, solvent/drug abuse, illegal drugs

We must balance the need to reflect the range of public attitudes and behavior realistically, with the danger of encouraging potentially damaging or illegal behavior, particularly amongst children.

For the purposes of the BBC Big Screens, unless editorially justified we should not encourage, glamorise or condone the use of illegal drugs, the abuse of drugs, smoking, solvent abuse and the misuse of alcohol. It is understood that concert clips, musical productions, dramatisations of social activities and such contain images of some of the above. This is not in itself problematic. It only becomes an issue of debate if stylized to appear unduly appealing.

Suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm

Suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm should be portrayed with great sensitivity, whether in drama or in factual programmes. Care must be taken to avoid describing or showing methods in any great detail and content producers should be alert to the dangers of making such behavior attractive to the vulnerable.

Children and consent

You should normally seek the consent of parents or legal guardians, or other person of eighteen or over in loco parentis before interviewing children or young people, or otherwise involving them in video projects. The younger and more vulnerable the child, and the more sensitive the subject matter, the more likely it is that consent is essential.

Please use the Contributor Consent form to obtain parental or guardian appearance permissions from those under the age of 18. In the case of large groups (school classes, short films, clubs, choirs and such), it is enough that a single form completed and signed by an adult in charge (teacher, project leader, director), providing they accept responsibility for having sought and received approval from the parents/guardians of all those taking part.

In law, Local Education Authorities license all child performances during school hours.

Any contributors are free to change their mind part-way through agreed play out and request that the clip be removed.

If in doubt please email any further queries to kevin.heathorn@bbc.co.uk - Big Screen Producer for Plymouth

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