

# The Ofcom Broadcasting Code

(Incorporating the Cross-promotion Code)

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**Ofcom**  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS





# Contents

**The Legislative  
Background  
to the Code**

**How to  
Use the Code**

**Section 1:**  
Protecting the  
Under-Eighteens

**Section 2:**  
Harm and Offence

**Section 3:**  
Crime

**Section 4:**  
Religion

**Section 5:**  
Due Impartiality  
and Due Accuracy  
and Undue  
Prominence  
of Views and  
Opinions

**Section 6:**  
Elections and  
Referendums

**Section 7:**  
Fairness

**Section 8:**  
Privacy

**Section 9:**  
Sponsorship

**Section 10:**  
Commercial  
References  
and Other Matters

**Appendix 1:**  
Extracts from the  
Communications  
Act 2003

**Appendix 2:**  
Extracts from the  
Television Without  
Frontiers Directive  
(89/552/EEC),  
as amended  
by (97/36/EC)

**Appendix 3:**  
European  
Convention on  
Human Rights

**Appendix 4:**  
Financial  
Promotions  
and Investment  
Recommendations

**The Ofcom  
Broadcasting Code  
Index**

**Cross-promotion  
Code**  
Introduction

Legislative  
background to  
the Code

Principles

Rules

Guidance

General guidance  
on the Cross-  
promotion Code

# The Legislative Background to the Code<sup>1</sup>

Ofcom is required under the Communications Act 2003 (“the Act”) and the Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended) (“the 1996 Act”) to draw up a code for television and radio, covering standards in programmes, sponsorship, fairness and privacy. This Code is to be known as the Ofcom Broadcasting Code (“the Code”).

Broadcasters are reminded of the legislative background that has informed the rules, of the principles that apply to each section, the meanings given by Ofcom and of the guidance issued by Ofcom, all of which may be relevant in interpreting and applying the Code. No rule should be read in isolation but within the context of the whole Code including the headings, cross-references and other linking text.

In setting these standards, Ofcom must secure the standards objectives set out in the Act. This not only involves setting minimum standards but also such other standards as may be appropriate. (See sections 3(1)(a) and (b), (2)(e) and (f) and (4)(b)(g)(h)(j) (k) and (l), 319, 320, 321, 325 and 326 of the Act and sections 107(1) of the 1996 Act. These extracts can be found in Appendix 1 of the Code.)

The Code also gives effect to a number of requirements relating to television in EC Directive 89/552/EEC, as amended by EC Directive 97/36/EC (“The Television Without Frontiers Directive”). Extracts can be found in Appendix 2 of the Code.

On 11 December 2007, the Television without Frontiers Directive was amended by Directive 2007/65/EC to become the Audio Visual Media Services Directive. Member States must ensure that they transpose this version into law or regulation within two years of this date. Ofcom expects to consult on any consequential changes to the Broadcasting Code during 2009.

The Code has also been drafted in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights (“the Convention”). In particular, the right to freedom of expression, as expressed in Article 10 of the Convention, encompasses the audience’s right to receive creative material, information and ideas without interference but subject to restrictions prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic

1. In this Broadcasting Code, where the context admits, references to any legislative provisions, whether in primary or secondary legislation, include a reference to those provisions as amended or re-enacted or as their application is modified by other provisions from time to time; any reference to a statutory provision shall include any subordinate legislation made from time to time under that provision.

society. This Article, together with Article 8 regarding the right to a person's private and family life, home and correspondence; Article 9, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and Article 14, the right to enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on grounds such as sex, race and religion, can be found in Appendix 3 of the Code.

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the Code applies to radio and television content (with certain exceptions in the case of the British Broadcasting Corporation ("the BBC") – see below) in services licensed by Ofcom, services funded by the licence fee provided by the BBC and to Sianel Pedwar Cymru ("S4C").

Broadcasters are required by the terms of their Ofcom licence to observe the Standards Code and the Fairness Code, which are to be interpreted as references to this Code. Observance of this Code is also required in the case of the BBC by the BBC Agreement<sup>2</sup> and, in the case of S4C, by statute. Except where the Code states otherwise, the term "television broadcasters" refers to providers of television programme services (including any local services such as restricted television services), the BBC and S4C, and "radio broadcasters" refers to providers of radio programme services (including local and community radio services and community digital sound programme services) and the BBC. Sections Five, Six, Nine and Ten of the Code do not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid.

Under the Act, the provider of a service is the person with "general control" over which programmes and other facilities and services are comprised in the service (section 362(2) of the Act).

General control is wider than editorial control in that it includes control over services and facilities to which access is provided (for example through the inclusion in the main service of a link or facility to interactive features) and over which the broadcaster may not have editorial control.

2. The BBC Agreement is the Agreement dated 25 January 1996 between Her Majesty's Secretary of State for National Heritage (now the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) and the British Broadcasting Corporation as amended by the Amendment dated 4 December 2003 (or any replacement thereof).

Although a link included in the service may lead to features outside of that service which are not regulated by Ofcom, the provision of access to those features by, for instance, the inclusion of a link, is within the control of the broadcaster and so within Ofcom's remit. Ofcom may therefore require such a link or facility to be removed where Ofcom has concerns, in the light of its statutory duties and, in particular, the standards objectives set out in section 319 of the Act, about the material to which it leads. In any event, the transition from broadcaster to third-party control must be clear to the viewer, so as to manage both audience expectations regarding the material to which they are being led and the risk to the broadcaster of being found in breach of this Code (for example Rules 1.2 and 2.1).

Where the Code has been breached, Ofcom will normally publish a finding and explain why a broadcaster has breached the Code (these findings are available in Ofcom's Broadcast Bulletins at [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)). When a broadcaster deliberately, seriously or repeatedly breaches the Code, Ofcom may impose statutory sanctions against the broadcaster. Ofcom's procedures for investigating cases (following the receipt of a complaint or otherwise) and applying statutory sanctions to broadcasters are also on the website. Members of the public who have no access to the web can ask Ofcom to send them a copy of the procedures by post.

The Code is divided into sections which are primarily drawn from the objectives as set out in section 319(2) of the Act and section 107(1) of the 1996 Act, as well as the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended).

## How to Use the Code

The Code is set out in terms of principles, meanings and rules and, for Sections Seven: Fairness and Eight: Privacy, also includes a set of “practices to be followed” by broadcasters. The principles are there to help readers understand the standards objectives and to apply the rules. Broadcasters must ensure that they comply with the rules as set out in the Code. The meanings help explain what Ofcom intends by some of the words and phrases used in the Code. The most relevant broadcasting legislation is noted under each section heading so readers can turn to the legislation if they wish.

When applying the Code to content, broadcasters should be aware that the context in which the material appears is key. In setting this Code, Ofcom has taken into account (as required by section 319(4) of the Act) the following:

- (a) the degree of harm and offence likely to be caused by the inclusion of any particular sort of material in programmes generally or in programmes of a particular description;
- (b) the likely size and composition of the potential audience for programmes included in television and radio services generally or in television and radio services of a particular description;
- (c) the likely expectation of the audience as to the nature of a programme’s content and the extent to which the nature of a programme’s content can be brought to the attention of potential members of the audience;
- (d) the likelihood of persons who are unaware of the nature of a programme’s content being unintentionally exposed, by their own actions, to that content;
- (e) the desirability of securing that the content of services identifies when there is a change affecting the nature of a service that is being watched or listened to and, in particular, a change that is relevant to the application of the standards set under this section;
- (f) the desirability of maintaining the independence of editorial control over programme content.

These criteria have informed Ofcom’s approach to setting the Code and therefore must be taken into account by broadcasters when interpreting the rules.

The Code does not seek to address each and every case that could arise. Broadcasters may face a number of individual situations which are not specifically referred to in this Code. Examples included in the Code are not exhaustive. However, the principles, as outlined in the following sections, should make clear what the Code is designed to achieve and help broadcasters make the necessary judgements.

To assist further those who work in broadcasting, as well as viewers and listeners who wish to understand broadcasting standards, non-binding guidance to accompany the Code will also be issued by Ofcom on the Ofcom website and will be reviewed regularly.

Broadcasters should be familiar with their audiences and ensure that programme content can always be justified by the context and the editorial needs of the programme. (In the Code, the word ‘programmes’ is taken to mean both television programmes and radio programmes/programming.)

Broadcasters may make programmes about any issue they choose, but it is expected that broadcasters will ensure at all times that their programmes comply with the general law, as well as the Code.

## **General guidance on the Code**

It is the responsibility of the broadcaster to comply with the Code. Programme makers who require further advice on applying this Code should, in the first instance, talk to those editorially responsible for the programme and to the broadcaster’s compliance and legal officers.

Ofcom can offer general guidance on the interpretation of the Code. However, any such advice is given on the strict understanding that it will not affect Ofcom’s discretion to judge cases and complaints after transmission and will not affect the exercise of Ofcom’s regulatory responsibilities. Broadcasters should seek their own legal advice on any compliance issues arising. Ofcom will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from reliance on informal guidance.

## Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 3(4)(h) and 319(2)(a) and (f) of the Communications Act 2003, Article 22 of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

This section must be read in conjunction with Section Two: Harm and Offence.

### Principle

**To ensure that people under eighteen are protected.**

### Rules

#### Scheduling and content information

- 1.1 Material that might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of people under eighteen must not be broadcast.
- 1.2 In the provision of services, broadcasters must take all reasonable steps to protect people under eighteen. For television services, this is in addition to their obligations resulting from the Television Without Frontiers Directive (in particular, Article 22, see Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Children must also be protected by appropriate scheduling from material that is unsuitable for them.

#### Meaning of “children”:

Children are people under the age of fifteen years.

#### Meaning of “appropriate scheduling”:

Appropriate scheduling should be judged according to:

- the nature of the content;
- the likely number and age range of children in the audience, taking into account school time, weekends and holidays;
- the start time and finish time of the programme;
- the nature of the channel or station and the particular programme; and
- the likely expectations of the audience for a particular channel or station at a particular time and on a particular day.

- 1.4 Television broadcasters must observe the watershed.

**Meaning of “the watershed”:**

The watershed only applies to television. The watershed is at 2100. Material unsuitable for children should not, in general, be shown before 2100 or after 0530.

On premium subscription film services which are not protected as set out in Rule 1.22, the watershed is at 2000. There is no watershed on premium subscription film services or pay per view services which are protected as set out in Rule 1.22 and 1.23 respectively.

- 1.5 Radio broadcasters must have particular regard to times when children are particularly likely to be listening.

**Meaning of “when children are particularly likely to be listening”:**

This phrase particularly refers to the school run and breakfast time, but might include other times.

- 1.6 The transition to more adult material must not be unduly abrupt at the watershed or after the time when children are particularly likely to be listening. For television, the strongest material should appear later in the schedule.
- 1.7 For television programmes broadcast before the watershed, or for radio programmes broadcast when children are particularly likely to be listening, clear information about content that may distress some children should be given, if appropriate, to the audience (taking into account the context).  
(For the meaning of “context” see Section Two: Harm and Offence.)

## **The coverage of sexual and other offences in the UK involving under-eighteens**

1.8 Where statutory or other legal restrictions apply preventing personal identification, broadcasters should also be particularly careful not to provide clues which may lead to the identification of those who are not yet adult (the defining age may differ in different parts of the UK) and who are, or might be, involved as a victim, witness, defendant or other perpetrator in the case of sexual offences featured in criminal, civil or family court proceedings:

- by reporting limited information which may be pieced together with other information available elsewhere, for example in newspaper reports (the ‘jigsaw effect’);
- inadvertently, for example by describing an offence as “incest”; or
- in any other indirect way.

(Note: Broadcasters should be aware that there may be statutory reporting restrictions that apply even if a court has not specifically made an order to that effect.)

1.9 When covering any pre-trial investigation into an alleged criminal offence in the UK, broadcasters should pay particular regard to the potentially vulnerable position of any person who is not yet adult who is involved as a witness or victim, before broadcasting their name, address, identity of school or other educational establishment, place of work, or any still or moving picture of them. Particular justification is also required for the broadcast of such material relating to the identity of any person who is not yet adult who is involved in the defence as a defendant or potential defendant.

## **Drugs, smoking, solvents and alcohol**

1.10 The use of illegal drugs, the abuse of drugs, smoking, solvent abuse and the misuse of alcohol:

- must not be featured in programmes made primarily for children unless there is strong editorial justification;

- must generally be avoided and in any case must not be condoned, encouraged or glamorised in other programmes broadcast before the watershed, or when children are particularly likely to be listening, unless there is editorial justification;
- must not be condoned, encouraged or glamorised in other programmes likely to be widely seen or heard by under-eighteens unless there is editorial justification.

### **Violence and dangerous behaviour**

- 1.11 Violence, its after-effects and descriptions of violence, whether verbal or physical, must be appropriately limited in programmes broadcast before the watershed or when children are particularly likely to be listening and must also be justified by the context.
- 1.12 Violence, whether verbal or physical, that is easily imitable by children in a manner that is harmful or dangerous:
  - must not be featured in programmes made primarily for children unless there is strong editorial justification;
  - must not be broadcast before the watershed or when children are particularly likely to be listening, unless there is editorial justification.
- 1.13 Dangerous behaviour, or the portrayal of dangerous behaviour, that is likely to be easily imitable by children in a manner that is harmful:
  - must not be featured in programmes made primarily for children unless there is strong editorial justification;
  - must not be broadcast before the watershed, or when children are particularly likely to be listening, unless there is editorial justification.

(Regarding Rules 1.11 to 1.13 see Rules 2.4 and 2.5 in Section Two: Harm and Offence.)

## Offensive language

- 1.14 The most offensive language must not be broadcast before the watershed or when children are particularly likely to be listening.
- 1.15 Offensive language must not be used in programmes made for younger children except in the most exceptional circumstances.
- 1.16 Offensive language must not be broadcast before the watershed, or when children are particularly likely to be listening, unless it is justified by the context. In any event, frequent use of such language must be avoided before the watershed.

(Regarding Rules 1.14 to 1.16 see Rule 2.3 in Section Two: Harm and Offence.)

## Sex

- 1.17 Representations of sexual intercourse must not occur before the watershed, or when children are particularly likely to be listening, unless there is a serious educational purpose. Any discussion on, or portrayal of, sexual behaviour must be editorially justified if included before the watershed, or when children are particularly likely to be listening, and must be appropriately limited and inexplicit.

## Nudity

- 1.18 Nudity before the watershed must be justified by the context.

## Exorcism, the occult and the paranormal

- 1.19 Demonstrations of exorcisms, occult practices and the paranormal (which purport to be real), must not be shown before the watershed or when children are particularly likely to be listening. Paranormal practices which are for entertainment purposes must not be broadcast when significant numbers of children may be expected to be watching, or are particularly likely to be listening. (This rule does not apply to drama, film or comedy.)

(See Rules 2.6 to 2.8 in Section Two: Harm and Offence and Rule 4.7 in Section Four: Religion.)

## **Films, premium subscription film services, pay per view services, adult-sex material on premium subscription services**

- 1.20 No film refused classification by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) may be broadcast unless it has subsequently been classified or the BBFC has confirmed that it would not be rejected according to the standards currently operating. Also, no film cut as a condition of classification by the BBFC may be transmitted in a version which includes the cut material unless:
- the BBFC has confirmed that the material was cut to allow the film to pass at a lower category; or
  - the BBFC has confirmed that the film would not be subject to compulsory cuts according to the standards currently operating.
- 1.21 BBFC 18-rated films or their equivalent must not be broadcast before 2100 on any service (except for pay per view services), and even then they may be unsuitable for broadcast at that time.
- 1.22 Premium subscription film services may broadcast up to BBFC 15-rated films or their equivalent, at any time of day provided:
- there is a protection system (a mandatory PIN or other equivalent protection) pre-2000 and post-0530, that seeks satisfactorily to restrict access solely to those authorised to view when material other than BBFC U-rated or PG-rated or their equivalents is shown; and
  - those security systems which are in place to protect children are clearly explained to all subscribers.
- 1.23 Pay per view services may broadcast up to BBFC 18-rated films or their equivalent, at any time of day provided:
- there is a protection system pre-2100 and post-0530 (a mandatory PIN or other equivalent protection), that seeks satisfactorily to restrict access solely to those authorised to view when material other than BBFC U-rated or PG-rated or their equivalents is shown;

- information is provided about programme content that will assist adults to assess its suitability for children;
  - there is a detailed billing system for subscribers which clearly itemises all viewing including viewing times and dates; and
  - those security systems which are in place to protect children are clearly explained to all subscribers.
- 1.24 Premium subscription services and pay per view/night services may broadcast ‘adult-sex’ material between 2200 and 0530 provided that in addition to other protections mentioned above:
- there is a mandatory PIN protected encryption system, or other equivalent protection, that seeks satisfactorily to restrict access solely to those authorised to view; and
  - there are measures in place that ensure that the subscriber is an adult.
- 1.25 BBFC R18-rated films or their equivalent must not be broadcast.

### **The involvement of people under eighteen in programmes**

- 1.26 Due care must be taken over the physical and emotional welfare and the dignity of people under eighteen who take part or are otherwise involved in programmes. This is irrespective of any consent given by the participant or by a parent, guardian or other person over the age of eighteen *in loco parentis*.
- 1.27 People under eighteen must not be caused unnecessary distress or anxiety by their involvement in programmes or by the broadcast of those programmes.
- 1.28 Prizes aimed at children must be appropriate to the age range of both the target audience and the participants.

(See Rule 2.11 in Section Two: Harm and Offence.)

## Section Two: Harm and Offence

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 3(4)(g) and (l) and 319(2)(a), (f) and (l) of the Communications Act 2003, and Articles 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

This section must be read in conjunction with Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens. The rules in this section are designed not only to provide adequate protection for adults but also to protect people under-eighteen.

### Principle

**To ensure that generally accepted standards are applied to the content of television and radio services so as to provide adequate protection for members of the public from the inclusion in such services of harmful and/or offensive material.**

### Rules

- 2.1 Generally accepted standards must be applied to the contents of television and radio services so as to provide adequate protection for members of the public from the inclusion in such services of harmful and/or offensive material.
- 2.2 Factual programmes or items or portrayals of factual matters must not materially mislead the audience.  
  
(Note to Rule 2.2: News is regulated under Section Five of the Code.)
- 2.3 In applying generally accepted standards broadcasters must ensure that material which may cause offence is justified by the context (see meaning of “context” below). Such material may include, but is not limited to, offensive language, violence, sex, sexual violence, humiliation, distress, violation of human dignity, discriminatory treatment or language (for example on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion, beliefs and sexual orientation). Appropriate information should also be broadcast where it would assist in avoiding or minimising offence.

**Meaning of “context”:**

Context includes (but is not limited to):

- the editorial content of the programme, programmes or series;
- the service on which the material is broadcast;
- the time of broadcast;
- what other programmes are scheduled before and after the programme or programmes concerned;
- the degree of harm or offence likely to be caused by the inclusion of any particular sort of material in programmes generally or programmes of a particular description;
- the likely size and composition of the potential audience and likely expectation of the audience;
- the extent to which the nature of the content can be brought to the attention of the potential audience for example by giving information; and
- the effect of the material on viewers or listeners who may come across it unawares.

- 2.4 Programmes must not include material (whether in individual programmes or in programmes taken together) which, taking into account the context, condones or glamorises violent, dangerous or seriously antisocial behaviour and is likely to encourage others to copy such behaviour.

(See Rules 1.11 to 1.13 in Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens.)

- 2.5 Methods of suicide and self-harm must not be included in programmes except where they are editorially justified and are also justified by the context.

(See Rule 1.13 in Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens.)

- 2.6 Demonstrations of exorcism, the occult, the paranormal, divination, or practices related to any of these that purport to be real (as opposed to entertainment) must be treated with due objectivity.

(See Rule 1.19 in Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens, concerning scheduling restrictions.)

- 2.7 If a demonstration of exorcism, the occult, the paranormal, divination, or practices related to any of these is for entertainment purposes, this must be made clear to viewers and listeners.
- 2.8 Demonstrations of exorcism, the occult, the paranormal, divination, or practices related to any of these (whether such demonstrations purport to be real or are for entertainment purposes) must not contain life-changing advice directed at individuals.

(Religious programmes are exempt from this rule but must, in any event, comply with the provisions in Section Four: Religion. Films, dramas and fiction generally are not bound by this rule.)

#### Meaning of “life-changing”:

Life-changing advice includes direct advice for individuals upon which they could reasonably act or rely about health, finance, employment or relationships.

- 2.9 When broadcasting material featuring demonstrations of hypnotic techniques, broadcasters must exercise a proper degree of responsibility in order to prevent hypnosis and/or adverse reactions in viewers and listeners. The hypnotist must not broadcast his/her full verbal routine or be shown performing straight to camera.
- 2.10 Simulated news (for example in drama or in documentaries) must be broadcast in such a way that there is no reasonable possibility of the audience being misled into believing that they are listening to, or watching, actual news.
- 2.11 Competitions should be conducted fairly, prizes should be described accurately and rules should be clear and appropriately made known.

(See Rule 1.28 in Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens.)

- 2.12 Broadcasters must not use techniques which exploit the possibility of conveying a message to viewers or listeners, or of otherwise influencing their minds without their being aware, or fully aware, of what has occurred.
- 2.13 Television broadcasters must take precautions to maintain a low level of risk to viewers who have photosensitive epilepsy. Where it is not reasonably practicable to follow the Ofcom guidance (see the Ofcom website), and where broadcasters can demonstrate that the broadcasting of flashing lights and/or patterns is editorially justified, viewers should be given an adequate verbal and also, if appropriate, text warning at the start of the programme or programme item.

## Section Three: Crime

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 3(4)(j) and 319(2)(b) of the Communications Act 2003, Article 22(a) of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

### Principle

**To ensure that material likely to encourage or incite the commission of crime or to lead to disorder is not included in television or radio services.**

### Rules

- 3.1 Material likely to encourage or incite the commission of crime or to lead to disorder must not be included in television or radio services.
- 3.2 Descriptions or demonstrations of criminal techniques which contain essential details which could enable the commission of crime must not be broadcast unless editorially justified.
- 3.3 No payment, promise of payment, or payment in kind, may be made to convicted or confessed criminals whether directly or indirectly for a programme contribution by the criminal (or any other person) relating to his/her crime/s. The only exception is where it is in the public interest.
- 3.4 While criminal proceedings are active, no payment or promise of payment may be made, directly or indirectly, to any witness or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness. Nor should any payment be suggested or made dependent on the outcome of the trial. Only actual expenditure or loss of earnings necessarily incurred during the making of a programme contribution may be reimbursed.
- 3.5 Where criminal proceedings are likely and foreseeable, payments should not be made to people who might reasonably be expected to be witnesses unless there is a clear public interest, such as investigating crime or serious wrongdoing, and the payment is necessary to elicit the information. Where such a payment is made it will be appropriate to disclose the payment to both defence and prosecution if the person becomes a witness in any subsequent trial.
- 3.6 Broadcasters must use their best endeavours so as not to broadcast material that could endanger lives or prejudice the success of attempts to deal with a hijack or kidnapping.

## Section Four: Religion

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 319(2)(e) and 319(6) of the Communications Act 2003, and Articles 9, 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

The rules in this section apply to religious programmes.

### Principles

**To ensure that broadcasters exercise the proper degree of responsibility with respect to the content of programmes which are religious programmes.**

**To ensure that religious programmes do not involve any improper exploitation of any susceptibilities of the audience for such a programme.**

**To ensure that religious programmes do not involve any abusive treatment of the religious views and beliefs of those belonging to a particular religion or religious denomination.**

### Rules

- 4.1 Broadcasters must exercise the proper degree of responsibility with respect to the content of programmes which are religious programmes.

#### Meaning of a “religious programme”:

A religious programme is a programme which deals with matters of religion as the central subject, or as a significant part, of the programme.

- 4.2 The religious views and beliefs of those belonging to a particular religion or religious denomination must not be subject to abusive treatment.
- 4.3 Where a religion or religious denomination is the subject, or one of the subjects, of a religious programme, then the identity of the religion and/or denomination must be clear to the audience.
- 4.4 Religious programmes must not seek to promote religious views or beliefs by stealth.

- 4.5 Religious programmes on television services must not seek recruits. This does not apply to specialist religious television services. Religious programmes on radio services may seek recruits.

**Meaning of “seek recruits”:**

Seek recruits means directly appealing to audience members to join a religion or religious denomination.

- 4.6 Religious programmes must not improperly exploit any susceptibilities of the audience.
- (See Rules 10.13 to 10.16 in Section 10: Commercial References and Other Matters, regarding appeals.)
- 4.7 Religious programmes that contain claims that a living person (or group) has special powers or abilities must treat such claims with due objectivity and must not broadcast such claims when significant numbers of children may be expected to be watching (in the case of television), or when children are particularly likely to be listening (in the case of radio).

## Section Five:

# Due Impartiality and Due Accuracy and Undue Prominence of Views and Opinions

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 319(2)(c) and (d), 319(8) and section 320 of the Communications Act 2003, and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

This section of the Code does not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid, which are regulated on these matters by the BBC Trust.

### Principles

**To ensure that news, in whatever form, is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality.**

**To ensure that the special impartiality requirements of the Act are complied with.**

### Rules

#### Meaning of “due impartiality”:

“Due” is an important qualification to the concept of impartiality. Impartiality itself means not favouring one side over another. “Due” means adequate or appropriate to the subject and nature of the programme. So “due impartiality” does not mean an equal division of time has to be given to every view, or that every argument and every facet of every argument has to be represented. The approach to due impartiality may vary according to the nature of the subject, the type of programme and channel, the likely expectation of the audience as to content, and the extent to which the content and approach is signalled to the audience. Context, as defined in Section Two: Harm and Offence of the Code, is important.

### Due impartiality and due accuracy in news

- 5.1 News, in whatever form, must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality.
- 5.2 Significant mistakes in news should normally be acknowledged and corrected on air quickly. Corrections should be appropriately scheduled.

- 5.3 No politician may be used as a newsreader, interviewer or reporter in any news programmes unless, exceptionally, it is editorially justified. In that case, the political allegiance of that person must be made clear to the audience.

### **Special impartiality requirements: news and other programmes**

#### **Matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy**

##### **Meaning of “matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy”:**

Matters of political or industrial controversy are political or industrial issues on which politicians, industry and/or the media are in debate. Matters relating to current public policy need not be the subject of debate but relate to a policy under discussion or already decided by a local, regional or national government or by bodies mandated by those public bodies to make policy on their behalf, for example non-governmental organisations, relevant European institutions, etc.

#### **The exclusion of views or opinions**

(Rule 5.4 applies to television and radio services except restricted services.)

- 5.4 Programmes in the services (listed above) must exclude all expressions of the views and opinions of the person providing the service on matters of political and industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy (unless that person is speaking in a legislative forum or in a court of law). Views and opinions relating to the provision of programme services are also excluded from this requirement.

#### **The preservation of due impartiality**

(Rules 5.5 to 5.12 apply to television programme services, teletext services, national radio and national digital sound programme services.)

- 5.5 Due impartiality on matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy must be preserved on the part of any person

providing a service (listed above). This may be achieved within a programme or over a series of programmes taken as a whole.

**Meaning of “series of programmes taken as a whole”:** This means more than one programme in the same service, editorially linked, dealing with the same or related issues within an appropriate period and aimed at a like audience. A series can include, for example, a strand, or two programmes (such as a drama and a debate about the drama) or a ‘cluster’ or ‘season’ of programmes on the same subject.

- 5.6 The broadcast of editorially linked programmes dealing with the same subject matter (as part of a series in which the broadcaster aims to achieve due impartiality) should normally be made clear to the audience on air.
- 5.7 Views and facts must not be misrepresented. Views must also be presented with due weight over appropriate timeframes.
- 5.8 Any personal interest of a reporter or presenter, which would call into question the due impartiality of the programme, must be made clear to the audience.
- 5.9 Presenters and reporters (with the exception of news presenters and reporters in news programmes), presenters of “personal view” or “authored” programmes or items, and chairs of discussion programmes may express their own views on matters of political or industrial controversy or matters relating to current public policy. However, alternative viewpoints must be adequately represented either in the programme, or in a series of programmes taken as a whole. Additionally, presenters must not use the advantage of regular appearances to promote their views in a way that compromises the requirement for due impartiality. Presenter phone-ins must encourage and must not exclude alternative views.
- 5.10 A personal view or authored programme or item must be clearly signalled to the audience at the outset. This is a minimum requirement and may not be sufficient in all circumstances. (Personality phone-in hosts on radio are exempted from this provision unless their personal view status is unclear.)

**Meaning of “personal view” and “authored”:**

“Personal view” programmes are programmes presenting a particular view or perspective. Personal view programmes can range from the outright expression of highly partial views, for example by a person who is a member of a lobby group and is campaigning on the subject, to the considered “authored” opinion of a journalist, commentator or academic, with professional expertise or a specialism in an area which enables her or him to express opinions which are not necessarily mainstream.

**Matters of major political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy**

- 5.11 In addition to the rules above, due impartiality must be preserved on matters of major political and industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy by the person providing a service (listed above) in each programme or in clearly linked and timely programmes.

**Meaning of “matters of major political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy”:**

These will vary according to events but are generally matters of political or industrial controversy or matters of current public policy which are of national, and often international, importance, or are of similar significance within a smaller broadcast area.

- 5.12 In dealing with matters of major political and industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy an appropriately wide range of significant views must be included and given due weight in each programme or in clearly linked and timely programmes. Views and facts must not be misrepresented.

## The prevention of undue prominence of views and opinions on matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy

(Rule 5.13 applies to local radio services (including community radio services), local digital sound programme services (including community digital sound programme services) and radio licensable content services.)

- 5.13 Broadcasters should not give undue prominence to the views and opinions of particular persons or bodies on matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy in all the programmes included in any service (listed above) taken as a whole.

### Meaning of “undue prominence of views and opinions”:

Undue prominence is a significant imbalance of views aired within coverage of matters of political or industrial controversy or matters relating to current public policy.

### Meaning of “programmes included in any service...Taken as a whole”:

Programmes included in any service taken as a whole means all programming on a service dealing with the same or related issues within an appropriate period.

## Section Six: Elections and Referendums

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 319(2)(c) and 320 of the Communications Act 2003, and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Broadcasters should also have regard to relevant sections of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) (“RPA”) – see in particular sections 66A, 92 and 93 (which is amended by section 144 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000).)

This section of the Code does not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid, which are regulated on these matters by the BBC Trust.

Rules made under section 333 of the Communications Act 2003 (regarding party election broadcasts, party political broadcasts and referendum campaign broadcasts) and paragraph 18 of Schedule 12 are contained in *Ofcom Rules on Party Political and Referendum Broadcasts* on the Ofcom website. However, such broadcasts are also required to comply with the relevant provisions of this Code, for example the provisions regarding harm and offence – notwithstanding that the content is normally the responsibility of the relevant political parties.

### Principle

**To ensure that the special impartiality requirements in the Communications Act 2003 and other legislation relating to broadcasting on elections and referendums, are applied at the time of elections and referendums.**

### Rules

#### Programmes at the time of elections and referendums

- 6.1 The rules in Section Five, in particular the rules relating to matters of major political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy, apply to the coverage of elections and referendums.

#### Programmes at the time of elections and referendums in the UK

The remainder of this section only applies during the actual election or referendum period which is defined below.

**Meaning of “election”:**

For the purpose of this section elections include a parliamentary general election, parliamentary by-election, local government election, mayoral election, Scottish Parliament election, Welsh, Northern Ireland and London Assembly elections, and European parliamentary election.

**Meaning of “referendum”:**

For the purpose of this section a referendum (to which the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 applies) includes a UK-wide, national or regional referendum but does not extend to a local referendum.

- 6.2 Due weight must be given to the coverage of major parties during the election period. Broadcasters must also consider giving appropriate coverage to other parties and independent candidates with significant views and perspectives.

**Meaning of “major party”:**

At present in the UK major parties are the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. In addition, major parties in Scotland and Wales respectively are the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. The major parties in Northern Ireland are the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, Social Democratic and Labour Party, and the Ulster Unionist Party.

**Meaning of “election period”:**

For a parliamentary general election, this period begins with the announcement of the dissolution of Parliament. For a parliamentary by-election, this period begins with the issuing of a writ or on such earlier date as is notified in the London Gazette. For the Scottish Parliament elections, the period begins with the dissolution of the Scottish Parliament or, in the case of a by-election, with the date of the occurrence of a vacancy. For the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the London Assembly and for local government elections, it is the last date for publication of notices of the election. For European parliamentary elections, it is

the last date for publication of the notice of election, which is 25 days before the election. In all cases the period ends with the close of the poll.

**Meaning of “candidate”:**

Candidate has the meaning given to it in section 93 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) and means a candidate standing nominated at the election or included in a list of candidates submitted in connection with it.

- 6.3 Due weight must be given to designated organisations in coverage during the referendum period. Broadcasters must also consider giving appropriate coverage to other permitted participants with significant views and perspectives.

**Meaning of “designated organisation” and “permitted participants”:**

Designated organisations and permitted participants are those that are designated by the Electoral Commission.

**Meaning of “referendum period”:**

For referendums different periods may apply. A referendum held under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (as amended) begins when the draft of an Order is laid before Parliament for approval by each House. In the case of a referendum held under other Acts, the time at which a referendum period commences is given in the individual Acts. In the case of an Order before Parliament, the time will be given in that Order. In all cases the period ends with the close of the poll.

- 6.4 Discussion and analysis of election and referendum issues must finish when the poll opens. (This refers to the opening of actual polling stations. This rule does not apply to any poll conducted entirely by post.)
- 6.5 Broadcasters may not publish the results of any opinion poll on polling day itself until the election or referendum poll closes. (For European Parliamentary

elections, this applies until all polls throughout the European Union have closed.)

- 6.6 Candidates in UK elections, and representatives of permitted participants in UK referendums, must not act as news presenters, interviewers or presenters of any type of programme during the election period.
- 6.7 Appearances by candidates (in UK elections) or representatives (of permitted participants in UK referendums) in non-political programmes that were planned or scheduled before the election or referendum period may continue, but no new appearances should be arranged and broadcast during the period.

### Constituency coverage and electoral area coverage in elections

(Rules 6.8 to 6.13 will only apply to S4C if S4C has adopted them under the RPA as its Code of Practice.)

- 6.8 Due impartiality must be strictly maintained in a constituency report or discussion and in an electoral area report or discussion.

#### Meaning of “electoral area”:

Electoral area (for example electoral division, borough ward or other area) is the local government equivalent to the parliamentary term “constituency”.

- 6.9 If a candidate takes part in an item about his/her particular constituency, or electoral area, then candidates of each of the major parties must be offered the opportunity to take part. (However, if they refuse or are unable to participate, the item may nevertheless go ahead.)
- 6.10 In addition to Rule 6.9, broadcasters must offer the opportunity to take part in constituency or electoral area reports and discussions, to all candidates within the constituency or electoral area representing parties with previous significant electoral support or where there is evidence of significant current support. This also applies to independent candidates. (However, if a candidate refuses or is unable to participate, the item may nevertheless go ahead.)

- 6.11 Any constituency or electoral area report or discussion after the close of nominations must include a list of all candidates standing, giving first names, surnames and the name of the party they represent or, if they are standing independently, the fact that they are an independent candidate. This must be conveyed in sound and/or vision. Where a constituency report on a radio service is repeated on several occasions in the same day, the full list need only be broadcast on one occasion. If, in subsequent repeats on that day, the constituency report does not give the full list of candidates, the audience should be directed to an appropriate website or other information source listing all candidates and giving the information set out above.
- 6.12 Where a candidate is taking part in a programme on any matter, after the election has been called, s/he must not be given the opportunity to make constituency points, or electoral area points about the constituency or electoral area in which s/he is standing, when no other candidates will be given a similar opportunity.
- 6.13 If coverage is given to wider election regions, for example in elections to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly, London Assembly or European Parliament, then Rules 6.8 to 6.12 apply in offering participation to candidates. In these instances, all parties who have a candidate in the appropriate region should be listed in sound and/or vision, but it is not necessary to list candidates individually. However, any independent candidate who is not standing on a party list must be named. Where a report on a radio service is repeated on several occasions in the same day, the full list need only be broadcast on one occasion. If, in subsequent repeats on that day, the constituency report does not give the full list of candidates, the audience should be directed to an appropriate website or other information source listing all candidates and giving the information set out above.

## Section Seven: Fairness

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 3(2)(f) and 326 of the Communications Act 2003 and sections 107(1) and 130 of the Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended), Article 23 of the Television Without Frontiers Directive and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

### Foreword

This section and the following section on privacy are different from other sections of the Code. They apply to how broadcasters treat the individuals or organisations directly affected by programmes, rather than to what the general public sees and/or hears as viewers and listeners.

As well as containing a principle and a rule this section contains “practices to be followed” by broadcasters when dealing with individuals or organisations participating in or otherwise directly affected by programmes as broadcast. Following these practices will not necessarily avoid a breach of this section of the code (Rule 7.1).

*However, failure to follow these practises will only constitute a breach where it results in unfairness to an individual or organisation in the programme.* Importantly, the Code does not and cannot seek to set out all the “practices to be followed” in order to avoid unfair treatment.

The following provisions in the next section on privacy are also relevant to this section:

- the explanation of public interest that appears in the meaning of “warranted” under Rule 8.1 in Section Eight: Privacy;
- the meaning of surreptitious filming or recording that appears under “practices to be followed” 8.13 in Section Eight: Privacy.

### Principle

**To ensure that broadcasters avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organisations in programmes.**

### Rule

- 7.1 Broadcasters must avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organisations in programmes.

## Practices to be followed (7.2 to 7.14 below)

### Dealing fairly with contributors and obtaining informed consent

- 7.2 Broadcasters and programme makers should normally be fair in their dealings with potential contributors to programmes unless, exceptionally, it is justified to do otherwise.
- 7.3 Where a person is invited to make a contribution to a programme (except when the subject matter is trivial or their participation minor) they should normally, at an appropriate stage:
- be told the nature and purpose of the programme, what the programme is about and be given a clear explanation of why they were asked to contribute and when (if known) and where it is likely to be first broadcast;
  - be told what kind of contribution they are expected to make, for example live, pre-recorded, interview, discussion, edited, unedited, etc.;
  - be informed about the areas of questioning and, wherever possible, the nature of other likely contributions;
  - be made aware of any significant changes to the programme as it develops which might reasonably affect their original consent to participate, and which might cause material unfairness;
  - be told the nature of their contractual rights and obligations and those of the programme maker and broadcaster in relation to their contribution; and
  - be given clear information, if offered an opportunity to preview the programme, about whether they will be able to effect any changes to it.

Taking these measures is likely to result in the consent that is given being ‘informed consent’ (referred to in this section and the rest of the Code as “consent”).

It may be fair to withhold all or some of this information where it is justified in the public interest or under other provisions of this section of the Code.

- 7.4 If a contributor is under sixteen, consent should normally be obtained from a parent or guardian, or other person of eighteen or over *in loco parentis*. In particular, persons under sixteen should not be asked for views on matters likely to be beyond their capacity to answer properly without such consent.
- 7.5 In the case of persons over sixteen who are not in a position to give consent, a person of eighteen or over with primary responsibility for their care should normally give it on their behalf. In particular, persons not in a position to give consent should not be asked for views on matters likely to be beyond their capacity to answer properly without such consent.
- 7.6 When a programme is edited, contributions should be represented fairly.
- 7.7 Guarantees given to contributors, for example relating to the content of a programme, confidentiality or anonymity, should normally be honoured.
- 7.8 Broadcasters should ensure that the re-use of material, i.e. use of material originally filmed or recorded for one purpose and then used in a programme for another purpose or used in a later or different programme, does not create unfairness. This applies both to material obtained from others and the broadcaster's own material.

### Opportunity to contribute and proper consideration of facts

- 7.9 Before broadcasting a factual programme, including programmes examining past events, broadcasters should take reasonable care to satisfy themselves that:
- material facts have not been presented, disregarded or omitted in a way that is unfair to an individual or organisation; and
  - anyone whose omission could be unfair to an individual or organisation has been offered an opportunity to contribute.
- 7.10 Programmes – such as dramas and factually-based dramas – should not portray facts, events, individuals or organisations in a way which is unfair to an individual or organisation.

- 7.11 If a programme alleges wrongdoing or incompetence or makes other significant allegations, those concerned should normally be given an appropriate and timely opportunity to respond.
- 7.12 Where a person approached to contribute to a programme chooses to make no comment or refuses to appear in a broadcast, the broadcast should make clear that the individual concerned has chosen not to appear and should give their explanation if it would be unfair not to do so.
- 7.13 Where it is appropriate to represent the views of a person or organisation that is not participating in the programme, this must be done in a fair manner.

### **Deception, set-ups and ‘wind-up’ calls**

- 7.14 Broadcasters or programme makers should not normally obtain or seek information, audio, pictures or an agreement to contribute through misrepresentation or deception. (Deception includes surreptitious filming or recording.) However:
- it may be warranted to use material obtained through misrepresentation or deception without consent if it is in the public interest and cannot reasonably be obtained by other means;
  - where there is no adequate public interest justification, for example some unsolicited wind-up calls or entertainment set-ups, consent should be obtained from the individual and/or organisation concerned before the material is broadcast;
  - if the individual and/or organisation is/are not identifiable in the programme then consent for broadcast will not be required;
  - material involving celebrities and those in the public eye can be used without consent for broadcast, but it should not be used without a public interest justification if it is likely to result in unjustified public ridicule or personal distress. (Normally, therefore such contributions should be pre-recorded.)

(See “practices to be followed” 8.11 to 8.15 in Section Eight: Privacy.)

## Section Eight: Privacy

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 3(2)(f) and 326 of the Communications Act 2003, sections 107(1) and 130 of the Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended), and Articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

### Privacy

#### Foreword

This section and the preceding section on fairness are different from other sections of the Code. They apply to how broadcasters treat the individuals or organisations directly affected by programmes, rather than to what the general public sees and/or hears as viewers and listeners.

As well as containing a principle and a rule this section contains “practices to be followed” by broadcasters when dealing with individuals or organisations participating or otherwise directly affected by programmes, or in the making of programmes. Following these practices will not necessarily avoid a breach of this section of the Code (Rule 8.1). *However, failure to follow these practises will only constitute a breach where results in an unwarranted infringement of privacy.* Importantly, the Code does not and cannot seek to set out all the “practices to be followed” in order to avoid an unwarranted infringement of privacy.

The Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended) requires Ofcom to consider complaints about unwarranted infringement of privacy in a programme or in connection with the obtaining of material included in a programme. This may call for some difficult on-the-spot judgments about whether privacy is unwarrantably infringed by filming or recording, especially when reporting on emergency situations (“practices to be followed” 8.5 to 8.8 and 8.16 to 8.19). We recognise there may be a strong public interest in reporting on an emergency situation as it occurs and we understand there may be pressures on broadcasters at the scene of a disaster or emergency that may make it difficult to judge at the time whether filming or recording is an unwarrantable infringement of privacy. These are factors Ofcom will take into account when adjudicating on complaints.

Where consent is referred to in Section Eight it refers to informed consent. Please see “practice to be followed” 7.3 in Section Seven: Fairness.

## Principle

**To ensure that broadcasters avoid any unwarranted infringement of privacy in programmes and in connection with obtaining material included in programmes.**

## Rule

- 8.1 Any infringement of privacy in programmes, or in connection with obtaining material included in programmes, must be warranted.

### Meaning of “warranted”:

In this section “warranted” has a particular meaning. It means that where broadcasters wish to justify an infringement of privacy as warranted, they should be able to demonstrate why in the particular circumstances of the case, it is warranted. If the reason is that it is in the public interest, then the broadcaster should be able to demonstrate that the public interest outweighs the right to privacy. Examples of public interest would include revealing or detecting crime, protecting public health or safety, exposing misleading claims made by individuals or organisations or disclosing incompetence that affects the public.

## Practices to be followed (8.2 to 8.22)

### Private lives, public places and legitimate expectation of privacy

#### Meaning of “legitimate expectation of privacy”:

Legitimate expectations of privacy will vary according to the place and nature of the information, activity or condition in question, the extent to which it is in the public domain (if at all) and whether the individual concerned is already in the public eye. There may be circumstances where people can reasonably expect privacy even in a public place. Some activities and conditions may be of such a private nature that

filming or recording, even in a public place, could involve an infringement of privacy. People under investigation or in the public eye, and their immediate family and friends, retain the right to a private life, although private behaviour can raise issues of legitimate public interest.

- 8.2 Information which discloses the location of a person's home or family should not be revealed without permission, unless it is warranted.
- 8.3 When people are caught up in events which are covered by the news they still have a right to privacy in both the making and the broadcast of a programme, unless it is warranted to infringe it. This applies both to the time when these events are taking place and to any later programmes that revisit those events.
- 8.4 Broadcasters should ensure that words, images or actions filmed or recorded in, or broadcast from, a public place, are not so private that prior consent is required before broadcast from the individual or organisation concerned, unless broadcasting without their consent is warranted.

### Consent

- 8.5 Any infringement of privacy in the making of a programme should be with the person's and/or organisation's consent or be otherwise warranted.
- 8.6 If the broadcast of a programme would infringe the privacy of a person or organisation, consent should be obtained before the relevant material is broadcast, unless the infringement of privacy is warranted. (Callers to phone-in shows are deemed to have given consent to the broadcast of their contribution.)
- 8.7 If an individual or organisation's privacy is being infringed, and they ask that the filming, recording or live broadcast be stopped, the broadcaster should do so, unless it is warranted to continue.
- 8.8 When filming or recording in institutions, organisations or other agencies, permission should be obtained from the relevant authority or management, unless it is warranted to film or record without permission. Individual consent of employees or others whose appearance is incidental or where they are

essentially anonymous members of the general public will not normally be required.

- However, in potentially sensitive places such as ambulances, hospitals, schools, prisons or police stations, separate consent should normally be obtained before filming or recording and for broadcast from those in sensitive situations (unless not obtaining consent is warranted). If the individual will not be identifiable in the programme then separate consent for broadcast will not be required.

### Gathering information, sound or images and the re-use of material

- 8.9 The means of obtaining material must be proportionate in all the circumstances and in particular to the subject matter of the programme.
- 8.10 Broadcasters should ensure that the re-use of material, i.e. use of material originally filmed or recorded for one purpose and then used in a programme for another purpose or used in a later or different programme, does not create an unwarranted infringement of privacy. This applies both to material obtained from others and the broadcaster's own material.
- 8.11 Doorstepping for factual programmes should not take place unless a request for an interview has been refused or it has not been possible to request an interview, or there is good reason to believe that an investigation will be frustrated if the subject is approached openly, and it is warranted to doorstep. However, normally broadcasters may, without prior warning interview, film or record people in the news when in public places.

(See “practice to be followed” 8.15.)

#### Meaning of “doorstepping”:

Doorstepping is the filming or recording of an interview or attempted interview with someone, or announcing that a call is being filmed or recorded for broadcast purposes, without any prior warning. It does not, however, include vox-pops (sampling the views of random members of the public).

- 8.12 Broadcasters can record telephone calls between the broadcaster and the other party if they have, from the outset of the call, identified themselves, explained the purpose of the call and that the call is being recorded for possible broadcast (if that is the case) unless it is warranted not to do one or more of these practices. If at a later stage it becomes clear that a call that has been recorded will be broadcast (but this was not explained to the other party at the time of the call) then the broadcaster must obtain consent before broadcast from the other party, unless it is warranted not to do so.

(See “practices to be followed” 7.14 and 8.13 to 8.15.)

- 8.13 Surreptitious filming or recording should only be used where it is warranted. Normally, it will only be warranted if:

- there is *prima facie* evidence of a story in the public interest; and
- there are reasonable grounds to suspect that further material evidence could be obtained; and
- it is necessary to the credibility and authenticity of the programme.

See “practices to be followed” 7.14, 8.12, 8.14 and 8.15.)

#### Meaning of “surreptitious filming or recording”:

Surreptitious filming or recording includes the use of long lenses or recording devices, as well as leaving an unattended camera or recording device on private property without the full and informed consent of the occupiers or their agent. It may also include recording telephone conversations without the knowledge of the other party, or deliberately continuing a recording when the other party thinks that it has come to an end.

- 8.14 Material gained by surreptitious filming and recording should only be broadcast when it is warranted.

(See also “practices to be followed” 7.14 and 8.12 to 8.13 and 8.15.)

- 8.15 Surreptitious filming or recording, doorstepping or recorded ‘wind-up’ calls to obtain material for entertainment purposes may be warranted if it is intrinsic to the entertainment and does not amount to a significant infringement of privacy such as to cause significant annoyance, distress or embarrassment. The resulting material should not be broadcast without the consent of those involved. However if the individual and/or organisation is not identifiable in the programme then consent for broadcast will not be required.

(See “practices to be followed” 7.14 and 8.11 to 8.14.)

### Suffering and distress

- 8.16 Broadcasters should not take or broadcast footage or audio of people caught up in emergencies, victims of accidents or those suffering a personal tragedy, even in a public place, where that results in an infringement of privacy, unless it is warranted or the people concerned have given consent.
- 8.17 People in a state of distress should not be put under pressure to take part in a programme or provide interviews, unless it is warranted.
- 8.18 Broadcasters should take care not to reveal the identity of a person who has died or of victims of accidents or violent crimes, unless and until it is clear that the next of kin have been informed of the event or unless it is warranted.
- 8.19 Broadcasters should try to reduce the potential distress to victims and/or relatives when making or broadcasting programmes intended to examine past events that involve trauma to individuals (including crime) unless it is warranted to do otherwise. This applies to dramatic reconstructions and factual dramas, as well as factual programmes.
- In particular, so far as is reasonably practicable, surviving victims and/or the immediate families of those whose experience is to feature in a programme, should be informed of the plans for the programme and its intended broadcast, even if the events or material to be broadcast have been in the public domain in the past.

### People under sixteen and vulnerable people

- 8.20 Broadcasters should pay particular attention to the privacy of people under sixteen. They do not lose their rights to privacy because, for example, of the fame or notoriety of their parents or because of events in their schools.
- 8.21 Where a programme features an individual under sixteen or a vulnerable person in a way that infringes privacy, consent must be obtained from:
- a parent, guardian or other person of eighteen or over *in loco parentis*; and
  - wherever possible, the individual concerned;
  - unless the subject matter is trivial or uncontroversial and the participation minor, or it is warranted to proceed without consent.
- 8.22 Persons under sixteen and vulnerable people should not be questioned about private matters without the consent of a parent, guardian or other person of eighteen or over *in loco parentis* (in the case of persons under sixteen), or a person with primary responsibility for their care (in the case of a vulnerable person), unless it is warranted to proceed without consent.

#### Meaning of “vulnerable people”:

This varies, but may include those with learning difficulties, those with mental health problems, the bereaved, people with brain damage or forms of dementia, people who have been traumatised or who are sick or terminally ill.

## Section Nine: Sponsorship

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 319(2)(i) and (j) and 319(4)(e) and (f) of the Communications Act 2003, Articles 1(e), 10(1) and 17 of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

This section of the Code does not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid.

### Principle

**To ensure that the unsuitable sponsorship of programmes on radio and television is prevented, with particular reference to:**

- **transparency – to ensure sponsorship arrangements are transparent;**
- **separation – to ensure that sponsorship messages are separate from programmes and to maintain a distinction between advertising and sponsorship; and**
- **editorial independence – to ensure that the broadcaster maintains editorial control over sponsored content and that programmes are not distorted for commercial purposes.**

**In this Principle, programmes include “channels” as defined below.**

### Rules

#### **Meaning of “sponsored programme”, “sponsored channel” and “sponsor”:**

A sponsored programme, which includes an advertiser-funded programme, is a programme that has had some or all of its costs met by a sponsor with a view to promoting its own or another’s name, trademark, image, activities, services, products or any other direct or indirect interest.

A channel is a television or radio service. A sponsored channel is a channel that has had some or all of its costs met by a sponsor with a view to promoting its own or

another's name, trademark, image, activities, services, products or any other direct or indirect interest.

Costs include any part of the costs connected to the production or broadcast of the programme or channel.

A sponsor is any public or private undertaking (other than the broadcaster or programme producer), who is sponsoring the programme, programming or channel in question with a view to promoting their or another's name, trademark, image, activities, services, products or any other direct or indirect interest. This meaning extends to those who are otherwise supplying or funding the programme or channel.

### **Content that may not be sponsored**

9.1 The following may not be sponsored:

- news bulletins and news desk presentations on radio; and
- news and current affairs programmes on television.

#### **Meaning of "current affairs programme(s)":**

A current affairs programme is one that contains explanation and analysis of current events and issues, including material dealing with political or industrial controversy or with current public policy.

### **Prohibited and restricted sponsors**

- 9.2 No channel or programme may be sponsored by a sponsor that is not allowed to advertise on the relevant medium.
- 9.3 Sponsorship on radio and television must comply with both the advertising content and scheduling rules that apply to that medium.

## The content of sponsored output

- 9.4 A sponsor must not influence the content and/or scheduling of a channel or programme in such a way as to impair the responsibility and editorial independence of the broadcaster.
- 9.5 There must be no promotional reference to the sponsor, its name, trademark, image, activities, services or products or to any of its other direct or indirect interests. There must be no promotional generic references. Non-promotional references are permitted only where they are editorially justified and incidental.

### Meaning of “promotional reference”:

This includes, but is not limited to, references that encourage, or are intended to encourage, the purchase or rental of a product or service.

## Sponsorship credits

### Television and radio

- 9.6 Sponsorship must be clearly identified as such by reference to the name and/or logo of the sponsor. For programmes, credits must be broadcast at the beginning and/or end of the programme.
- 9.7 The relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored channel or programme must be transparent.

### Radio

- 9.8 During longer sponsored output, credits must be broadcast as appropriate to create the degree of transparency required.
- 9.9 Credits must be short branding statements. However, credits may contain legitimate advertising messages.

- 9.10 Credits must be cleared for broadcast in the same way as advertisements.
- 9.11 Programme trails are treated as programmes and the same sponsorship rules apply.

### Television

- 9.12 Sponsorship credits must be clearly separated from programmes by temporal or spatial means.
- 9.13 Sponsorship must be clearly separated from advertising. Sponsor credits must not contain advertising messages or calls to action. In particular, credits must not encourage the purchase or rental of the products or services of the sponsor or a third party.
- 9.14 Where a programme trail contains a reference to the sponsor of the programme, the sponsor reference must remain brief and secondary.

## Section Ten: Commercial References and Other Matters

(Relevant legislation includes, in particular, sections 319(2)(f) and (i) and 319(4)(e) and (f) of the Communications Act 2003, Articles 1(c) and (d), 10(1) and (4) and 18(3) of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, section 21(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, and paragraph 3 of the Investment Recommendation (Media) Regulations Act 2005, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.)

This section of the Code does not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid, which are regulated on these matters by the BBC Trust.

The rules in this section are subject to, and supplemented by, Ofcom's Cross-promotion Code.

### Principles

**To ensure that the independence of editorial control over programme content is maintained and that programmes are not distorted for commercial purposes.**

**To ensure that the advertising and programme elements of a service are clearly separated.**

### Rules

- 10.1 Broadcasters must maintain the independence of editorial control over programme content.
- 10.2 Broadcasters must ensure that the advertising and programme elements of a service are kept separate.

### Products or services in programmes

- 10.3 Products and services must not be promoted in programmes.  
This rule does not apply to programme-related material.  
(See Rule 10.6.)
- 10.4 No undue prominence may be given in any programme to a product or service.

**Note:**

“Undue prominence” may result from:

- the presence of, or reference to, a product or service (including company names, brand names, logos) in a programme where there is no editorial justification; or
- the manner in which a product or service (including company names, brand names, logos) appears or is referred to in a programme.

### 10.5 Product placement is prohibited.

**Meaning of “product placement”:**

Product placement is the inclusion of, or a reference to, a product or service within a programme in return for payment or other valuable consideration to the programme maker or broadcaster (or any representative or associate of either). For the purposes of this rule, the following are not considered to be product placement:

- References to products or services acquired at no, or less than full, cost, where their inclusion within the programme is justified editorially. On television, a brief, basic text acknowledgement of the provider of these products or services may be included within the end credits of the programme. This is permitted only where the identity of the product is not otherwise apparent from the programme itself.
- For television, arrangements covering the inclusion of products or services in a programme acquired from outside the UK and films made for cinema provided that no broadcaster regulated by Ofcom and involved in the broadcast of that programme or film directly benefits from the arrangement.

**Programme-related material**

10.6 Programme-related material may be promoted in programmes only where it is editorially justified.

10.7 The broadcaster must retain responsibility for all programme-related material.

- 10.8 Programme-related material may be sponsored, and the sponsor may be credited when details of how to obtain the material is given. Any credit must be brief and secondary, and must be separate from any credit for the programme sponsor.

**Meaning of “programme-related material”:**

These are products or services that are both directly derived from a specific programme and intended to allow listeners or viewers to benefit fully from, or to interact with, that programme.

**Premium rate numbers**

- 10.9 Premium rate numbers will normally be regarded as products or services, and must therefore not appear in programmes, except where:
- they form part of the editorial content of the programme; or
  - they fall within the meaning of programme-related material (see above).
- 10.10 Any use of premium rate numbers must comply with the Code of Practice issued by PhonepayPlus.

**Competitions**

- 10.11 References to brands within competitions must be brief and secondary.
- (See Rule 1.28 in Section One: Protecting the Under-Eighteens and Rule 2.11 in Section Two: Harm and Offence.)

**Use of advertisements in programmes**

- 10.12 Advertising must be clearly separated from programmes. Advertisements must not appear in programme time, unless editorially justified.

**Charity appeals**

- 10.13 Charity appeals that are broadcast free of charge are allowed in programmes provided that the broadcaster has taken reasonable steps to satisfy itself that:

- the organisation concerned can produce satisfactory evidence of charitable status, or, in the case of an emergency appeal, that a responsible public fund has been set up to deal with it; and
- the organisation concerned is not prohibited from advertising on the relevant medium.

10.14 Where possible, the broadcast of charity appeals, either individually or taken together over time, should benefit a wide range of charities.

### **Appeals for funds for programmes or services**

10.15 Broadcasters may broadcast appeals for donations to make programmes or fund their service. The audience must be told of the purpose of the donation and how much has been raised as a result of the appeal. All donations must be separately accounted for and used for the purpose for which they were donated.

### **Financial promotions and investment recommendations**

10.16 When broadcasting financial promotions and investment recommendations broadcasters must comply with the relevant provisions in Appendix 4 to this Code.

#### **Meaning of “financial promotion(s)”:**

A financial promotion is an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity (in accordance with section 21(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Restrictions on financial promotion).)

#### **Meaning of “investment recommendation(s)”:**

An investment recommendation occurs when someone directly recommends a particular investment decision, for example, buying or selling a particular share or underwriting a particular share offer.

## Virtual advertising

### Television

10.17 The use of electronic imaging systems during broadcast coverage of an event must comply with the following requirements:

- broadcasters and viewers must be informed in advance of the presence of virtual images;
- virtual advertising may only replace existing on-site advertising – virtual advertising messages must not be more visible or conspicuous than the actual advertising at the venue;
- rules relating to prohibited advertisers also apply to virtual advertising; and the broadcaster may not trade in virtual advertising.

#### Meaning of “virtual advertising”:

Virtual advertising normally (but not exclusively) takes place at events, for example, sporting events, and involves altering the broadcast signal to replace existing venue advertising with other advertising in the television picture (potentially targeted at a particular geographical audience).

## Appendix 1

### Extracts from the Communications Act 2003

#### Section 3: General duties of OFCOM

- (1) It shall be the principal duty of OFCOM, in carrying out their functions -
  - (a) to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters;  
and
  - (b) to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition.
- (2) The things which, by virtue of subsection (1), OFCOM are required to secure in the carrying out of their functions include, in particular, each of the following:
  - (e) the application, in the case of all television and radio services, of standards that provide adequate protection to members of the public from the inclusion of offensive and harmful material in such services;
  - (f) the application, in the case of all television and radio services, of standards that provide adequate protection to members of the public and all other persons from both:
    - (i) unfair treatment in programmes included in such services; and
    - (ii) unwarranted infringements of privacy resulting from activities carried on for the purposes of such services.
- (4) OFCOM must also have regard, in performing those duties, to such of the following as appear to them to be relevant in the circumstances:
  - (b) the desirability of promoting competition in relevant markets;
  - (g) the need to secure that the application in the case of television and radio services of standards falling within subsection (2)(e) and (f) is in the manner that best guarantees an appropriate level of freedom of expression;
  - (h) the vulnerability of children and of others whose circumstances appear to OFCOM to put them in need of special protection;

- (j) the desirability of preventing crime and disorder;
- (k) the opinions of consumers in relevant markets and of members of the public generally;
- (l) the different interests of persons in the different parts of the United Kingdom, of the different ethnic communities within the United Kingdom and of persons living in rural and in urban areas.

### **Section 319: OFCOM's standards code**

- (1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to set, and from time to time to review and revise, such standards for the content of programmes to be included in television and radio services as appear to them best calculated to secure the standards objectives.
- (2) The standards objectives are:
  - (a) that persons under the age of eighteen are protected;
  - (b) that material likely to encourage or to incite the commission of crime or to lead to disorder is not included in television and radio services;
  - (c) that news included in television and radio services is presented with due impartiality and that the impartiality requirements of section 320 are complied with;
  - (d) that news included in television and radio services is reported with due accuracy;
  - (e) that the proper degree of responsibility is exercised with respect to the content of programmes which are religious programmes;
  - (f) that generally accepted standards are applied to the contents of television and radio services so as to provide adequate protection for members of the public from the inclusion in such services of offensive and harmful material;
  - (g) that advertising that contravenes the prohibition on political advertising set out in section 321(2) is not included in television or radio services;

- (h) that the inclusion of advertising which may be misleading, harmful or offensive in television and radio services is prevented;
  - (i) that the international obligations of the United Kingdom with respect to advertising included in television and radio services are complied with;
  - (j) that the unsuitable sponsorship of programmes included in television and radio services is prevented;
  - (k) that there is no undue discrimination between advertisers who seek to have advertisements included in television and radio services; and
  - (l) that there is no use of techniques which exploit the possibility of conveying a message to viewers or listeners, or of otherwise influencing their minds, without their being aware, or fully aware, of what has occurred.
- (3) The standards set by OFCOM under this section must be contained in one or more codes.
- (4) In setting or revising any standards under this section, OFCOM must have regard, in particular and to such extent as appears to them to be relevant to the securing of the standards objectives, to each of the following matters:
- (a) the degree of harm or offence likely to be caused by the inclusion of any particular sort of material in programmes generally, or in programmes of a particular description;
  - (b) the likely size and composition of the potential audience for programmes included in television and radio services generally, or in television and radio services of a particular description;
  - (c) the likely expectation of the audience as to the nature of a programme's content and the extent to which the nature of a programme's content can be brought to the attention of potential members of the audience;
  - (d) the likelihood of persons who are unaware of the nature of a programme's content being unintentionally exposed, by their own actions, to that content;

- (e) the desirability of securing that the content of services identifies when there is a change affecting the nature of a service that is being watched or listened to and, in particular, a change that is relevant to the application of the standards set under this section; and
  - (f) the desirability of maintaining the independence of editorial control over programme content.
- (5) OFCOM must ensure that the standards from time to time in force under this section include:
  - (a) minimum standards applicable to all programmes included in television and radio services; and
  - (b) such other standards applicable to particular descriptions of programmes, or of television and radio services, as appear to them appropriate for securing the standards objectives.
- (6) Standards set to secure the standards objective specified in subsection (2) (e) shall, in particular, contain provision designed to secure that religious programmes do not involve:
  - (a) any improper exploitation of any susceptibilities of the audience for such a programme; or
  - (b) any abusive treatment of the religious views and beliefs of those belonging to a particular religion or religious denomination.
- (7) In setting standards under this section, OFCOM must take account of such of the international obligations of the United Kingdom as the Secretary of State may notify to them for the purposes of this section.
- (8) In this section “news” means news in whatever form it is included in a service.

## Section 320: Special impartiality requirements

- (1) The requirements of this section are:
  - (a) the exclusion, in the case of television and radio services (other than a restricted service within the meaning of section 245), from programmes included in any of those services of all expressions of the views or opinions of the person providing the service on any of the matters mentioned in subsection (2);
  - (b) the preservation, in the case of every television programme service, teletext service, national radio service and national digital sound programme service, of due impartiality, on the part of the person providing the service, as respects all of those matters;
  - (c) the prevention, in the case of every local radio service, local digital sound programme service or radio licensable content service, of the giving of undue prominence in the programmes included in the service to the views and opinions of particular persons or bodies on any of those matters.
- (2) Those matters are:
  - (a) matters of political or industrial controversy; and
  - (b) matters relating to current public policy.
- (3) Subsection (1)(a) does not require:
  - (a) the exclusion from television programmes of views or opinions relating to the provision of programme services; or
  - (b) the exclusion from radio programmes of views or opinions relating to the provision of programme services.
- (4) For the purposes of this section:
  - (a) the requirement specified in subsection (1)(b) is one that (subject to any rules under subsection (5)) may be satisfied by being satisfied in relation to a series of programmes taken as a whole;

- (b) the requirement specified in subsection (1)(c) is one that needs to be satisfied only in relation to all the programmes included in the service in question, taken as a whole.
- (5) OFCOM's standards code shall contain provision setting out the rules to be observed in connection with the following matters:
  - (a) the application of the requirement specified in subsection (1)(b);
  - (b) the determination of what, in relation to that requirement, constitutes a series of programmes for the purposes of subsection (4)(a);
  - (c) the application of the requirement in subsection (1)(c).
- (6) Any provision made for the purposes of subsection (5)(a) must, in particular, take account of the need to ensure the preservation of impartiality in relation to the following matters (taking each matter separately):
  - (a) matters of major political or industrial controversy, and
  - (b) major matters relating to current public policy, as well as of the need to ensure that the requirement specified in subsection (1)(b) is satisfied generally in relation to a series of programmes taken as a whole.
- (7) In this section "national radio service" and "local radio service" mean, respectively, a sound broadcasting service which is a national service within the meaning of section 245 and a sound broadcasting service which is a local service within the meaning of that section.

### **Section 321: Objectives for advertisements and sponsorship**

- (1) Standards set by OFCOM to secure the objectives mentioned in section 319(2) (a) and (g) to (j):
  - (a) must include general provision governing standards and practice in advertising and in the sponsoring of programmes; and
  - (b) may include provision prohibiting advertisements and forms and methods of advertising or sponsorship (whether generally or in particular circumstances).

### **Section 325: Observance of standards code**

- (1) The regulatory regime for every programme service licensed by a Broadcasting Act licence includes conditions for securing:
  - (a) that standards set under section 319 are observed in the provision of that service; and
  - (b) that procedures for the handling and resolution of complaints about the observance of those standards are established and maintained.

### **Section 326: Duty to observe fairness code**

The regulatory regime for every programme service licensed by a Broadcasting Act licence includes the conditions that OFCOM consider appropriate for securing observance:

- (a) in connection with the provision of that service, and
- (b) in relation to the programmes included in that service; of the code for the time being in force under section 107 of the 1996 Act (the fairness code).

## **Broadcasting Act 1996 (as amended)**

### **Chapter 55**

### **Unjust or unfair treatment or unwarranted infringement of privacy**

#### **Section 107**

- (1) It shall be the duty of Ofcom to draw up, and from time to time review, a code giving guidance as to principles to be observed and practices to be followed in connection with the avoidance of:
  - (a) unjust or unfair treatment in programmes to which this section applies; or
  - (b) unwarranted infringement of privacy in, or in connection with the obtaining of material included in, such programmes.

## Appendix 2

### Extracts from the Television Without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC), as amended by (97/36/EC)

For the purposes of this Directive:

- (c) “television advertising” means any form of announcement broadcast whether in return for payment or other similar consideration or broadcast for self-promotional purposes by a public or private undertaking in connection with a trade, business, craft or profession in order to promote the supply of goods or services, including immovable property, rights and obligations, in return for payment;
- (d) “surreptitious advertising” means the representation in words or pictures of goods, services, the name, the trademark or the activities of a producer of goods or a provider of services in programmes when such representation is intended by the broadcaster to serve advertising and might mislead the public as to its nature. Such representation is considered to be intentional in particular if it is done in return for payment or for similar consideration;
- (e) “sponsorship” means any contribution made by a public or private undertaking not engaged in television broadcasting activities or in the production of audio-visual works, to the financing of television programmes with a view to promoting its name, its trade mark, its image, its activities or its products.

#### Article 10

1. Television advertising and teleshopping shall be readily recognisable as such and kept quite separate from other parts of the programme service by optical and/or acoustic means.
4. Surreptitious advertising and teleshopping shall be prohibited.

#### Article 17

1. Sponsored television programmes shall meet the following requirements:

- (a) the content and scheduling of sponsored programmes may in no circumstances be influenced by the sponsor in such a way as to affect the responsibility and editorial independence of the broadcaster in respect of programmes;
  - (b) they must be clearly identified as such by the name and/or logo of the sponsor at the beginning and/or the end of the programmes;
  - (c) they must not encourage the purchase or rental of the products or services of the sponsor or a third party, in particular by making special promotional references to those products or services.
2. Television programmes may not be sponsored by undertakings whose principal activity is the manufacture or sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products.
3. Sponsorship of television programmes by undertakings whose activities include the manufacture or sale of medicinal products and medical treatment may promote the name or the image of the undertaking but may not promote specific medicinal products or medical treatments available only on prescription in the Member State within whose jurisdiction the broadcaster falls.
4. News and current affairs programmes may not be sponsored.

### **Article 18**

3. For the purposes of this Article [relating to the proportion of transmission time permitted for advertising], advertising does not include:
  - announcements made by the broadcaster in connection with its own programmes and ancillary products directly derived from those programmes;
  - public service announcements and charity appeals broadcast free of charge.

### **Article 22**

1. Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that television broadcasts by broadcasters under their jurisdiction do not include any programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral

development of minors, in particular programmes that involve pornography or gratuitous violence.

2. The measures provided for in paragraph 1 shall also extend to other programmes which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, except where it is ensured, by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure, that minors in the area of transmission will not normally hear or see such broadcasts.
3. Furthermore, when such programmes are broadcast in un-encoded form Member States shall ensure that they are preceded by an acoustic warning or are identified by the presence of a visual symbol throughout their duration.

## **Article 22a**

Member States shall ensure that broadcasts do not contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality.

## **Article 23**

1. Without prejudice to other provisions adopted by the Member States under civil, administrative or criminal law, any natural or legal person, regardless of nationality, whose legitimate interests, in particular reputation and good name, have been damaged by an assertion of incorrect facts in a television programme must have a right of reply or equivalent remedies. Member States shall ensure that the actual exercise of the right of reply or equivalent remedies is not hindered by the imposition of unreasonable terms or conditions. The reply shall be transmitted within a reasonable time subsequent to the request being substantiated and at a time and in a manner appropriate to the broadcast to which the request refers.
2. A right of reply or equivalent remedies shall exist in relation to all broadcasters under the jurisdiction of a Member State.
3. Member States shall adopt the measures needed to establish the right of reply or the equivalent remedies and shall determine the procedure to be followed for the exercise thereof. In particular, they shall ensure that a sufficient time span

is allowed and that the procedures are such that the right of reply or equivalent remedies can be exercised appropriately by natural or legal persons resident or established in other Member States.

4. An application for exercise of the right of reply or the equivalent remedies may be rejected if such a reply is not justified according to the conditions laid down in paragraph 1, would involve a punishable act, would render the broadcaster liable to civil law proceedings or would transgress standards of public decency.
5. Provision shall be made for procedures whereby disputes as to the exercise of the right of reply or the equivalent remedies can be subject to judicial review.

## Appendix 3

### European Convention on Human Rights: Articles 8, 9, 10 and 14

#### Article 8

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

#### Article 9

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

#### Article 10

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

#### **Article 14**

1. The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

## Appendix 4

### Financial Promotions and Investment Recommendations

(See Rule 10.16 in the Code.)

#### Financial Promotions

1. Section 21 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 prohibits anyone, in the course of business, from communicating an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity. This is commonly referred to as “the financial promotion restriction”. There are a number of exemptions to the financial promotion restriction and these are set out in the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005.<sup>3</sup> Two of these exemptions are of particular relevance to broadcasters: Article 20 of that Order contains an exemption in respect of communications by journalists, and Article 20A of that Order contains an exemption in respect of promotions broadcast by a company director or employee of a company. This note sets out binding guidance on how broadcasters can take advantage of the exemptions to the financial promotion restriction.

#### Meaning of “financial promotion”:

A financial promotion is an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity (in accordance with section 21(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Restrictions on financial promotion)).

#### Exemption in respect of communications by journalists (Article 20 exemption)

2. The exemption for communications by journalists applies to any non-real time financial promotion they prepare while acting as journalists. For the exemption to apply to broadcast journalists the financial promotion must be in either:

3. S.I. 2005/1529

- a regularly updated news or information service (such as a website or teletext service); or
- a television or radio broadcast or transmission,

and the main purpose of the broadcast must not be to advise on, or lead or enable people to buy or sell, securities or contractually-based investments.

3. Where the subject matter of the financial promotion is shares and the financial promotion identifies directly a person who issues or provides the shares, journalists must also fulfil a disclosure requirement to benefit from the exemption.

#### **Meaning of “share”:**

Share means any share in a company and includes a derivative on such a share (including traded options).

#### **Disclosure requirement:**

A financial interest would be subject to disclosure where the journalist (or a close family member) would be likely to get a financial benefit or avoid a financial loss if people acted in line with the financial promotion. Where that is the case, the journalist or editor responsible for the financial promotion must declare the nature of any financial interest they (or their close family member) hold.

Note: The disclosure requirement is subject to certain exceptions, set out in paragraphs 4 to 6 below.

#### **Meaning of “close family member”:**

Close family member means a spouse and children under eighteen years of age.

4. The exceptions to the disclosure requirement are where the financial promotion is in either:

- a service or broadcast which has proper systems and procedures which prevent the publication of communications without disclosure of financial interests; or
  - a service or broadcast which falls within the remit of:
    - the Code of Practice issued by the Press Complaints Commission;
    - the Ofcom Broadcasting Code; or
    - the Producer’s Guidelines issued by the BBC.
5. If a broadcaster wishes to take advantage of the Article 20 exemption for journalists, it has a choice. The broadcaster can either:
- comply with the disclosure requirement; or
  - put in place proper systems and procedures which prevent the broadcast of financial promotions without disclosure of financial interests.
6. The Financial Services Authority (the “FSA”) suggests that the second option in paragraph 5 above could be achieved by, for example, the broadcaster requiring people working on financial programmes to declare and register their share ownership. This register would be available to the most senior editorial staff who can ensure that self-interested promotions are not broadcast by the person concerned. The FSA would also expect relevant staff to be required to be made aware of the existence of this register and of their obligations to disclose financial interests, and to confirm their acceptance of these obligations in writing.

### **Promotion broadcast by company director etc (Article 20A exemption)**

7. The main purpose of the exemption for promotions broadcast by company directors is to guard against the possibility that, during the course of a broadcast interview or a live website presentation, a financial promotion is made inadvertently by a director or employee of a company or other business undertaking when that person is not acting as a journalist.

8. Provided that the financial promotion made is not made as part of an organised marketing campaign, the exemption applies where the financial promotion:
- comprises words which are spoken by the director or employee and not broadcast, transmitted or displayed in writing; or
  - is displayed in writing only because it is part of an interactive dialogue to which the director or employee is a party and in the course of which that person is expected to respond immediately to questions put by a recipient of the communication.

The exemption also requires that the director or employee is identified as such in the financial promotion before it is communicated.

### **Investment recommendations**

9. The Investment Recommendation (Media) Regulations came into force on 1 July 2005. They impose standards on those who are, through the media, producing investment recommendations or disseminating investment recommendations produced by a third party. The standards require that the information is fairly presented, and there is disclosure of significant interests in an investment someone is recommending or of any conflicts of interest. If someone is regulated by the FSA because of their activity in producing investment recommendations or disseminating investment recommendations produced by a third party, they will be subject instead to rules of the FSA.

#### **Meaning of “investment recommendation”:**

An investment recommendation occurs when someone directly recommends a particular investment decision, for example buying or selling a particular share or underwriting a particular share offer.

10. There are exemptions from the Regulations for those producing or disseminating regulations in the media where self-regulation is in place, including where the Ofcom Broadcasting Code applies.
11. The Regulations are interpreted by Ofcom to apply to its licensees and S4C as follows. Where people working on programmes make an investment recommendation themselves, the broadcaster must ensure that:
  - the identity of the person making the recommendation is clear;
  - the investment recommendation is presented fairly; and
  - any financial interest that may reasonably be expected to impair the objectivity of that recommendation is disclosed.

#### Meaning of “presented fairly”:

This means that reasonable care should be taken that:

- facts are distinguished from non-factual information (for example opinions and estimates);
- where there is doubt whether a source is reliable this is indicated; and
- all projections, forecasts and price targets are described as such.

12. Where people working on programmes disseminate an investment recommendation made by a third party the broadcaster must ensure:
  - the identity of the company making the programme is clear; and
  - where a summary of a recommendation is produced, it is clear and not misleading and a reference is made to the producer of the recommendation.
13. In addition, where people working on programmes either recommend an investment recommendation or disseminate a recommendation made by a third party, the broadcaster must ensure that a clear reference is made during the programme to the fact that it is regulated by the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. This requirement would be fulfilled, for example, by including such a reference in the credits at the end of the programme.

**Meaning of “people working on programmes”:**

This means people employed by the broadcaster or working for or as an independent producer who makes a programme for the broadcaster.

**Note:**

Where a television or radio programme features someone regulated by the FSA who makes an investment recommendation, that person’s compliance with the FSA rules is the responsibility of that person and not the broadcaster. If a person working on a programme interviews someone who is not regulated by the FSA who makes an investment recommendation, responsibility again lies with the interviewee not the broadcaster to ensure his/her compliance with the Regulations.

# The Ofcom Broadcasting Code Index

## References are to the section and rule numbers.

- accident reporting**, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18, 8.19, Foreword to Section 8
- accuracy**,
  - in news programmes, 5.1, 5.2, Appendix 1
- adult content**,
  - and the watershed, 1.6
- adult programmes and films**, 1.21, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25
- advertising**,
  - misleading, Appendix 1
  - political, Appendix 1
  - separation from programmes, 10.2, 10.12, Appendix 2
  - separation from sponsorship, 9.13
  - standards, Appendix 1, Appendix 2
  - virtual advertising, 10.17
- age**,
  - discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
- alcohol abuse**,
  - portrayal of, 1.10
- ambulances**,
  - consents for filming and broadcast, 8.8
- announcements**,
  - personal view programmes, 5.10
  - programme content information, 1.7, 2.3, 2.13, Appendix 2
- antisocial behaviour**,
  - portrayal of, 2.4
- appeals**,
  - broadcasters, 10.15
  - charity, 10.13, 10.14
  - disasters and emergencies, 10.13
- “appropriate scheduling”**,
  - meaning of, 1.3
- archive footage**,
  - use of, 7.8, 8.10
- authored programmes**,
  - meaning of, 5.10
- BBC**, *see* British Broadcasting Corporation
- BBFC**, *see* British Board of Film Classification
- balance**, *see* impartiality
- beliefs, religious**
  - discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
  - freedom of, Appendix 3
  - respect for, 4.2
- bereavement and the right to privacy**, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18, 8.19, 8.22
- brand names**,
  - references to, 10.3, 10.4, 10.11

**breakfast-time programmes,**  
1.3, 1.5

**brief duration images,** 2.12,  
Appendix 1

**British Board of Film Classification**  
(BBFC), 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.25

**British Broadcasting Corporation,**  
BBC Trust, 5, 6, 10  
non-application of the Broadcasting  
Code to BBC services, 5, 6, 9, 10  
Producer's Guidelines, Appendix 4

**broadcasters,**  
and elections and referendums,  
6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.10  
appeals for funds to make  
programmes, 10.15  
compliance with the Code,  
Appendix 1  
editorial control and independence,  
9.4, 10.1, Appendix 1  
observance of the watershed,  
1.4, 1.6, 1.7  
protection of under-eighteens, 1.2  
regard to times that children are  
particularly likely to be listening,  
1.3, 1.5  
responsibilities in reporting sex cases  
involving the under-eighteens, 1.8,  
1.9  
views and opinions on political,  
industrial and public policy  
matters, 5.4, 5.5

**Broadcasting Act 1996,**  
7, 8, Appendix 1

**candidates in elections,**  
appearances in programmes,  
6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13  
meaning of, 6.2

**charities,**  
appeals, 10.13, 10.14, Appendix 2

**children,**  
and alcohol abuse, 1.10  
and appropriate scheduling,  
1.3, 1.4, 1.5  
and demonstrations of exorcism,  
occult practices and the  
paranormal, 1.19  
and drug abuse, 1.10  
and films on television,  
1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23  
and information about programme  
content, 1.7  
and offensive language in  
programmes, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16  
and portrayal of sexual behaviour,  
1.17, Appendix 2  
and premium subscription or  
pay per view services, 1.4, 1.21,  
1.22, 1.23, 1.24  
and radio listening, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10,  
1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.16, 1.17,  
1.19, 4.7  
and religious programmes, 4.7  
and smoking, 1.10  
and the watershed, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10,

1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.16, 1.17,  
1.18, 1.19, 4.7  
and violence in programmes,  
1.11, 1.12, 2.4, Appendix 2  
identification in court cases, 1.8, 1.9  
imitation of dangerous behaviour,  
1.13, 2.4  
interviewing of, 7.4, 8.22  
meaning of, 1.3  
participating in programmes,  
1.26, 1.27, 1.28  
privacy, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22  
prizes in children's programmes, 1.28  
protection by "appropriate  
scheduling", 1.3, 1.4, 1.5  
reports of court proceedings, 1.8, 1.9

**cinema films**, *see* films

**Communications Act 2003**,

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
Appendix 1 *passim*

**community radio stations**, 5.13

**competitions**,  
1.28, 2.11, 10.11

**complaints**,  
8, Appendix 1

**concealed recording and filming**,  
7.14, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15

**confidentiality of contributors**, 7.7

**consents for broadcast**,  
7.14, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.12, 8.15

**consents for filming**, 1.26, 7.3, 7.4,  
7.5, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 8.21, 8.22

**Conservative Party**, 6.2

**constituency reports**, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10,  
6.11, 6.12, 6.13

**"context"**,  
justification of, 1.7, 1.16, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5  
meaning of, 2.3

**contributors**,  
confidentiality, 7.7  
consents, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5  
contractual rights, 7.3  
criminals as, 3.3  
fairness to, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6,  
7.7, 7.8  
under-eighteens, 1.26, 1.27  
under-sixteens, 7.4, 7.5, 8.21

**court proceedings coverage**,  
1.8, 1.9, 3.4, 3.5

**crime**,  
incitement to, 3.1, Appendix 1  
prevention, Appendix 1, Appendix 3  
reporting, 1.8, 1.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 8.16,  
8.18, 8.19

**criminal techniques**,  
demonstration of, 3.2

**criminals**,  
interviews with, 3.3

**current affairs programmes,**

- impartiality in, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13
- meaning of, 9.1
- politicians in, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13
- sponsorship prohibited, 9.1, Appendix 2

**dangerous behaviour,**

- portrayal of, 1.13

**dementia, people with,**

- rights to privacy, 8.22

**Democratic Unionist Party, 6.2****demonstrations,**

- of criminal techniques, 3.2
- of exorcism, occult and paranormal practices, 1.19, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8
- of hypnotism, 2.9

**disability,**

- discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3

**disasters,**

- appeals, 10.13
- reporting, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18, 8.19
- Foreword to 8

**disclosure of financial interests,**

- Appendix 4

**discussion programmes,**

- elections and referendums, 6.1, 6.2,

- 6.3, 6.4, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12
- impartiality of chairs, 5.9

**disorder,**

- incitement to, 3.1, Appendix 1
- prevention, Appendix 1, Appendix 3

**distress and suffering,**

- and right to privacy, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18
- and under-eighteens, 1.27
- in past events, 8.19
- portrayal of, 2.3

**divination,**

- demonstrations of, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8

**documentary programmes,**

- demonstration of criminal techniques, 3.2
- impartiality, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13
- use of reconstructions, 7.9, 7.10, 8.19
- use of simulated news, 2.10

**donations,**

- to charity appeals, 10.13, 10.14
- to make programmes, 10.15

**doorstepping interviews,**

- 8.11, 8.15

**drama,**

- dramatised reconstructions, 7.9, 7.10, 8.19
- exorcism and paranormal in, 1.19, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8
- fairness, 7.10

portrayal of dangerous behaviour,

1.13, 2.4

portrayal of sex and nudity, 1.17, 1.18,  
2.3

portrayal of violence, 1.11, 1.12,

use of offensive language, 1.14, 1.15,  
1.16, 2.3

use of simulated news, 2.10

**drama-documentaries**, 2.2, 7.10, 8.19

**dramatised reconstructions**,

7.9, 8.19

**drinking in programmes**

(alcohol abuse), 1.10, 2.4

**drug abuse in programmes**, 1.10, 2.4

**“due impartiality”**,

meaning of, 5

*see also* impartiality

**editing**,

fair representation, 7.6

**editorial control and independence**,

9.4, 10.1, Appendix 1

**elections and referendums**, 6 *passim*

and party election broadcasts, 6

and party political broadcasts, 6

constituency reports, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10,

6.11, 6.12, 6.13

coverage, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4

designated “major parties”, 6.2

designated organisations, 6.3

discussion and analysis programmes,

6.4, 6.11

Electoral Commission, 6.3

European Parliament, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13

local government, 6.1, 6.2, 6.8,

London Assembly, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13

meaning of election and referendum,  
6.1

Northern Ireland Assembly, 6.1, 6.2,  
6.13

opinion poll results, 6.5

programme appearances by

candidates, 6.2, 6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 6.10,

6.11, 6.12, 6.13

Scottish Parliament, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13

Welsh Assembly, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13

**electoral area**,

meaning of, 6.8

**emergencies**,

appeals, 10.13

reporting, 8, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18

**entertainment programmes**,

portrayal of paranormal activity,

1.19, 2.7, 2.8

use of doorstepping interviews, 8.15

**epilepsy**,

precautions for viewers with, 2.13

**ethnic minorities**,

discriminatory treatment on grounds

of race, 2.3, Appendix 1

**European Broadcasting Directive,**

*see* Television Without Frontiers  
Directive

**European Convention on Human**

**Rights,** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,  
Appendix 3

**European Parliament,** 6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13**European Union,**

broadcasting in, Appendix 2

**exorcism,**

demonstrations of, 1.19, 2.6, 2.7,  
2.8, 4.7

**expression, freedom of,**

Appendix 1, Appendix 3

**FSA,** *see* Financial Services Authority**factual matters,**

portrayal of, 2.2

**factual programmes,**

contributors to,  
1.26, 1.27, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9,  
7.10, 7.12, 7.14, 8.21, 8.22  
coverage of dangerous behaviour,  
1.13, 2.4  
coverage of sex and nudity, 1.17, 1.18  
coverage of sexual offences, 1.8, 1.9  
coverage of violence, 1.11, 1.12, 2.4  
demonstration of exorcism and  
paranormal, 1.19, 2.6, 2.8  
discussion programmes, *see*  
discussion programmes

doorstepping for, 8.11, 8.15

fair treatment, 7 *passim*

impartiality, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4,  
5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11,  
5.12, 5.13

misleading, 2.2

news, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7,  
5.8, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13

offensive language in, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16,  
2.3

personal view programmes, 5.9, 5.10

surreptitious filming and recording,  
7.14, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15

**fairness,** 7 *passim*, Appendix 1

avoidance of unfair or unjust  
treatment, 7.1

complaints about, Appendix 1

in competitions, 2.11,

in conduct of interviews, 7.3

in drama and drama-documentary,  
7.10

in editing, 7.6

in factual programming, 7.9, 7.10

in reusing material, 7.8, 8.10

in revisiting past events, 7.9, 8.10

material obtained through deception,  
7.14

opportunity for response, 7.11

to contributors, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6,  
7.7

to views of non-participants, 7.12,  
7.13

**filming and recording,**

- consents for, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.12, 8.16, 8.21, 8.22
- doorstepping, 8.11, 8.15
- in institutions, 8.8
- in public places, 8.4, 8.11
- infringement of privacy, 8, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7
- obtaining material, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17
- recorded telephone calls, 7.14, 8.12, 8.13
- suffering and distress, 1.27, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18, 8.19
- surreptitious. 7.14, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15
- under-eighteens, 1.26, 1.27, 1.28, 8.21, 8.22

**films (cinema and video)**

- classification,** 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.25
- 15-rated, 1.22
- 18-rated, 1.21, 1.23, 1.25
- on pay per view services, 1.21, 1.23, 1.24
- on premium subscription services, 1.22, 1.24
- PG-rated, 1.22
- R18-rated, 1.25
- U-rated, 1.22

**financial promotions,**

- 10.16, Appendix 4

**Financial Services and Markets Act 2000,** 10, 10.16, Appendix 4**Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2001,** Appendix 4**Financial Services Authority (FSA),** Appendix 4**flashing lights and patterns,** 2.13**freedom,**

- of expression, Appendix 1, Appendix 3
- of thought and religious belief, Appendix 3

**fund-raising programmes,**

- 10.13, 10.14, 10.15

**games shows,** 2.11, 10.11**gender,**

- discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 2.3

**harm and offence,** 2 *passim*, Appendix 1**harmful material,**

- protection from, 2.1, Appendix 1

**hidden microphones and cameras,**

- 7.14, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15

**hijacking reports,** 3.6

**hospitals,**

consents for filming in, 8.8

**hypnotism, 2.9****identification of young victims or witnesses in court cases, 1.8, 1.9****ill people,**

rights to privacy, 8.22

**impartiality, 5 *passim*, Appendix 1**

in current affairs and documentaries,  
5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10,  
5.11, 5.12, 5.13

in discussion programmes, 5.4, 5.5,  
5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12,  
6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11

in election programmes, 6 *passim*

in news programmes, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4,  
5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.11, 5.12,  
6.4, Appendix 1

in ‘personal view’ programmes,  
5.9, 5.10

in series of programmes, 5.5, 5.6,  
5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12

in single programmes, 5.5, 5.11  
meaning of “due impartiality”, 5  
of chairs of discussion programmes,  
5.9

undue prominence of views and  
opinions, 5.4, 5.13

**incest,**

use of term, 1.8

**incitement,**

to crime and disorder, 3.1,

Appendix 1

to racial hatred, Appendix 2

**industrial controversy,**

due impartiality on 5.4, 5.5, 5.9,

5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 6.1, Appendix 1

meaning of, 5.4, 5.11

undue prominence of views and  
opinions on 5.13

**information about content for children, 1.7****information announcements,**

1.7, 2.3, 2.13, Appendix 2

**interviewees,**

rights of, 1.26, 1.27, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6,  
7.7, 8.22

**interviewers,**

impartiality of, 5.8, 5.9

politicians used as, 5.3, 6.6

**interviews,**

conduct of, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.12,  
8.11

consents for, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.14, 8.4,  
8.11, 8.12, 8.21, 8.22

doorstepping, 8.11, 8.15

editing of, 7.6

in institutions, 8.8

re-use of recorded material, 7.8, 8.10

surreptitious filming or recording of,  
7.14, 8.13, 8.15

telephone, 8.12  
 use of hidden cameras and  
   microphones, 7.14, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15  
 with children and young people  
   under sixteen, 1.26, 1.27, 7.4, 7.5,  
   8.20, 8.21, 8.22  
 with criminals, 3.3  
 with people in distress, 8.17  
 with victims of accidents or crime,  
   8.16, 8.17, 8.19  
 with witnesses in court cases, 3.4, 3.5

**investigative reporting**, 8.9, 8.11,  
 8.12, 8.13, 8.14

**Investment Recommendation  
 (Media) Regulations Act 2005**,  
 10, Appendix 4

**investment recommendations**,  
 10.16, Appendix 4

**kidnapping reports**, 3.6

**Labour Party**, 6.2

**language, offensive**,  
 and children, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3

**Liberal Democrat Party**, 6.2

**licensees (Ofcom)**, *see* broadcasters  
 (except BBC and S4C)

**local digital sound services**, 5.13,  
 Appendix 1

**local government**,  
 election coverage, 6 *passim*

**local radio services**, 5.13, Appendix 1

**London Assembly elections**, 6.1, 6.2,  
 6.13

**MPs**, *see* politicians

**medicines**,  
 sponsorship, Appendix 2

**mentally ill**,  
 rights to privacy, 8.22

**mind influencing techniques**,  
 2.9, 2.12, Appendix 1

**minorities**,  
 interests of, Appendix 1

**minors**, *see* under-eighteens

**misleading representation of  
 factual matters**, 2.2

**misrepresentation of views and  
 opinions**, 5.7, 5.12

**national digital sound services**, 5.5,  
 Appendix 1

**national radio services**, 5.5,  
 Appendix 1

**news programmes**,  
 accuracy, 5.1, 5.2, Appendix 1  
 and impartiality, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5,  
   5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12,  
   Appendix 1  
 appearances by politicians, 5.3, 6.6  
 corrections to mistakes, 5.2

- prohibited from sponsorship, 9.1
- right of reply, 7.11, Appendix 2
- simulated news bulletins, 2.10
- newsreaders,**
  - politicians as, 5.3, 6.6
- Northern Ireland,**
  - Assembly elections, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13
  - referendums, 6.3
- Northern Ireland Act 1998,** 6.3
- nudity in programmes,** 1.18
- occult practices,**
  - demonstrations of, 1.19, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8
- Ofcom,**
  - Broadcasting Code, Appendix 1, Appendix 4
  - complaints on infringement of
    - privacy, Foreword to Section 8
  - cross-promotion code, 10
  - general duties, Appendix 1
  - Rules on Party Political and Referendum Broadcasts,* 6
- offence,** 2 *passim*, 2.1, 2.3, Appendix 1
- offensive language,** 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
- offensive material,**
  - protection from, 2.1, Appendix 1
- old people,**
  - discriminatory treatment, 2.3
- opinion polls,** 6.5
- opinions,**
  - of broadcasters and service providers, 5.4, Appendix 1
  - of presenters and reporters, 5.9
- paranormal demonstrations,**
  - 1.19, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8
- party election broadcasts,** 6
- party political broadcasts,** 6
- payments,**
  - to criminals, 3.3
  - to witnesses, 3.4
- pay per view services,** 1.4, 1.21, 1.23, 1.24
- personal view programmes,**
  - and impartiality, 5.9, 5.10
  - meaning of, 5.10
- PhonepayPlus,** 10.10
- phone-ins,** 5.9, 5.10, 8.6
- photosensitive epilepsy,**
  - precautions for viewers with, 2.13
- Plaid Cymru,** 6.2
- police stations,**
  - filming in, 8.8
- political advertising,** Appendix 1
- political controversy,**
  - and due impartiality, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 6.1
  - Appendix 1

and undue prominence, 5.13  
 meaning of, 5.3, 5.11

**political parties,**  
 meaning of, 6.2

**Political Parties, Elections and  
 Referendums Act 2000,**  
 6, 6.1

**politicians,**  
 as newsreaders, interviewers or  
 presenters, 5.3, 6.6  
 in election programmes, 6.2, 6.3,  
 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13  
 in non-political programmes, 6.7

**premium rate number services,**  
 10.9, 10.10

**premium subscription film  
 services,** 1.4, 1.22, 1.24

**presenters,**  
 declaration of personal interest, 5.8  
 expression of own views, 5.9  
 politicians as, 5.3, 6.6

**prisons,**  
 consents for filming, 8.8

**privacy, *right to, 8 passim*, Appendix 3**  
 complaints of infringement, 8  
 consents, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.16,  
 8.21, 8.22  
 disclosure of person's homes or  
 addresses, 8.2  
 doorstep filming, 8.11, 8.15

for under-sixteens, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22  
 in public places, 8.4, 8.11  
 of people in the news, 8.3  
 suffering and distress, 8.16, 8.17, 8.19  
 “warranted” infringement, 8.1  
 re-use of material, 8.10

**prizes,**  
 in competitions, 2.11, 10.11  
 in children's programmes, 1.28

**products and services,**  
 in competitions, 10.11  
 placement, 10.5  
 references to brand names,  
 10.3, 10.4, 10.11

**profanity,** 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3, 4.2

**programme-related materials,**  
 10.3, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9  
 meaning of, 10.8  
 sponsorship, 10.8

**programme series,**  
 meaning of, 5.6, 5.5, Appendix 1

**programme sponsorship,**  
*see sponsorship*

**programme trails,** 9.11, 9.14

**promotions,**  
 financial, 10.16, Appendix 4  
 in sponsored programming, 9.5  
 of commercial products and services,  
 10.3, 10.4  
 of religious views and beliefs, 4.4, 4.5

- psychiatric patients,**
  - rights to privacy, 8.22
- psychic practices,** 1.19, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8
- public interest,** 3.3, 3.5, 7.3, 7.14, 8.1, 8.13
- public places,**
  - filming in, 8.4, 8.11
- public policy,**
  - impartiality on, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13
  - undue prominence to views and opinions on, 5.13, Appendix 1
- publications related to programmes,**
  - promotion of, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8
- race**
  - discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
- radio services,** Appendix 1
  - and child listeners, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.16, 1.17, 1.19, 4.7
  - charity appeals, 10.13, 10.14,
  - funds for programmes, 10.15
  - sponsorship, 9 *passim*
- radio licensable content service,**
  - Appendix 1
- rape,**
  - coverage of, 1.8, 2.3
- reconstructions,** 7.9, 8.19
- recorded material,**
  - re-use of, 7.8, 8.10
- recruiting for religion,** 4.5
- referendums,** 6 *passim*
  - meaning of, 6.1
  - opinion polls, 6.5
  - period of, 6.3
- religion,** 4 *passim*
  - discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
- religious beliefs,** 4 *passim*
  - freedom of, Appendix 3
  - promotion of, 4.4
  - recruitment to, 4.5
  - respect for, 4.2
- religious programmes,** 2.8, 4 *passim*, Appendix 1
  - abusive treatment, 4.2
  - and children, 4.7
  - exploiting audience susceptibilities, 4.6
  - identification of religion or denomination, 4.3
  - meaning of, 4.1
  - promotion of religious beliefs, 4.4
  - seeking recruits, 4.5
- reply, right of,** 7.11, Appendix 2
- reporters,**
  - declaration of personal interests, 5.8

- expression of own views and
  - opinions, 5.9
  - politicians as, 5.3, 6.6
- reporting court cases**, 1.8, 1.9, 3.4, 3.5
- Representation of the People Act 1983**, 6, 6.2, 6.8
- right of reply**, 7.11, Appendix 2
- S4C**, *see* Sianel Pedwar Cymru
- scheduling**,
  - and children 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, Appendix 2
  - meaning of “appropriate” scheduling, 1.3
- school holidays**,
  - scheduling to take account of, 1.3
- schools**,
  - consents for filming in, 8.8
- Scotland**,
  - Parliament elections, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13
- Scottish National Party**, 6.2
- set-up situations**, 7.14, 8.15
- sex cases in court**,
  - identification of under-eighteens, 1.8, 1.9
- sexual behaviour**,
  - portrayal of, 1.17
  - violent, 2.3
- sexual orientation**,
  - discriminatory treatment or language on grounds of, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 2.3
- Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C)**,
  - Appendix 4
  - Election and Referendum Code of Practice, 6.8
- simulated news bulletins**, 2.10
- Sinn Fein**, 6.2
- smoking in programmes**, 1.10
- Social Democratic and Labour Party**, 6.2
- solvent abuse in programmes**, 1.10
- sponsored channel**, meaning of, 9
- sponsorship**, 9 *passim*, Appendix 1
  - content of, 9.4, 9.5
  - credits, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14
  - non-sponsorable programmes, 9.1, Appendix 2
  - of programmes, 9.1, 9.4, 9.5
  - of programme-related materials, 10.8
  - of radio programmes, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.11
  - of television programmes, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14
  - prohibited or restricted sponsors, 9.2, 9.3, Appendix 2

separation from advertising, 9.13  
trails, 9.11, 9.14

**standards in broadcasting**, 2.1, 2.3,  
Appendix 1

**subliminal images on television**,  
2.12, Appendix 1

**subscription channels**,  
*see* premium subscription services

**suffering and distress**,  
and rights to privacy, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18  
in past events, 8.19

**suicide**,  
portrayal of, 1.13, 2.5

**surreptitious filming and  
recording**, 7.14, 8.12, 8.13,  
8.14, 8.15

**swearing in programmes**, 1.14, 1.15,  
1.16, 2.3

**systems to protect under-eighteens**,  
1.22, 1.23, 1.24

**telephone interviews**,  
recording of, 7.14, 8.12

**teletext services**, 5.5, Appendix 1

**television services**, Appendix 1  
advertising, 10.17, Appendix 2  
and children, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7,  
1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15,  
1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.28, 7.4,

7.5, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22  
and under-eighteens, 1.2, 1.8,  
1.9, 1.26, 1.27, 1.28, 7.4, 7.5,  
8.20, 8.21, 8.22  
charity appeals, 10.13, 10.14  
due impartiality, 5 *passim*,  
Appendix 1  
films on, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23,  
1.24, 1.25  
funds for programmes, 10.15  
observance of the watershed, 1.4, 1.6,  
1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.16,  
1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.21  
sponsorship, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5,  
9.6, 9.7, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14  
viewers with photosensitive epilepsy,  
2.13

**Television Without Frontiers  
Directive**, 1, 1.2, 3, 7, 9, 10,  
Appendix 2

**terrorism**,  
coverage of, 3.1, 3.6, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18,  
8.19

**trails**, 9.11, 9.14

**trials**, reporting of, 1.8, 1.9, 3.4, 3.5

**Ulster Unionist Party**, 6.2

**Under-eighteens**  
and alcohol, drugs and solvent abuse,  
and smoking 1.10  
and identification in court cases,  
1.8, 1.9

protection of, 1.1, 1.2, Appendix 1,  
Appendix 2  
taking part in programmes,  
1.26, 1.27

**Under-fifteens,** *see* children

**Under-sixteens,**  
as contributors to programmes,  
7.4, 7.5  
rights to privacy, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22

**undue prominence,**  
to products and services in  
programmes, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5  
of views and opinions on matters of  
political or industrial controversy,  
5.13, Appendix 1

**victims of crime, disasters or  
accidents,**  
interviews with, 8.17  
reporting, 1.8, 1.9, 8.16, 8.18, 8.19

**violence and dangerous behaviour,**  
and children, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 2.4,  
Appendix 2  
and the watershed, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13  
effects of, 1.11, 2.4  
portrayal of, 2.3, 2.4, Appendix 1

**virtual advertising,** 10.17

**vulnerable people,**  
interviews with, 7.5, 8.21, 8.22  
meaning of, 8.22  
rights to privacy, 8.20

**Wales,**  
Assembly elections, 6.1, 6.2, 6.13

**warning announcements,** 2.3, 2.13,  
Appendix 2

**“watershed,”**  
and exorcism and paranormal  
demonstrations, 1.19  
and films, 1.21  
and offensive language, 1.14, 1.16  
and portrayal of sex and nudity, 1.17,  
1.18  
and violence and dangerous  
behaviour, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13  
information for pre-watershed  
content, 1.7  
meaning of, 1.4  
observance by television broadcasters,  
1.4  
transition to adult material, 1.6

**Welsh Assembly elections,** 6.1, 6.2,  
6.13

**wind-up calls,** 7.14, 8.15

**witnesses in court cases,** 1.8, 1.9,  
3.4, 3.5

**young people,** *see* under-eighteens

# Cross-promotion Code

Effective from 10 July 2006

**Publication date: 10 July 2006**

## Contents

- 1: Introduction
- 2: Legislative  
background to  
the Code
- 3: Principles
- 4: Rules
- 5: Guidance
- 6: General guidance  
on the  
Cross-promotion  
Code

## Introduction

- 1.1 Subject to this Cross-promotion Code ('the Code'), television broadcasters are able to promote programmes, channels and other broadcasting-related services without such promotions being considered advertising and included in the calculation of advertising minutage.
- 1.2 The amount of advertising that may be broadcast on a television channel is restricted by the Rules on Amount and Distribution of Advertising ('RADA')<sup>1</sup>. RADA imposes a maximum on the amount of advertising that can be shown in a given hour and over any one day. For the purposes of RADA, the term 'advertising' is used to refer to any form of promotional announcement broadcast in return for payment or similar consideration.
- 1.3 The Code replaces the rules regulating the promotion of programmes, channels and related services on commercial television issued by the ITC in January 2002 and takes effect from 10 July 2006.
- 1.4 The Code applies to television services regulated by Ofcom. However, it does not apply to BBC services funded by the licence fee or grant in aid. All references to 'licensees' should be interpreted accordingly.
- 1.5 The Code applies to promotions outside programmes only.
- 1.6 Within programmes, references to all products and services, including broadcasting-related services, are subject to the rules in Section 10 (Commercial References) of the Broadcasting Code.
- 1.7 The Ofcom Broadcasting Code applies in the usual way to the content of promotions outside programmes, unless otherwise stated in the guidance on Section 10 of the Broadcasting Code.

<sup>1</sup> The Rules on Amount and Distribution of Advertising are available at: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/advertising/?a=87101>

## **Legislative background to the Code**

- 2.1 Under Ofcom's powers to issue broadcasting licences under the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996, broadcasting licences may contain such conditions as Ofcom considers appropriate having regard to the duties imposed on Ofcom under the Broadcasting Acts and Communications Act 2003. Under the Communications Act 2003 Ofcom also has the power to approve codes for the purposes of a provision contained in a licence.
- 2.2 Under section 316 of the Communications Act 2003 Ofcom has the power to include conditions which Ofcom considers appropriate for ensuring fair and effective competition. All television broadcasting licences currently contain a fair and effective competition licence condition. This condition requires licensees to comply with any code or guidance approved by Ofcom for the purpose of ensuring fair and effective competition.
- 2.3 Section 319 of the Communications Act 2003 imposes a duty on Ofcom to set standards to secure, amongst other things, that the international obligations of the United Kingdom with respect to advertising in television services are complied with. These international obligations include those contained in the Television without Frontiers Directive, EC Directive 89/552/EEC, as amended by EC Directive 97/36/EC.
- 2.4 Broadcasters should bear in mind the legislative background that has informed the rules, the principles that apply to each section, the meanings given by Ofcom and the guidance issued by Ofcom, in this Code and in the Broadcasting Code, all of which may be relevant in interpreting and applying the Code.

## Principles

3.1 There are two key principles which the Rules contained in Section 4 of the Code are designed to reflect:

- i) ensuring that cross-promotions on television are distinct from advertising and inform viewers of services that are likely to be of interest to them as viewers; and
- ii) ensuring that promotions on television outside programmes do not prejudice fair and effective competition (and, in particular, ensuring that, as television broadcasting in the United Kingdom switches from analogue to digital transmission, consumers are made aware of the various platforms and digital retail TV services through which they can receive broadcasting services and that this is done in such a way that will avoid the distortion of fair and effective competition).

## Rules

### Meanings

#### **‘Broadcasting-related Services’:**

include all broadcasting activities licensable by Ofcom, for example television and radio services. They also include other services with a ‘broadcasting feel’, that is, services which deliver content similar to that delivered on a television or radio service. In addition, a website that provides content clearly and directly related to a Broadcasting-related Service may itself be a Broadcasting-related Service.

#### **‘Cross-promotions’:**

are promotions, on a channel, of programmes and Broadcasting-related Services, that are not Self-promotions.

#### **‘Licensees’:**

are the companies and legal entities which hold a broadcasting licence granted by Ofcom pursuant to the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as amended by the Broadcasting Act 1996 and the Communications Act 2003).

**‘Promotions’:**

are Self-promotions and Cross-promotions.

**‘Self-promotions’:**

are promotions on a channel for that same channel and/or for programmes broadcast on that channel.

**Broadcasting-related services**

- 1.1 All licensees and S4C shall ensure that Cross-promotions are limited to Broadcasting-related Services.

**Platform and retail TV service neutrality**

- 2.1 The following rule shall apply to the analogue services of Channel 3, Channel 4 and Channel 5 licensees (‘the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters’).
- 2.2 The Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters shall ensure that Promotions to analogue households for Broadcasting-related Services that mention a digital retail television service and/or digital television broadcasting platform treat all major digital retail television services and/or digital platforms in an equal and impartial manner. In particular:
  - (a) promotions that refer to a digital retail television service, such as Freeview or Sky, must also name all other digital retail television services on which the Broadcasting-related Service is available;
  - (b) promotions that refer to a particular digital platform, such as digital terrestrial television (‘DTT’) or cable, must refer to all other digital platforms on which the Broadcasting-related Service is available. Generic promotions for digital television are permitted if they do not specifically mention any particular platform; and
  - (c) promotions must treat digital retail television services and/or digital platforms equally in respect of all aspects mentioned, such as pricing, brand names, availability and packages.

## Guidance

- 5.1 This guidance is non-binding and will be reviewed from time to time to reflect Ofcom's experiences with individual cases. It is provided to assist licensees in interpreting and applying the Code. Every complaint or case will be dealt with on a case by case basis according to the individual facts of the case.

### Broadcasting-related services

- 5.2 Ofcom does not wish to be prescriptive in defining the term 'Broadcasting-related Services'. Depending on the individual facts, it may include a service whereby audiovisual content is delivered over a mobile or broadband platform, and video-on-demand. It is distinct from 'programme-related material', which is defined in Section 10 of the Broadcasting Code.

### Cross-promotion relationships

- 5.3 Certain relationships between broadcasters (which are based on shareholdings or voting power) create a rebuttable presumption that there are sufficient incentives for the promoting channel to provide another channel or broadcasting-related service with free airtime without the need for additional consideration. In these specific circumstances Ofcom would not, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, consider these Cross-promotions to be advertising. However, if Ofcom believes that payment or some other consideration has passed or is passing between the parties, these types of arrangements could be investigated under the advertising minutage rules and may be counted as advertising minutage.
- 5.4 The relevant relationships that create this presumption of sufficient incentives are as follows:
- (i) the Licence Holder for the promoting channel has a shareholding of 30% or more (or voting power of 30% or more) in the Licence Holder for the promoted channel;

- (ii) the Licence Holder for the promoted channel has a shareholding of 30% or more (or voting power of 30% or more) in the Licence Holder for the promoting channel; or<sup>2</sup>
- (iii) the Actual Licence Holder for the promoted channel and promoting channel are the same.

5.5 For the purposes the relevant relationships outlined in paragraph 5.4<sup>3</sup>:

**‘Actual Licence Holder’** means: the legal entity or company which holds the broadcasting licence granted by Ofcom pursuant to the Broadcasting Act 1990 (as amended by the Broadcasting Act 1996 and the Communications Act 2003); and

**‘Licence holder’** means: the Actual Licence Holder or any legal entity or company which has a 30% or more shareholding (or 30% or more voting power) in the Actual Licence Holder.

- 5.6 If there is less than a 30% shareholding (or less than 30% voting power), there may be insufficient incentives for a broadcaster to provide another channel or service with free airtime and broadcasters will need to demonstrate that no consideration has passed between the parties and that Cross-promotion is justified on the basis of other incentives.
- 5.7 In the case of Cross-promotions between Channel 3 licence holders, there will be a rebuttable presumption that no consideration has passed.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that, since publication of the cross-promotion statement on 9 May 2006, this part of the guidance has been revised by adding the word “or”. This amendment has been made to make clear that in order to create the rebuttable presumption explained in paragraph 5.3, a broadcaster only needs to satisfy one of the three relationships which are outlined in paragraph 5.4.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that, since publication of the cross-promotion statement on 9 May 2006, this part of the guidance has been revised by adding the text “For the purposes the relevant relationships outlined in paragraph 5.4”. This amendment has been made to make clear that the definitions only apply to the relationships outlined in paragraph 5.4.

- 5.8 These presumptions do not apply to public service announcements, charity appeals broadcast free of charge, announcements required by Ofcom and information to viewers broadcast in accordance with an Ofcom requirement, which are already excluded from paid for advertising by RADA. In particular, information to viewers broadcast in accordance with requirements to inform viewers about digital switchover is excluded.

### **Platform and retail TV service neutrality**

- 5.9 This guidance relates to the platform and retail TV service neutrality requirements that are imposed on Channel 3 licensees, Channel 4 and Five ('the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters').
- 5.10 For reasons of practicality and also relevance to viewers, Ofcom considers that it is reasonable to limit the number of platform and retail TV services that need to be mentioned by the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters. Ofcom considers that a 500,000 customer base ('the materiality threshold') represents an appropriate threshold for these purposes as this captures the major platforms and retail TV services which have wide ranging availability throughout the UK.
- 5.11 At the time of drafting, Ofcom considers that the retail TV services which are likely to satisfy the materiality threshold are as follows:
- the digital satellite retail TV services operated by Sky
  - the digital cable retail TV services operated by NTL/Telewest
  - the digital terrestrial retail TV services provided by Freeview
- 5.12 The Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters will need to review which platform and retail TV services meet the materiality threshold from time to time. Ofcom considers that data provided in Ofcom's 'Digital Television Update' publications would be one appropriate source of information on customer numbers for these purposes.

- 5.13 Whilst the materiality threshold does not appear to be met for any particular retail TV services available via the broadband platform, Ofcom still considers that it will be appropriate for the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters to refer to broadband TV<sup>4</sup>.
- 5.14 For the avoidance of doubt, the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters must still comply with the neutrality requirement if, instead of making a generic reference to smaller digital platforms, they refer to the availability of their channels on a specific digital platform or retail TV service which does not satisfy the materiality threshold (e.g. by mentioning a particular brand name). Therefore, the materiality threshold operates in a way which gives the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters a choice of either referring specifically to all the smaller digital platforms and retail TV services where their channels are available within the relevant reception area or making a generic reference such as “available on other digital platforms”.
- 5.15 Ofcom would recommend that the Main Commercial Terrestrial Broadcasters use the following two phrases when referring to appropriate platforms or retail TV services:
- If the broadcaster only wishes to mention platforms: “available on satellite, cable, digital TV through your aerial, or broadband TV<sup>5</sup>”
  - If the broadcaster wishes to mention retail TV service brands: “available on Sky, NTL/Telewest, Freeview or other digital platforms”<sup>6</sup>

4 Please note that, since publication of the cross-promotion statement on 9 May 2006, this part of the guidance has been revised by adding ‘TV’ after the word ‘broadband’ in the last sentence. The amendment has been made to give further clarity.

5 Please note that, since publication of the cross-promotion statement on 9 May 2006, this part of the guidance has been revised by replacing the text “available on satellite, cable, digital TV through your aerial or over broadband” with “available on satellite, cable, digital TV through your aerial, or broadband TV”. This amendment has been made to give further clarity.

6 This phrase is intended to reflect the current branding of the retail TV services which satisfy the materiality threshold. The main commercial terrestrial broadcasters who are subject to the platform neutrality requirement will need to amend such a phrase to reflect any branding changes made to the retail TV services.

## **General guidance on the Cross-promotion Code**

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the broadcaster to comply with the Cross-promotion Code.
- 6.2 Ofcom can offer general guidance on the interpretation of the Cross-promotion Code. However, any such advice is given on the strict understanding that it will not affect Ofcom's discretion to judge cases and complaints after transmission and will not affect the exercise of Ofcom's regulatory responsibilities. Broadcasters should seek their own legal advice on any compliance issues arising. Ofcom will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from reliance on informal guidance.

