

## Archived BBC public responses to complaints

**2011**

### **Strictly Come Dancing, Len Goodman's comment to Craig Revel Horwood, BBC One, 12 Nov 2011**

#### **Complaint**

We've received complaints from some viewers unhappy with Len's comment to Craig during Saturdays Strictly Come Dancing.

#### **The BBC's response**

Strictly Come Dancing is a live show and this was an unscripted, off the cuff remark for which Len apologised on air immediately afterwards. As the show is live, exchanges between the judges can sometimes be animated. However, we appreciate some viewers found Len's comment uncalled for and out of character.

### **Strictly Come Dancing, Robbie Savage's dance routine, BBC One, 29 October 2011**

#### **Complaint**

We've received complaints from some viewers unhappy with Robbie Savage's dance routine on Strictly Come Dancing.

#### **The BBC's Response**

Robbie danced a Paso Doble to Michael Jackson's 'Bad' on Saturday's show and the choreography emulated some of Michael's most famous dance moves. Strictly is a live entertainment show and with it being the Halloween Special, Robbie wanted to pull out all the stops. We would like to assure viewers no offence was intended.

### **BBC Radio 1, changes to dance music line-up, April 2012**

#### **Complaint**

We've received complaints from listeners who are concerned by the planned schedule changes to BBC Radio 1's dance music line-up that will come in to effect in April 2012.

#### **Our Response**

BBC Radio 1 works hard to try to provide a wide range of programmes for its audience, but does appreciate that schedule changes can result in some people being disappointed or upset when their favourite DJs move or leave the station. The BBC Trust, whose job is to represent the views of licence fee payers, have challenged BBC Radio 1 to ensure it continues attracting young listeners and the station has always looked to evolve with its audience. Developing new DJ talent is a key part of this and BBC Radio 1 believes the changes to the schedule will ultimately strengthen the overall range and depth of its specialist music offering.

## **BBC Red Button, Olympia Horse Show, 19 December 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who were unhappy that the Olympia Horse Show was not available on Freeview.

### **The BBC's Response**

We recognise that some of our viewers were unhappy that the Olympia Horse Show was not available on the Freeview platform on the BBC Red Button Service. Due to a communication error, this information was not passed to the television production team which meant our presenting team on Sunday 18 December were unable to specify this information during the broadcast. When a broadcast is made available to watch on the BBC Red Button and not on the Freeview platform, we would normally specify this in our listings on the BBC website and send this information to other listings including non-BBC publications. However on this occasion, this was unfortunately overlooked for which we apologise. We have reviewed our processes to ensure we can prevent this from happening again in the future.

## **BBC News, coverage of Osama Bin Laden's death. 04 May 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from members of our audience who feel that we have devoted too much coverage to the announcement of the death of Osama Bin Laden.

### **BBC News' response**

The discovery and death of Osama Bin Laden was by any standards a major news story. The operation to find him had lasted over a decade, during which time Al Qaeda has continued to mount attacks around the world. The details of his killing, his hiding place and the many political ramifications in the US, Pakistan and elsewhere fully justified the level of coverage BBC News devoted to the story.

## **BBC Radio 7, rebranded as BBC Radio 4 Extra 04 May 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from people who were unhappy that BBC Radio 7 has been rebranded as BBC Radio 4 Extra.

### **Response**

As part of a review of BBC Radio output the BBC Trust found that Radio 7 provides a high quality service that is much loved by its audience. With around a million listeners, Radio 7 has the second largest audience of the BBC's digital stations - but overall awareness is very low. Therefore the BBC Trust endorsed the Executive's proposal to reposition Radio 7 as Radio 4 Extra - a move which will encourage audiences to sample the station. In order to preserve the elements that audiences value, the BBC Trust will strengthen the service licence so that the commitment to comedy and drama is increased, and limit the amount of Radio 4 catch-up programming. Gwyneth Williams, Radio 4 Controller, explained that Radio 4 Extra is another way of enjoying BBC Radio drama and comedy programmes with something else thrown into the mix. There is a developing Radio 4 archive of documentaries and history programmes, science as well as film and arts interviews. Further to this, Tim Davie, Director of Audio & Music placed the emphasis firmly on quality content and unveiled further digital-only programming such as: 'The 4 O'Clock Show' on Radio 4 Extra, a family friendly daily show featuring quizzes, stories, comedies and interviews to be enjoyed by listeners of all ages. A new regular Sunday slot for dramas appealing to older children will broadcast, amongst other titles, new commissions of 'The Silver Sword', 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' and 'Elidor'. Also, the 'Comedy Club' will regularly premiere new comedy, to be broadcast first on Radio 4 Extra prior to transferring to Radio 4. This will include a new series of Arthur Smith's 'Balham Bash' and Sarah Millican's 'Support Group'.

## **Royal Wedding 2011, General coverage 09 May 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from members of our audience who feel that we devoted too much coverage to the wedding of Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton.

### **The BBC's Response**

The royal wedding was an event of national significance, which captured the public imagination both in the UK and internationally. We're pleased to have brought coverage of this celebration to audiences on the BBC. The fact that in the UK a peak audience of 20 million people watched the wedding service on the BBC and that more than 34 million viewers watched some of our coverage of the wedding across the day is testament to the considerable interest among our audience.

## **The Royal Wedding, BBC One, 29 April 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from members of our audience unhappy with restrictions on Australian broadcaster ABC using live footage of the royal wedding.

### **The BBC's Response**

It was always made clear by the BBC that use of its basic live news feed from Westminster Abbey and our BBC One programme for the royal wedding would not be permitted for comedy, satirical or similar entertainment purposes. This was a standard contractual condition in agreement with Clarence House and applied to all broadcasters around the world who had licensed content from the BBC, ITN and Sky.

## **The Shadow Line, upsetting scenes featuring a cat, BBC Two 17 May 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from some viewers who felt scenes of a cat being submerged in a barrel of water in *The Shadow Line* were inappropriate and upsetting.

### **The BBC's response**

We would like to reassure viewers of *The Shadow Line* that the cat was not harmed or distressed during filming. As with all drama, the director worked closely with the animal handler to ensure this was the case. The majority of the scene was put together in the edit, where we can make it look like Jay Wratten was trying to drown the cat while not actually harming him in any way. At no point was the cat near water - the last shot shows the cat wet which was achieved by combing him with a wet comb. This scene was felt necessary to show the psychotic behaviour of Jay, whose character has been clearly set up from the start of episode one as a man for whom violence is the solution to any problem. We're always careful about any violence we show on screen, but there are times when it should be incorporated for the sake of the drama. We feel the audience can separate fact from fiction and wouldn't expect this scene to cause or encourage any harm to cats.

## **Family Guy, BBC Three, 15 May 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy that *Family Guy* was not broadcast as billed on 15 May 2011.

### **The BBC's Response**

We're sorry for any inconvenience caused to viewers that *Family Guy* was broadcast later than its scheduled time slot on Sunday 15 May 2011. This was due to coverage of Lady Gaga's set at *Radio 1's Big Weekend* overrunning. Live events such as this can sometimes overrun and have a knock on effect to the published schedule. We appreciate that many viewers were waiting for *Family Guy* to begin but in situations such as this we have to balance up the demands of both audiences and make a decision that we feel is best for our audience as a whole. *Radio 1's Big Weekend* is a once a year event and Lady Gaga's performance was the culmination of the festival. The audience would therefore naturally expect us to continue with coverage until it had concluded. We endeavoured to let everyone know that *Family Guy* would follow the gig in a variety of ways. As well as displaying on-screen information notices we also used our social media outlets such as the BBC Three live twitter feed and facebook pages to keep our audience updated. New episodes of *Family Guy* are repeated on Saturdays ensuring that viewers have another opportunity to watch and enjoy the programme.

## **BBC Radio 1 Xtra - Hip Hop M1x with Charlie Sloth - rap song by Mic Righteous - Tx 30 April, 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints about the decision taken in editing the song 'Fire In the Booth' by Mic Righteous - the phrase "Free Palestine" was obscured.

### **The BBC's Response**

All BBC programmes have a responsibility to be impartial when dealing with controversial subjects and an edit was made to the artist's freestyle to ensure that impartiality was maintained.

## **Tennis: French Open, Lack of coverage of the Racing from Epsom, 3 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received some complaints from viewers who are unhappy with the amount of coverage devoted to the *Racing From Epsom* on 3 June 2011.

### **The BBC's response**

In covering events such as the *Tennis: French Open* and *Racing From Epsom*, we are tasked with a difficult decision as to what to show and when. As Britain's number one tennis player, there is undoubtedly huge interest in Andy Murray among our audience and thus his progression to the semi-final in the French Open meant we took the decision to show the match. Ultimately, our aim is to bring our audience the most comprehensive coverage of both events; and we did try to accommodate the *Tennis: French Open* and *Racing From Epsom* on BBC Two, BBC Red Button and online on the BBC Website. In particular, we ensured all the live race coverage was protected, and we were also at Epsom in time to build up to the big two races of the day, the Coronation Cup and the Oaks. However, we acknowledge that when there is a clash like this it is hard to satisfy all of our audience.

## **EastEnders, objections to scene featuring the characters Christian and Syed, BBC One 07 Jun 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from some viewers who felt a scene featuring Christian and Syed in bed together during an episode of *EastEnders* was inappropriate.

### **The BBC's response**

*EastEnders* aims to reflect real life, and this means including and telling stories about characters from many different backgrounds, faiths, religions and sexualities. We approach our portrayal of homosexual relationships in exactly the same way as we do heterosexual relationships, ensuring depictions of affection or sexuality between couples are suitable for pre-watershed viewing. We would also point out that same-sex civil partnerships became law in December 2005, giving equal rights to gay couples in the UK. The BBC cannot discriminate by treating gay characters differently to heterosexual characters. We have also received a lot of very positive feedback about the storyline regarding Christian and Syed's relationship.

## **Holby City, objections to a scene featuring the characters Dan and Malick, BBC One 16 Jun 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from some viewers who felt a scene featuring Dan and Malick kissing during an episode of *Holby City* was inappropriate.

### **The BBC's response**

*Holby City* aims to reflect real life in the setting of a medical drama and this means telling stories about characters from many different backgrounds, faiths, religions and sexualities. We approach our portrayal of same sex relationships in the same way as we do heterosexual relationships and aim to ensure depictions of affection or sexuality between couples are suitable for pre-watershed viewing. Regular viewers will have seen the subtle build up to this story as Malick's sexuality wrong-footed Dan and the love/hate relationship they have endured since Dan realised Malick is gay. This is a story we will continue to tell with sensitivity and integrity as we follow a character who struggles to come to terms with his sexuality.

## **Terry Pratchett: Choosing to Die, Unhappy that the BBC broadcast the programme, 13 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from some viewers who were unhappy that the BBC chose to broadcast Terry Pratchett: Choosing to Die. In addition, some viewers felt that by showing the programme, the BBC has taken a stance on assisted death.

### **The BBC's Response**

We acknowledge that there has been considerable discussion about Terry Pratchett: Choosing to Die and the BBC's coverage of assisted death. It was for that reason that the commissioning editor, Charlotte Moore posted a blog answering some of the questions that have been raised: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/aboutthebbc/2011/04/terry-pratchett-choosing-to-die.shtml>. The BBC is completely impartial on the issue of assisted death. This film did not promote assisted death, but looked at the individual choices that people make, including Mick who had chosen to make use of hospice care. We appreciate that the subject of assisted death or living with a degenerative condition is a difficult one which is why we constantly look at the issue in a number of ways. Across all BBC output, we have looked at these subjects in news debates, religious programmes, documentaries and dramas. In addition, we broadcast *Choosing to Die: Newsnight Debate* after this programme aired which gave different voices the opportunity to share their thoughts. This is not a simple yes or no issue which is why we believe it is important to encourage discussion and debate. We agree that suicide is an extremely difficult issue and should be portrayed with the utmost sensitivity. We are confident that in this case, there was clear editorial justification for its inclusion, however we understand that there are those that would prefer not to watch the programme. We hoped that the documentary would spark a constructive national discussion that engaged people across the spectrum of opinion and it is clear that this was achieved.

## **Scheduling: Formula 1 Canadian Grand Prix, Disruption to the schedule on BBC One and BBC Two, 12 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from some viewers who were unhappy that the schedules on BBC One and BBC Two were disrupted due to the overrunning of the Formula 1. Some viewers were also unhappy that coverage of the Grand Prix was split between BBC One and BBC Two.

### **The BBC's Response**

The BBC is committed to showing all nineteen Grand Prix races live and our flagship channel BBC One, is the natural home for Formula 1. We wanted to attract the biggest possible audience to the race and BBC One has a tradition of showing the biggest news and sporting moments. The weekend's Canadian Grand Prix started as scheduled, and was subsequently suspended after twenty five laps due to rain. We did not revert back to the original schedule as it was not possible to predict exactly when the race would resume and we wanted to take into account of the millions of viewers who were waiting patiently. The subsequent disruption to the schedule was flagged up to the audience throughout the programme via the commentary and was also made clear again just before we switched our coverage over to BBC Two. The BBC has a responsibility to reflect a wide range of interests and in reacting to a unique situation, took the decision to switch the Canadian Grand Prix coverage to BBC Two until its conclusion. Making late changes to schedules is always complex, and we are aware that any changes can have a great impact on our viewers. A lot of thought goes into the decisions with a wide range of factors taken into consideration. As such the decision was made to stay with the broadcast. The BBC has a contractual obligation to show the Grand Prix race in full on one of our channels and in any case, given the huge amount of interest in the event, we did not feel that it would be right to restrict coverage or to switch it onto the BBC Red Button.

## **BBC News at Ten, BBC One, 27 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers unhappy that incorrect pictures were shown during a report on the death of the actress Margaret Tyzack.

### **The response from BBC News**

Due to human error incorrect pictures were used to illustrate a report of the death of actress Margaret Tyzack on the BBC News At Ten on 27 June 2011. The pictures used were in fact of the actress Siân Phillips. This was very unfortunate and we would like to apologise to both the family of Margaret Tyzack and to Siân Phillips for any distress or offence caused.

## **The One Show, BBC One, 27 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers unhappy with the views expressed by Katie Hopkins about public sector workers and the planned strikes.

### **The BBC's Response**

Katie Hopkins' view was not intended to be offensive. She made it clear that she wasn't referring to frontline workers but to back office staff who she believes don't share the same pressures as private sector workers. Her views were balanced by a union deputy leader and a group of council workers who fundamentally disagreed with her. Adam Shaw, a BBC journalist and economics specialist explained the reasoning behind the strike in the studio and Ross Kemp, the guest, also made clear he didn't agree with her. The programme also heard from supporters of the strike in the following night's programme.

## **BBC Red Button (Freeview): Practice 2 of the European Grand Prix dropped for extended coverage of Wimbledon 2011, 24 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy with the disruption to the BBC Red Button Freeview schedule due to extended coverage of *Wimbledon 2011*.

### **The BBC's Response**

Initially, we intended to show the second practice of the European Grand Prix across all BBC Red Button platforms. However, due to a rare spectacle of two British ladies in action at *Wimbledon* at the same time at this stage of the Championships, we decided to use the BBC Red Button stream to offer one of these two matches as we only had one network channel (BBC Two) available for *Wimbledon* coverage. Live coverage of the practice session was made available via the BBC Sport website, and a full replay was also made available on the BBC iPlayer.

## **Scheduling: BBC News programmes, Disruption to the schedule on BBC One and BBC Two, 29 June 2011**

### **Complaint**

Some viewers complained that extended coverage of *Wimbledon* on Wednesday 29 June resulted in loss or disruption to their 6.30pm regional news programmes.

### **The BBC's Response**

We are sorry to viewers who complained that they missed their regular 6.30pm regional news programmes on BBC One because of extended coverage of *Wimbledon*. We have managed the BBC One and BBC Two schedules carefully during the tournament to largely avoid disruption to the *BBC News at Six* and regional news programmes at 6:30pm. However, the match on Wednesday 29 June was a quarter-final of national interest to viewers across the UK featuring Andy Murray, and BBC One is the place where the British public come together for such live events of national significance. Since the match was in mid-flow at 6pm, we therefore stayed with it and transmitted the *BBC News at Six* on BBC Two. News programmes in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland followed at 6:30pm. Because we are technically unable to show regional bulletins in England on BBC Two, we transmitted shorter regional bulletins in England on BBC One at 7pm and extended our regional bulletins at 10.25pm to compensate.

## **Wimbledon 2011: Unhappy with the standard of commentary, 20 June 2011 to 2 July 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who were unhappy with the standard of commentary during *Wimbledon 2011*.

### **The BBC's response**

The aim of our commentary team was to inform our audience and give context to the matches we showed. This year, our line-up included ex-players such as Tim Henman, John McEnroe, Pat Cash, Boris Becker, Lindsay Davenport, Tracey Austin, Virginia Wade and Greg Rusedski. We felt that the diversity of the team itself added balance and insight where necessary. Views on our commentary are of course subjective and we do appreciate that over-talking can irritate our audience. We hope that across our coverage we have achieved the right balance and have accurately reflected the event, but we are of course sorry if on occasion you have not been satisfied.

## **Scheduling: Disruption to the schedule on BBC One and BBC Two due to coverage of Wimbledon, 20 June 2011 to 2 July 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received some complaints from viewers who are unhappy with the disruption to schedule and the amount of coverage devoted to *Wimbledon 2011*.

### **The BBC's response**

In covering events as renowned as *Wimbledon*, we were faced with very difficult decisions as to what matches to show on network television and when. Ultimately, our aim was to bring our audience the most comprehensive coverage of all the key matches during *Wimbledon* and as a result, there have been occasions where we have decided to make late changes to the published schedules to accommodate a match which had been delayed or had gone on longer than we have scheduled. In addition, we realise that not all our viewers will be interested in *Wimbledon* or indeed sport. However, the BBC has a duty to represent all licence fee payers and there is a large section of our audience who appreciate the coverage we offer. In event of schedule changes, we do endeavour to inform our audience and reschedule programmes which have been dropped for a later date.

## **Torchwood, Scheduling, BBC One 08 Jul 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers unhappy that the new series of *Torchwood* will be broadcast in America before the UK.

### **The BBC's Response**

We are pleased to announce that *Torchwood* will return to BBC One at 21.00 on Thursday 14 July. *Starz* in the US have the contractual right to the World Premiere, that relates to the deal that was done and ultimately this has created better value for licence fee payers. Contractually, the broadcasters in other territories can transmit from the next day onwards but being as close to the transmission in the US is not the only factor in the scheduling decision. We have identified what we think is the best slot for BBC One viewers and have also ensured that it's within a week of transmission in the US.

## **Torchwood: Miracle Day, scenes being edited for the UK, BBC One 21 Jul 2011**

### **Complaint**

We've received complaints from some viewers unhappy with reports that we have edited out a sex scene from the UK version of *Torchwood: Miracle Day*.

### **The BBC's response**

It is not unusual for co-productions to have slightly different versions of a show to reflect its different audiences. For episode three of *Torchwood*, as part of the usual discussions between broadcasters and the production company, small potential edits in two intercutting scenes of gay and straight sex were discussed and made by production. This minimal edit makes little difference to the episode to be broadcast in the UK. Both scenes remain but run a few seconds shorter than the US version. In a later episode a sequence of gay sex is important to the story and therefore both the US and UK will show the same version. *Torchwood* continues to be a series that will ask important questions of how we all live in today's society and the drama reflects life as we recognise it. The BBC and Starz have both been huge supporters of the writers' vision for the series.

## **Golf: The Open, too much studio discussion, BBC One, 16 July 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that our television coverage included too much studio discussion and not enough live golf.

### **The BBC's response**

We understand that some of our viewers would like to have seen more of the live action from Royal St George's during our *Golf: The Open 2011* programme on Saturday 16 July. On the Saturday there was a total of nine hours and twenty minutes of live golf which meant we were showing live action on BBC One and Two for three and a half hours before the leaders teed off. This is more than at any golf event in the world. Across the weekend, we did review our timings with regards to showing live action to ensure that we were not preventing our viewers from watching live and meaningful golf. However we felt it was important for us to build up to the live coverage by featuring related material and highlights of the first two days play at The Open. During this time we did keep viewers up to date with what was taking place on the course. In addition, we did ensure that our viewers had the option of watching the golf live on BBC Red Button and online on the BBC Sport website at all times.

## **Formula 1, unhappy with the announcement of a new rights agreement with the BBC and Sky 29 July 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from some Formula 1 fans who are unhappy that the BBC will no longer have exclusive rights to broadcast the sport from 2012.

### **The BBC's response**

We know that Formula 1 has an extremely passionate following in the UK and that some fans will be disappointed that not all races will be available exclusively live on the BBC from next season. We are operating in a very tough financial climate and in common with all areas of the BBC, BBC Sport is having to make significant cost savings over the next few years in order to operate within the constraints of the licence fee settlement, therefore we have to make some difficult choices. We believe this deal represents good value for money for licence fee payers. We retain live coverage of half of the race weekends and we will have extended highlights of the remaining races so we are pleased that all of the key action from Formula 1 for the next seven seasons will remain on BBC television. Online coverage of the race weekends that we broadcast will remain the same, and we will carry all the news and reports from the rest of the season. Radio coverage will not change whilst the most popular races - the British Grand Prix, the Monaco Grand Prix and the final race of the season will continue to be broadcast live on BBC One.

## **Torchwood: Miracle Day, inappropriate sexual content, BBC One 8 August 2011**

### **Complaint**

We've received complaints from some viewers who feel it is inappropriate to show gay sex in *Torchwood*.

### **The BBC's response**

We have strict Editorial Guidelines which govern the content of our programmes, and *Torchwood* is no exception. These clearly state: "In all BBC output the portrayal of sex, or the exploration of sexual issues, should be editorially justified and treated with appropriate sensitivity. In post-watershed content, we must be able to justify the frank and realistic portrayal of sex and the exploration of themes and issues which some people might find offensive." Captain Jack Harkness is an established character in the series. We felt the content was justified in terms of the context and character and would be within the expectations of regular viewers. We aim to depict relationships whether heterosexual or homosexual in an honest and realistic way. These scenes are not meant to cause offence.

## **BBC News, England riots coverage 10 August 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that Fiona Armstrong was rude towards Darcus Howe and accused him of taking part in riots during her interview on the BBC News Channel that was broadcast on 9 August 2011.

### **BBC News' response**

We forwarded concerns on this issue to BBC News Channel Editors and while they accept that this interview was not ideal, they stressed that the presenter did not intend to show Mr Howe any disrespect and the questions were simply intended to gauge his reaction to the events in Croydon the night before. In particular they acknowledge that the interview included a poorly phrased question about rioting. This can and does happen on occasions during live interviews and was compounded by a number of technical issues during the interview which led to the presenter and Mr Howe talking over each other. Therefore while Fiona Armstrong was trying to make a general point about protests, we'd like to apologise for any offence that this interview has caused.

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who feel that the BBC News Channel incorrectly referred to "UK riots" rather than "England riots."

### **BBC News' response**

In response to complaints on this issue, our coverage was initially guided by the fact that, while the disturbances were in England, the story and its implications had an impact on the UK as a whole - hence the UK Prime Minister returning early from his holiday and his subsequent decision to recall the UK Parliament. Within the wider media we were not alone in taking this approach but as the story has continued, with the trouble confined to several cities and towns in England and in recognition of the sensitivities involved for people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we have decided to change to "England riots" in the interest of geographical precision and better clarity for our audience.

## **Newsnight, BBC Two, 12 August 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who felt David Starkey's contribution to the discussion on the England riots was inappropriate and racially offensive. Some viewers also felt Dr Starkey's views were not sufficiently challenged.

### **Newsnight's response**

This was a challenging and at times heated ten minute debate examining the causes of last week's riots and looting. Whilst we acknowledge that some people will have found David Starkey's comments offensive he was robustly challenged by presenter Emily Maitlis and the other contributors who took issue with his comments. Owen Jones particularly highlighted that many people listening would find the views expressed offensive and Emily provided further context making it clear that David Cameron had said this was not a race issue and that people taking part in the riots came from a range of ethnic backgrounds.

## **Muse @ Reading, BBC Three, 28 August 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy that BBC Three's coverage of *Muse @ Reading* did not include the entire performance of the 'Origin of Symmetry' album.

### **The BBC's Response**

When the band first conceived the idea of performing the album 'Origin of Symmetry' at the festival, it was purely for the audience at the event and not for a wider audience on television. The production team were able to agree with the band to broadcast three songs from that part of the performance, but unfortunately the BBC couldn't air any more contractually. We appreciate it can be disappointing and frustrating when one doesn't get the whole of a show they may have been looking forward to but the BBC has to respect the wishes of the band in such instances.

## **America Remembers September 11th, BBC Two, 11 September, 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers unhappy that commentary was aired while the names of the victims of the 9/11 attacks were read out. Some viewers found this disrespectful.

### **Response from BBC News**

This special programme sought to mark the tenth anniversary of the September 11th attacks featuring reaction and discussion on the day's events and covering the ceremonies in New York, Washington and Shanksville Pennsylvania. As I'm sure you can understand, it can be difficult to strike the right balance between showing as much of the ceremony as we can, as well as providing commentary and analysis for our audiences. Such a large and continuous roll call of names also brings its own challenges for broadcasters. We believe our coverage was handled sensitively and respectfully, however we're sorry if some of the audience didn't feel we got this quite right on this occasion. We certainly intended no offence.

## **Celebrity MasterChef, Scheduling, BBC One 19 August 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers unhappy that the latest series of *Celebrity MasterChef* is being shown in a daytime slot.

### **The BBC's Response**

This series allows a greater examination of the celebs' cooking skills as there will be more hours of *Celebrity MasterChef* than ever before. The Friday and Saturday evening programmes will ensure that viewers won't miss out on the main event as they pick up with the three celebs facing their last terrifying challenges and battling for their place in the semi-final. While our audience may be more familiar with *MasterChef* being shown in the evening, this ensures that both those who consume our output during the day and in the evening can enjoy this series of *Celebrity MasterChef*. This format means viewers will get even more *Celebrity MasterChef* than in previous years and more of our audience can follow the competition. With 90 minutes of catch up in the peak schedule and availability on the BBC iPlayer we hope everyone can enjoy the series.

## **Newsnight, BBC Two, 28 September 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers following the broadcast of a discussion in which one contributor, journalist Peter Osborne, described another contributor, European Commission spokesman Amadeu Altafaj-Tardio, as an "idiot".

### **Response**

This was a heated, live debate regarding the European debt crisis about which there are strongly held views and positions. Mr Osborne's views were entirely his own and we have apologised to Mr Altafaj-Tardio for the discourtesy he was shown. On air, Jeremy Paxman challenged Mr Osborne's behaviour, criticising his treatment of another guest, and also pointed out that it meant the opportunity to explore the European Commission's position further was lost.

## **Miranda Hart and Jon Holmes (for Chris Evans), BBC Radio 2, October 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from listeners who were unhappy with the quality of the show.

### **The BBC's Response**

Miranda Hart is one of the UK's best-loved comedians and BBC Radio 2 felt it appropriate to bring her warmth to its audience for a week. Jon Holmes is a highly experienced presenter from BBC Radio 6 Music. BBC Radio 2 is proud to be the home of many popular entertainers and presenters and as part of the network's scheduling, from time to time, the channel tries new presenters and styles of shows. BBC Radio 2 appreciates if their presentation wasn't to everyone's liking, but feels it's important to be able to bring new talent to its output and hopes its audience understands the importance of maintaining a breadth of content on the network.

## **BBC News, 20 October 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that the footage of Col Gaddafi's capture, and images apparently showing his corpse were too graphic to be shown as part of the news coverage from Libya.

### **Response from BBC News**

Mary Hockaday, Head of BBC Newsroom, has blogged about the challenges of covering this story and the decision to show the footage. You can read this at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2011/10/the\\_challenges\\_of\\_reporting\\_ga.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2011/10/the_challenges_of_reporting_ga.html)

## **Panorama - Dale Farm: The Big Eviction, BBC One, 27 October 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers who felt this programme showed bias in favour of the travellers at Dale Farm.

### **The BBC's response**

This has been an incredibly sensitive story, prompting very strong views on all sides. The programme strived to represent the voices concerned and heard from members of Basildon council and local residents. The production team had specifically asked Basildon Council for access to both the leader Tony Ball and meetings in which the eviction issues were discussed. The council offered two filming opportunities, which were both taken up and used in the programme. The programme makers approached many local residents in the Crays Hill area along with other members of Basildon council and the bailiff company, many of whom ultimately declined to take part. We explained the reasons behind these decisions during the programme. The programme looked at issues affecting both sides, dating back to over a decade ago and explored planning legislation and the overall debate regarding the application of the rule of law. Two previous programmes by the same team and including many of the same participants have been made over the past five years, both of which we believe were fair and balanced. We believe we approached the subject in the same fair and impartial manner on this occasion, allowing viewers to make up their own minds.

## **Celebrity MasterChef, BBC One, 21 October 2011**

### **Complaint**

We received complaints from viewers who were unhappy that the winner was not announced at the end of the programme

### **The BBC's Response**

We introduced a new format for this series by having more episodes during the week and showing extended highlights at the weekend. We appreciate that not all viewers were able to watch the daily episodes so rather than have different people finding out the winner at different times and risk the surprise being spoiled for some, we felt it would be fairer and more exciting for everyone to announce the winner in the Saturday evening edition. Unfortunately it was stated in some TV listings that the result would be announced on the Friday and we're sorry for any confusion or disappointment caused.

## **The One Show, comments by Jeremy Clarkson, BBC One, 30 Nov 2011**

As has now been widely reported, we had many complaints about a number of Jeremy Clarkson's comments on the show. The One Show is a live topical programme which often reflects the day's talking points. Usually we get it right, but on this occasion we feel the item wasn't perfectly judged. The presenters apologised at the end of the programme to viewers who were offended by his comments and the BBC and Jeremy would like to apologise for any offence caused. Jeremy has said: "I didn't for a moment intend these remarks to be taken seriously – as I believe is clear if they're seen in context. If the BBC and I have caused any offence, I'm quite happy to apologise for it alongside them." The reaction we receive informs our editorial discussions and we do value it. We have reported the feedback widely across the BBC and discussed the matter with the production team. You can read further information in [How we handle your complaint](#) about our complaints process and how we respond to issues raised in the feedback we receive.

## BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2011, Nominee list 2 Dec 2011

### Complaint

We received complaints about the lack of women nominated for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2011.

### Our response

We recognise that the all-male line-up has created much debate amongst viewers of the programme, sports-lovers in general and those that champion the cause of Women's sport in this country. We have had many different points made in the reaction we receive which informs our editorial discussions and we do value it. We have reported all this feedback widely across the BBC and in order to ensure we use the licence fee as efficiently as possible we are sending this response to the issues from our Director of Sport, Barbara Slater to everyone who has contacted us which addresses as many of the detailed points raised by everyone as we are able to:

*"The shortlist comprises some of the finest sports stars on the planet. Everyone is rightly proud of their achievements over the last year, the role they play in inspiring younger generations and the credit they deliver back for the UK. I share the disappointment that the independently determined shortlist does not include any British Sportswomen. There were some worthy female candidates and I should recap how the selection process works. The shortlist of the ten British sports stars is determined by the combined votes of a panel of industry experts based on their assessment of relative sporting achievements during the year. The panel consists of the sport editors of the national newspapers, selected regionals and magazines. These are chosen because of their expertise in the area, their coverage of a wide range of sports throughout the year and the extent of their readership. In total, we received 27 responses from the 35 invitations that were issued this year. The panel included publications such as the Sunday Times, the Daily Mail, the Irish News, the Mirror, the Daily Telegraph, Sport Magazine and the Herald. It is worth noting that most of the publications did include at least one sportswoman in their shortlist. The inclusion of publications such as Nuts and Zoo in the shortlisting panel is for a variety of reasons. These magazines have a dedicated sports section which every week covers a range of sports including Women's sport and minority sports. They also have a readership profile which reaches younger audiences and helps contribute to a balanced panel which is representative of all the BBC's audiences. There are very few other widely-read publications that cover such a breadth of sporting news, features and reports on a regular basis. We do not include specialist sporting publications given their potential inherent bias to one particular sport nor do we canvas the views of non-sporting publications. The current system was introduced in 2006 and at least two women have always previously been shortlisted for the main award. Having considered a wide range of alternative mechanisms, we remain convinced that the current system is fair, independent and robust. Previous top 10 candidates included in 2010 Jessica Ennis (3rd) and Amy Williams whilst 2009 saw Jessica Ennis (3rd) and Beth Tweddle. In 2008 Rebecca Adlington (3rd), Nicole Cooke, Christine Ohuruogu and Rebecca Romero all made the Top 10 as did Paula Radcliffe and Christine Ohuruogu in 2007. In 2006 Nicole Cooke, Beth Tweddle and Zara Phillips were nominated with Zara winning the award. This is therefore the first time there has been no female representation since the current system was put in place five years ago. The ultimate winner of the award is determined solely by a public telephone vote during the show itself. "We stand by the current voting process but have committed to take on board what has happened this year and we will review the shortlisting process for next year's show. It is too early to say what, if any changes will be made to the process but please rest assured that we will seek the opinions of people both within and outside of the BBC before deciding on the appropriate methodology for 2012. The current focus on the shortlist for the Sports Personality of the Year Award has shone a bright light on the wider issues surrounding the media coverage and profile of Women's sport in the UK. As I'm sure you are aware, the BBC is committed to covering a broad range of sports and events and this includes a significant commitment to Women's sport. The BBC is proud to have followed the achievements of many successful sportswomen through our coverage of events such as the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games, Wimbledon and the Women's Football World Cup. I trust that I have addressed your questions satisfactorily and made clear the BBC's commitment to a fair selection process. This year's shortlist for the main award represents six very different sports and has candidates from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is disappointing that the independent process did not result in the shortlisting of a female candidate; but we believe it does not detract from the incredible array of British talent that will compete for the 58th Sports Personality of the Year Award."*

Barbara Slater, Director of Sport

[www.bbc.co.uk/complaints](http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints)

## **Changes to the BBC Online Homepage 7 Dec 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints and other detailed feedback about the new BBC Homepage.

### **Our response**

James Thornett (Head of Product, BBC Homepage) has explained the Homepage changes in his blog and has subsequently responded further to complaints and other detailed feedback about the new features and changes to the BBC Homepage. You can send us your feedback about the Homepage via the links contained in [James Thornett's blog](#).

## **BBC News - Europe coverage 13 Dec 2011**

### **Complaint**

We have received complaints from viewers and listeners who felt our news coverage following the Prime Minister's use of a veto at last week's European Union summit has shown pro-European bias.

### **Response from BBC News**

A number of concerns have been raised, covering a range of issues. In response to these points Helen Boaden, Director of BBC News, has written the following blog about the challenges of covering this story. You can read this at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2011/12/the\\_challenge\\_of\\_reporting.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2011/12/the_challenge_of_reporting.html)