

Archived BBC public responses to complaints

2013

Sunday Half Hour, BBC Radio 2, moving to a morning slot 20 Jan 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from people who are unhappy that Sunday Half Hour is being moved to a morning slot.

Response from BBC Radio 2

We understand how well loved 'Sunday Half Hour' is for many regular BBC Radio 2 listeners. For that reason the decision to move the programme from its place at 8.30pm in the Sunday evening schedule has not been taken lightly. Over the past decade the number of people listening to the programme and on Sunday nights generally has declined significantly, and so we feel it is time to refresh our Sunday evening music offer and that this is also a good time to move 'Sunday Half Hour' alongside our other weekly faith programme 'Good Morning Sunday'. The move will enable us to expand the airtime to an hour and broadcast it at a time when there are both more people listening and an expectation to hear faith-related output. In addition, all of our programmes are available on BBC iPlayer so if you are able to access the internet or can receive BBC iPlayer through your television, you can enjoy the show at any time of the day.

Ripper Street, BBC One 13 Jan 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who feel the content of *Ripper Street* is too violent and unsuitable for its timeslot.

The BBC's response

BBC One showcases a broad range of drama and tackles a wide variety of subjects, from *Last Tango in Halifax* to *Call the Midwife* and *The Syndicate*. *Ripper Street* is a strong and gritty series set in the east end of London at the end of the 19th Century and we have tried to be true to the period. We scheduled it after the 9pm watershed and made sure the content was widely publicised as well as giving a warning before each episode as necessary so the audience would know what to expect.

The Nolan Show, BBC One Northern Ireland, 16 January 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from some people who were unhappy about the make-up of the audience for this programme and who felt that it did not include people from different community backgrounds.

The BBC's response

Any member of the public can apply to be part of 'The Nolan Show' studio audience. Admission is on a first-come and ticket only basis. We do not select audience members on the basis of their community background or political affiliations but are always concerned to make BBC events as inclusive as possible. A smaller number of people than normal turned up for Wednesday night's programme. This may have been due to what was happening outside the studio - all of which was outside our control. Despite these difficult circumstances we felt it important to proceed with our broadcast plans and tried to manage contributions in a way that was fair to all those involved. None of this was easy. We accept that the studio audience in Blackstaff may not have been fully reflective of the wider community, but were able to include a range of views through the selection of panel members and guest contributors. Those taking part in the discussion included people from different areas and community backgrounds, together with business representatives and political commentators. Diverse views and opinions were also reflected through text and email messages from members of our television audience.

Tweenies, CBeebies, 20 January 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt it was inappropriate to feature a character dressed as a DJ impersonating Jimmy Savile.

The BBC's response

On 20 January 2013, CBeebies broadcast a repeat of an episode of the Tweenies, originally made in 2001, featuring a character dressed as a DJ impersonating Jimmy Savile. This programme will not be repeated and we are very sorry for any offence caused. We have spoken to the team to ensure this mistake cannot be repeated.

Let's Dance for Comic Relief, BBC One, 16 February

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who felt Steve Jones made an inappropriate comment at the end of *Let's Dance for Comic Relief* concerning rugby scores.

The BBC's response

Steve Jones' comments at the end of *Let's Dance for Comic Relief* were intended to be light-hearted in keeping with the tone of the show. It's well-known that there is a friendly rivalry between the home nations when it comes to rugby, and Steve was simply reflecting this as a Welshman in his off-the-cuff remark.

BBC Red Button changes 22 Feb 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from some viewers about changes to the Red Button service.

Response

As part of digital switchover the Ceefax text service was discontinued and the publishing system had to move onto digital systems. We're sorry that this change caused temporary technical difficulties, and some pages did not appear properly. These problems are being addressed and pages are being improved. The changes are explained under the '**Text changes**' heading in the **help section** on the Red Button service itself. Because of limitations to the capacity available some services have had to be discontinued, including premium bond results and changes to some news pages. We have also had to make changes to the way in which some information is organised. We welcome the feedback we have received and are now changing the format of horse-racing and some other results services, as well as correcting temporary problems which had occurred with some split-screen pages

Comic Relief, BBC One, 15 March 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers about the suitability of some of the content in this year's *Comic Relief*, with many complainants singling out sketches by Rowan Atkinson and *Call the Midwife*.

The BBC's response

Comic Relief night featured seven hours of live television and has become known for pushing at the boundaries of comedy alongside heartfelt appeal films. The team was faced with the difficult challenge of scheduling items so that they appealed to a varied and wide ranging audience. Getting the language, tone and content of the evening is therefore extremely important and the team closely monitor all the audience feedback as it comes in. It was clear from this feedback that the Rowan Atkinson sketch was problematic for a number of different reasons, with many viewers noting the subject matter, the language used and its placing early in the evening. It is clear to us that this sketch did not translate as we had hoped and as a direct result of viewer feedback we took a swift decision to remove this from BBC iPlayer. With the *Call the Midwife* sketch we hoped viewers would appreciate the mix of different genres, comedy styles, (*Miranda*) and time travel (*Doctor Who*), and that it would be clear how absurd the sketch was - with the Midwife characters trying to attend to a couple in a modern-day hospital setting. We would now like to take this opportunity to say that we are sorry that any of the above offended our viewers. This year the programme was watched by a peak audience of 12.2m and raised a record total of over £75m, and the very last thing we wanted was to take away from all of the hard work everyone put in. We will bear these issues in mind for all future events.

The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins, BBC One, 23 March 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who believe we accepted a wrong answer concerning flags which feature the colour red during *The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins*.

The BBC's response

The second list which featured on the show was entitled: "Countries with the colour red on their national flag". Before playing the list, Nick Knowles read out the following clarification to both teams: "To clarify, we are looking for any present day country whose national flag features the colour red. This is according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica online". As noted by our source, the Finnish flag takes two forms, one of which is typically flown from government buildings and features a red, white and yellow coat of arms. The flag of Finland, therefore, qualifies as an answer on our list. In addition to internal checks by our question team, all our lists are scrutinised by two external verifiers both of whom agreed that "Finland" was a correct answer for this list.

The Andrew Marr Show, BBC One, 24 March 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt presenter Eddie Mair was too aggressive during his interview with Mayor of London Boris Johnson.

The BBC's response

This interview looked at issues facing London and the wider political landscape, as well as looking towards this week's BBC2 documentary about Boris Johnson. As the documentary is biographical, we felt it was appropriate to explore controversial episodes in the Mayor's life. During the course of the interview Eddie's line of questioning attempted to elicit responses to direct questions that were not being answered. We believe the interview was carried out in a fair and professional manner.

The Boat Race, BBC One, 31 March 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who were offended by bad language in our live coverage of *The Boat Race*.

The BBC's response

We are very sorry that our live coverage of *The Boat Race* included two instances of audible swearing from one of the coxes, as we recognise that this offended some viewers. On both occasions, in accordance with the BBC Editorial Guidelines covering live output, our commentators immediately apologised on-air, and we subsequently removed the offending language before making the programme available on BBC iPlayer. BBC Sport take such matters very seriously and, as in previous years, the production team had spoken with both coxes beforehand to emphasise that they should not swear because their voices would be picked up by on-board microphones. We would like to reassure our audiences that we will be looking at ways to ensure we can avoid a repetition of these unfortunate incidents in future years.

BBC News, Coverage of the death of Lady Thatcher, 8 April 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from audience members who felt that BBC News devoted too much time to news of the death of Lady Thatcher and that this coverage was biased in her favour. We also received complaints that our coverage was biased against her.

The BBC's response

Having served for over a decade as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the death of Lady Thatcher was unquestionably an event which we believe merited the attention we gave it. BBC News respectfully reported the story as news of her death broke and this was also an occasion to examine her legacy, including the controversial aspects of her leadership. Our output featured a very diverse range of voices and opinions, from world leaders and politicians to members of the public and we provided extensive expert analysis for our different audiences across TV, radio and online, while also continuing to cover other stories.

Barely Legal Drivers, BBC Three 9 April 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who objected to the premise of the series, with many feeling that it rewarded dangerous driving.

The BBC's response

Barely Legal Drivers does not glamorise reckless driving but highlights that young drivers in the UK are some of the most dangerous in Europe, and this serious message is clearly stated at the top of every programme. The series seeks to encourage road safety and make young people better drivers, and dangerous driving or bad habits are never shown without being commented on immediately. Former traffic cop, Judith Roberts, is on hand throughout to offer practical advice and her comments act as a clear message to the audience. For example, in the first episode, just one message is that you can think you're drinking relatively small amounts over the course of an entire evening but this can put drivers over the drink drive limit. The decision on who gets a car or advanced driving lessons is down to Judith Roberts who analyses the drivers and it is clear that they are never in competition. In the programme she quizzes the contributors, who have already passed their driving tests, about what they have learned from the experience and all the drivers in fact receive a far longer, detailed de-brief from Judith than can be shown in the broadcast version of the programme. We have been asked whether the police will be taking action against the drivers and we would like to advise that this is a matter for the local police force, rather than the BBC. BBC Three is committed to highlighting issues relevant to its audience and teenage accident and death rates on the road is a major one. *Barely Legal Drivers* is just one programme on the channel tackling this subject. A forthcoming documentary - *Licence to Kill* - further explores the issue in depth and the serious implications of dangerous driving among newly qualified teen drivers. Sophie, who presents it, is in a wheelchair as a result of an accident she caused herself, giving her a unique perspective as she meets people who've been injured in traffic incidents - or who've been responsible for causing one, and perhaps even taking a life. A recent drama *The Crash* demonstrated the channel's commitment to tackling this important topic in a variety of ways.

The Official Chart with Jameela Jamil, BBC Radio 1, decision to play a clip of the song 'Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead', 14 April 2013

Complaint

We received complaints about the decision to play a clip of the song 'Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead' on *The Official Chart with Jameela Jamil*.

Response from BBC Radio 1

BBC Radio 1's position is explained in a blog written by the station's Controller Ben Cooper as follows: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/aboutthebbc/posts/Statement-regarding-Radio-1s-Chart-Show-14-April-2013>.

Have I Got News For You, 12 April, 2013

Complaint

We received complaints about this broadcast - some viewers were disappointed by the comments made about the late Lady Thatcher.

The BBC's Response

HIGNFY's agenda is set by the biggest news stories of the week. Given the enormous amount of TV and newspaper comment on the life and achievements of Lady Thatcher, it was impossible to ignore the story. *HIGNFY's* purpose is to be entertaining as well as satirical and it has a tradition of irreverence and sailing as close to the wind as possible on the subjects it covers. The very fact that the programme covered the death of Lady Thatcher was always going to infuriate some viewers, however they should know what to expect from the show after 23 years. If you look closely at the content of the show you will see that at no point did we make fun of Lady Thatcher herself or put forward a critique of her record – everything was based around the reaction to her death by other politicians and public figures, and the row over the cost of the funeral.

Panorama: North Korea Undercover, BBC One, 15 April 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from audience members unhappy that an undercover reporter posed as a student from the London School of Economics (LSE) for a programme investigating North Korea. Some complainants also felt the programme should not have been broadcast.

The BBC's response

We believe there was a strong public interest in broadcasting this programme. It sought to understand the North Korean government's behaviour through exposing some aspects of life inside the country. The programme brought that perspective to a general audience on BBC One, engaging them with the importance of what is happening in the region. A programme of this sort involves some difficult judgements, editorially, practically and ethically, and that is why it was handled at a senior level at the BBC. The students were told in advance about the increased risks of the trip, including the risk of arrest and detention and that they might not be able to return to North Korea in the future. They were told in good time in order for them to be able to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to proceed with the trip. All of the students in the group were of an age to give informed consent, being between 18 and 28 years old. A dialogue with them has continued since their return. We do not, and never did, intend to make any reference to the LSE in the programme. The actions of the programme team in relation to its contributors were, we believe, proportionate to the subject matter, as is required in the BBC's Editorial Guidelines.

Have I Got News For You, BBC One, 26 April 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who were unhappy with comments made about Scotland during *Have I Got News For You* on Friday 26th April.

The BBC's response

Have I Got News For You is a topical and satirical entertainment panel show and as such contains jokes and provocative comment rather than genuine political reporting or debate. The guest host's material, including the questions and extra jokes he has written, do not reflect the opinions of the BBC, they are jokes concerning the major news stories of the week which are intended to be enjoyed by as great a proportion of the audience as possible. The programme has dealt with many subjects over the last 20 years and we don't believe the way the subject of Scotland was handled in this edition would have gone against audience expectations for the show.

www.bbc.co.uk/complaints

BBC News, 08 May 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt there was too much coverage of Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement from Manchester United.

Response from BBC News

The breaking news of Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement from Manchester United was a big story for many of our audience. Alex Ferguson has led Manchester United for 26 years and the team is one of the most internationally recognised for sporting achievement. There was significant interest in the story worldwide as well as in the UK. Accordingly, the BBC News Channel led with the story as it broke. At other points during the day the BBC News Channel also led on the Queen's Speech and the issues arising from that; such as immigration and changes to pensions. The News Channel showed BBC One's special programme on the Queen's Speech in full, from 1030 through the rest of the morning. As BBC One's coverage of *The State Opening of Parliament* ran until 1215, we led on the Alex Ferguson story during the *News at One*, offering BBC One viewers comprehensive reporting on both events. The Queen's Speech was the lead story during the *News at Ten*. The bulletin also focused on the kidnapping story in Ohio and on the elections in Pakistan. For our website audience interested in sport, our figures show this was the biggest story since the Olympics, however we appreciate not all viewers share the same interest in the story. Taking that into consideration, we were very mindful of the need to balance this with other stories throughout the day.

BBC News, Coverage of the Woolwich attacks, 22 May 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that it was inappropriate to broadcast footage of one of the suspected attackers in Woolwich making a statement after the attack. We also received complaints that the accompanying footage we broadcast in our news reports on this story was too graphic and distressing.

The BBC's response

In our coverage of the Woolwich murder we thought very carefully about the pictures we used to tell the story. We gave great consideration to how we used the footage of the attacker. The footage, captured by a bystander, was an important element of the story and shed light on the perpetrators and the possible motives for the attack. We did not show the footage in its entirety, we gave warnings for pre-watershed transmission and dealt with the material as carefully as we could. Where there were distressing images we used them sparingly and again, we gave warnings for pre-watershed transmission. We acknowledge that some of the images central to reporting the story were distressing and we were very mindful of possible audience sensitivity when we used them.

Sunday Politics, BBC One, 16 June 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt presenter Andrew Neil was too aggressive during his interview with the leader of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson.

Response from Sunday Politics

The English Defence League has been demonstrating across the country in significant numbers following the Woolwich murder, and also stands accused by some of having inspired (or even be directly responsible for) the recent increase in Islamophobic attacks. Also, six men were recently convicted for having tried to detonate explosives at an EDL rally. Given that background, we decided to interview the EDL's co-founder, spokesman and leader Tommy Robinson in order to give viewers a chance to understand more about the organisation through a testing interview. We believe the interview was editorially valuable. As with all *Sunday Politics* interviews, we seek to present a true picture of the subject and the subjects under discussion with meticulous research and robust interviewing. This was the approach we took with this interview. The item covered the history and ideological outlook of the group, its attitudes to Muslim Britons, its reaction to Woolwich as well as Mr Robinson's political and personal history, which was relevant material given his criminal convictions and the allegations of criminality on the part of EDL members. Given that the EDL is not a political party but a loose organisation, discussion of the character of the group and its leadership is particularly relevant. It was a robust interview, as our viewers would expect, given the importance and significance of the issues being discussed. Mr Robinson was given ample time and space to reply to Andrew Neil's questions. He was shown video and stills of himself, and other EDL members, and again was given time and space to respond. Mr Robinson had 15 minutes on BBC1 on one of our flagship political programmes and had the opportunity to put his case forcefully and clearly which he did. It is true that towards the end of the interview, Mr Neil and Mr Robinson talked over each other a few times and we appreciate some viewers may have found this frustrating. However, we believe the interview was fair, forensic and well conducted.

The Voice UK, BBC One, 22 June 2013

Complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who felt that Holly's dress for the final of *The Voice UK* was unsuitable for a family audience.

BBC's response

We're sorry if some viewers found Holly's dress to be unsuitable. Holly enjoys fashion and we felt the dress she wore for the live final of *The Voice UK* was glamorous and wholly appropriate for the occasion. We don't believe it would have gone against audience expectations for a TV spectacle such as this.

The Andrew Marr Show, BBC One, 23 June, 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt Russell Brand was an inappropriate choice of guest during the newspaper review section of the programme.

Response from The Andrew Marr Show

The newspaper review is a forum for a range of different people to give their take on the stories in the newspapers that weekend. The programme uses a mix of journalists, commentators, politicians and other public figures and sometimes features entertainers. Russell Brand, although known to many as a comedian, has been vocal on a number of social and political issues. With that in mind the programme's producers felt that Russell Brand might contribute positively to the discussion, bringing a fresh eye to the stories in the news. Several viewers have commented that they appreciated someone outside the usual mould of those chosen to review the papers: others have urged us to stick to the more traditional format. We appreciate that he's proved a divisive figure, but feel it was worthwhile hearing from him on this occasion.

Wimbledon 2013, BBC Radio 5 Live, 06 July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from listeners who were offended by comments made by John Inverdale about Marion Bartoli's appearance.

The BBC's response

John Inverdale is one of our most experienced presenters, however we do accept that in the run-up to Saturday's Wimbledon Ladies' Final John made an insensitive comment regarding Marion Bartoli. John has apologised for this remark and acknowledges that it was "clumsy". Speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live subsequently, John went on to explain that, "The point I was trying to make, in a rather ham-fisted kind of way, was that in a world where the public perception of tennis players is that they are all six feet Amazonian athletes, Marion, who is the Wimbledon Champion, bucks that trend and she is a fantastic example to all young people that it's attitude and will and determination, together obviously with talent, that does in the end get you to the top". John has also written a personal apology to Marion Bartoli to express his regret if any offence was caused.

Wimbledon 2013, BBC One, 06 July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy that the result of the Formula One German Grand Prix Qualifying was revealed.

The BBC's response

The reference to Lewis Hamilton having secured pole position in the Formula One German Grand Prix Qualifying earlier that day was an unfortunate error made by the Wimbledon production team. The intention was to promote BBC One's coverage of the German Grand Prix Final the following day, but in doing so the team failed to realise that at that point BBC One's highlights of the Qualifying had yet to be broadcast. We apologise for this error and that it affected some viewers' enjoyment of our Qualifying highlights programme. BBC Sport have reminded their teams of the importance of checking transmission schedules before such promotions.

Andy Murray: The Man behind the Racquet, BBC One, 08 July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy about the scheduling of Andy Murray: The Man behind the Racquet.

The BBC's response

Due to the overwhelming interest around the country in Andy Murray being the first British man to win Wimbledon in 77 years, we believe Andy Murray: The Man behind the Racquet merited the 9pm slot on BBC One on Monday 8th July. Although it was a repeat, it was updated with new footage following Andy Murray right up until the day of transmission. We have to react to what we think our audience want to see or hear - so high profile news worthy events may sometimes take precedence over the billed programme schedules. Given the fact 4 million people tuned in to watch, we are confident that we made the right decision. Nevertheless we accept that some of our audience were frustrated by the last minute changes.

BBC News Channel, 12 July, 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers unhappy that commentary was aired during a two minute silence on the day of the funeral of Fusilier Lee Rigby.

Response from BBC News

BBC News provided full coverage of Fusilier Lee Rigby's funeral in Bury on Friday. The service was private but an audio feed of some of the service was provided to crowds waiting outside. A little before 11am many of these mourners fell silent as they waited for the first address to be given. Music being played in the church at this point was not included in the audio feed, adding to the sense of quiet reflection. Our team had liaised closely with the Church and the Ministry of Defence, and were told that a formal silence did not form part of the proceedings in Bury. This meant our reporter continued to explain the event to our viewers, some of whom had joined on BBC 2. We are aware that a formal silence was observed at 1100 at Fusilier Rigby's barracks in Woolwich, and some other locations. We recognise that our live coverage did not reflect this, given a decision to focus on the funeral in Bury in a way that was, we hope, respectful throughout.

Nick and Margaret: We All Pay Your Benefits, BBC One, 11 July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from some viewers who felt the programme was not an accurate representation of benefits claimants.

The BBC's response

The debate over how much benefit is enough to live on has never been so fierce in the UK, and the series took this polarization in attitudes as its starting point. Our hope was that by bringing both sides of the debate together it would offer the opportunity for both sides to have their views challenged, and for them and for the audience to have a deeper understanding of the realities of life on benefits. The programme investigated the debate on this issue in a reasoned, unbiased and intelligent way, through the experiences of real taxpayers and real claimants. The claimants were selected after an extensive and rigorous research process and we chose articulate people who wanted to have their views challenged and were prepared to both defend their own position and listen to others. Each individual represented a different facet of the benefits debate: a single mum, a recent graduate, someone who had been unemployed for over a year and a long-term unemployed person who is also a recipient of disability benefit. The series did not aim to represent all types of claimants nor all types of taxpayers, but for these individuals to be able to be more informed through taking part in the programme.

Live European Football coverage: Cliftonville v Celtic – 17 July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from some viewers in Scotland and Northern Ireland who were upset by chanting from a section of the crowd during our live coverage of the Cliftonville v Celtic match in Belfast.

The BBC's response

Match coverage of the tie between Cliftonville and Celtic was provided by BBC Northern Ireland. Crowd sound levels were consistent with other sports outside broadcasts transmitted by the BBC.

BBC News, Royal Baby coverage, July 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from some viewers who feel there has been too much coverage of the royal baby story and also from some who feel that the coverage has been biased in favour of the monarchy.

Response from BBC News

Over the past few days the birth of the royal baby has been a lead story for BBC News, but our editors have taken care that other stories have been covered too. There have been some key moments - the announcement of the birth and the appearance of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge with the new prince, where we have offered rolling coverage, particularly on the BBC News Channel which is a service which focuses on big events and occasions, and new viewers join all the time. But the News Channel also ran a range of other news and most of its scheduled sport bulletins. There have been a wide range of stories across the rest of our output too. We reported on the Prime Minister's announcement on internet restrictions on pornography, the "help to buy" mortgage scheme, the Pope's visit to Brazil, Chris Froome's win in the Tour de France, and the charging of a man for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock, which led the Radio 4 Six O'Clock News on Tuesday evening. BBC One viewers were offered full News at Six and News at Ten bulletins on Monday and Tuesday with a wide range of stories. We know from our audience figures that our coverage of the royal baby has been extremely popular - Monday was the biggest global day and second biggest UK day ever for BBC News online with 19.4m unique browsers globally and 10.8m from the UK. We are satisfied that our audiences had both the best coverage of a major historical event - the birth of a new heir to the throne - as well as options to view other news across BBC output as a whole. We have also been careful to feature a range of contributors and opinions across our coverage, including those who do not support the monarchy or the attention this event has received. This included featuring the opinions of Republic, which campaigns for the abolition of the monarchy and a number of other voices.

BBC Homepage – 29 July, 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from users who were unable to access their local news/weather pages for a few days.

Response from the Homepage team

The BBC homepage was subject to technical problems which led to the site being unavailable for a few short periods recently. In order to stabilise the service and continue to provide the main items of news, sport and TV the team turned off all the feeds that supply local information so the problem could be addressed. Localisation of news and weather has now been reinstated.

BBC News, 16 August, 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers and listeners about a report on Pentecostal pastors who advise members of their congregation to cease taking medication for serious illnesses. Some audience members felt the report incorrectly implied that these actions were widespread amongst Pentecostal pastors.

Response from BBC News

This report was part of our continuing coverage of the way religion and particular denominations interact with a changing society. It is our view that the report raised a significant matter of public interest. The BBC did not report that it is standard behaviour for Pentecostal ministers to advise HIV patients to refrain from taking medication. We reported that this was the experience of some HIV patients and a practice conducted by a minority of pastors in England. But the fact that even a small number of people stop taking HIV medicine in a way that could endanger their lives as a direct result of encouragement from pastors is a serious issue. Doctors belonging to the Children's HIV Association conducted a study of patients abandoning their medication because of what they had been told by pastors and out of concern for the well-being of patients. The reports on the BBC One's *News at Six* and *News at Ten* each ended with a clear statement that "only a minority of Britain's many independent Pentecostal churches tell people to stop their medicine, but doctors warn that the wrong advice from even a few could do far-reaching harm".

Watchdog, BBC One, 09 October 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt that Ed Miliband was an inappropriate choice of guest for *Watchdog*, and that Anne Robinson's interview style was too soft.

Response from Watchdog

Energy pricing has been a running theme from the start of this series of *Watchdog*, and Ed Miliband's appearance on the programme was entirely justified. Mr Miliband's pledge at the Labour Party Conference to freeze energy prices made it logical to quiz him on the viability of his proposals and to examine their possible impact from a consumer's perspective. During the course of the interview, Anne Robinson challenged him on a number of key points, drawing an assurance that under his proposals the country would not suffer blackouts, that customers' bills would be simplified and that he is prepared to return to the programme and be accountable for his actions if he wins power and fails to fulfil his promises. *Watchdog* is about to embark on a series of interviews with the Big Six Energy companies about their plans for the future and as a result we felt it was entirely appropriate to outline an alternative view of how their industry could be run in the years to come. The Government's position will be reflected in an interview with Energy Secretary Ed Davey in an upcoming programme, so across the series we are maintaining impartiality.

Coverage of the death of Nelson Mandela/changes to schedules 6 Dec 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers and listeners who felt there was too much coverage of the death of Nelson Mandela. Some audience members felt there was not enough coverage of the storm affecting the UK. We also received complaints from viewers unhappy about the disruption to the BBC One schedule on 5 December.

Response from BBC News

Nelson Mandela was one of the most important world leaders of the 20th century whose long and complex life story represents a moment of historical change for people in South Africa and around the world. His death was something we regarded as sufficiently significant both to break into our scheduled coverage and extend our news programmes. His political and cultural influence was global and as both a UK and international broadcaster it is important that we reflected that, and the range of reactions to his death, to all our audiences. BBC One viewers received updates on the storm in their area during regional bulletins broadcast at 2250 and in a weather forecast at 0030, on the BBC News website and on BBC local radio stations throughout the night. We are continuing to report on the aftermath of the storm.

Response from BBC Scheduling

Interruptions to programmes are rare but we regard the death of Nelson Mandela to be of significant public interest.

Question Time Special, BBC One, 12 December 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who were unhappy the programme was broadcast from Johannesburg and focused on South African issues.

Response from Question Time

Nelson Mandela was a hugely significant world leader with an enormous political and cultural influence across the world. His death is of considerable interest to our audiences at home and across the globe. The Question Time special from Johannesburg gave viewers an insight into the personal and political views of people in South Africa at a poignant time for the country, and in a way that would not have been possible in a broadcast from the UK. Although Question Time is usually based in the UK, it has broadcast from other countries before and audiences at home regularly debate international topics such as Syria, Edward Snowden and other global news stories. The programme was of interest to our viewers and was the most watched programme on TV at that time.

BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2013, BBC One, 15 December 2013

Complaint

We received complaints from viewers about the result of BBC Sports Personality of the Year in light of the fact a trophy was presented to Andy Murray when he was in Miami.

The BBC's response

The BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards always feature a high calibre of athletes in the top ten and it is inevitable that not all contenders are able to attend due to training and competition commitments. For this reason we always have contingency plans in place, this is standard practice for the show. On this occasion, Andy Murray was unable to attend in person, but as he was on the shortlist, we had a replica of the main trophy and replicas of the second and third place trophies in Miami as a contingency if he should be in the top three at the end of the public vote. We also had contingency plans including recipients on stand-by in the studio if any of the other nominees who could not be at the ceremony should be in the top three. The authentic and original BBC Sports Personality of the Year trophy was brought on stage by Sir Bradley Wiggins at the start of the show.

Coverage of the death of Ronnie Biggs, BBC News

Complaint

We have received complaints from viewers and listeners who feel there has been too much coverage of the death of Ronnie Biggs. Some audience members felt the story was too prominent during our morning news programmes on 18 December and that our coverage underplayed Mr Biggs' criminal actions.

BBC News response

Ronnie Biggs was a highly controversial figure whose decades on the run made him a household name. His death was newsworthy but we do not believe that our coverage glamorised or glorified him or the robbery. We made very clear that he was a member of a violent criminal gang which left a man severely injured; that he was unrepentant and unwilling to pay for his crime; and that he divided opinion. The story was given prominence as it broke but quickly ceased to be the lead in running orders. His death was just one of a wide range of stories covered throughout the day including the latest unemployment figures, the Lee Rigby murder trial, the Jayden Parkinson investigation and the sentencing of sex offender Ian Watkins.

Coverage of the death of Ronnie Biggs, BBC News 19 Dec 2013

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Today, BBC Radio 4, 20 December 2013

Complaint

We have received complaints from listeners who felt that it was inappropriate to interview Anjem Choudary on 20 December following the guilty verdicts in the Lee Rigby murder trial.

BBC News response

We have given great consideration to our reporting of the Woolwich murder and the subsequent trial, and carried a wide range of views from across the political and religious spectrums. We have a responsibility to both report on the story and try to shed light on why it happened. We believe it is important to reflect the fact that such opinions exist and feel that Anjem Choudary's comments may offer some insight into how this crime came about. His views were robustly challenged by both the presenter, John Humphrys and by Lord Carlile, the government's former anti-terrorism adviser.