

Archived BBC public responses to complaints

2020

BBC News, Royal Family coverage, January 2020

Summary of complaint

We were contacted by viewers who were unhappy with the level of coverage given to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's announcement that they will be 'stepping back' as senior royals.

Our response

In our editorial judgement, the announcement that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex planned to quit their frontline roles was a major news story of great constitutional significance as well as widespread public interest.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have a very high profile at home and abroad and their decision affects the entire Royal Family, as well as raising questions about the levels of public support they enjoy and their charitable roles too.

We appreciate viewers may not agree with how this story was covered, but we also made space for other major stories, including developments in Iran and Australia, both of which we have given extensive airtime.

BBC World Service, Sinhala, January 2020

Summary of complaint

We received a number of complaints about BBC Sinhala correspondent, Azzam Ameen, with concerns over his conduct during the Sri-Lankan presidential election.

Our response

Editorial impartiality is the foundation of the BBC's global reputation as a trusted news source and this is something which cannot be compromised. The BBC has taken appropriate action as a result of this serious breach of its Editorial Guidelines.

Question Time, BBC One, 16 January 2020

Summary of complaint

We were contacted by viewers who were unhappy with the audience makeup of the programme.

Our response

Question Time audiences are, and always have been, selected to reflect national voting trends and the current political picture. These trends are of course different in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and so the audience make-up changes to reflect this when Question Time is broadcast from those locations. We are a national programme that is obligated to reflect national politics.

We recruit our audiences for each episode locally. Everyone who appeared in the Liverpool edition of the programme was from the City or the surrounding area. We recruit our audiences for each episode locally, but they reflect a nationwide picture of electoral support, not a local one. In response to audience requests, and in the interest of transparency, Fiona explained this at the beginning of the programme on 16 January:

“As usual, our audience has been selected to reflect the current political picture, depending on where we are, so here in England there are more Conservative than Labour supporters...”

We did not state that a ‘majority’ of the audience was Conservative – just that this was the largest of the groups present, which reflected current electoral support.

BBC News, Victoria Derbyshire (TV) January 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints that there are plans to end the Victoria Derbyshire programme.

Our response

We appreciate the support received for the Victoria Derbyshire programme.

The Director of BBC News has made clear the plan is to end the programme on television later this year as part of a wider savings announcement.

BBC News has to make savings and it has been decided it is no longer cost effective to continue producing the programme on television. Victoria Derbyshire will continue to be a central part of the BBC News team and will be taking a wider role across the BBC’s output, continuing to lead on some of the high profile audience events and original stories she has championed so effectively on the programme in recent years.

The programme’s journalism has made a huge impact and BBC News is committed to continuing to work on the sort of stories championed by the programme by retaining

some of the programme's journalism roles.

We realise regular viewers will be disappointed with the decision but we hope this sets out why BBC News is taking this step.

BBC News, Kobe Bryant January, 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints that we gave too much coverage of the death of US basketball player Kobe Bryant.

Our response

Kobe Bryant was a US basketball star whose career made him one of the most famous players of all time. He was a five times NBA Champion and Olympic medallist and one of the top scorers in the history of the game. He also enjoyed fame outside the world of basketball, having won an Oscar in 2018. Basketball is a popular team sport with a dedicated following in the UK and its stars are international household names.

We appreciate not everyone agrees with our editorial decisions but in our judgement Kobe Bryant's sudden death was a significant news story and our coverage reflected this.

BBC News 10pm bulletin, 26 January 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about showing pictures of basketball player, LeBron James in one section of our report about the death of basketball player Kobe Bryant.

Our response

There was a question mark over whether some of the pictures of Kobe Bryant the production team had been using were subject to rights restrictions (and couldn't be used on air by the BBC) and so the team needed to make a last minute change. Unfortunately when they searched for alternative images the story which came up was one which marked LeBron James' achievement in surpassing Kobe Bryant's points record which showed pictures of LeBron James rather than Kobe Bryant himself. These were the pictures the team used. The tight deadline meant that report was broadcast without the usual pre-transmission checks.

The newsreader apologised at the end of the bulletin and the Editor has also accepted this was a mistake which fell below our usual standards.

BBC News, 31 January 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people unhappy that the BBC did not broadcast Boris Johnson's Brexit Day address to the nation.

Our response

There is a process for recording statements by the Prime Minister, under which one broadcaster records it and then shares the footage with other broadcasters. This allows us, for instance, to assess whether it would be appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to be given an opportunity to reply. Number 10 decided to supply its own footage on this occasion. The BBC is not required to show ministerial broadcasts, except in exceptional circumstances, such as a decision to go to war.

Along with other media, BBC News was given advance notice of the news-worthy aspect of the Prime Minister's video message and reported that in our coverage throughout the day on Friday. In line with our usual editorial practice in such circumstances, we did not run the video when it became available on Friday night. The video was available elsewhere, including on the Prime Minister's social media.

BBC News, 3 February 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people who feel that there has been insufficient coverage of political journalists' boycott of a 10 Downing Street briefing.

Our response

Inevitably there will be disagreements about the level of coverage a certain story may receive. We appreciate that our audience may have wanted coverage of this story of the journalists' boycott of a Downing Street briefing earlier in the week. However this story has since been discussed on our Political and News programming, such as Politics Live and In Short on BBC 5live.

Scheduling, FA Cup Match of the Day Live, BBC One, 4 February 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from some viewers unhappy with the disruption to the BBC One schedule.

Our response

The FA Cup is one of the biggest competitions in the football calendar and while we are pleased to be able to bring it live to viewers, our commitment to broadcast does mean that schedules are subject to change.

On this occasion, the Oxford United v Newcastle United fourth-round replay went to extra-time which meant that we had to move the BBC News at Ten to after the match. We also made the decision to postpone Silent Witness until the following evening to avoid further disruption to the BBC One schedule.

We acknowledge that some viewers will disagree with this approach and we are grateful for the feedback we have received.

For uninterrupted news available 24 hours a day, you can tune into the BBC News channel, the BBC News App on mobile devices and the BBC Red Button digital text service. If you missed Silent Witness or would like to watch the entire series again, it is still available on the BBC iPlayer.

Horrible Histories: Brexit film, 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people who are unhappy with the Horrible Histories: Brexit film.

Our response

This 9 minute long special, available on iPlayer, was a montage of old clips taken from previous series. Some viewers may only have seen the CBBC tweet which linked to the full episode, but only included the final clip from the programme – a song about “British Things” which was first broadcast on CBBC in June 2009.

The programme was intended as a light-hearted and fun acknowledgement of a momentous day in Britain’s modern history, i.e. leaving the European Union and included sketches about the Norman Invasion, the German origins of the Royal Family, and 15th century Italian fashion. Regular viewers of the programme – now into its eighth series – will be familiar with the tone of these comic sketches. None of them were meant to be anti-British or anti-European.

The song ‘British Things’, from 2009, was intended to reflect that we are a nation, like many others, that enjoys a patchwork of traditions and culture from other countries as well as our own. The song accurately reflects the fact that many goods common in Britain during the Victorian era were harvested or produced by slaves in other countries.

The contribution Britain made to ending the slave trade prior to this period has been featured in other Horrible Histories episodes.

In numerous sketches over many years Horrible Histories has extolled great British achievements, British ingenuity, inventions in science and agriculture, the genius of our writers and artists, culture and great British achievements. Indeed, the most recent series included a whole episode highlighting Queen Victoria's role in supporting the pioneers of early film technology. Other specials have celebrated the 800-year anniversary of Magna Carta, and the work of William Shakespeare.

The introduction to the full programme states that "...the UK is leaving the European Union" and at the end that "Britain in the European Union is now history". We feel it is clear to viewers that the reference to "leaving Europe" means the European Union".

BBC News Special, 31 January 2020

Summary of complaint

Some viewers were unhappy with Geeta Guru-Murthy's description of the crowd during a report at Parliament Square.

Our response

Our presenter Geeta Guru-Murthy was broadcasting from the Parliament Square Brexit celebration over several hours during our programme on BBC News and BBC World News. She interviewed numerous members of the public who are leave supporters as well as politicians, including Ann Widdecombe from the Brexit Party. The presenter and her producer spent the time they were not on air talking to members of the crowd and looking for contributors willing to be interviewed. As they did this research, the main issue offered for why they supported Brexit was more control on immigration.

The presenter's comment about the crowd being mainly white came when she was interviewing three women who had come to the event. One of them had said she could now, after Brexit, be proud of the Union Jack. Geeta Guru-Murthy used the comment about the ethnicity of the crowd to move the discussion onto immigration and Brexit supporters' desire for more controls. Her question was whether this desire for more immigration controls had the effect of not being welcoming to black and ethnic minority people – which had been an issue that was discussed during and after the referendum campaign and a reasonable question on the night the UK was leaving the EU. So commenting on the ethnic mix of the crowd was giving context to the question. We should point out that none of the three of the women interviewed was unhappy during or after the interview about the line of questioning.

Question Time, BBC One, 20 February 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that a member of the audience was allowed to make unchallenged racist comments, and that a clip should not have been posted to the programme's Twitter page.

Our response

Question Time is a topical discussion programme where the audience place a key role in the debate. We always seek out a range of opinions and views on every topic and it is therefore inevitable that from time to time there will be comments made that you may disagree with. This edition of the programme included a debate about immigration which featured a broad range of views from the audience members and panellists.

After the audience member in question finished speaking, Fiona offered the panel the opportunity to respond to the points raised. Ash Sarkar strongly refuted the audience member's claims before the debate continued and we heard from other members of the panel and our audience on this issue. We recognise that some of our viewers would have preferred that Fiona interrupted this particular audience member more quickly but we are satisfied that in the generality of the debate we ensured that different perspectives and viewpoints were heard. As a programme we are a forum for discussion and therefore never take a view on the comments made by our panellists or audience members. We do want to assure you, however, that all content that we publish adheres to the BBC's editorial and legal guidelines.

In regards to the Tweet, Question Time posted five clips of people expressing their different views on the issue, which included the contributions of two panel members and two other audience contributions. We note that some of these posts have also been widely discussed and shared in keeping with our core obligation around ensuring that our audiences on social and digital as well as television and radio get a balanced summary of the debate in question.

BBC News, February 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt there was too much news coverage of the death of TV presenter, Caroline Flack.

Our response

We believe this was a considerable and newsworthy story, given Caroline Flack's notable career in the media industry, and the circumstances leading up to her tragic and sudden

death. We recognise that not everyone will agree with the decisions taken by our news editors, but would stress other major stories were also given prominence including Storm Dennis and Coronavirus.

The One Show, 26 February 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about the dance routine of The Pussycat Dolls.

Our response

The Pussycat Dolls are well known for their dance routines and outfits and we announced at the start of the show that they would be appearing. Their performance then came towards the end of the programme, just before 8pm.

As with all performers, we worked with the band to ensure their performance was suitable for the programme. We felt it was appropriate for the time slot and wouldn't fall outside the expectations of most viewers. However, we appreciate that some viewers didn't agree.

The programme also included a film which looked at cosmetic procedures which are being purchased by children, without the need for parental consent or appropriate checks. We believe this film highlighted an important issue. We have noted that some viewers felt that these two items shouldn't have been included in the same programme.

The One Show, 24 March, 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints regarding our item on dying hair at home.

Our response

The One Show had been contacted by a number of viewers asking if they could go to the hairdressers given the current advice about social distancing. We therefore decided to include this item which looked at whether we should be cutting hair ourselves. We gave viewers some simple advice to help them feel confident about managing their hair until they are able to get their hairdresser to do the job properly.

Our hairdresser did suggest people should seek advice from their hairdressers and we believe viewers would be aware of the need to carefully check the instructions for any product they buy.

BBC News, March 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people unhappy with some aspects of our coverage of the coronavirus outbreak.

Our response

Covid-19 is spreading across the world and affecting the lives of millions of people.

This is an exceptional and developing news story with widespread implications and the BBC is devoting substantial coverage to it.

The BBC is a trusted source of information and we take our responsibility to report accurately and with due impartiality extremely seriously. As a public service broadcaster, we aim to provide the public with facts and information from authoritative sources to put the outbreak in context and convey the reality of what is happening.

We also have a duty to our staff and those we interview and their safety is paramount. All our output is subject to careful risk assessment and is in line with Government guidance in the UK and abroad.

Given the rapid pace at which this story is unfolding we will continue to keep every aspect of our coverage under review.

Great British Menu, BBC Two, March 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received some complaints from viewers about the new format of Great British Menu.

Our response

Great British Menu has long been a firm favourite of BBC Two audiences and the basic premise of this series remains the same as it always was. However, we are always keen to ensure the show stays relevant and we want the new series to reflect changes in modern British cooking from the past decade. There is now more time for the chefs to demonstrate their skills and a presenter to help new viewers understand the show and help the chefs settle into their new environment.

We appreciate that changes to a long established series often take time for viewers to get used to and that they will not always be to everyone's taste. However we have

already heard from many viewers who are enjoying the new format and we hope others will continue to tune in.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, BBC One & BBC News Channel, 2 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers unhappy that coverage of the government briefing was ended before its conclusion.

Our response

The Downing Street briefing on Thursday 2nd April began later than usual. Every briefing that had taken place before this had always ended by 1800.

Our coverage of this briefing takes place across two channels, BBC One and the BBC News Channel, both of which have the News at Six programme scheduled as normal. BBC News is following the government guidelines and is only allowing essential staff to work. Due to this simplification of our television and gallery staffing we didn't have the capacity we would normally have had to keep the coverage of the briefing running on the News Channel when the News at Six programme was due to start on BBC One.

We are talking to Downing Street about future timings and we are looking again at our own contingencies. BBC News will always maintain the highest possible standards of bringing the latest news stories to our audience, however during these unprecedented times there may be the occasional scheduling changes.

BBC News, 5 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people unhappy that we reported on the content of the Queen's address to the nation prior to broadcast.

Our response

Buckingham Palace released excerpts to the media for the purpose of reporting prior to broadcast, outlining the key themes of the speech. We're aware that in these exceptional times the Queen's message was much anticipated, but don't believe our pre-transmission coverage diminished the objective of the address, or the comfort people derived from it.

BBC News has a responsibility to report information related to significant news stories as

and when we receive it; this applied to the Queen's rare address to the nation, in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, BBC One and BBC News Channel, 5 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received some complaints that our coverage did not join the briefing at the beginning.

Our response

We recognise that viewers were disappointed that coverage of the government briefing did not begin until after the briefing had commenced.

On this occasion there was a technical fault affecting the live video being streamed from Downing Street, which all broadcasters including the BBC were using. This meant we could not broadcast the start of the press conference but joined it after the opening remarks when the press questions were underway.

When the press conference ended we were able to play a recording of the opening remarks while we were still on BBC One. We also spoke to our Health Editor, Hugh Pym, who had listened to the entire news conference, to bring viewers up to date.

BBC News, 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from people who feel that our coverage of the coronavirus pandemic has focused too much on England and not enough on the other nations.

Our response

We have made considerable efforts to cover the pandemic from across the United Kingdom.

We have broadcast the lunchtime press briefings from the First Ministers in Scotland and Wales when they happen, or soon after, on the News Channel. At present no such briefings are done in Northern Ireland. We also report the differing infection and death rates.

We have regularly reported from different parts of the UK - for example, on how families are coping in Northern Ireland and from Scotland after 13 people died in a Glasgow care

home. We also covered the resignation of the Scottish Chief Medical Officer.

We believe we are delivering comprehensive and accurate coverage of the impact of the virus for our audiences across the United Kingdom.

BBC News, 6 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers unhappy Fergus Walsh reported from a hospital intensive care unit and felt that he wasted PPE clothing.

Our response

Our Medical correspondent Fergus Walsh and BBC cameraman Adam Walker were given permission to film at University College Hospital's Intensive Care Unit. Their special report gave a powerful insight into conditions at one of the biggest Covid-19 facilities, as pressure on hospitals across the UK increases.

We believe this was in the public interest to show the reality of Covid-19 and how ICU staff are responding.

The team took expert advice on how to film safely and were guided by ICU staff throughout to ensure they did not obstruct medical teams whilst in the unit. We ensured patients were not identifiable and all filming was done with the utmost respect and sensitivity. We donated PPE to the hospital so didn't deplete the hospital's own resources.

Our sincere thanks to all the staff at University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, who enabled us to bring this special report to our viewers.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, April 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who are unhappy the BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update briefing sometimes ends before its conclusion.

Our response

Downing Street confirms the timings of the briefings every morning and we work hard to accommodate these in our schedules. Our coverage takes place across two channels, BBC One and the BBC News Channel, both of which have the News at Six programme scheduled as normal.

As we're sure our viewers understand, BBC News is following the government guidelines and is only allowing essential staff to work. Due to this simplification of our television and gallery staffing we do not have the capacity we would normally have had to keep the coverage of the briefing running on BBC One and the BBC News Channel when the News at Six programme is due to start on BBC One.

Where we cannot provide continuing television coverage of the briefing we will be pointing audiences to Radio 5 Live.

BBC News will always maintain the highest possible standards of bringing the latest news stories to our audience, however during these unprecedented times there may be the occasional scheduling change.

BBC News, 17 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about the accuracy of reports that a 'NHS boss' had approached us for help in obtaining PPE for healthcare staff.

Our response

We had reported across different outlets and platforms that a boss of an NHS trust had contacted the BBC with concerns about the shortage of gowns for the coronavirus crisis. He had asked us for the phone numbers of Burberry and Barbour, both trying to aid supply.

The person concerned is not in fact the boss of an NHS trust but part of a network of organisations helping to source personal protective equipment for some trusts. The mistake was caused by a misunderstanding of the person's role in the fight against the pandemic.

This reporting clearly did not meet the BBC's editorial standards, for which we apologise. We have corrected our error online and on the broadcast outlets where we reported it.

BBC News Special: Silence for NHS Workers, BBC One and News Channel, 28 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received some complaints from viewers who felt the minute's silence was not

observed on the programme.

Our response

This BBC News special on 28 April 2020 showed live coverage of the one minute's silence commemorating healthcare and other key workers who have died from coronavirus.

Our coverage began a few minutes before 11.00am with Victoria Derbyshire describing scenes across the country as people prepared to observe the silence. She finished her commentary about 15 seconds before 11.00am, and resumed at about 15 seconds after 11.01am. There was no commentary during the silence itself, which was observed appropriately.

Panorama - Has the Government Failed the NHS?, BBC One, 27 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from some viewers who felt that the programme was biased against the government.

Our response

The programme raised legitimate questions about the government's role in ensuring that the UK is providing NHS workers with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), which we would consider to be of great public interest at this particular time. The Panorama investigation also included four significant revelations:

- * That the billion plus figure of items of PPE that the government has supplied included cleaning products and individually counted gloves.
- * That gowns, visors, swabs and body bags were not included in the pandemic stockpile. Last year the expert advisory committee NERVTAG (The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group) recommended gowns be added to that stockpile but they were not.
- * That although 33 million FFP3 respirator masks were specified in the stockpile procurement list, only 12 million have been distributed. The programme sought, but received no explanation from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for what happened to the other 21 million masks.
- * That steps to remove Covid-19 from the list of High Consequence Infectious Diseases (HCID) were taken by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on the 13th March, the same day PPE guidance was downgraded. Sources on the committee who supported the removal of Covid-19 from the HCID list told Panorama the decision to

remove it was in part based on how much PPE was available.

All of the reported findings were put to the DHSC in detail for interview or comment ahead of broadcast. The government did not make a minister available for interview and the DHSC's written responses were reported fairly in the programme.

The issue of the lack of PPE has been well documented in our News programming, and we have often heard the government's position on this throughout our reporting.

The programme spoke to a number of interviewees, including doctors who have been treating Covid-19 patients. We don't consider it is accurate to claim they are all Labour activists, and we don't believe that their political views would invalidate their direct experiences of risking their lives on the frontline, and their fears that they are inadequately equipped. Their concerns have been reflected by BMA and the Royal Colleges, as well as the dozens of NHS workers who provided their testimony to the Panorama team in the course of their research.

Some NHS Trusts have discouraged health care workers from discussing the lack of PPE publicly, which we did signpost in the programme - highlighting how few are willing to speak out. We made clear that nurse Libby Nolan is a union representative and introduced Professor John Ashton as a long-standing critic of the government, so we don't consider that audience would have been left in doubt about their positions.

We appreciate that some of our viewers may have found the programme title or the subject matter contentious. However it is the duty of BBC News to update our audience with factual reporting, and to reflect the reality of any given story. In this case we felt it was important to give a voice to the people working on the frontline, and investigate any failings that have led to this point, but we have also looked at the bigger picture in our wider coverage on BBC News.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, BBC One and News Channel, 20 April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from some viewers unhappy with a question on PPE posed by Hugh Pym at the Government's daily press conference, and the subsequent report.

Our response

We are currently in the midst of an unprecedented national health emergency, and it is the role of BBC journalists to scrutinise all aspects of the coronavirus pandemic and the government's response to it.

There had been several reports of health and care staff having problems getting the right PPE and being concerned their employers might run out, and after Government announcements about increasing supplies medical leaders were still saying the shortages were unacceptable and that they were worried about staff safety. Our piece included a comment to that effect by Dr Alison Pittard of the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine.

It is legitimate that Hugh's questioning held the government to account, asking for a response to a criticism that had been widely levelled. Mr Sunak was clearly not uncomfortable with the line of questioning, and was given ample time to answer. Ministers are accustomed to, and indeed expect, robust questioning from journalists.

BBC News, Friday 8 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt that we shouldn't have shown street parties during our coverage of VE Day celebrations, given social distancing guidelines.

Our response

Whilst perspectives on camera can sometimes be deceiving, our journalist made clear in the report that people were social distancing and those close together are from the same family unit. It is not for BBC News to instruct people how they should behave and our presence at this event was only to report on what was already taking place.

BBC News, 11 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers who are unhappy that reports about disproportionate deaths from COVID-19 among certain occupations referred to 'low-skilled' or 'unskilled' workers.

Our response

We were reporting on the figures from the Office for National Statistics, and the terms 'low-skilled' and 'unskilled' are the ones the ONS itself applies to particular types of jobs, which is why we used them. However, we appreciate the concern that these descriptions downplay the important work that many people do, particularly key workers, and we altered the way we described these groups as a result of this feedback on later bulletins. There was no intention to cause offence and we are sorry that some viewers felt this was the case.

VE Day 75: The People's Celebration, BBC One, 8 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from viewers who are upset that we didn't feature the Police in the "We'll Meet Again" moment at the end of the VE Day 75 celebration.

Our response

We had every intention of including the Police within this montage. From the earliest stages of production, the BBC Studios Events team reached out to all the appropriate authorities, including the Police, asking if they wanted to contribute to the piece.

Understandably we could only include the approved contributions we received back. We fully appreciate that our request would not have been the most important priority for the Police during this crisis when resources are likely stretched.

We hope that our efforts to secure a contribution shows that we also wanted the Police to feature in the programme.

Casualty, BBC One, 2nd May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from some viewers who felt that the scheduled episode of Casualty should have broadcast.

Our response

After much careful consideration, we decided not to air the scheduled episode of Casualty on 2nd May. It was written and filmed last year before the spread of COVID-19 and contained some content which we felt wouldn't be appropriate to broadcast at this time.

To avoid any gaps in the storyline we broadcast a short recap of the episode's relevant dramatic information to update fans on the main things they'd need to know as we skipped forward to the next episode.

BBC News, 18 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about remarks made during BBC One News bulletins relating to

lockdown in Scotland.

Our response

Following complaints received on remarks by Sarah Smith on Monday evening's news bulletins, Sarah has since clarified her remarks, acknowledged where there were errors and has apologised to the First Minister, who has accepted those clarifications and has indicated that she regards the matter as now closed.

BBC News Channel, 11 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers unhappy with comments Daniel Sandford made when discussing the UK Government's proposals to ease lockdown measures in England.

Our response

Daniel Sandford was asked about the differing travel restrictions in England as compared to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland shortly after the UK Government published its guidance on the proposed easing of lockdown measures in England.

Daniel was broadcasting in a live unscripted format and accepts that some of his language could have been more precise, as it was in his subsequent reporting on the issue later in the day. As a senior specialist correspondent, he was giving his professional assessment of the new information, rather than expressing personal opinions. He had no intention of causing any offence to viewers, but was trying to clarify a diverging picture.

The BBC News press team responded to comments on social media accepting that Daniel had been incorrect to say that incoming travel to Wales was not being policed and that he had clarified that in his subsequent reporting. We have also published a correction on the Corrections and Clarifications section of BBC online:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/helpandfeedback/corrections_clarifications/

Social Media, 22 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people who feel that Laura Kuenssberg tweeted in defence of Dominic Cummings, against allegations that he broke lockdown guidelines.

Our response

As the BBC's Political Editor, Laura Kuenssberg's role is to provide our audiences with an

impartial analysis of key political developments, based on her knowledge and expert judgment, and she often uses social media as a tool in her day to day work.

We don't consider that Laura was tweeting in defence of Dominic Cummings. Laura was simply reporting information from a source, and we believe this was clearly stated in her tweet. A key part of Laura's job is to reflect views from many different parties in any given news story, which she did throughout her reporting and in her Twitter posts, during Friday evening and the rest of the weekend. This was clearly a big news story that was unfolding quickly, and we believe Laura reflected a lot of different views, whilst also establishing the facts and accurately reporting the many details of the story.

BBC staff are always reminded never to present their own personal views on social media, within the fields in which they work. We're happy that this wasn't the case with Laura here.

Newsnight, BBC Two, 26 & 27 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about the introduction to the programme.

Our response

We would like to make absolutely clear that Emily Maitlis was not 'removed' or 'suspended' from last night's programme, despite much speculation to the contrary. She herself has tweeted that she 'asked for the night off'.

The BBC must uphold the highest standards of due impartiality in its news output. We reviewed the entirety of Newsnight on Tuesday May 26th, including the opening section, and while we believe the programme contained fair, reasonable and rigorous journalism, we feel that we should have done more to make clear the introduction was a summary of the questions we would examine, with all the accompanying evidence, in the rest of the programme. As it was, we believe the introduction we broadcast did not meet our standards of due impartiality. Our staff have been reminded of the guidelines.

Newsnight has a long-established and recognised reputation for excellent journalism, for scrutinising arguments and for holding power to account, which it does on a daily basis, including the night in question.

Our editorial guidelines allow us to make professional judgments but not to express opinion.

The dividing line can be fine, but we aim to say so if we think we have overstepped the mark.

The introduction to Newsnight was intended as a summary of the issues that would be explored, with all the supporting facts and evidence, in the programme. But as broadcast, it risked giving the perception that the BBC was taking sides, and expressing an opinion, rather than being impartial.

It said that 'the country' was 'shocked the government cannot see' Dominic Cummings broke lockdown rules; that he 'made those who struggled to keep the rules feel like fools'.

But there are some who do not share this opinion, nor think that the issue is a 'scandal' or the Prime Minister has displayed 'blind loyalty'.

By presenting a matter of public and political debate as if the country was unanimous in its view, we consider Newsnight risked giving the perception that the BBC was taking sides - or that the introduction constituted the presenter's opinions, rather than a summary of the journalism which would follow, which explored these issues rigorously and fairly and, crucially, with the supporting evidence.

This is not a question of apportioning blame to anyone.

It is a question of accountability to our audiences.

Our audiences hold the BBC in high trust, not least because we hold ourselves to exacting standards, and we do not want to forfeit this by ignoring our own rules.

BBC News, May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel our coverage of allegations Dominic Cummings breached lockdown rules has been biased against him.

Our response

The allegations made against Dominic Cummings and the political row this has caused are significant not just because of the political implications, but also because of what this could signify in terms of wider consequences for public health.

This is a story which has involved claims and counter-claims. As such, we have provided the information necessary to enable our audience to come to their own conclusions. We reported the timeline of events concerned, explained what the lockdown guidance at the time was, and offered analysis of how the rules could be interpreted. We have heard from those critical of Mr Cummings' actions, but also from those who spoke in his

defence. We have reflected the response to these allegations from Downing Street, cabinet ministers and broadcast Mr Cummings' statement in full.

Opposition parties as well as several Conservative MPs, scientists, and Church of England bishops have expressed concern that the government's handling of this issue has caused confusion over social distancing guidelines. We have scrutinised in detail what impact this story could have on trust in the government's messaging and public compliance with these rules. As the lockdown restrictions ease and become more nuanced over the coming weeks this is clearly an important story.

BBC News Special, BBC One and BBC News Channel, 25 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel our News Special covering Dominic Cummings' statement was biased against him.

Our response

This was a developing news story which raised important questions about how the lockdown is applied and the Government's messaging to the public. Dominic Cummings' actions had been widely criticised for undermining trust in the Government and jeopardising public health. This press conference was organised by Downing Street so Mr Cummings could personally explain what happened and answer questions after his statement. It is unprecedented for a senior political adviser to the Government to conduct a press conference in this way and a measure of the importance of this story. We broadcast Mr Cummings' statement and the questions afterwards in full so that audiences could judge what was said and draw their own conclusions about the impact this story has had. Our coverage also included reaction to his comments from a broad range of contributors.

BBC News, May 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who feel that Laura Kuenssberg's reporting is biased in favour of the government.

Our response

As the BBC's Political Editor, Laura's role is to provide our audiences with an impartial analysis of key political developments. This is based on her knowledge, expert judgment and professional experience.

Our editorial guidelines require us to achieve due impartiality. This does not mean that each report or programme must include the views of each side of the story but we must ensure that different views are given proportionate coverage over an appropriate period of time.

We consider that Laura's reporting has been consistent with these guidelines. A key part of Laura's job is to reflect views from many different parties in any given news story, which she has been doing throughout her reporting during the ongoing pandemic. Laura always establishes the facts, scrutinises the decisions of people in positions of power and asks the questions that we believe to be likely in the minds of our audience.

We consider that Laura has maintained our editorial guidelines and has upheld a professional approach at all times during this extremely busy period. Laura is an excellent political editor and we are very pleased that she is part of the BBC News team.

Have I Got News For You, BBC One, 29 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that the programme was biased against Dominic Cummings.

Our response

HIGNFY has always covered the biggest news stories of the week and allegations that Dominic Cummings had broken lockdown guidelines had dominated headlines across many news outlets. This was a fast moving story, with many layers. The BBC has a long tradition of satire and it isn't unusual for public figures to have their actions scrutinised. No-one in the public eye is exempt.

We don't consider that this story received disproportionate coverage on the programme. It was certainly one of the biggest news stories of the week, and it was appropriate for it to be the focus of this episode as it reflected what much of the nation had been discussion and debating. The jokes and asides were intended to be funny and not expressions of fact.

Today, BBC Radio 4, 29 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people unhappy with a comment Nick Robinson made during the paper review.

Our response

Nick's comment followed Mishal's summary of a Daily Mail story in the newspaper review. This is what she said:

The Daily Mail claims that Dominic Cummings is considering leaving his job as Boris Johnson's most senior adviser later this year but it suggests his possible departure has nothing to do about the row over his trip to County Durham during the lockdown. The Mail says it's been told by well-placed sources that Mr Cummings wants to be in the post to see out his two main aims: cutting the UK's ties with Brussels and shaking up the civil service. But once those are achieved he could resign.

Nick made a one word remark afterwards, but it was 'could', not 'good'. He was echoing Mishal's phrasing to highlight the fact that the Mail story was not saying Mr Cummings' move was a certainty, only a possibility, and one which had appeared in media reports in the past and never come to pass.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, BBC One & BBC News Channel, 28 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who are unhappy that Laura Kuenssberg asked the Prime Minister a question about Dominic Cummings during the daily briefing.

Our response

The daily press briefing at Downing Street is an important opportunity for journalists to ask the questions that will inform our audiences and reflect their concerns. The allegations made against Dominic Cummings during the lockdown has been a story that our audiences have followed closely, and there has been a range of reactions to it. On the day in question there had been another development in this story, with a new statement from Durham Police.

We believe that it was entirely appropriate for Laura Kuenssberg to put this question to the Prime Minister, as we consider that his response was of great national interest. All of our audiences have been directly affected by the lockdown guidelines so we think it is suitable for us to challenge someone in a position of responsibility about their views on the behaviour of a senior government aide, and how this might be interpreted by the general public.

A member of the BBC News team attends the briefing each day, and we have asked questions on a range of topics during these press briefings since they began. We will continue to challenge when appropriate, and to ask the important questions on behalf of our audience.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, 23-26 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt there was too much focus on Dominic Cummings in journalists' questions and analysis.

Our response

We are only responsible for what our own journalists ask. In the days after this story broke, the Downing Street briefings have been the first opportunity for us to directly question a member of the cabinet or in the case of the briefings fronted by the Prime Minister, ask Boris Johnson about his position and his response to what Dominic Cummings' had said at his Downing Street rose garden press conference.

In our questioning it was therefore relevant to highlight that a number of Conservative MPs were calling for the resignation of Mr Cummings, to seek clarification around travelling in light of what had been reported, and then detailed by Mr Cummings himself, about his movements and actions, and ask when the Prime Minister knew about them and did he approve of what many see as a breach of the spirit of the guidelines.

Our analysis always aims to put stories and events into context, including and reflecting a range of viewpoints so that the audience can make up their own minds. That analysis has included a look at the number of deaths in the UK from coronavirus reported during the briefings. We have continued to cover other aspects of the pandemic across BBC News.

BBC News, April 2020

Summary of complaint

We received a number of complaints regarding BBC News coverage of Dominic Cummings, and the conduct of journalists during doorstepping.

Our response

The story about Mr Cummings' trip to Durham during lockdown is a major one, and it was in the public interest for journalists to investigate and report on it. It's well established practice for journalists to follow people at the heart of a breaking story and bring the public up-to-date pictures, and we do this regularly with political figures. 'Doorstepping' someone, where they're approached and questioned in a public place is also permitted in the BBC's Editorial Guidelines, for example when an individual's role requires them to be publicly accountable or when they're someone who doesn't respond

to interview requests.

On this story the BBC and other UK broadcasters (Sky, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) were using the 'pool' system. That is, we took it in turns to film from the street outside Mr Cummings' house, and we then shared the footage. The camera team consists of two people; a camera person and a producer, so pooling material like this reduced the numbers present and also made it easier to adhere to the social distancing guidance and the need to stay two metres away from others. However the pool system is for broadcasters, not newspapers or agency photographers who were also covering the story, and the BBC has no influence or say over their behaviour.

While camera angles can make people appear closer together than they really are, we accept that with a large number of photographers present too it can be difficult to observe the guidance. We've shared these concerns with the BBC News teams, and they'll reiterate to staff the need to keep an appropriate distance when filming.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Daily Update, BBC One, 24 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about BBC staff and social distancing during the daily briefing.

Our response

The filming of this segment was set up to maintain social distancing and it is unfortunate that there were initial sound issues.

Downing Street had taken control of the muting process and sent a link, a pop-up, which needed to be activated at the very moment Iain was allowed to speak which did not work. Whilst this is all checked beforehand, technical issues can occur. Iain made the decision to remain onscreen to avoid confusion and so he could still ask his question once the issue was fixed.

The health and safety of the BBC's workforce is paramount. The Gov.uk website states: 'Corona viruses can spread when infected people have close, sustained contact with those who are not infected. This typically involves spending MORE THAN 15 MINUTES within 2m of an infected person.'

However, no regulations were breached and as there was no sustained contact between staff - neither of whom have the virus - the activity was low risk. Ideally they would have been 2m apart but the team took a spur of the moment decision to deal with the unforeseen circumstances and all those involved are sorry the 2m guideline wasn't possible this time.

Little Britain, BBC iPlayer, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who are unhappy that Little Britain was removed from BBC iPlayer.

Our response

There's a lot of historical programming available on BBC iPlayer which we regularly review. Times have changed since Little Britain first aired, so it is not currently available on BBC iPlayer.

The Andrew Marr Show, BBC One, 24 May 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about Andrew Marr's interview with Grant Shapps.

Our response

The Andrew Marr Show features politicians from a wide spectrum of parties and viewpoints. They are all invited onto the programme on the basis that they are likely to face questions about the day's major news stories as well as on particular policy areas in which they hold a brief. As Andrew Marr explained at the top of the programme and during the interview with Mr Shapps, there is a clear public interest in whether Dominic Cummings did or did not follow the lockdown rules and the impact that might have on the behaviour of the rest of the UK. Mr Shapps, as the Government representative that morning, knew that he would be expected to answer questions on the Mr Cummings story. At this stage there were still many details which had not been fully explained and Andrew questioned Mr Shapps closely in order to find out what had happened. He also made clear at the end of the interview the programme will interview Mr Shapps again about transport issues. The interview was firm and probing but it was fair and in line with what our audience would expect from a programme with a speciality in in-depth political interviewing.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel our coverage of the anti-racism demonstrations which have been held across the UK hasn't reflected incidents of violence and vandalism which have taken place.

Our response

Our coverage of the anti-racism protests which have taken place around the UK has made clear that while the demonstrations have been overwhelmingly peaceful, there have been instances of violence, vandalism and attacks on the police. In these cases, we have explained the details surrounding each incident and, when available, shown footage to accompany our reports.

We have reflected the views of those, such as the Prime Minister and Home Secretary, who have condemned the violence, and from members of the public upset by the damage done to monuments. We have also heard from representatives of the police who have spoken of the challenges they face in policing these demonstrations and explained the approach they have taken.

The protests sparked by the death of George Floyd have many implications. We will continue to report impartially on issues highlighted as this story develops.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints regarding our description of the four officers involved in the death of George Floyd.

Our response

The death of George Floyd is clearly an important story with many implications, which has resonated with people around the world. Racial injustice and police brutality are key issues which have been highlighted, and we have reported the race of both Mr Floyd and the ex-officer charged with his murder in this context.

There have been a few instances in our coverage when we have referred to all four officers involved as being “white”. This was a mistake. We’re fully aware of the need to report this story accurately and with sensitivity, and we’re sorry that on these occasions we didn’t meet our usual standards.

Newsnight, BBC Two, 3 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt Emily Maitlis was biased against the government when discussing the number of deaths in the UK relating to COVID-19.

Our response

That day, the UK had the second highest number of recorded deaths in the world as captured by the World Health Organisation. This figure was undisputed and it was reported as such across different media outlets. During Prime Minister's Questions the Prime Minister remarked that he was proud of his government's record.

The edition of Newsnight broadcast later that evening explored the government's response and the further measures necessary to deal with this unprecedented situation.

Questions have been raised over aspects of the government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak so far, for example the communication strategy, the timing of measures put in place to protect public health, and whether NHS workers are adequately protected. It was legitimate for Emily to address these issues with our guests.

Newsnight will continue to give extensive coverage to this rapidly developing story over the coming weeks, and scrutinise its many implications, reflecting opinion from scientific and medical experts, and across the political spectrum.

BBC News, 9 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt too much time was given to the funeral of George Floyd.

Our response

The story of George Floyd's killing has had a huge resonance for millions of people around the world. It has prompted the biggest protests about race and police brutality in America for 50 years and across the globe, including here in the UK, thousands of people have joined marches against racism.

His story is a significant one and clearly in the public interest. We feel the coverage of his service was justified and proportionate.

BBC News, 6 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints that the fall of a mounted police officer from her horse at the London protest was reported inaccurately.

Our response

We reported that there were clashes outside Downing Street as police tried to clear Whitehall after the official end of the protest and that trouble started when groups who had stayed behind threw bottles and flares at officers.

Before Chi Chi Izundu said that the mounted police officer 'knocked herself off her horse', a bystander could be clearly heard saying, "Oh my God, a horse has bolted". In subsequent reports, including BBC Breakfast the following morning, we indicated that the officer was knocked from her horse and had 'hit her head on a traffic light when her panicked horse bolted'. The Metropolitan Police Service's statements said that the officer was 'seen to fall from her horse' and they were investigating the circumstances. While the initial phrasing might have been improved, we believe the reporting was accurate and developed as more information became available.

Newsnight, BBC Two, 3 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about how we presented the Covid-19 death rates.

Our response

That day, the UK had the second highest number of recorded deaths in the world as captured by the World Health Organisation. This figure was undisputed and it was reported as such across media outlets, and given by Emily in the programme's introduction.

Following the presentation of the graph, Nick Watt was very clear in explaining what the figures represented. He pointed out there was a two-week lag between the UK and France and Italy and emphasised the need to be careful when comparing such statistics and emphasised that different countries compile them in different ways. He also stated the UK figure given represented the number of deaths registered in the period given.

Given these explanations we wouldn't agree they were misleading.

BBC News, May and June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel our recent coverage of protests which have taken place in the UK and USA has been biased in favour of the protesters.

Our response

Our coverage of the anti-racism protests which have taken place in the USA and UK,

sparked by the death of George Floyd, has reflected the global impact this story has had and the strength of feeling that has been galvanised. We reported on events and developments as they have happened, and examined the wider political and social implications. We have made clear the protests are taking place amid the coronavirus pandemic and that mass gatherings risk the spread of the virus.

Mr Floyd's death was a catalyst for these demonstrations, but our reporting has also given the social and historical context in which they occur. We have explored the aims and motivations of those taking part, reflected their views, and scrutinised their actions. That President Trump signed an Executive Order introducing police reform was a bipartisan acknowledgment of the central demand of the protests in the USA.

While the protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful, we have made clear there have been instances of violence, criminal damage and attacks on the police. In these cases, we have reported the circumstances surrounding each incident. We have heard from representatives of the police on their response to the issues raised and the challenges they face in policing these demonstrations. We have also reflected the views of political leaders and representatives, from across the spectrum, and their analysis of the situation and what action should be taken.

George Floyd's death, and the protests which have followed, has resonated with people around the world. We will continue to report impartially on issues highlighted as this story develops.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about our coverage of the protests in London

Our response

We were careful in our reporting to talk about the protests 'including' far right 'groups' or 'elements'. This was on the grounds that we were aware there were members of the far right group 'Britain First' present.

Throughout the day in his packages and live reports our correspondent Tom Symonds carefully stepped through the various groups who were protesting. He described the different elements who were there – and interviewed one of the protesters who explained he wanted to protect Winston Churchill's statue, because he was proud of Churchill's legacy in British history.

On Sunday morning Trevor Coult was interviewed, a veteran and military cross winner, who explained that he and others had gone to protect the cenotaph and condemned the

violence.

We are confident that our coverage accurately and impartially reflected the protests.

BBC News, May & June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel that the BBC is failing to report on the circumstances surrounding George Floyd's arrest and/or that he had previously spent time in prison.

Our response

The death of George Floyd has sparked the biggest protests about race and police brutality in America for over 50 years. Around the world, thousands of people have joined marches against racism. This is what our reporting has reflected. However, we have taken a closer look at George Floyd himself, for example in the article <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52871936>. We have indicated that Mr Floyd's arrest was following reports of the use of counterfeit money, for example on BBC News at Six and Ten on 27 May, and on Panorama's 'George Floyd: A Killing That Shook the World' on 15 June – the latter also referring to Mr Floyd spending time in prison for armed robbery and drug offences.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our coverage of the protests which took place in London on 13 June didn't accurately reflect those protesting.

Our response

Our coverage of the protests which took place in central London on 13 June made clear there were several groups involved with a range of nuanced motivations. We reported on events in detail as they developed, including the clashes which occurred and who was responsible for the violence. We were careful with the language we used when describing those participating and when ascribing actions to them.

Of those who said they were there to protect monuments, we explained that some were veterans and interviewed others who explained why they were there, that they had no issue with the BLM campaign and condemned the violence. However, as was evident from our footage, monkey chants could be heard and we were aware far-right activists were present. We also reflected the Prime Minister's tweet that the protests had been

subverted by “racist thuggery”. While it was both legitimate and accurate to report there were “some far-right” elements present, our coverage certainly did not place everyone under this label.

We stated that while there were a smaller number of anti-racism protesters present, BLM had moved their demonstration to the previous day to avoid trouble. When reporting on the anti-racism protests which have taken place around the UK over the last few weeks we have reflected that while the demonstrations have been overwhelmingly peaceful, there have been instances of violence, vandalism and attacks on the police. In these cases, we have explained the details surrounding each incident and, when available, shown footage to accompany our reports.

We are confident that we reported all aspects of these protests accurately and impartially.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our coverage of a banner being flown over a Premier League match inaccurately reflected the message of the banner, and the motives of those who had organised it.

Our response

The “White Lives Matter Burnley” banner which was flown over the Etihad Stadium during Burnley FC’s match with Manchester City caused widespread condemnation. Our coverage didn’t express an opinion on the incident but simply reflected the strong reaction that had been provoked, including from Burnley FC, fans of the club, the town’s mayor, some of its residents, and from across football. We reported that some who were critical of the banner had used words such as “offensive” and “racist” to describe it.

Our reporting reflected the context in which this story occurred, following weeks of anti-racism protests across the UK and USA. The players present at the match had just “taken the knee” in support of Black Lives Matter, a campaign which has received endorsement from across the Premier League. We offered analysis on why the banner had caused such controversy, and what the motivations behind it could have been.

We also made clear that following investigation, Lancashire Police had concluded that no criminal act had been committed.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who feel our coverage of the anti-racism demonstrations which have been held across the UK hasn't reflected the public health implications.

Our response

Our coverage of the anti-racism protests which have been held across the UK has made clear that they are taking place amid the coronavirus pandemic and the public health concerns they've therefore raised. We have reflected the calls from government representatives, and others, that people don't attend as mass gatherings breach social distancing guidelines and risk spreading the virus. We have also heard from the police on the challenges they face policing these demonstrations and the reasons they have taken the approach they have.

We have spoken to those participating and asked them why, despite the public health concerns, they still felt the need to attend. However, we have also reported that many of the protesters have been wearing masks and the instances when social distancing has been attempted.

The protests sparked by the death of George Floyd have had many implications, including those related to public health which have been reflected as part of our overall coverage of this story.

BBC News, June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt our coverage of the clashes with police in Brixton at an unlicensed street party was insufficient.

Our response

This incident was reported a number of times across BBC News on 25 June, including the Six and Ten O'Clock bulletins on BBC One. BBC London News led with the story in its main 18:30 programme and it also featured in its lunchtime and late bulletins. There was further reporting in radio bulletins and online.

We know that not everyone will agree with our choices of stories or the prominence they get. BBC News always reports independently and impartially and each story is judged based on its own editorial merit.

We consider that we covered this story appropriately.

Countryfile, BBC One, 28 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about a tweet by @Countryfile in relation to minority ethnic groups and the countryside.

Our response

The twitter post on @BBCCountryfile on Sunday 28 June directly reflects the findings of an independent report commissioned by DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which was published as “Landscapes Review” in September 2019.

This government report concluded that, ‘Many communities in modern Britain feel that these landscapes hold no relevance for them. The countryside is seen by both black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and white people as very much a “white” environment. If that is true today, then the divide is only going to widen as society changes. Our countryside will end up being irrelevant to the country that actually exists.’

It was the questions raised by this report, with its conclusions and recommendations, that formed the basis for the feature in the programme, presented by Dwayne Fields, the wildlife enthusiast and explorer. Countryfile set out to examine the important issues raised in light of recent events across the country.

BBC News, 22 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt it was inappropriate for reports to refer to the sexuality of the Reading park attack victims.

Our response

The three victims were all friends and part of Reading’s LGBT community and it was in this context that the reference to their sexuality was made.

They were regular attendees at Reading’s best-known gay bar ‘The Blaggrave Arms’. Some of their friends, along with some of the regulars, had gathered at the bar on the 22 June, and there were tributes made there that evening which we covered in our piece.

The clip we used in our report included a specific reference to Reading’s LGBT community. The Chief Executive of Reading Pride also paid tribute and spoke about the positive role all the men made to local life.

Our coverage was not discriminatory but reflected the lives of the victims and the tributes paid to them after this terrible attack.

Countryfile, BBC One, 28 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about a report on challenges facing members of the BAME community living in the countryside.

Our response

The feature in June 28th directly reflected the findings of an independent report, “Landscapes Review”, commissioned and published in September 2019 by DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

This government report concluded that ‘Many communities in modern Britain feel that these landscapes hold no relevance for them. The countryside is seen by both black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and white people as very much a “white” environment. If that is true today, then the divide is only going to widen as society changes. Our countryside will end up being irrelevant to the country that actually exists.’

Countryfile set out to examine the important questions raised by the DEFRA report in the light of recent events across the country. As was made clear it was this report, with its conclusions and recommendations, that formed the basis for the feature, presented by Dwayne Fields, the wildlife enthusiast and explorer, who openly brought his own experience to the subject.

Sunday Worship (TV)

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people unhappy that Sunday Worship is no longer scheduled for broadcast.

Our response

We hugely value viewer feedback and are very pleased to hear that the Sunday Worship programmes shown on BBC One during lockdown were of such value. Now that churches are beginning to reopen, the programmes have come to an end. However, the BBC continues to provide Sunday services every week on Radio 4 and on local radio whilst Songs of Praise brings viewers songs, hymns and stories of faith from across the UK on BBC One.

Six O'Clock News, BBC Radio 4, 2 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from listeners who felt that a report on David Starkey's interview with Darren Grimes was misleading, and biased against him or Reasoned UK.

Our response

Please note that we have updated our Corrections and Clarifications page in regards to a description concerning Reasoned UK:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/helpandfeedback/corrections_clarifications/

In regards to the points about David Starkey made in this piece, we consider that our reporter accurately covered the comments he made in the video posted on the site.

BBC News, July 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our reporting of Bianca Williams and her partner Ricardo dos Santos being stopped and searched was biased against the police.

Our response

Our coverage of allegations from Team GB athlete Bianca Williams that she and her partner had been stopped and searched by police because they had been racially profiled made clear this was her perspective on what had taken place. While it was important to hear Ms Williams' views and show footage she had taken of the incident, we fully reflected the explanation from the Met Police as to the circumstances which had led to the stop. We also reported on statements from the Met that having conducted two internal reviews, they had found no issue of misconduct.

This case has wider implications with regards to ongoing concerns that stop-and-search powers are disproportionately used against the black community, and it was legitimate to explore this as part of our overall coverage. We used clearly sourced data to give context to this.

This is a developing story which we have and will continue to follow. We have reported on the Met's apology to the couple for distress caused, and the force having referred itself to the IOPC for independent investigation of the incident.

Lunchtime Live, BBC Radio Scotland, 23 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt it was inappropriate to interrupt coverage of the Scottish government's daily coronavirus briefing to cover the UK government's briefing from Westminster.

Our response

In our coronavirus coverage that day, there were fast moving developments that Lunchtime Live brought to the BBC Radio Scotland audience.

We broadcast two sections of the First Minister's daily briefing, and heard from the Prime Minister in the Commons. All of these developments were placed into context by a BBC Scotland political correspondent in Westminster and our Political Editor Brian Taylor. The developments in England were commented upon by the First Minister and there was subsequent reaction from Scottish businesses.

We appreciate that, in addition to being unhappy with the decision to interrupt the coverage of the Scottish Government's briefing, some listeners felt it wasn't sufficiently clear that the Prime Minister's comments concerned England, resulting in confusion.

Our complete coverage sought to give the audience the best news and analysis of this important story. But we acknowledge that some considered it disrespectful to interrupt the Scottish Government's briefing, and we take on board the views of listeners unhappy with the particular way in which the story was covered on this occasion.

Drivetime, BBC Radio Scotland, 29 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about a question by John Beattie regarding the stabbings at the Park Inn hotel in Glasgow.

Our response

We acknowledge that the line of questioning, asking if the police had anything to answer "given that a white policeman shoots dead a black man carrying a knife in Glasgow", wasn't appropriate to the discussion that evening and was based on speculation.

John Beattie gave the following apology during Drivetime on 30 June 2020:

"Now, on yesterday's programme we were covering the aftermath of Friday's knife attack at the Park Inn hotel in Glasgow. I put a question to an MP about the

circumstances surrounding the incident; the question was whether the police had anything to answer given that a white policeman had shot dead a black man carrying a knife in Glasgow.

“I apologise for this question being asked. It was speculation on our part and not an appropriate line of questioning. As a team, we’ve talked about it and we offer this apology to the police officers of Scotland.”

No Country For Young Women, BBC Sounds, 30 June 2020

Summary of complaint

We received some complaints about the content of the podcast, No Country For Young Women, and a BBC social media post which promoted it.

Our response

The comments which prompted a reaction were not part of the podcast, and featured only in a short social media clip, which we’ve removed. The podcast episode itself is an in-depth and broad discussion on racism, class, feminism and stereotypes.

No Country For Young Women is a long running podcast series which predominantly explores the experiences of young black and Asian women in the UK. It features in-depth discussions with a wide variety of guests, who share views on important and complex topics in a way that is relevant to the conversations of many young people.

Some listeners felt that opposing views should have been included in the same discussion in the interest of balance, but this isn’t required as a matter of course. Due impartiality takes into account the context of the series. It allows for a range of input to be heard over a period of time too, rather than within each and every edition. With No Country For Young Women, each topic is handled through the lens of the hosts, Sadia Azmat & Monty Onanuga, and their guests’ experiences and backgrounds. Some of these themes have had very recent developments and the discussion is sure to evolve – we may return to similar topics at a later date.

Changes to the over 75 TV Licence scheme

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about changes being made to the over 75s TV licence scheme from August 2020.

Our response

The Government decided to stop funding free TV licences for all over 75s from June 2020. Parliament - under the law - then gave the BBC the power to decide the future and consult. The difference is any funding would have to come from the BBC's budget for programmes and services.

We consulted and over 190,000 people took part - this was the largest consultation the BBC has ever run. There was a small majority who wanted to change the concession and many who felt strongly that the concession should continue. There was little support for abolishing the concession. Many raised pensioner poverty and social isolation as key concerns, others raised concerns about cuts to the BBC. There was little public appetite to cut BBC services.

The BBC decided that the fairest thing to do was protect the poorest older pensioners - that is why we decided to provide free TV licences to those over 75 who receive Pension Credit. This will cost the BBC £250 million, around 6% of the budget. This was also the fairest thing to do for all licence fee payers, because the overall cost of continuing the scheme for everyone would be £745 million and rising. This would lead to profoundly damaging cuts and closures of key BBC services including BBC Two, BBC Four, Radio 5 Live, the Scotland Channel and some local radio stations.

Some people have suggested that the £745 million cost of paying for free TV licences for all those over 75 could be covered if we cut pay for our talent, senior managers and staff. This is simply not true. Even if we stopped employing every presenter currently earning over £150,000 that would save less than £20 million. If no senior manager were paid over £150,000 that would save £5 million. This would not make up anywhere near the difference.

This was not an easy decision to make, but we put fairness at the heart of our decision – fairness to the poorest older pensioners and fairness to all licence fee payers. If we had continued with the scheme in its current form, its quickly rising cost would have meant profoundly damaging closures of major services that we know audiences - and older audiences in particular - love, use, and value every day.

We delayed the introduction of the new scheme as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The scheme will now move forward on 1 August, but safety will be at its heart:

Implementation of the new scheme will be Covid-19 safe. No one needs to take any immediate action, or leave their home, to claim for a free TV licence or pay for one

TV Licensing will be writing to all over 75 licence holders with clear guidance. For those who now need to pay, they have a range of options and can choose to pay weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, if they don't want to pay the licence fee all in one go

We have set up specialist telephone contact centres to help people. People can also go

online

The BBC has been working with a range of external organisations to help support people during this time

We hope this has explained the position. The information you can read [HERE](#) has further detail, including reports from the consultation which the BBC Board considered before reaching its decision.

If you or someone you know is approaching or is over 75 there is no need to do anything, since the free licence continues until 1 August and TV Licensing will be in touch before then about what to do. If you need more information about this please visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk/age.

BBC Breakfast, 9 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt Naga Munchetty was impolite and didn't allow Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak the opportunity to answer questions properly during an interview.

Our response

Naga Munchetty's interview with Chancellor Rishi Sunak on BBC Breakfast on 9 July 2020 was a professional, fair and informative analysis of his statement to Parliament the previous day.

Mr Sunak was able to speak at length about the measures the government had put in place to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the UK's workforce.

BBC Breakfast, BBC One & BBC News Channel, 15 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from viewers who felt that our presenter showed bias and endorsed criminal behaviour in an interview with Jen Reid about the unauthorized replacement of Colston's statue in Bristol.

Our response

Naga Munchetty certainly does not endorse criminal behaviour, and she made it clear at the start and end of the interview that Bristol City Council did not approve the statue.

The issue of statues of people involved in the slave trade and the Black Lives Matter movement have been well documented across BBC News, and BBC Breakfast has held many discussions over the past few weeks in regards to these issues. During this time we have heard people with arguments in defence of and against such statues.

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BBC News at Ten, 21 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our report on Winston Churchill's handling of the Bengal famine, during our series "Echoes of Empire", was biased against him.

Our response

In light of the ongoing debate about how Britain views its colonial past, News at Ten has been running a series exploring the impact of the British Empire and its legacy in different parts of the world. Yogita Limaye's report looking at Winston Churchill's handling of the Bengal famine, reflected that he is considered a hero by many but explored the reasons why his actions in relation to India mean that others have a different view of him.

Yogita detailed the causes of the famine. While she made clear Churchill wasn't to blame, she explored the reasons why some feel his actions made the situation worse, and the anger felt towards him because of this by some in India. The reasons for Churchill's decisions, in the context of his Second World War strategy, were reflected, as were the views of British officials and government ministers from the time.

As we have seen throughout this series, colonialism can be a nuanced issue, both in terms of experiences of those living under it, but also current attitudes towards its legacy and figures connected to it. Yogita Limaye's report reflected this complexity and the reasons why a historical figure as significant as Winston Churchill can provoke such contrasting viewpoints.

BBC News, July 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our coverage of Chris Packham's legal challenge against HS2 high-speed rail scheme has been insufficient.

Our response

We have given this story, and the protests by campaigners opposed to the high-speed rail, some initial coverage - we reported online and across radio news summaries in March that Mr Packham had launched his legal challenge.

On 3 April 2020 Mr Packham applied to the High Court for an interim injunction to stop the work on woodlands and wildlife sites pending the outcome of a substantive judicial review of the HS2 decision. The High Court declined to grant an injunction and refused permission for judicial review. Mr Packham subsequently sought permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal. That case was heard July 8-9, 2020.

The judges are first examining whether Mr Packham has permission to appeal, not whether he is entitled to judicial review. They are yet to announce their decision. We will await developments.

We know that not everyone will agree with our choices of stories or the prominence they get but BBC News always aims to report independently and impartially and each story is judged based on its own editorial merit.

The Next Step, CBBC, July 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints about a storyline involving a same-sex kiss.

Our response

The decision to include this moment, as part of a longer storyline throughout series 7 which has been tracking the development of a romantic relationship between two of the

characters, Jude and Cleo, was taken very carefully and with much consideration, and came about after CBBC and Boatrockers (the production company who make the show) acknowledged that the series could and should do more to reflect the lives of LGBTQ+ young people. This is an important part of our mission to make sure that every child feels like they belong, that they are safe, and that they can be who they want to be.

We believe that the storyline, and the kiss, was handled with sensitivity and without sensationalism, following as it did the portrayal of Jude & Cleo's developing relationship and I'm afraid we do not agree that it was inappropriate for the audience age – CBBC regularly portrays heterosexual young people dating, falling in love, and kissing, and it is an important way of showing children what respectful, kind and loving relationships look like.

At Children's BBC, we are proud to reflect all areas of children's lives across our factual and fictional output. Same-sex relationships have already featured in other CBBC shows such as Jamie Johnson, 4 O'Clock Club, Dixie and Marrying Mum and Dad, and (contrary to what was reported in the press about The Next Step) the first same-sex kiss on CBBC was in fact in Byker Grove, many years ago. This moment in The Next Step is merely one story among a myriad of voices and experiences across our output.

BBC News, July 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from people who felt there was insufficient coverage of protests for a pay rise for NHS staff.

Our response

The BBC has extensively covered the work of NHS staff during the pandemic, as well as broadcasting the weekly 'Clap for Our Carers' live on BBC One. We consider we have accurately reported on the working conditions NHS staff have faced and we have covered a range of issues, including pay, during this time:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52312038>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53478404>

Unfortunately BBC News is unable to cover all protests that take place, and stories are chosen due to their editorial merit. For instance, if it's breaking news or an update to a recent news story. There is often a debate in the Newsroom over what to cover, but ultimately we accept that not everybody will be happy with the decisions that we make.

BBC Sport website, 28 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints about an article on the BBC Sport website.

Our response

As a result of the Court of Arbitration for Sport's (CAS) 93-page legal document being released to the media with no embargo to allow preparation, the news story was a naturally developing one over the first couple of hours as the full details were fully digested. The piece underwent a number of changes in that period. Importantly none of the alterations were as a result of factual errors – it was the process of our journalists developing the initial take into the full story.

By 9.00pm the story was finalised with headline and copy referencing the fact that the report had found there was "no conclusive evidence" Manchester City "disguised funding from their owner as sponsorship".

The criticism of Manchester City by CAS was an important part of the story. Manchester City were said to have committed a "severe breach" by showing a "blatant disregard" to UEFA, European football's governing body. The panel said that Manchester City were to be "seriously reproached" for obstructing UEFA's investigation. The 10m Euros fine, albeit reduced from 30m, remains one of the biggest in football history.

When the CAS verdict was released the previous week we had already reported prominently that Manchester City had overturned their ban and had been cleared of "disguising equity funds as sponsorship contributions."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/53387306>

Therefore in our initial version of the story on the release of the full report we focused on the criticism of Manchester City from CAS that we judged key new information. We included high up in the story that "the panel cannot reach the conclusion that disguised funding was paid to City" and in subsequent versions built up that part of the story with more information.

Reporting on a complex and evolving story like this required our journalists to digest a high volume of detail to produce an accurate and impartial account of the case.

Points West & BBC News Channel, July 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints about the language used in a report of an attack on an

NHS worker in Bristol.

Our response

On Sunday 9th August, the Director General sent an email to all BBC Staff about this subject.

The full response is below:

“This morning I brought together a group of BBC colleagues to discuss our news coverage of the recent shocking attack on an NHS worker. I wanted us to look at the issues raised by the reporting and the strength of feeling surrounding it.

We are proud of the BBC’s values of inclusion and respect, and have reflected long and hard on what people have had to say about the use of the n-word and all racist language both inside and outside the organisation.

It should be clear that the BBC’s intention was to highlight an alleged racist attack. This is important journalism which the BBC should be reporting on and we will continue to do so.

Yet despite these good intentions, I recognise that we have ended up creating distress amongst many people.

The BBC now accepts that we should have taken a different approach at the time of broadcast and we are very sorry for that. We will now be strengthening our guidance on offensive language across our output.

Every organisation should be able to acknowledge when it has made a mistake. We made one here. It is important for us to listen - and also to learn. And that is what we will continue to do.”

American History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley, BBC Two, 1 August 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about this programme.

Our response

Firstly we understand and we are sorry for any distress caused to any of our audience by language included in the programme. We recognise it is an offensive term and one that is rarely included in our output. We assess all content we broadcast on a case by case basis taking into consideration a range of factors including the programme and the context.

This film was the second episode of a history series originally shown on BBC FOUR last year and it explored the American Civil War, featuring contributions from a number of African American scholars. This episode included a John Wilkes Booth quote uttered in reaction to President Abraham Lincoln's 1865 speech in which Lincoln declared that people, regardless of colour, should have equal rights to vote. The language used in Wilkes Booth's statement was included to indicate the strength of his views and his attitude towards African Americans – racist views shared by many at that period in America's history. A continuity announcement at the start of the programme flagged to viewers the nature of the content; this was reinforced by the presenter who alerted the audience before reading from the Wilkes Booth statement.

We have listened to audience concerns and have re-edited the programme on BBC iPlayer. If we were making this programme today we would not have included the word.

The BBC Director-General has issued the following statement which, whilst primarily about a recent BBC News report, also states that the BBC will be strengthening guidance on offensive language across our output:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/complaint/pointswestbbcnewschannel0720>

BBC News, 24 July 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our interview with Boris Johnson was biased against him.

Our response

Laura Kuenssberg used her interview with Boris Johnson to reflect on his first year as Prime Minister. Given the magnitude of the coronavirus crisis, a significant part of the interview was dedicated to scrutinising the government's handling of this. Mr Johnson acknowledged there were things they "could have done differently" in their response to the pandemic. Given we are still living with coronavirus, and amid fears of a second wave, it was legitimate for Laura to question him on what had gone wrong to see what lessons could be learnt for the future.

The government, and Mr Johnson personally, have faced criticism over their management of certain aspects of the crisis, such as the timing of lockdown and the spread of the virus within care homes. While Laura addressed these issues with Mr Johnson, he also spoke about the Nightingale hospitals, and other areas which he felt the government had handled successfully and the measures they have put in place to mitigate the impact of possible future peaks in the virus. Laura also gave Mr Johnson the opportunity to talk about his priorities, and his government's achievements and

agenda, aside from tackling the virus.

We believe Laura conducted her interview with the Prime Minister in the thorough, firm but fair manner that our viewers would expect from our Political Editor.

The Trial of Alex Salmond, BBC Two, 18 August 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt the programme was biased against Alex Salmond.

Our response

Alex Salmond has been a senior political figure for many years and his trial and subsequent acquittal was a major news story, which received extensive coverage at the time. The outcome was fairly reflected in the programme and would have been known to everyone watching. Within that context, the film aimed to examine what impact the trial had had in terms of the 'me too' movement and Scottish politics. A range of different views were heard, including authoritative contributors who made points in support of Alex Salmond, such as Jim Sillars and Kenny MacAskill. Mr Salmond himself was invited to take part but declined to do so, as the film made clear.

BBC News, August 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from people who felt coverage of the migrant Channel crossings has been excessive and/or sensationalist.

Our response

We don't believe our coverage has been excessive or sensationalist. The topic of Channel crossings is of huge importance and one which we always endeavour to cover sensitively.

The crossings are of significant public interest and political debate. August has seen a record number of migrants making the crossing for a single month. Across our reporting we have looked at the response of the UK and French governments, and the criticism of that response from, amongst others, groups that work with migrants. We have also explored where the migrants come from, why they are making the crossing and what happens to them after they are intercepted.

We always think carefully about how we cover any story. Our aim is always to be impartial, factual and fair.

BBC News, 21 August 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt our reporting on the Stonehaven derailment was inaccurate and/or unfair.

Our response

Our coverage during Reporting Scotland on 21 August, and more generally, provided a fair and accurate account of information contained in a report by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB).

We reported the speed the train was travelling at in the moments before it derailed. This was referenced as more than 70mph or detailed as 72.8mph and we also explained that this was below the speed limit on the relevant section of the line of 75mph. To provide further context, we outlined that investigators had said the speed of the train was one of the key elements being examined so as to establish the cause of the accident and its tragic consequences.

At no point did we attribute blame to the driver and nor do we believe that it was implied through our reporting. During Reporting Scotland we included the views of the Professor of Railway Engineering at Imperial College. As part of his contribution he questioned why the train was travelling at the speed reported. We are of the view that this was a fair line of commentary and we don't believe that it implied the driver was at fault in any way.

Our coverage made it clear that this is a lengthy and complex investigation and that the final conclusions are still a long way off.

Last Night of the Proms, BBC, 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people concerned that 'Rule, Britannia!' and other pieces would not be sung at the Last Night of the Proms.

Our response

Today we have issued a further statement:

'The pandemic means a different Proms this year and one of the consequences, under COVID-19 restrictions, is we are not able to bring together massed voices. For that

reason we took the artistic decision not to sing Rule, Britannia! and Land of Hope and Glory in the Hall.

We have been looking hard at what else might be possible and we have a solution. Both pieces will now include a select group of BBC Singers. This means the words will be sung in the Hall, and as we have always made clear, audiences will be free to sing along at home. While it can't be a full choir, and we are unable to have audiences in the Hall, we are doing everything possible to make it special and want a Last Night truly to remember.

We hope everyone will welcome this solution. We think the night itself will be a very special moment for the country - and one that is much needed after a difficult period for everyone. It will not be a usual Last Night, but it will be a night not just to look forward to, but to remember.'

Famalam, BBC One

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt the 'Jamaican Countdown' sketch was offensive.

Our response

Famalam is a well-established, award-nominated BBC Three sketch comedy show that is now in its third series. It stars some of the UK's best comedy talent and explores aspects of contemporary life from a black perspective.

Like many sketch comedy shows Famalam finds humour in a wide range of scenarios and regular viewers who are familiar with the tone of the show will know that it has a reputation for challenging stereotypes and confronting social issues. We can assure you that the intention of this sketch isn't to diminish Jamaican people or Jamaican culture, and nor is there any intention to cause offence.

BBC Breakfast, BBC One, 4 September 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about the Ireland flag being incorrectly shown to represent Northern Ireland on BBC Breakfast.

Our response

The incorrect flag shown in a graphic was human error and we apologised on-air for this

mistake before the end of the programme.

News Bulletin, BBC Radio 4, 5 September 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from listeners who are unhappy with the use of the phrase 'what they call the climate emergency' during a report about Extinction Rebellion printing press blockades.

Our response

Climate change is a subject we take very seriously, and we completely understand the necessity of accurate and factual reporting around this issue. We regularly report on the latest updates and figures from reputable sources.

This was a short bulletin, and we consider we accurately reflected the views of Extinction Rebellion.

Politics Scotland, BBC Scotland

Summary of complaint

We've been receiving complaints about how we'll cover First Minister briefings in Scotland.

Our response

As we continue to provide essential public information on the current pandemic, we will, from next week (w/b 14th September), be adapting how we cover the regular Scottish Government briefings. We will still provide a significant amount of live coverage – on TV, radio and online – and all the key news issues will feature prominently across our output. BBC Radio Scotland and the BBC News Channel will continue to broadcast parts of the briefings live, based on news value, as they currently do, and we will continue to stream all of the briefings live and in their entirety on our news website. They will also feature prominently on the BBC Scotland channel news output and on our BBC One news programmes.

Likewise, we will continue to provide live TV coverage of First Minister updates in Holyrood, as we did yesterday (Thursday 10th) when a statement was delivered on the official three-weekly lockdown review, and as we have been doing with First Minister's Questions for the past weeks.

However we won't necessarily cover every single briefing live on TV. Rather, we will

cover them based on their news value, on what information is being imparted by the Scottish Government. Where it is appropriate to cover the briefings in their entirety, on TV, we will do so. That is not, nor has it ever been, in question. And that's exactly the same approach taken towards Welsh Government briefings, by BBC Wales, and by network colleagues who are looking to cover the forthcoming UK Government briefings. By way of example, Monday (14th) sees the introduction of new restrictions in Scotland and we will cover the lunchtime briefing live, on TV, on BBC One Scotland and on the BBC Scotland channel in the same way that our colleagues in Wales will be covering the Welsh Government briefing that day.

We will also continue to cover Scottish Government press conferences and statements and we will continue to provide live output beyond the lunchtime briefing slot, such as we did recently when the government announced further restrictions on households in Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire.

In addition, we will continue to send our cameras daily and broadcast the main points from the briefings on our programmes that follow.

We will continue all our activity based on News values. With Holyrood and other sectors, such as education, now returning to business, this slight adjustment to our approach will allow us to continue to cover all of the key points while we look also to provide comprehensive news coverage of parliamentary and other business. As you'd expect, our overall coverage will bring a range of voices into the discussions, offering enhanced opportunities for scrutiny and analysis by both politicians and commentators.

We emphasise that we will keep these arrangements under review and will, as said, cover the live briefings on television when it is right and in the public interest to do so.

Strictly Come Dancing, BBC One, September 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from some viewers about a same-sex pairing on the programme.

Our response

Strictly Come Dancing is an inclusive show and is proud to have featured same sex dancing amongst the professional dancers in group numbers in previous series.

We have stated, in the past, that we are open to the prospect of including same sex pairings between our celebrities and professional dancers, should the opportunity arise.

Nicola Adams requested an all-female pairing, which we are happy to facilitate. The

show is first and foremost about dance, the sex of each partner within a coupling should have no bearing on their routine.

BBC Red Button, 22 August

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints about changes to the BBC Red Button schedule on 22 August.

Our response

Due to Snooker overrunning we had to move away from the frames on the Red Button to allow us to show the Women's Open Golf.

As a result of changes to sporting events caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we are faced with a busy sporting schedule across all platforms and sometimes have to make difficult scheduling decisions.

The Women's Open Golf was the first major women's sport event since the lockdown and we felt these highlights would be of great interest to our viewers.

Our Snooker coverage continued live on BBC iPlayer, the BBC Sport website and on Smart TVs, and viewers were clearly signposted to those platforms as the Red Button coverage drew to a close.

We know that schedule changes can be frustrating and we do try to keep them to a minimum.

Today, BBC Radio 4, 8 September 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from listeners who felt Justin Webb seemed to suggest that the climate emergency is 'a matter of opinion' in an interview with Extinction Rebellion member Tim Crosland.

Our response

Climate change is a subject we take very seriously, and we completely understand the necessity of accurate and factual reporting around this issue. Man made climate change is widely accepted by the scientific community, as well as by the BBC, however there is still debate on whether to describe the current situation as a 'climate emergency' and particularly what the response should be.

During an interview with Tim Crosland, from Extinction Rebellion, our presenter Justin Webb put to him that there was a legitimate disagreement about the response to climate change. Specifically, Justin said: "For instance, Extinction Rebellion want us to be carbon neutral by 2025. Plenty of environmental campaigners think that's absolutely mad. That's a matter of opinion." He went on to say that while the climate emergency had been recognised by Parliament, MPs did not want to do the things that Extinction Rebellion wanted to do and suggested again there was room for legitimate disagreement. In neither of these examples did Justin argue that the evidence for man made climate change was a matter of opinion, he focused on the response to the situation.

Mr Crosland was given plenty of opportunity to put across his views during the interview, and we're sure that our viewers were left in no doubt about Extinction Rebellion's position.

Coronavirus Update (Scotland), September 2020

Summary of complaint

Update on our coverage of the Scottish government health briefings.

Our response

Whilst there continue to be major developments in the pandemic in Scotland, we will continue to look to cover the Scottish government health briefings live on TV. There are clearly strong editorial reasons for continuing to do so at this time. This will be in addition to the significant amount of coverage we continue to offer our viewers and listeners in TV news bulletins, on radio, live online and on the BBC News Channel.

Such decisions will always be made on the basis of editorial judgement and listening to our audiences. We will always take full account of how the pandemic continues to evolve to inform that judgement.

All of our coverage must, necessarily, be fully in line with the requirements set out in our own Editorial Guidelines and in the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. With increasing political comment and commentary from across the political spectrum around many of the decision-making practices and processes related to the pandemic, including the economic response, effects on education, etc., we believe it is important to evolve our overall approach to ensure we can continue to deliver content that is both accurate and duly impartial and which allows a range of voices and perspectives to be heard within that coverage. That applies, also, to the government briefings themselves.

The new approach came into effect on Monday 21 September, with a programme that,

on BBC One Scotland, will look to bring news and views from around Scotland and beyond, including contributions from across the political spectrum, as well as from commentators, analysts and other experts. The full briefing and Q&A will be broadcast on the BBC Scotland channel.

Frankie Boyle's New World Order, BBC Two, 10 September 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt comments made during the programme were offensive.

Our response

Frankie Boyle's New World Order was shown after 10pm and its content is within audience expectations for a post-watershed, topical, satirical programme from a comedian whose style and tone are well-established.

Every week on the show Frankie puts forward a number of topics for debate, this episode was no different. The panellists' comments were in response to a motion that was written and presented in line with the programme's tone and style.

Sophie Duker is a talented comedian and a regular panellist on Frankie Boyle's New World Order, and we look forward to continue working with her at the BBC.

A Question of Sport, September 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received some complaints about upcoming changes to the line-up on A Question of Sport.

Our response

We would like to thank Sue Barker for her enormous contribution as the show's longest reigning host over the last 24 years, and Matt Dawson and Phil Tufnell for their excellent team captaincy over 16 and 12 years respectively.

Together they have ensured A Question of Sport remains a firm favourite with the BBC One audience.

Sue, Matt and Phil's final episodes will be broadcast next year.

A Question of Sport has been airing on BBC One for 50 years, and its longevity is

testament to the show's ability to reinvent its format and change its line-up.

BBC Red Button text service closure

Summary of complaint

Some users were unhappy about the original plans to close the BBC red button text services.

Our response

Updated response (30th September 2020)

After a comprehensive review, the BBC is pleased to announce a decision has been made to retain the most valued elements of the red button text service.

This means viewers will continue to be able to access local, national and international news headlines and stories, main sport headlines and stories, sport fixtures and results, as well as weather forecasts through the red button text service.

For the BBC to be able to continue to offer the most valued elements of the text service, reductions will have to be made to some aspects, and so the following will be phased out:

Lottery results - from November 2020

English Regional sport pages – from mid-2021

Individual sport headlines (besides football and those on the main sport pages) – from mid-2021

Overnight updates of the news and sport elements of the service – though these will be refreshed each morning then throughout the day to ensure you are up-to-date

National sport indexes (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) will be retained - as will all sport fixtures and results.

BBC red button video streams will be unaffected and will still provide coverage of live sport and music events.

Context of this decision

The BBC communicated that it planned to remove the text element of the BBC red button service in November 2019 because the significant technical effort and cost of

retaining the service came at the expense of investing in other services.

A number of individuals and organizations got in touch with the BBC to voice concerns about the impact of this change and in January of this year we said that we were suspending the planned closure in order to understand more about the possible impact the removal would have, particularly on the elderly and people with disabilities.

Since then, we have been in contact and had extensive dialogue with a wide range of representative groups to build on our existing research into what elements of the service are most used and valued by different groups.

We have listened to this feedback - and have found a way to keep the things that matter to people most about the red button text and data service.

The BBC would like to thank everyone who has got in touch to share what they value about red button text. We hope you continue to enjoy the service.

BBC News, October 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt that our coverage of Donald Trump contracting coronavirus was excessive and/or biased against him.

Our response

Donald Trump's diagnosis with Covid-19 and his subsequent hospitalisation a month before the presidential elections raised questions over how the final stages of the campaign and the election would be conducted, and who would assume power should the president be incapacitated. This was a significant story with possible consequences not just for the USA but also for the rest of the world. We believe our coverage was proportionate, and reflected the wider political and health implications.

As part of our analysis of this story we explored what impact President Trump contracting the virus, and also the pandemic itself, would have on the election. In this context, it was legitimate to scrutinise previous statements and actions President Trump has taken with regards to coronavirus. Mr Trump has faced criticism over his handling of the crisis. While our coverage reflected those who were critical of his attitude towards Covid-19, we also heard from those supportive of his stance.

We reported on this story as it developed, including updates on the president's health released by the White House, press conferences with his medical team at the Walter Reed military hospital, and tweets and statements from the president himself.

We will continue to report on any significant developments and explore possible implications on the election.

BBC News, 13 October 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from people who felt a tweet by Laura Kuenssberg was biased in favour of the government.

Our response

Laura Kuenssberg used social media as a tool to keep our audience up to date with Sir Keir Starmer's announcement that the Labour Party were advocating a circuit breaker, and share reaction as this story broke. This marked a clear split in the consensus between the government and the Labour Party on the handling of the coronavirus pandemic, and it was important to gauge the government's immediate response to this. As is common journalistic practice, Laura often gains information from off the record sources, as was the case in this instance, but it was clear these words were a quote.

BBC News broadcast Sir Keir's press conference in full and featured reaction from across the political spectrum. Laura Kuenssberg covered this story in the manner that our audience would expect from our Political Editor, offering detailed and impartial analysis of the implications of Labour's stance on this issue.

BBC News, October 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people who felt that the BBC is failing to report allegations by the New York Post of corruption by Joe Biden and Hunter Biden in Ukraine.

Our response

We know that not everyone will agree with our choices on which stories to cover, how long we focus on them for, or the order in which they appear. Our editors make these complex decisions based on the editorial merit of all the stories at hand. We accept that not everyone will agree with each decision.

We did report on this story on the BBC News Channel, as well as online:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54553132>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54552101>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54568785>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54649262>

We also reported this allegation in the context of the presidential debate, when it was raised by President Trump.

We have covered the US election campaign accurately, impartially and in full.

BBC News Special: Coronavirus Update, BBC One & BBC News Channel, 31 October 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from audience members who were unhappy that slides featuring COVID-19 data were not fully visible.

Our response

The press briefings are broadcast live and the BBC doesn't have any prior control over the graphs provided by the Government. We appreciate that at times it was difficult to read the graphs due to the amount of information contained within them and we assure you that this issue has been raised with the relevant teams responsible for conducting the briefings. Unfortunately there was also a technical issue with the line from Downing Street which led to slight cropping of the slides being shown. We apologise for this error and we're sorry if our audience had trouble understanding the information that was being given during the briefing. We consider that we factually reflected the points being made in the briefing in our news coverage throughout the rest of the evening. Senior members of BBC News staff have spoken with the teams concerned, and have put measures in place to avoid this from happening again.

BBC News, November 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from people who felt our coverage of the US election results was biased against Donald Trump/in favour of Joe Biden, in projecting Joe Biden as the winner, and that we inaccurately reported claims of electoral fraud.

Our response

To date, there has been no evidence presented to any court in any state anywhere in America that any Judge has accepted as proof of what President Trump has described as 'tremendous fraud' in the US elections. To date, no Secretary of State, Republican or Democrat, has said they have found evidence of 'tremendous fraud' in the US election

process they have run in their states.

The British Government along with many other Western allies of America has accepted and congratulated President Elect Joe Biden on winning the election. Along with every other major news organisation, both British and American, ranging from Fox News to NBC, the BBC stands by its projection that Joe Biden has passed the threshold of 270 electoral votes and has therefore won the 2020 elections.

We are confident our coverage was duly impartial and accurate as required by the BBC's Editorial Guidelines.

BBC Breakfast, 30 October 2020

Summary of complaint

We received some complaints from people who were unhappy that Charlie Stayt and Naga Munchetty weren't wearing poppies for the majority of the programme.

Our response

Every year the BBC agrees dates between which, for those wishing to do so, poppies may be worn on screen. This year Remembrance Sunday occurs on November 8th and Armistice Day on Wednesday November 11th. Therefore the BBC has advised that poppies may be worn on screen, by those who wish to do so, from 6 am on Saturday October 31st. This enables consistency across all BBC output and is in line with a number of other major public bodies and public figures.

Naga and Charlie were wearing theirs earlier than the guidance outlined, which is why they were removed, and there was no intention to appear disrespectful. The following morning, Saturday 31st October, Naga and Charlie were wearing poppies in line with the guidance.

Six Nations Rugby, October 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received some complaints about a comment made by Brian Moore about Cian Healy during our commentary of the France v Ireland match on 31 October.

Our response

We have spoken to Brian Moore and he fully accepts he should not have made this comment about Cian Healy.

Brian has made a public apology making it clear he is sorry for any offence caused. 'Yesterday I made a bad comment about bulimia – it shouldn't have been made and I apologise'. <https://twitter.com/brianmoore666/status/1322901135154421761>

Newsnight, BBC Two, 17 November 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from viewers who felt that our presenter's interviewing was biased against Jenny Manson and Jeremy Corbyn.

Our response

The decision to readmit Jeremy Corbyn to the Labour Party was a controversial one and Newsnight sought to examine the different reactions there had been and what that meant for the party leadership. Jenny Manson was interviewed because she supports Jeremy Corbyn and represents Jewish Voice for Labour, a group within the party with strong views on this issue. She was challenged on how widely her opinions are shared across the Jewish community, and Kirsty Wark put to her research from the Campaign for Anti-Semitism and the views of the British Board of Deputies. The BBC's Editorial Guidelines require us to report with due impartiality and accuracy and we are confident that viewers will have understood she holds a minority view within the British Jewish community but that she also represents a strand of thinking within Labour which is important in understanding the internal debate about how the Labour party deals with anti-Semitism.

The interview with the former MP Louise Ellman was similarly robust. Kirsty Wark challenged her on whether she would have accepted an apology from Mr Corbyn and pointed out that he had accepted that the claims of anti-Semitism were not exaggerated. While no two interviews are ever the same and we approach each on their individual merits, we consider that Kirsty treated both guests fairly and appropriately.

Impartiality Guidance, October 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints about our impartiality guidance.

Our response

We would like to make it clear there is no ban – and never has been – on staff attending Pride events.

The impartiality guidance was intended to make sure our news, current affairs and

factual content is impartial, and that our journalists and producers are fair-minded and seen to be so. It is a longstanding principle of our Editorial Guidelines that no one should get involved in political debates or intervene in public policy issues about which you may have to report, produce programmes, or make editorial judgements.

For those colleagues for whom the strictest impartiality is required as part of their job – that is people in news, current affairs and factual journalism, as well as senior leaders – we expect these individuals to not take sides on party political issues, political controversies, or public policy matters.

There's a simple reason for this: when you work for a journalistic organisation you need to protect your ability to fairly and impartially make programmes and report on a story and to be seen to do so. This means avoiding any potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, ensuring that the reputation of both you and the BBC are protected.

As a public service broadcaster, impartiality on political controversies is required in our output by our Charter, and by our content regulator Ofcom. In our content, we must remain impartial in our reporting when others dispute the rights and wrongs of policies and laws affecting different sections of society. But we want to be very clear with you that the BBC as an organisation is not impartial about fundamental human rights. We support them, and we cherish the right of people, irrespective of their gender, age, race, ethnicity, and sexuality to live their lives free of discrimination of any sort.

Have I Got News for You, BBC One, 20 November 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from viewers who felt that a guest's comment about bombing Glastonbury to get rid of Jeremy Corbyn supporters was inappropriate, and could incite violence.

Our response

After more than 30 years on air, Have I Got News For You is a well-established comedy series that has built a reputation for irreverent humour and satire. Regular viewers expect the panellists to make jokes and understand that contributions are intended to be funny and amusing, and this edition was no exception. It was clear that comedian Fin Taylor was talking about an utterly absurd scenario, in which he compared Jeremy Corbyn to Bob Dylan, and was in no way whatsoever to be taken seriously.

Radio 1, Fairytale of New York, November 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints about Radio 1's decision to only play an edited version of 'Fairytale of New York' by The Pogues.

Our response

We know 'Fairytale of New York' is considered a Christmas classic and we will continue to play it this year on BBC Radio, with our stations choosing the version of the song most relevant for their audience.

We are aware that young audiences are particularly sensitive to derogatory terms for gender and sexuality, and after considering this carefully, Radio 1 has decided to play a version featuring Kirsty MacColl singing alternative lyrics, provided by the record label.

BBC North West, December 2020**Summary of complaint**

We received complaints from people who felt the use of red ribbons, on World Aids Day, when remembering those who have lost their lives to Covid, was disrespectful.

Our response

We apologise for the upset caused by the launch of this project. The timing on World Aids Day was wrong and we're really sorry.

We are working closely with families in the north west who have lost loved ones during the pandemic and it was never our intention to cause offence.

We are no longer mentioning the ribbons as part of this project and have deleted social media posts referencing them. The team issued an apology on social media and on the evening programme on 2nd December.

BBC Radio Lincolnshire, November 2020**Summary of complaint**

We received complaints about Radio Lincolnshire commentator Steve Thompson.

Our response

Steve made three comments on air in a short period of time that he now accepts didn't meet the standards we or our listeners expect. These included comments about the referee's wife and a remark that a player "should have worn a skirt".

He has been warned about his use of language before. As a freelancer, he cannot be suspended. Steve has volunteered to complete a course run by the League Managers Association and will be back on air next month after he has completed this training.

BBC One, Strictly Come Dancing, 5 December 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt it was inappropriate for some of the male professional dancers to be dressed in drag for the opening dance.

Our response

Strictly Come Dancing's theme weeks prove very popular with viewers and to kick off this Musicals Week special the professional dancers pulled out all the stops and paid homage to the musical 'Priscilla, Queen of the Desert', which has received universal acclaim.

It was intended to be a fun and entertaining musicals dance for our viewers who are used to and expect Strictly to be glamorous. We feel that it's important to allow the choreographers and professional dancers to exercise creative freedom when putting together routines for a programme of this nature. Strictly is an inclusive show and we always ensure that the programme's content is appropriate.

Have I Got News for You, BBC One, 4 December 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from viewers unhappy with a joke made about President Elect, Joe Biden.

Our response

Comedy is one of the most subjective areas of programming, and there will often be occasions that jokes which are acceptable to some will occasionally not be acceptable to others – indeed as we saw from the reactions of the rest of the panel on this occasion. Have I Got News For You is a well-established comedy series that has built a reputation for irreverent humour and satire. We appreciate that some of our audience members found this joke to be in poor taste, but we consider it was simply tongue in cheek and was not intended to offend.

Will My Puppies Make Me Rich? (Working title)

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints about a programme in development.

Our response

A lot has been said and written online about this future programme. If the BBC were making a programme about how to exploit animals for profit, then that would be a cause for concern. The reality is rather different. The BBC is not making such a programme and never intended to.

The title of the programme is a working title. It is not uncommon for programmes to have working titles while they are developed. As the working title has allowed there to be some ambiguity around what the content might be, we have now chosen the new working title - "Britain's Puppy Boom – Counting the Cost." We think that title makes clearer the BBC's and the programme's intentions.

To clarify further, it will be a film underpinned by sound journalism, providing a balanced exploration of why more young people have become interested in turning their passion for dogs into a profession, done responsibly, as well as understanding the wider negative impacts of the rise in demand for dogs. It will not be a 'how to' guide. It is not about encouraging people to get into breeding. Nor is it an attempt to glamorise breeding.

The welfare of animals is of the utmost importance and this programme will follow young individuals that are already responsibly breeding or are training to become accredited in order to highlight what constitutes best practice. The idea was commissioned during a live pitch event for new talent which is different to how we usually commission, but it will now be developed and made in accordance with the usual processes in line with BBC Editorial guidelines and the production team will research and consult widely within the industry.

The BBC condemns the personal attacks that have been directed towards the young women who pitched the idea of the documentary. They are not dog breeders but felt the subject was an interesting one to tackle due to the rise in demand for dogs over the past few months. The BBC is responsible for commissioning the film and its editorial direction.

We hope this statement makes clear the position.

BBC One, The Vicar of Dibley in Lockdown, 14 December 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints that the programme referenced the Black Lives Matter movement.

Our response

In ‘The Vicar of Dibley in Lockdown’ Geraldine shares her take on some of the key stories of 2020 with her congregation, including clapping for the NHS, lockdown and school exams being cancelled. Like many others have done this year, she also reflected on the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.

We believe this was in keeping with the character and the theme of the show.

The Andrew Marr Show, 29 November 2020

Summary of complaint

We received complaints from viewers who felt Andrew Marr was biased against the First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon and that statistics presented to the First Minister were used in a selective way.

Our response

The First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon was closely questioned on topics such as her handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the attainment gap in Scottish education, and we heard Ms Sturgeon respond at length.

Andrew Marr referred to two distinct periods in his questioning about the pandemic, the first wave in the Spring and the second this Autumn.

Viewers were clear that Ms Sturgeon was being questioned about Scotland’s performance in the first wave before being presented with the most recent data available at the time of the interview.

We don’t agree that the approach taken was biased or unfair.

The Andrew Marr Show is known for its rigorous and in depth interviews in which politicians and others in positions of power are held to account. The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was asked a range of challenging questions as were the other politicians interviewed on this edition of the programme. Every interview is different but we believe each showed the scrutiny, detail and due impartiality the audience would expect.

The Andrew Marr Show, BBC One, 13 December 2020

Summary of complaint

We've received complaints from viewers who felt Andrew Marr interrupted Ed Miliband too much, and seemed to be defending the government over Brexit.

Our response

Each interview is different and Andrew Marr seeks to challenge each guest on their arguments, using facts and other points of view to test what they say. This approach was very clear in the interview with the Shadow Business Secretary who was closely questioned on topics including Labour's position if a deal does come back, where compromises can be made to strike a deal and the impact that would have on the UK. We don't agree that the approach taken was biased or unfair. Ed Miliband was given plenty of time to make his points.

The interview with the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, displayed the same level of scrutiny with its focus on the impact of leaving the transition period without a trade deal on security, on trade and on food prices. Mr Marr reminded Mr Raab of promises made while he was on the campaign committee of the Vote Leave campaign and then closely questioned whether those promises had been kept.

No two interviews will ever be the same. However, we don't consider Mr Marr treated Mr Miliband any differently to the other guests on the programme.

BBC News website, 21 December 2020

Summary of complaint

We have received complaints from readers who believe that our article The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing is biased in favour of JK Rowling or endorses transphobic views.

Our response

Amol Rajan repeatedly made clear he was not taking a view on the subject of JK Rowling's essay and acknowledged the severity of offence that some people had taken to what she'd written.

He did not detract from that when he objectively praised the writing style, her honesty in talking about her own experiences of domestic and sexual abuse, and the bravery required to express a viewpoint knowing it will lead to further online abuse.

The Goes Wrong Show, December 2020

Summary of complaint

We received some complaints about the Christmas Special of The Goes Wrong Show.

Our response

This programme follows the fictional Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society as they attempt to put on a variety of plays, always with disastrous and comedic results. In this Christmas special, the troupe performed the Nativity, with the usual technical hiccups and blunders that viewers of the programme would expect.

While it's never our intention to offend or upset our viewers with what we show, it is perhaps inevitable that some aspects of our programmes will occasionally strike some in our audience as inappropriate. This is especially so within comedy; one of the most subjective areas of programming. Our Editorial Guidelines uphold the right to freedom of expression and the right of programme-makers to include material which some members of the audience may find inappropriate or offensive.

However, we are always very conscious of how jokes might resonate with those with direct experience of the subjects we cover, and we never set out to mock or undermine their beliefs and experiences.