

Editorial Complaints to the BBC - July to September 2005

The BBC handled over 35,000 editorial complaints between July and September 2005 (down from 49,000 in the previous quarter). These ranged from a small number of complaints about potentially serious breaches of editorial guidelines through to a much larger collection of views about programme content and scheduling.

The key themes which emerged are detailed below:

Coverage of the London Bombings: Four issues in particular prompted complaints from the audience (detailed BBC responses to all these were published on the BBC Complaints and BBC Newswatch websites). Some viewers considered that the **Panorama Special: A Question of Leadership** portrayed Muslims and the Islamic faith in a negative light. Others complained about Gavin Esler's questioning of George Galloway on **Newsnight** (14 July). There were also complaints that footage of attempts to resuscitate a man was broadcast during **The BBC News 24 Special** about the London bombings (the BBC apologised and ensured the footage was not included again). The use or non-use of the word 'terrorist' to describe the bombers also caused controversy.

Other News Issues: Complaints were received from residents in the USA about alleged anti-Israel bias.

Scheduling: A number of viewers complained that the **Moto GP** was not extended in the BBC North regions on 31 July to show the full race (the BBC apologised and published this on the Complaints website). Some viewers were annoyed that the **Super League Show** was dropped from schedule on 3 July due to Wimbledon overrunning. Others objected to schedule changes made to **Silent Witness** and **Holby City** to accommodate coverage of Match of the Day Live (Manchester United v Debrecen) on 9 August.

Insufficient Coverage: Complaints of insufficient coverage were received in relation to the **200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar** in July, particularly analogue coverage of the Fleet Review. Others complained that short information films during coverage of **Live 8** were not shown in full.

Other Complaints: Some viewers complained that on-screen synchronised notes during the **First Night Of the Proms** were intrusive and patronising (they were only available for subsequent televised Proms on digital TV via the optional red button).

Offence General: Complainants felt that **Bring Your Husband to Heel** was sexist.

Bad Language: A number of viewers complained that swearing by **Live 8** performers before 9pm was unacceptable (the BBC apologised for any offence caused, especially to those watching with children).

Other Complaints: The new TV weather format continued to prompt some complaints although changes were made in response and numbers have since decreased significantly. There were complaints about the closure of the cult section of the BBC website (an explanation was published on the Complaints website).

The BBC's responses to some recent issues are available at www.bc.co.uk/complaints