



Attitudes towards sexual material on television

A qualitative research report for Ofcom prepared by Opinion Leader

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1. Executive Summary of research findings

Background and context¹

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to draw up and, from time to time, revise a code for television and radio services. This is known as the Broadcasting Code ('the Code') and came into effect in July 2005.

Ofcom has a duty to *protect the under-eighteens* (Section One of the Code). This responsibility is shared with parents, those who look after children and young people, and broadcasters. Ofcom also has a duty to ensure that *generally accepted standards* are applied to the content of radio and television services to provide adequate protection from the inclusion of harmful or offensive material (Section Two of the Code). In relation to generally accepted standards, including those in relation to sex, Ofcom recognises that these are subject to changes over time and should be underpinned by consumer research.

In carrying out its duties Ofcom seeks to ensure that sexual material is editorially justified, appropriately scheduled and where necessary access is restricted to adults.

Sexual material may appear in general entertainment programmes either, for example, in mainstream dramas or documentaries, or in programmes made specifically for adults which are about, and include, sexual activity. Sexual material also appears in 'adult-sex' programming where the primary purpose of the broadcast is to arouse the viewer.

In relation to 'adult-sex' material, Ofcom requires all services providing this material to have mandatory PIN protected systems (or other equivalents) in place to restrict access to adults who specifically select and pay to watch them (*mandatory access restrictions*). This is in addition to the provision by many digital television platforms and device manufacturers of either protection mechanisms that enable the removal of all channels located in the adult section of the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG); or personal PIN protection functions to block access to certain programmes or channels (*voluntary access restrictions*).

In addition, from 20:00 onwards on a range of platforms, some 'adult-sex' channels which are otherwise subject to mandatory access restrictions, broadcast long-form promotional trailers (up to fifteen minutes in length) that are free-to-view and which include strong sexual material for the purpose of promoting the channel's mandatorily restricted 'adult-sex' material.

Ofcom conducted consumer research into sexual material in 2005. However, the broadcasting landscape has changed since then: access to the range of sexual content provided both in general programming and via 'adult-sex' channels has broadened through a range of either free-to-view channels or pay-TV services. In addition, the platforms that carry these channels – satellite (e.g. Sky, Freesat), cable (e.g. Virgin) and the digital terrestrial platform (Freeview) – have grown and developed.

¹ A full glossary of terms used throughout this paper can be found at the end of this document.

In addition, during 2007 and 2008 Ofcom received a number of complaints about stronger sexual material broadcast on a range of digital channels. These complaints resulted in six sanction decisions against broadcasters licensed by Ofcom, and 22 published findings regarding the broadcast of strong sexual material. Ofcom found that some recent material, which had been transmitted without any form of access restrictions, had featured nudity of a strong sexual nature, and sustained sex scenes and sexual language that was not, in some cases, justified by the context in which it was transmitted. In some of these cases Ofcom concluded that some of the material should only have been broadcast with mandatory access restrictions.

In 2009, Ofcom commissioned Opinion Leader to undertake qualitative research amongst the general public as part of its current review of the Code, which is tasked with ensuring that the Code remains fit for purpose. Ofcom seeks to ensure that the application of its rules on sexual material is informed by a detailed understanding of current attitudes towards a range of sexual material that can be viewed on television. This is therefore the specific focus of this research.

Recruitment and methodology

Opinion Leader researchers met with sixteen discussion groups each engaging between 10 and 11 participants, with 169 participants taking part in all. All discussion groups were single gender, and the sample was further segmented to capture the views of younger and older people; parents and non-parents; and, people from different socio-economic groups. The research took place in locations in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland and included people living in both urban and rural areas. Quotas were set for ethnic minority groups; viewers of analogue terrestrial; digital terrestrial; digital satellite and digital cable television; different television viewing habits (from light to heavy); and, different attitudes to the topics being discussed (self-defined as “liberal” or “conservative” in comparison to other people).

The format of the discussion groups each included the same mix of presentations, discussion sessions and viewing clips². Ofcom selected example clips to demonstrate the range of different types of sexual material that has been available without mandatory access restrictions on television (including some material which Ofcom found to have breached its rules). Individual views in the groups were captured through the use of self-completion questionnaires (at key points of the discussion), which generated some quantitative data to support the qualitative findings.

Note: the quantitative findings should be treated as *indicative* only, given the overall sample size (169 participants) and given that the sample was not selected with the aim of reflecting an exact representation of the population as a whole, rather with the aim of providing enough people in all the groups of interest to conduct *qualitative* discussion groups.

² Also see “Response to the clips” below.

Key findings

- Television was not the platform of greatest concern to participants – they were more concerned about the content available on the internet. While *sexual content on television* was a concern for participants it was also not their area of greatest concern, with violence, sexism and racism also being cited as examples of unacceptable content that were of equal or greater concern.
- Participants found it difficult to discuss their views of sexual content on television in the abstract. When initially asked about their level of concern about sexual content on television, 40% expressed some level of concern. When shown the clips, most thought that there was a place for all of the content shown. The main issue, and the main area where participants differed, was the *degree to which they wanted such content to be regulated* in terms of channel, timing, editorial justification and mandatory access restrictions.
- A wide range of factors appeared to inform participants' levels of concern, with clear differences according to *demographics* (particularly age but also gender), *life-stage* (particularly whether they have children at home) and *attitudes* (liberal or conservative). In particular, older participants (those aged 35-54 and 55+, and particularly older women) and those with children at home (especially those with older children³) were more likely to be concerned about sexual material on television. Older participants tended to be more concerned from the perspective of *personal offence*. Those with children (particularly older children, who may actively seek out stronger sexual content), were more concerned about the *protection of under-eighteens*.
- All participants considered that material of a sexual nature on television had increased in recent years, both in terms of the *frequency and strength* of sexual material shown. Sexual material is now felt to be found in programmes where viewers would not necessarily expect to find it, e.g. plotlines of a sexual nature in family entertainment programmes such as soaps, which some participants considered were used by the broadcaster as a way of attracting a greater audience share. In the context of a perceived general proliferation of sexual material across a range of media, all participants thought that the strength of the sexual material available on television had increased overall and that stronger material was now being shown earlier in the schedules.
- Most participants believed in general that *there is a place for sexual material on television* for those adults who would choose to watch it. However, participants voiced the need for mandatory access restrictions where appropriate, depending on the type and strength of sexual material, and highlighted the importance of other contextual considerations such as: the channel, time of broadcast and pre-transmission announcements. This was a common finding across demographic categories, although there were differences in the strength of the material participants would consider to be in need of access restrictions.

³ For the purposes of this document 'older children' refers to children aged over 12 years old.

- Overall, protection of under-eighteens was the main concern with respect to sexual material as this group was seen to be at risk of harm from exposure to such material. Participants raised two issues in particular. Firstly, the need to protect *younger children* from stumbling across sexual content (unintentional viewing) was raised across all demographic groups, including non-parents, although it was a greater concern for parents. Secondly, the need to restrict *older children* from seeking it out (intentional viewing) was raised, mostly by parents of children in this age group.
- Participants did not pass sole responsibility for protection of under-eighteens over to broadcasters and regulators; stating that *parents should also take responsibility for their children's viewing*. This was considered particularly with regard to families who chose to have satellite (e.g. Sky) or cable (e.g. Virgin Media) television, which contain channels where most participants expected to see sexual material. However, regulation was felt to help protect those children whose parents may not police television to the same degree as others, and provided a certain level of reassurance for all parents. In addition, the increase in on-demand programmes and PVRs was seen to increase the importance of parental responsibility, as the 21:00 watershed does not apply.
- For most participants, personal offence was less of a concern than protecting the under-eighteens, given that they believed adults could simply choose to switch off the television or change channel. However, there were some exceptions: personal offence was more of an issue for some participants (especially *older viewers* or those with more conservative views) if the sexual content was perceived to be particularly strong. In addition, *stumbling across sexual content* was more of a concern for participants in general when viewing television with others.
- Participants spontaneously identified a range of programmes containing sexual content on television from mild to strong material, and tightly linked levels of acceptability to context. Participants had different individual views on what constituted strong sexual content although most considered that *stronger sexual material required greater editorial justification* and should be subject to a wider range of contextual conditions. For example participants showed less tolerance for images portraying group sex and fetishes. In addition, the treatment of the subject matter was seen as important. Key considerations included the length of a scene, how graphic it was, lighting, what sounds accompanied the images, relevance to the plot and whether any images were pixellated. Programmes which included the strongest sexual material incorporated into what was claimed to be a drama or documentary were considered by some to be simply an excuse to show explicit ('adult-sex') content. This material was seen by participants to have a place on television but specifically in programmes where broadcasters applied mandatory access restrictions.
- It was apparent that participants considered a wide range of other contextual factors when considering the acceptability of sexual material that was broadcast without mandatory access restrictions. The *context* in which any sexual material was shown was extremely important in determining perceived acceptability. Contextual considerations discussed by participants focused on *three key issues*:

- Were children likely to stumble across sexual content either unintentionally or intentionally?
- Would viewers know what to expect from the programme?
- Did the editorial context justify the content?
- In relation to these three key issues, participants considered the following factors:
 - *Strength of material*: how graphic and explicit the broadcast images were;
 - *Time of broadcast*: whether pre- or post-watershed, and how long after the watershed;
 - *Channel*: participants had different expectations of different channels and showed greater tolerance for stronger sexual content on non-public service broadcasting channels, with the strongest acceptance for sexual content on premium subscription adult channels with mandatory access restrictions;
 - *Likely audience*: who would be likely to be watching and how likely were under-eighteens to be exposed to the material, either unintentionally or intentionally;
 - *Signposting and viewer expectations*: would adult viewers know what to expect from the programme? Location on the EPG was also mentioned by some participants. For example, it was felt that viewers would know what to expect from a channel located within the adult section of the EPG;
 - *Access restrictions*: such as PIN protection (both voluntary and mandatory);
 - *Type of programme*: did the editorial context justify the content? Sexual material was seen to have more editorial justification in factual programming, dramas, documentaries and educational programmes, and least in reality television; and;
 - *The programme maker's or broadcaster's motivation*: what was the perceived purpose of the programme? For example was it "porn" for the purpose of arousal or was there a serious 'documentary' purpose?
- Only a *small number of participants did not consider the issue of editorial justification* when evaluating what sexual content they deemed to be acceptable on television. These participants fell into two groups. Firstly, there were those who thought the only issue was exactly what was shown (i.e. that the focus should be on strength of content and that it did not matter whether the purpose of the content was to inform or arouse). Secondly, there was another group of participants who thought that sexual content was never justified, and could nearly always be implied, although some of this group would make an exception in cases where sexual content was presented in a desexualised way (e.g. as part of a documentary).
- Participants across demographic groups did not seem to distinguish whether the material broadcast was *real sex or simulated sex*. Participants stated that they found it hard to tell whether real sex or representations of sex were being shown unless the images were very close up i.e. with the focus on genitals. In any event, it was the *strength* of the broadcast content that most concerned them, the way in which it was presented and the *purpose* of the broadcast.

- Participants had an understanding of the *watershed* and believed that it provided some protection for younger children. However, there were concerns that it was not always adhered to, with some sexual material being shown before 21:00. There was also some concern that the watershed might not provide sufficient protection for older children and young people who were likely to be watching television after 21:00 and/or who might actively seek out stronger sex material that is transmitted without mandatory access restrictions. Many participants suggested that stronger sexual material should be shown much later at night (e.g. from 22:30 or 23:00) and wanted to see greater care applied by broadcasters in relation to sexual content shown before this time.

Response to the clips

Nine clips were selected by Ofcom to illustrate a range of different types of material of a sexual nature that have recently been included in a range of programmes broadcast across different channels and platforms (all of which had been broadcast free-to-view and some of which had been found in breach of Ofcom's Code).

The clips were necessarily brief (up to three minutes each in length) and used for illustration purposes only, as stimulus to discuss in-principle responses to the type of material shown. The clips were chosen to illustrate three different concepts: daytime/pre-watershed programmes; post-watershed programmes; and, material that had some or many of the characteristics of 'adult-sex' material. The three minute clips did not necessarily provide a balanced representation of each individual programme, rather a sample of a particular type of material.

As well as discussing how acceptable each clip was, participants also indicated on a questionnaire using a scale of 1 to 10 how acceptable they thought it was. Scores were grouped as follows: 1-4 'unacceptable', 5-7 'neutral' and 8-10 'acceptable'.

As noted above under 'Recruitment and methodology' quantitative findings should be treated as indicative only, given the overall sample size (169).

Daytime/pre-watershed programmes

Clip 1 was taken from a daytime, general light-entertainment programme not aimed at children. It was broadcast in the mid-afternoon on ITV1 during term time. It featured the programme's resident "sexpert" on a bed with the presenter humorously discussing a range of sex toys including a number of different dildos.

Some participants (42%) thought this clip was unacceptable because, whilst it was not aimed at children, some could have been watching. There was general agreement among these participants that the subject matter of sex toys was unsuitable particularly given that the presenters were on a bed, and given the extent of some of the sexual innuendo that was used. 21% of the participants were neutral and 36% found the material acceptable, for reasons including that they considered the sexual imagery and innuendo to be mild and the purpose of the sex toys would not have been obvious to younger children.

Clip 2 was taken from a one-off documentary about sex education in the UK and compared it to the compulsory sex education system in Holland. It was broadcast on Channel 4 at 20:00. It featured some brief scenes of a sexual nature including naked cartoon characters having sex and masturbating, and anatomical drawings of sex organs.

Most participants thought it was acceptable (46%) or were neutral (27%) given the context, type of programme, the informative title, transmission time and the channel, which contributed to its overall acceptability. The majority of participants considered that the context in which the images were shown, some of which were explicit, justified their inclusion in an educational programme broadcast before the watershed. 27% of participants found the material unacceptable: reasons for this included that they felt 20:00 was too early for this type of content, and that they considered the cartoons to be gratuitous.

Post-watershed programmes

Clip 3 was taken from a serialised historical drama transmitted from 21:00 on BBC Two. The programme featured a scene showing a female character engaged in sexual intercourse with a man to the point of climax.

47% of participants thought it was acceptable, a further 28% were neutral and 24% found the clip unacceptable. Contextual factors including time of broadcast, historical context for accuracy and the perceived tasteful presentation of the images of sex and nudity influenced perceived acceptability.

Clip 4 was taken from a documentary series broadcast from 23:00 on Five exploring attitudes to sex with an educational and entertainment purpose. The programme, presented by a doctor, included contributions from sexual health experts and other medical professionals and material of a strong sexual nature depicting sex acts and discussions about sex. This clip featured the topic of group sex. It showed participants talking about their enjoyment of it and blurred and pixellated images of consensual group sex.

49% of participants considered this clip was acceptable and a further 28% neutral, given that the programme was seen as educational, the programme title signposted that it would feature sexual content, it was shown suitably late at night at 23:00 and was presented by a doctor. 23% found the clip unacceptable, some believed the material was too graphic to be transmitted without some form of access restriction and some considered that the primary purpose of this “educational documentary” was just an excuse to show explicit sexual content.

Clip 5 was taken from an observational or “fly-on-the wall” documentary broadcast after 22:00 on Virgin 1 which took a light-hearted look at the sex industry and included material of a strong sexual nature. This episode focused on the issue of men who are married to actresses who work in the adult film industry. This clip opened with an interview with one of the actresses who removed an anal plug and placed it in her mouth in front of the presenter. There followed an interview with her husband on a film set. In the background, as he and the interviewer looked on, the actress was shown engaged in several sex acts, including anal and oral sex, with three male actors. The images of the

actual sex acts were masked and limited so as not to reveal any genital detail, although the nature of the sex was clear to the viewer.

This clip was seen as the least acceptable overall given the perceived strength of the material, with 48% finding it unacceptable. Some participants believed this material should not have been available without mandatory access restrictions. Other participants considered that this would have been acceptable for broadcast, without any mandatory access restrictions, but only after 23:00 in order to ensure sufficient protection for under-eighteens. This was on the basis that the programme title and channel provided, for some, an indication as to the likely content which could serve to manage viewer expectations. Given the transmission time of 22:00, 29% of participants were neutral and 22% found it acceptable, taking into account the humorous approach to the content and that the people featured in the clips were all consenting adults.

Clip 6 *was taken from a documentary series broadcast after 23:00 on Virgin 1 which provided commentary and observation on sexual behaviour and fetishes and which included material of a strong sexual nature. This clip featured interviews with a film maker who makes sex films about his stockings fetish. The material included scenes from the making of the films which included women and men performing oral sex on other women wearing stockings. The more graphic images were blurred and pixellated.*

Just under half (47%) of participants found this acceptable, given that it was broadcast at a suitable time and the title signposted that it contained sexual content. Those who found it unacceptable (27%) mentioned reasons including a perception that the material was primarily designed as an excuse to show “porn” and was not appropriate for a mainstream channel without any form of mandatory access restrictions. 25% were neutral.

Post-watershed ‘adult-sex’ material and associated trailers

Clip 7 *was taken from a TV sex-drama series transmitted from 23:00 on Playboy One (broadcast without mandatory access restrictions). The full programme featured strong and repeated sex scenes, one of which was viewed in the clip shown to the participants. This clip featured a male and female actor engaged in what appeared to be real sex acts including oral sex and full intercourse (although no sexual organs i.e. neither a penis nor vagina, were visible).*

All participants considered this material to be “porn”. However they were divided on its acceptability. Some (40%) thought it was acceptable for reasons which included that it was on a channel associated with sexual content, so clearly signposted. Others (29%) thought it unacceptable, considering that the material was gratuitous and had insufficient context. Some considered that because it was “pornographic” material it should have been broadcast only with mandatory access restrictions. 21% were neutral.

Clip 8 *was taken from a free-to-view trailer to promote an adult-sex channel (with mandatory access restrictions), broadcast at 20:00 on Spice Extreme. It contained material of a strong sexual theme although did not feature any nudity or sex acts.*

Overall 42% of participants considered this clip was unacceptable. Participants voiced general concerns relating to the depiction of men and women in fetish clothing pre-

watershed. However some of these participants considered this material would have been acceptable for broadcast after 21:00. 30% were neutral, and 22% found the material acceptable, given that there was no nudity, or scenes of sexual intercourse, in the material and it was broadcast on an adult-sex channel.

Clip 9 was taken from a free-to-view trailer to promote an adult-sex channel (with mandatory access restrictions). The promotional trailer was broadcast at midnight on RedHot 40+. It contained material of a strong sexual nature including images of what appeared to be real sexual activity.

Just under half (43%) of participants thought the clip was acceptable given that it was shown very late at night. A further 21% were neutral. 26% found the material unacceptable, some were concerned about older children (12 years and above) intentionally seeking out this content, even at midnight.

Conclusion to clip responses

In relation to the daytime/pre-watershed clips, it was clear that respondents understood that the watershed was in place to ensure appropriate scheduling of material for under-eighteens, including material of a sexual nature. In general, participants deemed most sexual content apart from the mildest (e.g. mild innuendo and kissing) to be unsuitable to show before the watershed. The type of sexual content that participants considered should be scheduled after the watershed was material that included representations of sexual activity or nudity. However, it was recognised that there would be occasions, for example in a sex education documentary aimed at older children, where representations of sex before the watershed could be shown with the appropriate editorial justification for doing so, on the basis that it was both signposted and timed so that younger children were not likely to stumble across it.

In terms of sexual material broadcast after the watershed, participants considered that stronger sexual material required stronger editorial justification. In particular, the purpose of the sexual material and the time of broadcast were key factors in relation to its acceptability, with stronger material becoming more acceptable after 22:00 and especially 23:00. At 21:00 participants said they did not expect to see much more than a brief sex scene or brief nudity. Where sexual material was considered to be “too strong” to be broadcast without mandatory access restrictions in place, it was because it appeared to have a primary purpose of arousing viewers i.e. an excuse to show what participants referred to as “porn” and not to be justified in terms of plot, character development or editorial context.

In considering post-watershed ‘adult-sex’ material, participants were divided on their views on Clip 7. While all considered the material to be “porn”, some considered that it was appropriate to broadcast without mandatory access restrictions, given the channel and transmission time. Others did not believe that the material was editorially justified which led them to say it should have been subject to mandatory access restrictions as it clearly contained ‘adult-sex’ material.

With regard to free-to-view promotional trailers broadcast on adult-sex channels, (Clips 8 and 9) most participants did not object in principle to these trailers being broadcast without any form of access restriction. This was however conditional on them only being available (in the case of Sky) in the adult section of the EPG and, for other platforms, if

parental controls (voluntary protection systems) could remove them from view, thereby restricting access by under-eighteens. Participants also thought that such promotional trailers should only show content that was no stronger than that which would be shown on non adult-sex channels at the same time.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background to the research⁴

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to draw up and, from time to time, revise a code for television and radio services. This is known as the Broadcasting Code ('the Code') and came into effect in July 2005. Ofcom is further required to make sure the Code complies with the new European Commission Audio and Visual Media Services (AVMS) Directive from December 2009 and Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Ofcom has a duty to *protect the under-eighteens* (Section One of the Code). This responsibility is shared with parents, those who look after children and young people, and broadcasters. Ofcom also has a duty to ensure that *generally accepted standards* are applied to the content of radio and television services to provide adequate protection from the inclusion of harmful or offensive material (Section Two of the Code). In relation to generally accepted standards, including those in relation to sex, Ofcom recognises that these are subject to changes over time and should be underpinned by consumer research.

In carrying out its duties Ofcom seeks to ensure that sexual material is editorially justified, appropriately scheduled and where necessary access is restricted to adults.

Sexual material may appear in general entertainment programmes either, for example, in mainstream dramas or documentaries, or in programmes made specifically for adults which are about, and include, sexual activity. Sexual material also appears in 'adult-sex' programming where the primary purpose of the broadcast is to arouse the viewer.

In relation to 'adult-sex' material, Ofcom requires all services providing this material to have mandatory PIN protected systems (or other equivalents) in place to restrict access to adults who specifically select and pay to watch them (*mandatory access restrictions*). This is in addition to the provision by many digital television platforms and device manufacturers of either protection mechanisms that enable the removal of all channels located in the adult section of the Electronic Programme Guide ('EPG'); or personal PIN protection functions to block access to certain programmes or channels (*voluntary access restrictions*).

In addition, from 20:00 onwards on a range of platforms, some 'adult-sex' channels which are otherwise subject to mandatory access restrictions, broadcast long-form promotional trailers (up to fifteen minutes in length) that are free-to-view and which include strong sexual material for the purpose of promoting the channel's mandatorily restricted 'adult-sex' material.

Ofcom conducted consumer research into sexual material in 2005. However, the broadcasting landscape has changed since then: access to the range of sexual content provided both in general programming and via 'adult-sex' channels has broadened

⁴ A full glossary of terms used throughout this paper can be found at the end of this document.

through a range of either free-to-view channels or pay-TV services. In addition, the platforms that carry these channels – satellite (e.g. Sky, Freesat), cable (e.g. Virgin) and the digital terrestrial platform (Freeview) – have grown and developed.

In addition, during 2007 and 2008 Ofcom received a number of complaints about stronger sexual material broadcast on a range of digital channels. These complaints resulted in six sanction decisions against broadcasters licensed by Ofcom, and 22 published findings regarding the broadcast of strong sexual material. Ofcom found that some recent material, which had been transmitted without any form of access restrictions, had featured nudity of a strong sexual nature, and sustained sex scenes and sexual language that was not, in some cases, justified by the context in which it was transmitted. In some of these cases Ofcom concluded that some of the material should only have been broadcast with mandatory access restrictions.

In 2009, Ofcom has undertaken a public consultation⁵ on proposals to review the Code in order to ensure it remains fit for purpose. As part of this review, Ofcom commissioned Opinion Leader to undertake qualitative research amongst the general public. Ofcom seeks to ensure that the application of its rules on sexual material is informed by a detailed understanding of current attitudes towards a range of sexual material that can be viewed on television. This is therefore the specific focus of this research⁶.

2.2 Aims and objectives

The objectives of the research were to understand the following questions:

- What are generally accepted standards regarding **material of a sexual nature** on television?;
- What are viewers' perceptions in relation to a wide range of **different types of sexual material** and where are the parameters between what they consider is and is not acceptable?;
- What impact does the **context** have on perceived acceptability – e.g. channel, type of content/programme genre, transmission time (including pre- and post-watershed i.e. before and after 21:00)?;
- What are viewers' perceptions about **specific issues** regarding material of a sexual nature on television such as the watershed, mandatory and voluntary access restrictions, 'adult-sex' material, and free-to-view promotional trailers for adult-sex channels?; and
- How do perceptions differ by different **demographic groups**?

2.3 The approach

Research design

⁵ <http://rhprod-webstg01/consult/condocs/bcode09/>.

⁶ This research does not consider 'adult entertainment' and 'adult sexual entertainment' material where the primary purpose is revenue generation through invitations to call adult chat lines. This material is the subject of a separate Ofcom consultation on Participation Television planned for autumn 2009, for which Ofcom is also undertaking audience research.

Ofcom wished to conduct a qualitative programme of research to provide an in-depth understanding of current attitudes relating to a range of sexual content, and in particular stronger material. In addition, it sought a quantitative element to provide some *indicative*⁷ numbers to accompany the qualitative insights.

We adopted the following methodology to deliver against these requirements⁸:

- 16 x 2.5 hour discussion groups were held with a cross-section of the adult population aged 18+ across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales;
- 11 participants were recruited to attend each group and at least 10 attended each group; this provided a total sample of 169 participants which was large enough to enable indicative quantitative data to be gathered; and
- Each discussion group comprised a presentation recorded by Ofcom's Content and Standards team on the purpose of the research, discussion sessions and viewing of clips. Ofcom selected example clips to demonstrate a range of different types of sexual material that has been available without mandatory access restrictions on television (including some material which Ofcom found to have breached its rules). Individual views of participants were captured through the use of self-completion questionnaires at key points in the discussion, which generated some indicative quantitative data to support the qualitative findings.

We agreed in collaboration with Ofcom to build the following mechanisms into the research approach to ensure participants would feel as comfortable as possible given the nature of some of the material. This involved:

- Providing a detailed explanation at the recruitment stage and in the groups themselves as to what the groups would be covering, who the research was for and why the research was being conducted;
- Conducting single, rather than mixed, gender groups and gender matching moderators to participants to ensure as far as possible that participants felt comfortable articulating their views on the topic of sexual content on television; and
- Giving participants the opportunity to opt out of viewing some of the stronger clips if they felt they would not be comfortable viewing them, and providing a 'support moderator' in each group to facilitate discussion sessions with any participants who chose to opt out. Whilst only four out of the 169 respondents did opt out of viewing some of the clips, it was important to provide this option.

Sample breakdown and recruitment approach

In addition to gender, the sample was segmented by:

- Age (18-24, 25-34, 44-54, 55+);

⁷ See note at paragraph 2.4.

⁸ There are a number of differences between the 2009 research and that conducted in 2005. Given that comparability between two different sets of qualitative participants viewing two different sets of clips is limited, it was not vital to replicate the 2005 methodology exactly. The research design was therefore aimed at producing similar outputs to the 2005 research, i.e. a primarily qualitative report including some quantitative measures of the differences between clips viewed, in order to aid comparison between responses to clips and different subgroups.

- Parents (of younger and older⁹ children) and non-parents; and
- Socio-economic group (ABC1, C2DE).

The research took place in locations in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland and included people living in both urban and rural areas. Quotas were set for:

- People from different ethnic minority groups;
- Viewers of analogue terrestrial television (i.e. the public service broadcasters; BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five and S4C), digital terrestrial, digital satellite and digital cable television;
- Different television viewing habits (from light to heavy); and
- Different attitudes to the topics being discussed (self-defined as “liberal” or “conservative” in comparison to other people).

The sessions were conducted between 15th April and 6th May 2009.

It is important to make clear that participants were specifically not asked about sexual orientation at either the recruitment or fieldwork stages because the sexual content that was featured in the clips was chosen to reflect a range of *strengths* of sexual material irrespective of sexual orientation. The full sample is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Sample breakdown

Group number	Gender	Location	Age	Whether parents/age of children (Younger children 0-11, older children 12-17)	Socio-economic group
1	Female	Glasgow	18-24	No children	ABC1
2	Male	London	18-24	No children	ABC1
3	Male	Belfast	18-24	No children	C2DE
4	Female	London	18-24	Parents of younger children	C2DE
5	Male	Leicester	25-34	No children	ABC1
6	Female	Birmingham	25-34	No children	C2DE
7	Female	London	25-34	Parents of younger children	ABC1
8	Male	Consett	25-34	Parents of younger children	C2DE
9	Male	Consett	35-54	Parents of younger children	ABC1
10	Male	London	35-54	Parents of older children	C2DE
11	Female	Birmingham	35-54	Parents of older children	ABC1
12	Female	Cardiff	35-54	No children	C2DE
13	Male	Leicester	55+	No children (at home)	ABC1
14	Female	Glasgow	55+	No children (at home)	ABC1
15	Male	Belfast	55+	Mix of children at home/no children/none at home	C2DE
16	Female	Cardiff	55+	Mix of children at home/no children/none at home	C2DE

⁹ ‘Older children’ are defined in this research as between 12-17 years old.

Participants were recruited through Opinion Leader's network of local recruiters, using a screening questionnaire (which can be seen at Annex 1).

Research content

All participants were asked to complete an exercise before coming to the discussion groups. This consisted of a television diary to be filled in over the week preceding the session (see Annex 2).

Each discussion group followed the same agenda as follows:

- The groups opened with a discussion of the pre-task exercise about the programmes participants had viewed on television in the preceding week and anything that concerned them or caused them any personal offence. This was designed to uncover the extent to which participants noticed sexual material in their own television viewing and how sexual material compared as a concern to other issues such as swearing or violent content. This was followed by a general discussion about sexual material on television and other platforms, perceived changes over time in the sexual material available and participants' initial views about the acceptability of sexual material on television;
- In the next session, the boundaries of acceptability and offence were discussed in more detail. The role of context was explored in detail, as was the specific types of sexual material people perceived to be acceptable and not acceptable;
- A short recorded presentation from Ofcom's Content and Standards team followed which explained the role of Ofcom and the purpose of the research; and finally
- A DVD comprising nine clips of 2-3 minutes each was shown and discussed. The clips were shown for illustrative purposes and provided a stimulus to discuss boundaries of acceptability. Before showing each clip, a brief explanation of the content was read out. The clip was then shown, participants completed an individual questionnaire on their reactions and this was followed by a general discussion about it. The clips were divided into three groups according to how strong the sexual material was. With two of these groups (clips 5-6 and clips 7-9¹⁰) participants were provided the opportunity to opt out of viewing the individual clips if they were not comfortable with the description of the content. Of the 169 participants, four chose to opt out. These participants were taken to a separate room where they filled in the same questionnaire as the main group and discussed their reasons for not viewing and thoughts about the clip description. They returned to the main session for a more general discussion.

The discussion guides along with stimulus material for both the main and opt-out discussions can be found in the accompanying appendices (see Annexes 3-5).

¹⁰ See Section 3.4.

2.4 Notes to reading this report

This report provides the main thematic findings from the qualitative research and includes quotes from participants to provide a flavour of the views expressed.

Throughout this report, demographic or attitudinal differences between participants have been presented.

While this research was qualitative in nature, the use of individual self-completion questionnaires generated some indicative quantitative data. These quantitative findings are included in the report to support the qualitative data and highlight sub-group differences. However, the quantitative findings should be treated with a degree of caution as indicative only due to the overall sample size and also because the sample was not selected with the aim of giving an exact representation of the population as a whole. Rather, the aim was to provide enough people in all the groups of interest to conduct qualitative discussion groups. In addition, the questions were normally completed prior to discussion and therefore captured a more spontaneous view compared to what was expressed once participants had the opportunity to fully consider and debate their views.

3. Main Findings

3.1 Overall views of material of a sexual nature

The first part of the discussion was designed to explore the pre-task exercise and to enable participants to spontaneously raise any particular sources of concern or offence felt about television and in the media generally. Following this, the topic of sexual material was introduced and participants were asked to discuss their initial views of material of a sexual nature on television and reasons or any concerns that existed.

The main findings from these sessions, which are explored in more detail below, were:

- Television was not the medium of greatest concern to participants. They were more concerned about the content available on the internet.
- While sexual content on television was a concern for participants, it was not their area of greatest concern, with violence, swearing, sexism and racism also being cited as examples of unacceptable content of equal or greater concern;
- Within the context of a perceived general proliferation of sexual material across a range of media (including television, newspapers, “lads” mags and the internet), the amount and strength of sexual material on television was perceived to have increased in recent years. Sexual material was now felt to be found in programmes where viewers would not necessarily expect it. All participants thought that stronger material was now being shown earlier in the schedules;
- A wide range of factors appeared to inform participants’ levels of concern about sexual content on television, with clear differences according to demographics (particularly age, but also gender), life-stage (particularly whether they have children at home) and attitudes (liberal or conservative);
- Most participants believed in general there is a place for material of a sexual nature on television, with restrictions and conditions of acceptability attached; and
- Specific concerns about sexual material related both to personal offence and to protection of under-eighteens, the latter being of more concern in most instances. Under-eighteens were seen to be at risk of harm from exposure to such material.

3.1.1 Context

Overall concerns about media content

Material of a sexual nature was one of a number of concerns that participants had about content provided across a range of different media (television, internet, newspapers, magazines, etc). However, it was not the first mentioned, or most serious, concern for most participants. The majority of participants were equally or more concerned by violence, swearing, sexism and racism. However, some participants may not have been aware at the start of the sessions of the full range of material available without mandatory access restrictions on television. Therefore these findings should be considered in conjunction with the later ones voiced once participants had viewed the clips.

Participants from certain demographics were more concerned by different issues on television:

- Violence was a particular concern for parents and older participants;
- Swearing was a particular concern for older participants; and
- Sexism and racism were particular concerns for women, BME¹¹ participants, and also parents.

These different concerns held true from both a personal perspective, when considering general offence, and when considering the protection of under-eighteens. These issues were raised spontaneously in the groups.

“Unless it is a discussion programme anything to do with drugs is taboo as far as I’m concerned.”

Female, 55+, ABC1, No children, Glasgow

“I don’t like excessive violence – for example I saw a drama a few months ago containing graphic scenes of torture.”

Male, 25-34, ABC1, No children, Leicester

Perceived declining standards in the media

Many participants perceived there to be declining standards in the media generally, and an increase in the types of material they had most concerns about (i.e. violence, swearing, racism and sexual material). This led to concerns from participants about children, especially teenagers (as they were thought to be more likely to come into contact with such material either by accident or design), being exposed to perceived unacceptable content. Children were seen as particularly vulnerable to the influence of the media generally, and television within this. This concern was expressed by both parents and non-parents, although it was more of a concern for parents.

“A lot of these programmes on – a lot of them are speeding, drugs - things that excite the youth. You know what I mean, the fast cars and the drugs...and they’re feeding it to the youths constantly.”

Male, 35-54, C2DE, Parents of older children, London,

“I think the media has an influence on society and that what is portrayed in the media has influenced youngsters.”

Female, 25-34, C2DE, No children, Birmingham

Parents’ concerns tended to relate to the age of their children. Parents of older children tended to be concerned because their children could choose to seek out and/or watch such material, and because it is a feature of programmes watched by this age group. Parents of younger children were more concerned about them being exposed to such content by accident.

¹¹ BME stands for Black and Minority Ethnic participants.

“There was a children’s thing... I was watching this programme and all of a sudden she started talking about having sex with this bloke and I am thinking, hold on a minute it is 11am and my niece or anyone could be watching this...the age they are ten and eleven they shouldn’t really be hearing about that sort of stuff.”

Male, 18-24, ABC1, No children, London

Views on different media

Where participants expressed concerns about perceived declining standards and the proliferation of “unsuitable” content in the media generally, these did not just focus on television. Indeed, for some participants the internet was of most concern. The internet was considered to present as much, if not a greater possibility for children to view unsuitable content in comparison to television. This was particularly an issue for parents, as children could stumble across such content, or may purposefully seek it out (particularly older children over twelve years old). In addition, the internet was seen as a more difficult medium to monitor than television for a range of reasons including:

- There is a range of content with limited controls;
- There is no watershed on the internet;
- Content on the internet can be extremely strong – much stronger than would be available on television or in print;
- The internet, unlike television, is generally seen as an individual activity (rather than a shared family activity), making monitoring more difficult;
- The location of the computer can also hinder effective controls for children because it is often not situated in communal areas within the home, unlike the main television set; and
- Parents said that they are less adept at technology than their children and expressed surprise about the strength of content that could be accessed by children and the ease with which they were able to access it.

“They’re upstairs in their room [saying] ‘Oh Dad, we’re just doing some homework’, and they’re really on the internet with those things, and it was shocking...”

Male, 35-54, C2DE, parent of older children, London

The possibility of accessing television content online was seen to have added a new level of complexity to parental control of television viewing, as children could access television content shown after the watershed at any time of day.

“They just go on iPlayer and it says ‘Are you over eighteen?’ and you’ve only got to click it.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, parent of older children, Birmingham

How strong are different types of sexual material considered to be?

Sexual content such as kissing and innuendo was deemed to be very mild by most participants, and still fairly mild even when accompanied by evident sexual overtones. Most participants accepted portrayals of sex in dramas and documentaries when the scenes were “limited” and where genitals were not visible, although these scenes were

considered by participants to be moderate to strong. More explicit or extended portrayals of sexual intercourse were considered to be strong to very strong. The issue of the acceptability of different types of material is explored in more depth in Section 3.3.

Participant views on material of a sexual nature

All participants believed that sexual material on television has increased in recent years, both in terms of the amount and strength of sexual material shown. It was felt to be found in programmes where they would not expect it. Many participants mentioned family entertainment programmes (particularly soaps such as *River City* and *Eastenders*) as having recently shown plotlines of a sexual nature, which some felt were inappropriate for family viewing. There was a general perception that some programme makers may have used sexual material as a way of attracting audience share.

“I think that channels are sort of reacting to a more liberal society by putting more [sexual material] on and I don't think that is necessarily a problem, they have just reacted.”

Male, 18-24, ABC1, no children, London

Participants felt that programme makers were “pushing the boundaries”, showing sexual material earlier in the evening, or even in the daytime, and showing strong content more frequently than in previous years.

“Every dirty scene for me is competing with each other for the same type of storyline, you know, sex and violence...It's getting earlier and earlier and earlier.”

Male, 55+, C2DE, no children, Belfast

Most participants believed there was a place for material of a sexual nature on television, but with restrictions and conditions of acceptability attached. Only a small minority of participants did not believe there was any place for sexual material on television. The majority, even if they did not want to watch such content themselves, believed that viewers have a right to be able to view sexual material, including ‘adult-sex’ material, if the right restrictions were in place.

Many participants when reflecting on sexual content spontaneously mentioned general entertainment programmes, such as *Shameless* and *Sex and the City* as examples of programmes that showed stronger sexual content in an appropriate way.

“It is like a choice really you know because I like watching Shameless and I know there's going to be sex in Shameless.”

Female, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

A minority of participants said that they enjoyed watching sexual material, including ‘adult-sex’ material, personally – this was predominantly a view found amongst male participants.

“As a male you can't get enough of that sort of thing on TV.”

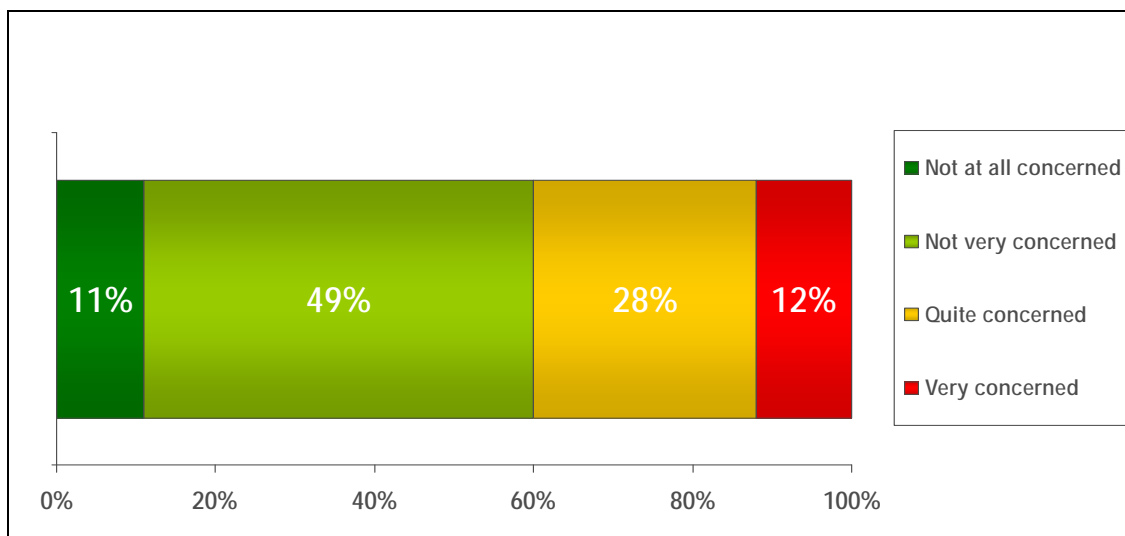
Male, 35-54, ABC1, parent of younger children, Consett

Levels of concerns about material of a sexual nature

Following the initial discussion about any particular sources of concern or offence on television and in the media generally, participants were asked to rate their own personal level of concern about sexual material on television. They did this using their self-completion questionnaires. Their ratings and reasons for those ratings were then discussed as a group. However, some participants at the start of the sessions may not have been fully aware of the range of material available on television without mandatory access restrictions, and so these findings should be considered in conjunction with the later ones when participants viewed the clips.

Figure 2 below shows the results from the self-completion questionnaires. Just under half of all participants said they were not very concerned about sexual material on television (49%), with a further one in ten saying that they were not at all concerned (11%). At the other end of the spectrum just over a quarter (28%) said they were quite concerned, with just over one in ten saying that they were very concerned (12%).

Figure 2: Initial levels of concern about sexual material on television



Q: “How concerned or unconcerned are you personally about sexual material on television? (Not at all concerned, not very concerned, quite concerned, very concerned)”
Base 169 participants (to be treated as indicative).

Within the overall sample, clear differences in views emerged according to demographic and life-stage variables, both in the qualitative discussion and the quantitative self completion questionnaires. These variables included:

- Age
- Gender
- Parental status
- Age of children (if any)

- Religious views
- Attitudes to sexual content on television (liberal vs. conservative¹²)

The findings suggest that age made a greater difference than gender to levels of concern about sexual material on television. Older men and women were more likely to say they were concerned about sexual material on television, whereas younger men and women were less likely to be concerned. A minority of participants said they enjoyed ‘adult-sex’ material.

Participants with children showed a higher level of concern about sexual content on television than those without children, and this was particularly the case for those with older children. This was likely to be linked to concerns about protection of the under-eighteens (see section 3.1.2). Figure 3 summarises the sub-group differences in attitudes towards sexual material on television.

Figure 3: Summary of sub-group levels of concern about sexual material on television¹³

More concerned about sexual material on television	Less concerned about sexual material on television
Older age groups – 35 to 54 year olds and 55+ year olds	Younger age groups – 18 to 24 year olds and 25-34 year olds
Older men	Younger men
Older women	Younger women
All those with children, especially those with older children	Those without children

Not surprisingly, personal views and values were also important in determining perceptions of the acceptability of sexual content on television and had an impact on levels of concern. This research found that those who felt they had a liberal attitude towards sexual content on television tended to be less concerned than those who defined their attitudes as conservative. Those with more conservative values generally believed that there is more capacity for sexual material to cause offence.

Some participants also said in the course of discussion that they believed that material of a sexual nature on television objectified or degraded women. This was a particular concern for younger female participants. These participants were also more likely to express concern about sexual material on television, with music videos raised as a spontaneous example of such content.

“The things I don’t like are the sexualisation of women on the music channels and stuff. I don’t like that. Women dressing like that and they do that at any time.”

Female, 18-24 C2DE, Parents of young children, London

“... my little cousin is only seven, and she wears clothes that... are just a bit, I think, too old for her, and I think there’s too much, sort of, like that on

¹² Self-defined attitudes towards the issue of sexual content on television – whether liberal or conservative in relation to other people.

¹³ Small base sizes, indicative only.

the television. Somebody else said about, you know, the music channels and things like that. It's just, yes, it's a bit demeaning."

Female, 18-24, ABC1, No children, Glasgow

"I think its degrading to women. It's always the women that – it's not like men prancing around in little boxers. It's always women that are prancing around."

Female, 18-24 C2DE, Parents of young children, London

Some participants, particularly older men and women, expressed concern about the impact that material of a sexual nature on television had on general morality in society, and wider social values. This was not the majority view even in these demographic groups, but was firmly held by a sizeable minority. These participants were more concerned about sexual material on television. Material showing sex outside marriage, group sex and wife-swapping was of particular concern from this standpoint. These participants did not necessarily believe that television had a role in upholding and promoting standards of behaviour, but they considered that showing material which could be considered beyond "social norms" has the potential to normalise it and make it more acceptable.

This was also to some extent a concern amongst parents of older children, given that teenagers were thought to be impressionable and some believed that they might be encouraged into earlier or more extreme sexual experimentation. Some participants cited reality television such as *Big Brother* as a particular concern from this point of view. The programme was perceived to promote casual, promiscuous sexualised encounters (because the participants had clearly not known each other for very long and were generally not in relationships), even if the images were not strong or the sexual behaviour was only referred to rather than shown.

"I think a lot of what is on TV today sends out the wrong messages to the new generation really."

Female, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

"There is no stability, there are no relationships... it is like you could be with one person one week and then they will be with another person the next week and morality wise it sends the wrong message."

Female, 25-34, C2DE, no children, Birmingham

There was widespread awareness that broadcasters must adhere to certain rules on content and timing. This was spontaneously raised by participants. There was general understanding and awareness of the watershed, which participants knew was at 21:00. In addition, they were also aware of other standards – for example, participants discussed what material they understood was acceptable for broadcast on television and what they did not think was allowed (e.g. erect penises).

"Do you think they're allowed to – I don't think they're allowed to show that (erect penises) anyway, are they?"

Female, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

3.2 Key considerations when reaching views on perceived acceptability

- Overall, the factors that participants considered when determining the acceptability of material of a sexual nature included the transmission time, likely audience, pre-programme information or other information that identified from the outset that potentially offensive content was coming up.
 - This included programme title and other signposting, the type of programme the editorial context in which the material was shown, the perceived motivation of the programme maker and the availability of mandatory and/or voluntary access restrictions.
- Participants also considered that channels BBC One and BBC Two were expected to adhere to the strictest standards, followed by ITV1, Channel Four, Five and S4C, followed by the digital terrestrial, cable and satellite general entertainment channels.
 - The standards participants expected the on-demand services (providing programmes and films) and the adult-sex channels (which are subject to mandatory access restrictions) to follow were much less strict. This was largely because they thought that viewers should know what to expect from these channels – which they felt reduced the potential for personal offence;
 - Participants also considered that these services/channels could follow less strict standards of content because their audience size was perceived as smaller; and
 - However, it was considered that they should still adhere to important conditions regarding how and when they could be accessed.
- Participants spontaneously raised two key considerations: personal offence and protection of under-eighteens. These two issues are explored in more detail below.

3.2.1 Protection of Under-Eighteens

Protection of under-eighteens was seen as the main issue for all participants. The need to protect under-eighteens from sexual material was spontaneously raised in all discussion sessions by both parents and non-parents – although this concern was greater among parents. Children were the group that were seen as at risk from harm caused by exposure to sexual material, while many participants said adults could simply switch off if they were offended by what they saw. Parents, in particular, raised concerns that sexual material on television contributed to the premature sexualisation of children and teens (citing, for example, US teen shows and music videos).

“I think that a lot of these programmes that hint or touch upon sex means kids are forced to grow up too quickly... they’re seeing all this, where does it lead them to? Or where does it force them to almost?”

Male, 55+, ABC1, no children at home, Leicester

Participants raised two different aspects within the need to protect under-eighteens: protecting younger children from stumbling across sexual content unintentionally, and protecting older children from accessing sexual content (particularly stronger sexual content) intentionally.

Protecting young children from stumbling across content unintentionally

Participants believed it was highly likely that young children would stumble across some sexual material on television, given that some material appeared before 21:00. However they felt that young children should only encounter the mildest sexual content, if at all, and most believed that broadcasters have a responsibility to ensure appropriate scheduling. The watershed was seen as offering parents some reassurance about protection of younger children, but there were concerns that it is not always adhered to.

“I was watching a programme with my son and a couple started taking their clothes off. He asked me ‘Mum, are they going to have sex?’ He’s at an age where he’s going to ask questions and I don’t think it should be in his face on TV for him to see.”

Female, 25-34, ABC1, parent of young children, London

“I don’t think the watershed really works because, for example soaps...people are sleeping around, they’re having children at fourteen years of age – out of wedlock – and it is all shown at a time when children can be watching. I don’t think it is right.”

Female, 55+, no children at home, C2DE, Cardiff

Protecting older children from accessing content intentionally

Sexual material on television was seen as relatively easy for older children to access. Participants said that many older children were up later than 21:00 so were able to access content shown post-watershed, especially at weekends and during holidays.

“I think as an adult you are fully aware of what you are watching aren’t you? The problem is with the younger generation. I know the watershed is at nine and some of these things are on at ten and I must admit, I don’t know any kids that are like thirteen or fourteen that are in bed at ten you know the majority of them have got TVs in their bedrooms. That is the only concern I have got.”

Male, 25-34, ABC1, no children, Leicester

Participants said that many older children have a television in their rooms which is not under constant parental supervision, which therefore makes it easier for them to access content intentionally. At the same time, new technology was felt to have increased the potential access children have to sexual content; with the increase in Personal Video Recorders (PVRs) and on-demand television making access for children at any time of day much easier.

“The time is virtually immaterial now. Most people and most kids have got access to recording devices. So whatever time it’s on, I mean if they’re sufficiently organised if they want to watch something that’s on after midnight... you know a lot of the lads stay up and watch it, but others if

they want to watch it they just record it. Or they put it on their computers. I mean umpteen have got access to it on their computers.”

Male, 55+, ABC1, no children, Leicester

Whilst the focus of non-parents tended to be on protecting younger children, parents of older children thought that older children were more vulnerable to the impact of material of a sexual nature on television.

“I think that sexual material on TV is a contributing factor in the underage sex and teen pregnancies. I think that the media, especially television, has to take a little bit more of a responsible role, because parents are not always able to, kind of, control the television that their kids are watching.”

Female, 25-34, ABC1, parents of young children, London

The role of broadcasters

Most participants believed broadcasters have a role to play in minimising the possibility that under-eighteens will be able to access stronger sexual material. All groups spontaneously referenced the watershed as providing some reassurance to parents. However, as discussed above, whilst the watershed was felt to offer protection for younger children, there were concerns that it does not provide sufficient protection for older children who are likely to be watching television after 21:00.

“The other thing with the watershed it is all well and good saying the watershed is nine o'clock. Friday night and Saturday night they [participants' children] don't go to bed at nine o'clock, or during the school holidays either so it's no use.”

Male, 35-54, ABC1, Parents of young children, Consett

The role of parents

Participants did not however pass sole responsibility over to broadcasters and regulators, and said that parents also had to take responsibility for their children's viewing. This was stated particularly to be the case for families who made the choice to have digital satellite or cable television, which contain channels on which most participants expected to see sexual material. Regulation was felt to help protect those children whose parents may not police television to the same degree as others, and to provide a certain level of reassurance for all parents. The increase in on-demand television programmes and PVRs, as discussed above, was seen to increase the importance of parental responsibility, as the 21:00 watershed does not apply.

“If you choose to have Sky then you need to make sure you use the parental PIN options, there is a lot on Sky that's not suitable for children and that's your responsibility to guard against.”

Female, 18-24, ABC1, no children, Glasgow

3.2.2 Personal offence

Personal offence was less of a concern than protection of under-eighteens for most participants in most instances. The main reason for this was the belief that adults could

make an informed choice themselves. Adults were felt largely to know what to expect from channels and from television as a whole at different times of day. It was thought that they could therefore choose to watch or not watch much of the sexual content on television (e.g. by choosing not to subscribe to premium adult-sex channels). Additionally, participants said that adults could just switch channels if they came across something they found offensive.

“Everyone’s got the control of their television. If it’s offensive, if you don’t like it, turn it off.”

Female, 55+ C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

“I don’t really think on general TV you find anything that bad to be honest and if it is, it is generally on at a time when you know it is coming. It is obviously your choice whether you watch it or not.”

Male, 18-24, ABC1, no children, London

While protection of under-eighteens was generally seen as more of a concern, there were some occasions where personal offence was seen as an issue. Some older participants were concerned about personal offence caused by viewing sexual material unexpectedly. This was usually unexpected sexual content in a programme they chose to watch, although there were also those who expressed concern about stumbling across material when flicking through channels to see what was on. Those with conservative views also expressed concern.

Regardless of the strength of the content, general offence was also important among those who held strong views on the objectification of women (this primarily tended to be female participants). They expressed dislike of some types of sexual content that was perceived to do this – citing for example music videos or much ‘adult-sex’ material.

Participants in general were also concerned about potential offence on behalf of other people (for example older relatives) or when watching with other people.

Personal offence became more of an issue for all participants, but particularly the above-mentioned groups, when the sexual content was:

- Stronger;
- Not signalled (e.g. in a programme where sexual content is unexpected, or stronger than expected);
- Viewed with other people – mostly children (including older, i.e. grown-up children) or parents, although friends and partners were also mentioned. This related strongly to the issue of unexpectedness: participants said they could feel embarrassed and ambushed if they were watching television with others and sexual content appeared unexpectedly; or
- Perceived to be unnecessary – participants showed a stronger tolerance for sexual content, and a tolerance of stronger content, where it was perceived to be justified, for example in a documentary about sex education.

3.3 Contextual factors affecting perceived acceptability

- Whilst many contextual considerations were raised initially spontaneously, participants were subsequently asked to consider the role of a range of different factors. These included the transmission time, the type of programme and the channel on which the sexual content might be shown. This section explores participants' views on the importance of context. The main findings are outlined below.
- The context in which sexual material was shown was extremely important in determining the perceived acceptability of different types of sexual content. However, context is a complex issue and participants considered a number of factors when reaching a decision about whether the type of sexual material shown was acceptable. In most instances these factors were interrelated;
- Contextual considerations focused on three key issues:
 - Were children likely to stumble across content either unintentionally or intentionally?
 - Would viewers know what to expect from the programme?
 - Did the editorial context justify the content?
- Participants considered a large range of factors in considering what made material acceptable or not. Specifically, contextual considerations included:
 - The **strength** of the sexual material;
 - The **channel** on which the sexual material was shown;
 - The **time of broadcast** that the sexual material was shown;
 - The **type** of programme: did the **editorial context** justify the content?;
 - The **purpose** of the programme;
 - **Signposting** and **viewer expectations**: including the programme **title**; presence of information, such as a verbal and/or on-screen text indication that the programme contained explicit sexual material; and location on the EPG;
 - Perceived **programme maker/broadcaster motivation**;
 - **Likely audience** – linked to channel and time of day; and
 - **Access restrictions**: such as PIN protection (both voluntary and mandatory).

The strength of the sexual material

Participants had different individual views on what constituted stronger sexual content. The issue of exactly what was and was not deemed to be acceptable in terms of different types of content is explored in greater depth in Section 3.3. Participants did not use the words “mild” and “strong” themselves, and these words are used below merely to attempt to define, categorise and rank different types of content within the report.

It must also be remembered that within each of these categories the acceptability of the content depended very much on context (an issue that is also explored further later in the report), and what was actually shown. This was felt to vary on a case-by-case basis and therefore there may be some fluidity between categories. The strength of the content was dependent on the context and the individual respondent's views, and therefore it is difficult to set specific rules for it. However, broadly speaking:

- The **mildest** sexual content was considered to be kissing and innuendo;
- Kissing with sexual overtones/petting was considered to be **stronger, but still mild** (in most cases);
- Implying but not showing intercourse was considered to be stronger than kissing, but still within the boundaries of **mild/moderate** unless shown when not expected (e.g. when children are likely to be watching and/or was more graphic);
- Nudity and representations of intercourse were not deemed unexpected in dramas and documentaries, and were acknowledged as representations of real life. If the scene was brief and fairly inexplicit, not shot in close-up, and if the camera shots were not perceived to be lingering then the scene was considered to be **moderate** by most, assuming their conditions of acceptability around the time of broadcast were met. If the scene was longer or the camera was perceived to be lingering it was then felt that the scene might be considered stronger. The addition of sound was also said by some participants to make a sex scene stronger; and
- Respondents considered any or all the following to be **strong** sexual material: group sex; anal sex; vaginal sex where the scene was perceived to be longer than was felt to be justified within the programme; visibility of genitals in a sex scene; or lingering on breasts/genitals in a nude scene. If the scene was perceived to be gratuitous or unjustified by the editorial content, some participants said they would perceive it as stronger. Material featuring fetishes was considered to be very strong by some participants, irrespective of the degree of explicitness of any associated depiction of sex.

Participants had different individual views on what constituted strong sexual content, although most considered that stronger sexual material required greater editorial justification and should be subject to a wider range of contextual conditions.

The channel the material is shown on

Participants had different expectations of different **channels**. They expected to see different strengths of sexual material on different channels, and believed that stronger sexual material was more acceptable on channels that were associated with sexual content. This was perceived to help manage viewer expectations; help viewers to decide what to watch; and assist parents in the protection of under-eighteens.

Broadly speaking, the public service broadcasting channels (PSBs), BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five, and S4C, were seen as less likely to feature stronger sexual material than general entertainment digital channels available on a range of television platforms including digital satellite and cable. While the PSBs were perceived to show the least amount and mildest forms of sexual material, there were notable differences in perceptions between channels. BBC One and Two were felt to be “safer” public service broadcasting channels, and to have tighter limits on the strength of sexual material shown. Channel 4 and Five were perceived as being more likely to show more, and stronger, sexual material. They were seen by participants as trying to “push the boundaries”. ITV1 was perceived as falling between these two groups – it was seen as much less likely than Channel 4 and Five to show stronger sexual material, but also as not quite as “safe” as BBC One and Two.

“Channel 4 and Five are always pushing the boundaries whereas the BBC will get crucified if they show something.”

Male, 35-54, ABC1, Parent of young children, Consett

The less widely available the channels were, the more acceptable stronger sexual material was perceived to be. The strongest tolerance for sexual content was on premium subscription adult-sex channels. Participants believed it was less acceptable for the PSBs, which are freely available and which they believed to have the largest number of viewers, to show strong sexual content. However participants were still happy for them to show sexual content in the right context. PSBs were seen to have the most potential to cause offence to people who did not wish to view sexual content and could stumble over it, and to under-eighteens, regardless of the time of day the content was shown. Sexual content on general entertainment free-to-view channels (i.e. those channels that are provided via digital platforms), was considered to be more acceptable than on the PSBs.

“I don’t think [channels] One to Five would show much at all, or not really graphic stuff, would they, really? You’d see stuff from freeview onwards, I suppose, not One to Five, particularly given their audience.”

Female, 25-34, ABC1, Parents of young children, London

Digital satellite and cable channels were seen as less widely available and therefore stronger sexual material on these channels was generally considered more acceptable. This was in part because participants recognised, to some extent, that parental responsibility increased if they chose to purchase a digital package. This was increased by the fact that it is possible for parents to put PIN controls on certain channels to restrict children’s viewing.

“If you choose to have Sky then you need to make sure you use the parental PIN options. There is a lot on Sky that’s not suitable for children and that’s your responsibility to guard against.”

Female, 18-24, ABC1, no children, Glasgow

Participants however stressed that knowing what to expect from a channel did not equate to a licence to show anything, even on premium subscription adult-sex channels. They still had concerns about sexual content that was broadcast free-to-view on both general entertainment channels and channels that were clearly signposted as channels showing ‘adult-sex’ material, for two reasons:

- Channels that are known for ‘adult-sex’ content could act as a signpost for older children and teenagers who were attempting to access ‘adult-sex’ material. This also applied to specific programmes that were known to show stronger sexual content on general entertainment channels; and
- The possibility of stumbling upon content unawares still existed. This was seen to be the case for both children and adults, and for both general entertainment

channels (if voluntary access restrictions had not been set up by the household) and adult-sex channels if they showed unrestricted promotional trailers.

This led participants, particularly parents, to attach conditions to the strongest sexual material around transmission times (above and beyond the watershed). Parents also considered there to be a need for a gradual transition to the strongest sexual content, and to look to other forms of protection (e.g. mandatory restricted access) regardless of which channel this material was shown on. These conditions of acceptability and access were still therefore said to be important even when viewers know what to expect from a channel, but in particular in relation to adult-sex channels and any promotional content they might transmit which is free-to-view. Participants voiced the strongest levels of acceptability for sexual content on premium subscription channels with mandatory access restrictions.

The time the material is shown

The **time** that material of a sexual nature is shown on television was considered important when protecting under-eighteens. Showing sexual material, particularly stronger sexual material, later at night was thought to protect both older and younger children from stumbling across it, and to help to limit the possibility of teenagers and older children from choosing to view strong content.

Many participants said they recognised that sexual material was freely available at any time of day on other forms of media (e.g. the internet, page three in newspapers, “lads” magazines). However television programmes were seen as being particularly influential. Participants spontaneously referred to the 21:00 watershed on television and said that their expectations of programmes changed after 21:00. The watershed was seen, both by parents and non-parents, as an important device in terms of protecting under-eighteens, and in particular younger children. However, there were concerns that it was not always adhered to, with some sexual material being shown before 21:00.

When discussing pre-watershed programming, some participants said they did not expect to see any sexual content apart from that which was very mild e.g. kissing and sexual innuendo. However, the majority of participants generally accepted that it might occasionally be shown before the watershed. However, it was clear that participants understood that whilst the watershed was in place to limit such material in terms of its explicitness there would be occasions (for example in a sex education documentary aimed at the under-eighteens) where representations of sex could be shown with the appropriate amount of editorial justification for doing so. Some participants talked about pre-watershed general entertainment programmes like *Friends*, where sexual content was implied but not explicitly shown, as being the limit of what they would want to see pre-watershed.

It was acknowledged, however, that sexual content has a role in reflecting real life. Most participants were keen to stress that by expressing their concerns about stronger sexual content shown earlier, they did not want to see all sexual content completely removed from all programmes.

“If you remove all sex from TV then you don’t have TV anymore, I mean even things like Friends and Scrubs which are harmless entertainment

programmes have got sex in, so you need to be clear that we're just talking about more extreme stuff."

Female, 18-24, ABC1, no children, Glasgow

However a minority of participants said they did not believe it was ever acceptable to show any type of sexual material before the watershed.

Participants said that they expected to see more sexual material post-watershed. However they believed that the gradation in what is acceptable, in terms of volume and strength of sexual material shown, was important to protect older children who either do not necessarily stop watching television at 21:00 or may intentionally seek out stronger sexual material. There was a sense among some participants that strong sexual material was sometimes shown too soon after 21:00 and some concern that the watershed may not provide sufficient protection for older children and young people. Many participants suggested stronger sexual material should be shown much later at night (e.g. from 22:30 or 23:00) and wanted to see greater care applied by broadcasters in relation to sexual content shown before this time.

Participants said they found stronger sexual content increasingly acceptable the more time that has elapsed since the watershed, with all expecting to see more and stronger content later in the evening (i.e. 22:30 or 23:00 onwards). This was generally seen as acceptable and appropriate scheduling. Some participants felt that there were several gradations of the time at which different material was acceptable after 21:00: with post 22:00 for stronger dramas (e.g. *Shameless* and *Sex and the City*) and post 23:00 for stronger, more explicit material.

"The soaps and what have you in the early evening are more suggestion and innuendo and that type of thing. Whereas the dramas you know sort of nine o'clock, ten o'clock drama type will perhaps be a bit more explicit, but then the films are shown even later and that makes sense."

Male, 35-54, ABC1, Parents of young children, Consett

Some participants (particularly parents) expressed concern that sexual content was being shown earlier and the level of sexual content was increasing overall, for example:

- daytime television programmes now occasionally included some mild sexual content;
- soaps and dramas, where some mild sexual material was expected, occasionally included some stronger and more unexpected material; and
- programmes such as dramas which it was understood would contain some stronger sexual content were said to be growing stronger in nature.

"I think there is quite a lot and even at sort of earlier times at night like if you watch Hollyoaks quite regularly, it does get quite into stuff that you wouldn't probably normally expect to see at half six or seven o'clock at night."

Male, 25-34, ABC1, no children, Leicester

The type of programme and editorial context

For most participants the **editorial context** of the material shown was felt to be key to perceptions of acceptability, with stronger content thought to require stronger editorial justification. Only a small number of participants did not consider the issue of editorial justification when evaluating the acceptability of sexual content. These participants fell into two groups with contrasting views. Both groups believed the primary issue was what was shown rather than the editorial context.

A minority of participants did not believe that stronger material necessarily needed to be accompanied by editorial context or that it required editorial justification. This view was more common among those with the strongest tolerance overall for sexual content.

In contrast some participants thought that sexual content could never be justified. This view tended to be held by a minority who had the lowest tolerance for sexual content. These participants did not want to see sexual content whatever the circumstances.

The editorial justification for showing sexual material was also linked by participants to the purpose of the programme. Overall, they accepted that educational programmes, documentaries and dramas broadcast post-watershed would include sexual content that was editorially justified.

In addition sexual content made with the perceived primary motivation of arousing the viewer (i.e. 'adult-sex' material) was deemed unacceptable on general entertainment free-to-view channels, particularly the PSBs. However, most participants accepted there was a place for this type of content on television although felt it should only be broadcast on 'adult-sex' channels subject to mandatory access restrictions.

"Why does it [sexual material] have to be there in normal programming? If you are watching and you see two people having sex, is it serving a purpose in the programme? And you can know that they have had sex without having to actually show it you know? I am not against watching sex on the TV ..., if you want to watch sex on the TV (i.e. adult material)."

Male, 35-54, ABC1, Parents of young children, Consett

"I flicked on, what was it, (a documentary about sex) man they have got some harsh stuff on there telling you how to do it, where to do it, who to do it with and everything and yes there is no need to be educated like that, that is porn in disguise."

Male, 25-34, ABC1, no children, Leicester

Closely linked to this, **the type of programme** also impacted on perceptions of acceptability for many. Some types of programmes were seen to warrant stronger sexual content than others, given that they were perceived to generally provide stronger editorial justification.

Factual programming, documentaries and educational programmes, were seen to present the strongest justification for including sexual content, particularly stronger sexual content. In these circumstances sexual material was often seen as necessary to support a point being discussed. Dramas were seen to present the next strongest justification, where the use of sexual material was potentially relevant to the plot or representation of other people's lives.

“Some of the dramas need that sort of sex... but there’s sex and there’s smut, you know. If it’s part of the story, its fine, but sometimes it goes into almost porn.”

Female, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

Programmes which included the strongest sexual material incorporated into what was claimed to be a documentary or drama were considered by some to be simply an excuse to show explicit (‘adult-sex’) content. Although this was felt to have a place on television, this was specifically in programmes where broadcasters applied mandatory access restrictions.

Signposting and viewer expectations

Programme titles were seen as useful devices in managing viewer expectations. Programmes with titles which clearly signposted that they would include material of a sexual nature were believed to have less chance of causing offence as the title helped provide an indication. Titles were also seen to aid parents protecting under-eighteens, because parents would have an idea beforehand of what the programme might contain.

“It’s in the title of the programme though, so if you watch Sex in the City (sic) you know it’s going to show people having sex in a city!”

London, Female, 25-34 ABC1, younger children

Therefore, overall participants believed that stronger sexual material was to some extent more acceptable in programmes where the title clearly signposted its content. ‘*Sex and the City*’ was spontaneously mentioned in most groups as an example of a programme which contained some scenes of a strong sexual nature clearly signposted. However, participants were very clear in their view that simply providing signposting through the word “sex” in the title did not mean that channels should show inappropriate content.

Pre-programme information or guidance from the broadcaster was seen as another measure which helped manage viewer expectations and therefore was thought to make the inclusion of sexual material, particularly stronger sexual material, more acceptable. Pre-programme information to avoid personal offence was seen as particularly important by older participants who were, in general, more concerned about personal offence than younger participants.

“I watched Embarrassing Bodies and they sometimes say at the beginning, ‘Look away’ so it allows viewer discretion with things like sex and bad language.”

Female, 25-34, C2DE, no children, Birmingham

“They do warn you beforehand don’t they, sex and bad language. And if you don’t want to watch it, you turn it off.”

Female, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Cardiff

Participants also referred to how television viewing has changed, with many saying that flicking between channels led to them missing the start of a programme and the pre-

programme information. This led some participants to suggest that there should be greater use of information within programmes. For example information should be shown immediately prior to the sexual material being featured (i.e. at the closest preceding advert break), or programmes should have on-screen text information/guidance intermittently throughout the programme rather than just at the start. This was thought to be particularly relevant when the sexual content was quite a long way into the programme. Participants did recognise that this style of information/guidance would be more difficult on BBC channels without advert breaks.

Participants did not think that information and guidance should provide a blanket justification for broadcasters to show anything they wanted, and other conditions of acceptability as explored above were equally important.

“Just because there is a warning shown, you wouldn’t want complete filth to follow, it still needs other rules in place.”

Female, 25-34, C2DE, young children, London

Location on the EPG was also mentioned by some participants. For example it was felt that viewers would know what to expect from a channel located within the adult section of the EPG.

3.4 Perceived acceptability of different types of content

In addition to contextual considerations, the content of what is shown was thought to be equally important in determining perceived levels of acceptability. Through the course of discussions both before and after the clips were shown, participants discussed the importance of the type of content, and the way in which it was treated. Whilst many considerations were initially raised spontaneously, participants were subsequently prompted to consider a range of sexual content such as nudity, images of genitals, kissing and group sex.

This section explores responses from both the spontaneous discussions and prompted discussions of different types of content and their treatment (see also section 3.2).

The specifics of the content, and the way in which the content was treated were important considerations alongside the context. Participants therefore found it hard to provide “in principle” views of different types of sexual material on television in isolation from the clips. Some participants initially said that both male and female genitals should never be allowed on television without mandatory access restrictions in place. However their views changed when they considered the type of programme in which it might be permissible to show these images and the type of image. For example sexual material shown in an educational programme with images from a distance rather than close up might be acceptable.

Before viewing the clips, participants were asked about their views in general in relation to different types of sexual content. Participants found it difficult to discuss their attitudes to different types of sexual content in the absence of examples to talk about and make specific reference to. However, some consistencies in views did emerge, which are explored below.

Kissing

Many thought that sexual innuendo and kissing should be unrestricted. The majority of respondents believed that mild sexual content which they described as kissing could be shown unrestricted, in any programme at any time of day. A minority of participants felt kissing should be shown after 21:00 given that it can vary in strength – one example given was the ‘Kiss TV advert’ with prolonged and intimate kissing. However most participants felt that children would be exposed to mild sexual content in their day to day lives, e.g. parents kissing or people in the street, and thought this need not be restricted on television.

“Kissing is alright before nine because kids are going to see that in a morning if their dad’s going to work and their mum’s taking them to school or vice versa.”

Male, 18-24, C2DE, no children, Belfast

The acceptability of kissing with sexual overtones depended on whether anything else was happening. The stronger the sexual overtones seen on screen, e.g. petting, groping, the later participants felt the content should be shown, specifically post watershed. However, implied sexual overtones, for example going upstairs or closing the bedroom

door, divided participants. Some felt they were acceptable pre-watershed as nothing was actually shown on screen, while others thought they should be shown after 21:00 as it would be clear that sex was going to take place.

Mild portrayals of sexual acts

Mild portrayals of sexual acts (this would typically be a short and inexplicit scene of two adults having sex, although without showing any images of genitals), and the noise of people having sex, were seen as acceptable on television without access restrictions (either mandatory or voluntary) in place. However, the majority of participants said they believed this material should only be shown after 21:00. Others (mainly those with more liberal attitudes) disagreed, believing that soaps and programmes such as *Friends*, *Scrubs* and *Hollyoaks* all showed mild portrayals of sex in an appropriate way before the watershed. The type of programme the material is shown within was an important factor for many participants, with mild portrayals of sex being seen as more appropriate in documentaries, comedies and dramas, and less acceptable on reality television.

Many participants found the noise of people having sex on a par with mild portrayals of sex regardless of whether any sexual content was actually shown. Others put it more on a par with fairly explicit sex scenes, as they viewed the vocalisation as being very graphic in nature and said they could be embarrassed by it.

Nudity

Nudity provoked a mixed reaction from participants given that it covered a broad range of material. Most placed it in the context of other media, for example shower adverts, "lads" magazines or page three in newspapers. They believed this type of material to be acceptable on television without access restrictions (either mandatory or voluntary) in place, after the watershed as long as the imagery was not too prolonged, close up or gratuitous, and if the image was justified editorially. The more time that had passed since 21:00, the more acceptable this imagery was seen to become. Some participants were, however, more reserved, and said they believed this material only to be acceptable if desexualised (e.g. shown as part of a medical documentary).

"Society is a bit hung up on naked bodies but it is fairly natural so I think if it was in an educational programme even before 9pm I don't think a kid would be offended, but it depends on the context."

Male, 18-24, ABC1, No children, London

In discussion there was some feeling that people were more accustomed to seeing naked women than men, but participants said material showing both men and women should be regulated in a similar manner. Images of nudity in which the whole body was shown were felt by some to be more acceptable than those focusing or perceived to linger on specific body parts (i.e. breasts, buttocks or genitals), although again this was felt to be heavily influenced by context and editorial justification.

Male and female genitals

Participants were split in their perceptions of whether or not it was acceptable to show images of genitals on television without access restrictions (either mandatory or voluntary) in place. An approximately equal proportion of participants said they believed that images of male or female genitals should appear after 21:00 if the context

demanded, compared to those who said that such images should not be shown without mandatory access restrictions.

Those participants who said they thought it was acceptable to show material of this nature on television without any access restrictions (either mandatory or voluntary) in place said they would expect to see these images in a desexualised and editorially justified manner, such as on educational programmes (e.g. the recent *Sex Education Show* on Channel 4). In discussion it was clear that views depended on how graphic the material was. If male genitals were depicted in a state of arousal, this was nearly always seen to be unacceptable.

“The female genitals - we see those in medical programmes when ladies are giving birth.”

Male, 55+, ABC1, No children, Leicester

“Well, I put on here (wrote on the individual questionnaire when asked about the acceptability of male genitals on TV) if flaccid, because if it's not then I'd go for PIN protected. If it's just the willy then I'm alright with that after 9pm.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, Parents of older children, Birmingham

Sexual intercourse

For participants the term “sexual intercourse” again covered a wide range of potential material. Participants considered a number of key factors when assessing the acceptability of particular content.

Firstly they took into account which body parts would be visible. While participants drew the line in different places, generally scenes showing or depicting sexual intercourse which focussed on the less sexual parts of the body (such as arms and backs) were seen as more acceptable. However scenes showing more private body parts (especially breasts, vaginas and penises, but also to some extent buttocks) were seen as less acceptable with the majority of participants saying they did not want or expect to see such material on television without some form of restriction.

A further consideration was whether there was editorial justification for the sex scene, or whether the scene was gratuitous. Most participants believed that sexual intercourse should not just be shown as “sex for sex's sake”. Linked to this, participants took into account how long the scene lasted and how tasteful the images were. Participants also felt that programmes showing scenes of sexual intercourse should either be signalled by information or guidance, or it should be reasonably implied from the programme title that stronger sexual material was likely to occur.

“I'm sure we've all seen a programme when you think that's just an excuse to get a sex scene in or a programme about sex where the content is very flimsy or whatever. Whereas if it's a serious educational programme talking about sexually transmitted disease (it) might be acceptable. And I think we can all tell the difference between a naked couple in bed and when it has a serious point to make.”

Male, 55+, ABC1, No children, Leicester

“Okay, the educational stuff, you can understand that it’s informative, but the stuff that just turns into soft-core porn, it has to be encrypted [access restricted].”

Male, 55+, C2DE, Mix of children at home/no children, Belfast

The majority of participants felt that images showing sexual intercourse were acceptable after 21:00 if the context required it and if it was handled “tastefully”. This was a rather inexact term which could encompass lighting, camera angles, the amount of time the camera lingered on the actors and exactly what could be seen. To be tasteful it was thought that a sex scene should not show genitals. However, participants said that stronger images showing sexual intercourse should be shown well after 21:00 (i.e. 22:30 or 23:00) to protect the under-eighteens.

Participants did not seem to distinguish between real sexual intercourse and portrayals of intercourse per se, rather it was the strength of the content that most concerned them and the way in which it was presented. This was primarily because participants said they found it hard to tell whether real sex was being shown unless the images were very close up i.e. focussed on the genitals. This would in itself make the sex scene more graphic and less acceptable for broadcast for the vast majority of participants, without mandatory or voluntary access restrictions. There was however some sense that simulated representations of sexual intercourse were generally handled more tastefully than real sexual intercourse and therefore would be more acceptable in more instances. Overall it was the strength of the broadcast content, the way in which it was presented and the purpose of the broadcast that most concerned participants.

Almost all participants showed more tolerance for images showing consensual sex between two people, and less tolerance for even a ‘mild’ image that differed from this, e.g. group sex or sex involving fetishes. Whilst most participants said they recognised that they could not shield children from portrayals of sex entirely, they were concerned that children would be influenced by representations of sex, or images showing real sex, on television. Participants said they were concerned that children would start to experiment with what they perceived to be more extreme forms of sex, because they have seen it in the media. Many participants said that images of anal sex, group sex and sex involving fetishes were also personally offensive and this made them less acceptable. It was also perceived that fetish or group sex was often used for shock value, while “straightforward” sex is more often used with editorial justification (e.g. with relevance to a plot).

“This is just a personal thing but there should be more normal sex on TV because kids, well I say kids, you see teenagers and all this they see what people are doing on TV. ‘Oh lets go out and buy a sex toy’ and everyone is like blaring it about left right and centre; there is not a lot of actual normal sexual activity on the TV to encourage kids to be more what I would say is traditional.”

Male, 25-34, ABC1, no children, Leicester

Other types of material

Some participants were also concerned about representations of sexual behaviour between young adults fearing that younger teenagers could copy this behaviour. Some

participants thought it never acceptable to show suggestive or sexual behaviour involving teenagers on television; however, most believed it to be acceptable on television after 21:00.

Other concerns

Some participants spontaneously said they were concerned about a range of other aspects of sexual content on television. Representations of sexual violence on television and in the media generally were seen as the type of material most likely to cause personal offence, and to have the gravest implications if under-eighteens were exposed to it. It was either seen as totally unacceptable or as requiring the strongest editorial justification. Participants believed that it would rarely be necessary to show this type of material and that it could nearly always be implied rather than shown, without compromising the understanding of the viewer. Even when this type of material was perceived to be editorially justified, most participants said they personally would not want to watch such material.

The treatment of the sexual material

Whether or not a sexual image was considered acceptable also depended on how it was treated as well as what was actually shown and the context in which it was portrayed. Specific considerations around how it was treated included:

- Which **body parts** could be seen: buttocks were generally viewed as the most acceptable body part, with breasts being acceptable depending on the length of time the camera lingered on them, with a longer time reducing acceptability. Genitals were perceived as instantly making the scene more graphic and to sharply reduce acceptability;
- Which **camera angles** were used: an oblique, distance or obscured shot was felt to be more acceptable than a full-frontal, close-up shot;
- Whether **shots changed quickly** or rested on one image for a long time: participants said that resting on one scene for a long time made them feel more intimately involved, increasing embarrassment and reducing acceptability;
- The total **length** of the scene: a longer scene was generally seen as being less acceptable as it made participants feel more intimately involved and could cause embarrassment. The longer the scene, the more likely it was considered it would be perceived as gratuitous and subsequently unacceptable;
- How '**tasteful**' the images were: as previously described "tastefulness" was a nebulous, inexact and personally subjective concept that brought in elements of directorial treatment, lighting, and relationship to plot;
- How the scene was **lit**: dim lighting was said to increase acceptability as it reduced the amount that could be seen and hence the overall extent to which the scene would be perceived as explicit; and
- What **sounds** accompanied the images: no sound at all was perceived as being the most acceptable, followed by sounds of kissing. Moans and any other noises were said to be far less acceptable, with many feeling that explicit sounds could be as unacceptable as explicit visuals. If there were sounds, the louder they were the more likely participants said they would be to be deemed unacceptable. Again, this was partly because people thought that explicit sounds made them feel more intimately involved and therefore increase the potential for both personal offence, and embarrassment.

3.5 Reactions to the clips

- Following detailed discussion of the principles underpinning responses to the acceptability of material of a sexual nature on television, participants were shown nine clips as examples of programmes featuring material of a sexual nature that have recently been broadcast on television. These clips had been selected by Ofcom to demonstrate a range of different types of sexual material that has been available without mandatory access restrictions on television (including some material which Ofcom found to have breached its rules). Participants were asked to view each clip and then immediately rate their initial reactions regarding its acceptability, taking contextual factors into account. Discussion and exploration of the reasons for their answers then followed.
- Participants were given the opportunity to opt out of viewing the clips if they so wished, based on a description of the material that was read out prior to viewing. In total four participants (out of 169) chose to opt out of viewing clips 5 and 6; three participants chose to opt out of viewing clips 7, 8 and 9 (one participant opted out and then opted back in).
- The nine clips were by necessity brief (up to three minutes each in length) and were used for illustration purposes only as a stimulus to discuss responses to the type of material shown. The clips were chosen by Ofcom to illustrate three areas of programming: daytime/pre-watershed programmes; post-watershed programmes; and material that had some or many of the characteristics of ‘adult-sex’ material. The clips illustrated a range of sexual material that has recently been broadcast at different times across different channels. These channels included the public service broadcasters, digital terrestrial, and digital satellite and cable channels. They also represented different types of programmes (including mainstream and adult dramas, and documentaries), as well as free-to-view promotional trailers broadcast to promote adult-sex channels which are otherwise subject to mandatory access restrictions. **The clips were chosen to illustrate concepts and therefore did not necessarily provide a balanced representation of the individual programmes.** The channel, time and programme type for each clip are given in the table below.

Clip 1	ITV1, 15:00, general entertainment
Clip 2	Channel 4, 20:00, documentary
Clip 3	BBC Two, 21:00, drama
Clip 4	Five, 23:00, documentary
Clip 5	Virgin 1, 22:00, documentary
Clip 6	Virgin 1, 23:00, documentary
Clip 7	Playboy One, 23:00, drama
Clip 8	Spice Extreme, 20:00, free-to-view trailer
Clip 9	Red Hot 40+, midnight, free-to-view trailer

3.5.1 How the clips were shown and analysis of questionnaire data

Before showing each clip, a brief explanation of the programme and its context was provided to participants as background (although no information on whether Ofcom had investigated the programme was given). Participants' views were therefore based on their judgement of the brief clip they were shown rather than viewing the entire programme. As well as discussing how acceptable each clip was, participants also indicated on a questionnaire using a scale of 1 to 10 how acceptable they thought it was. Scores were grouped as follows: 1-4 'unacceptable', 5-7 'neutral' and 8-10 'acceptable'.

The use of individual self-completion questionnaires generated some indicative quantitative data alongside the points raised in the discussion. These quantitative findings should be treated as indicative only due to the overall sample size and because the sample was not selected with the aim of giving an exact representation of the population as a whole, but with the aim of providing enough people in all the groups of interest to conduct qualitative discussion groups.

In addition, the questions were normally completed prior to discussion and therefore capture a more spontaneous view compared to what was expressed once participants had the opportunity to fully consider and debate their views. Please note the following about the indicative quantitative data shown in this section:

- Figures shown are based on all participants who chose not to opt out of viewing the clips;
- Some participants did not answer all questions, therefore not all figures add up to 100%.

3.5.2 Participants' views of the clips

This section explores participants' reaction to each clip in turn. A brief description of the content of each clip is included before the subsequent analysis.

The factors participants considered when evaluating the clips were consistent with those identified in the earlier in-principle discussions about sexual material. Additional contextual factors were also important, including the content and how it is treated.

Reactions to the examples of material shown in the clips were mixed, with all clips seen as acceptable by some and as unacceptable by others, reflecting differences in demographics and attitudes to sexual material in general. Younger people (particularly men) and those with more liberal attitudes, tended to regard many of the clips as more acceptable than older people (particularly women). Those with children at home and those with more conservative attitudes to sexual material also tended to regard the clips as less acceptable.

Figure 4: Summary of sub-group responses to the clips

More likely to find the clips acceptable	Less likely to find the clips acceptable
Participants aged 25-34	Participants aged 35+
Those without children at home	Those with children at home
Those with liberal attitudes	Those with conservative views
Male participants (especially younger men)	Female participants (particularly older women)

However, despite these variations, some examples of material were clearly seen as more acceptable than others by the majority of participants.

In the following section we discuss respondents' reactions to each clip in detail.

Clips 1-2: Daytime/pre-watershed

Clip 1

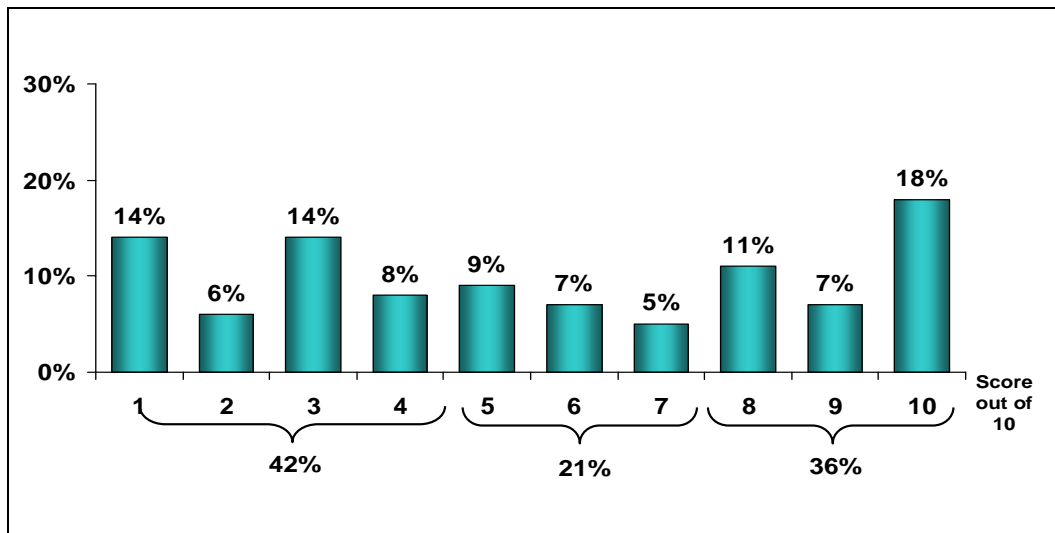
Description

Clip 1 was taken from a daytime, general light-entertainment programme aimed at adults. It was broadcast at 15:00 on ITV1 during school term time. It featured the programme's resident "sexpert" on a bed with the presenter humorously discussing a range of sex toys including a number of different dildos.

Summary of reactions

This clip divided participants. While it is possible with most of the subsequent clips to ascertain whether the majority regarded them as acceptable or unacceptable, with this particular clip a similar proportion believed that the material was acceptable (36%) as considered it unacceptable (42%). In addition, this polarity was evident when comparing the highest and the lowest possible score (10 vs. 1) - just under one in five (18%) believed this clip to be totally acceptable but almost as many (14%) regarded it as totally unacceptable. Twenty-one per cent (21%) were neutral.

Figure 5 Reactions to clip 1



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is completely acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 169 participants (Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- It showed mild sexual imagery/innuendo;
- The images shown were not considered as overly sexual which some participants said meant that viewers would not realise what the toys were for unless they already knew – i.e. it would not harm or offend those under-eighteen;
- No explanation was given as to how the sex toys should be used: there was no description of the purpose of the sex toys shown, and the purpose was only implied in the clip. It was considered that younger children would not realise what the programme was about, which, it was felt, in itself would protect them to some extent;
- The use of humour: some participants believed that the use of humour in the clip made the sexual content more acceptable, given its light-hearted style and tone;
- It was a programme clearly aimed at an adult audience;
- Some participants said that children would not be attracted to this programme and would switch over if it came on television, thereby limiting the possibility of harming under-eighteens;
- It was shown when children were at school or when some participants said that their viewing would be policed by parents, so parental responsibility was a key issue in this instance; and
- There was a preamble before any sexual imagery was shown: the long introduction by the presenter was seen by some participants to give adequate indication as to the content, which it was thought would enable viewers to switch off if they did not want to view.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- There was an expectation among some participants that sexual material of any nature would be shown later;
- There was some concern that children might be at home and watching television at this time of day and that the laughter on the clip would attract their attention. Some parents also said that they did not expect to have to police television at 15:00, and therefore would not expect or be looking out for content of this nature, so increasing the possibility of children viewing;
- The justification of it being shown during school hours and in term time was not seen as a hard and fast rule: participants said that there are always exceptions, for example in Scotland participants stated that their school terms run very differently to English school terms. Other participants said that children might be sick and off school and so could potentially view this programme regardless of the fact it was shown during school hours and in term time;
- There was general agreement among these participants that the subject matter of sex toys was unsuitable for the time of broadcast, particularly given that the presenters were on a bed and given the extent of sexual innuendo used;
- Some parents were concerned that children could start asking awkward questions if they viewed content of this nature; and
- Some participants were concerned that elderly people could be offended by content of this nature (although older respondents said that they were not offended by the content).

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

This clip would have been more acceptable to more participants if it had been shown after the watershed at 21:00, so there was less chance of young children stumbling across content – although others felt that the content was so mild that it was acceptable to show before the watershed.

“I didn’t find the actual programme offensive at all. I just think (it was unsuitable) for that time of day.”

Female, 34-54, ABC1, older children, Birmingham

Some participants felt that the fact that the discussion occurred on a bed added unnecessary sexual innuendo. If the conversation about sex toys had happened behind a desk or in a more neutral studio environment it would have desexualised the item and made it more acceptable to some participants.

Many participants felt that the programme was not the typical type of programme in which they would have expected to see material of a sexual nature. Linking to the importance of knowing what to expect from programmes (See section 3.2), some participants said the content would have been more appropriate if it had been included in a programme in which participants would expect it, such as *The Graham Norton Show* or *Loose Women*.

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Levels of acceptability varied according to the age and life-stage of participants. Those participants aged 35-54 were more likely to find this clip less acceptable. This can be linked to the fact they are the age group most likely to have children and the key concern with this clip was around protection of the under-eighteens. Those aged 55+ were more likely to find this clip acceptable given that the programme was thought to be aimed at this demographic.

The age of children watching television was a concern to participants. Those with younger children were more likely to be concerned about this clip given that their children would be most likely to be watching and therefore needed protecting from it. Those with more conservative views found this clip significantly less acceptable than those with liberal views. This pattern was repeated throughout the subsequent clips.

Clip 2

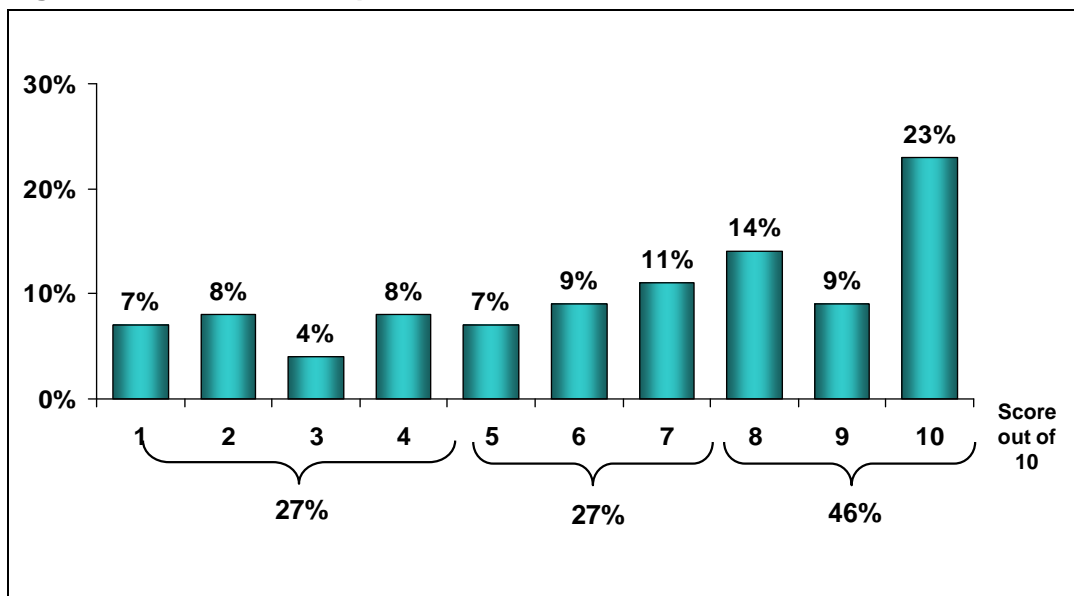
Description

A one-off documentary featuring a well known presenter transmitted from 20:00 on Channel 4, with a sex-education purpose. The programme explored the reasons why the UK has such a high rate of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and investigated the teaching of sex education in schools in the UK compared to Holland. The programme featured some brief scenes of an explicit nature, including naked cartoon characters having sex and masturbating, and anatomical drawings of sex organs taken from a Dutch sex-education video.

Summary of reactions

Overall the majority of respondents (46%) thought that this clip was broadly acceptable, with around a quarter (23%) believing it was completely acceptable. Twenty-seven per cent (27%) thought it neutral. At the other end of the scale, just under one in ten (7%) found this clip totally unacceptable, whilst around a quarter of participants found the clip unacceptable overall (27%).

Figure 6: Reactions to clip 2



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 169 participants

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- Most participants felt that the fact this programme was educational and provided strong editorial justification for the sexual material that was shown. They believed that showing material of this nature was warranted, given that the aim of the programme was to educate young people about safe sex;
- Some participants believed that in this instance it was acceptable to show material of a sexual nature before the watershed, given that it was aimed at young people rather than adults and for a reason that most deemed to be important;
- The title clearly flagged up what the programme would be about since it contained the word “sex”. Therefore some participants believed that potential viewers would have been adequately warned about the content that would follow. This was also thought to ensure that parents would have been given an indication about the content of the programme from which they could make a decision not to watch it or allow their children to watch it;
- It was the type of programme some participants said they expected to see on this channel and therefore their expectations of the content were somewhat managed; and
- The images shown were all cartoons: their use to depict sexual material made this clip acceptable for some. Some participants stated that if these had been

images or real nudity and genitals they would have found it far more unacceptable.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- 20:00 was seen as too early by some, who felt that children who might be too young to fully understand the context might have been watching. Parents said they were concerned about their children learning about sex before they were ready. Some parents also stated that they did not expect to have to police television at 20:00 as it was before the watershed, and therefore that they would not expect or be looking out for content of this type; and
- While most participants accepted that the cartoons of sex and of how genitals developed were necessary for the editorial content of the programme, some felt that the images of masturbation did not add anything to the programme and could have been considered gratuitous.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

This clip would have been more acceptable to more participants if it had been shown after 21:00. Most participants believed that the target audience of teenagers would still have been watching television, but that younger children would have been in bed. This eased participants' concerns about younger children learning about sex too early, whilst also respecting the boundary of the watershed.

“Teenagers are awake at 9pm, 10pm whereas the younger children will have gone to bed by that time. Whereas 8pm, they could still have been up.”

Female, 35-54, C2DE, No children, Cardiff

Some participants also felt that if the cartoons depicting masturbation had been removed they would have found this clip more acceptable and editorially justified.

“They didn't need to show some of the cartoons I don't think, they went a bit far, but then much better than real people.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, older children, Birmingham

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Once again there were some differences by age in terms of which sub groups were more or less likely to find this clip acceptable. Younger participants (those under 35) both men and women, were more likely to find this clip acceptable than older participants of both genders.

Whether participants had children or not also made some difference to views, but the biggest differences were seen by looking at the age of their children. Those with children were more likely to find this less acceptable than those without children as a whole; however those with younger children were more likely to find this clip less acceptable than those with older children. Parents of younger children said they were concerned about their children learning about sex before they were ready, because it was shown pre-watershed.

Once again those with more conservative views were more likely to find this clip unacceptable than those with liberal views.

Clips 3 – 6: Post-watershed programmes

Clip 3

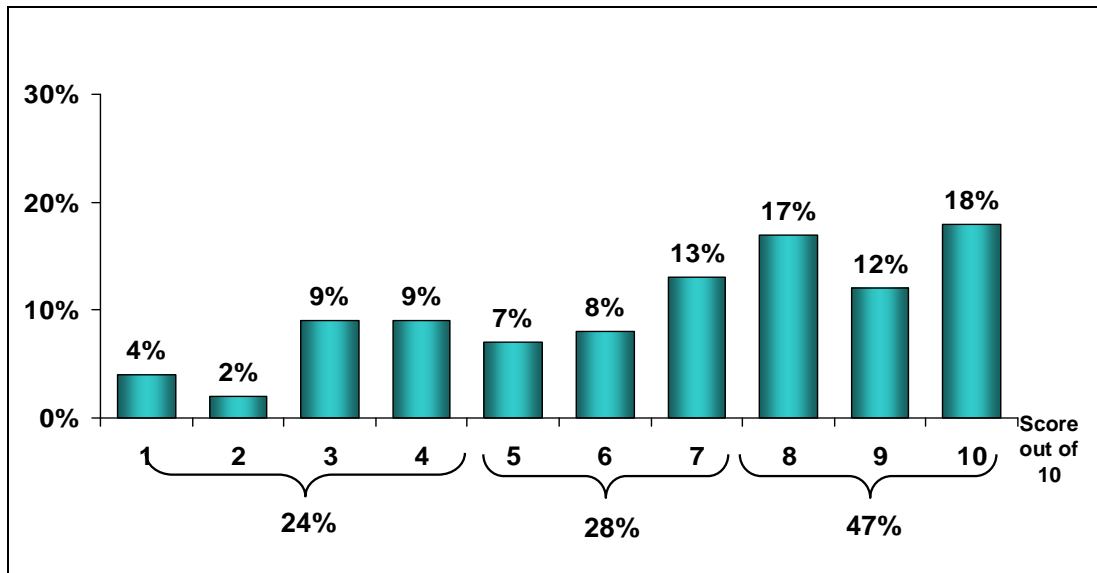
Description

A serialised historical drama transmitted from 21:00 on BBC Two. The programme featured a scene showing a female character engaged in sexual intercourse with a man to the point of climax and a second scene which showed the same female character bathing naked and stepping out of the bath with her son looking on.

Summary of reactions

Just under half of all participants (47%) thought this clip was broadly acceptable, a further 28% were neutral, whilst around a quarter (24%) thought it was broadly unacceptable. This was similar to the responses regarding acceptability with clip 2. Looking at the most acceptable and least acceptable scores, more participants thought this clip was totally acceptable (18%) than totally unacceptable (4%).

Figure 7: Reactions to clip 3



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 169 participants (Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- It was shown after 21:00 and therefore was seen to respect the watershed;

- Some participants did not believe the imagery shown to be very strong: the sex scene did not show extensive nudity, and the images were seen by many participants to be depicted tastefully with little focus on breasts or genitalia;
- It was seen as a programme clearly aimed at an adult audience: many participants perceived that children were not going to be interested in a historical drama and therefore believed there was less chance of children choosing to view this programme regardless of time of day. Furthermore, some participants said this programme was shown on a channel that tended not to market itself towards young people and therefore was unlikely to attract children;
- The sexual content was seen as editorially justified by many: the content was seen to show what life was like in the time period that the drama was depicting, and therefore it was seen as a critical part of the story and important for character development and historical accuracy;
- Content like this was expected as part of drama of this nature shown on this channel;
- Participants were familiar with dramas of this nature and said that knowing what to expect from a drama of this type shown on this channel helped to manage their expectations and assist in choosing what to view; and
- For some, the use of soft lighting helped make the material more acceptable.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants believed it was shown too early: they did not believe that enough time had passed since 21:00 for scenes of this nature to be shown, given their view that there should be a slower transition to more explicit material following the watershed;
- Some participants felt that while the sex scene was important to the story, the scene itself went on longer than was necessary. The camera was also seen to linger on the genital region (although no genitals were actually shown) which some also felt was unnecessary;
- Similarly the scene in the bath was seen as gratuitous by some, who considered that the full frontal nudity shot in the bath was not necessary to the plot at all and that it could have been implied. Some considered that the footage also lingered on the naked woman, and felt this was unnecessary; and
- There was some discomfort with the mother/son dimension: these participants felt that the son should not have seen his mother naked and they were particularly concerned because he looked so young.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

This clip would have been more acceptable to more participants if it had been shown slightly later: most participants who found it unacceptable suggested after 22:00 as they considered that the likelihood of young children stumbling across it would be decreased significantly.

“I think if it was on later it would have been better, perhaps 10pm or 10.30pm would have been better just to make sure children aren’t watching as it is quite explicit.”

Male, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Belfast

Participants said it would also have been more acceptable to them if the images had been less “gratuitous” at times, for example if the sex scene was shorter, with fewer

close ups on the groin area (even given that no genitalia were seen) and if it had not included the full frontal nudity in the bath.

“It wouldn’t have made the programme less interesting, it would have told the storyline just as well if they didn’t show the whole, what they showed. I don’t think it needed it.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, Older children, Birmingham

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

There were some differences according to gender in how likely participants were to find this clip acceptable or unacceptable. Male participants were more likely to find it acceptable than female participants, with younger men (under 35) being the most likely to say this clip was acceptable.

Clip 4

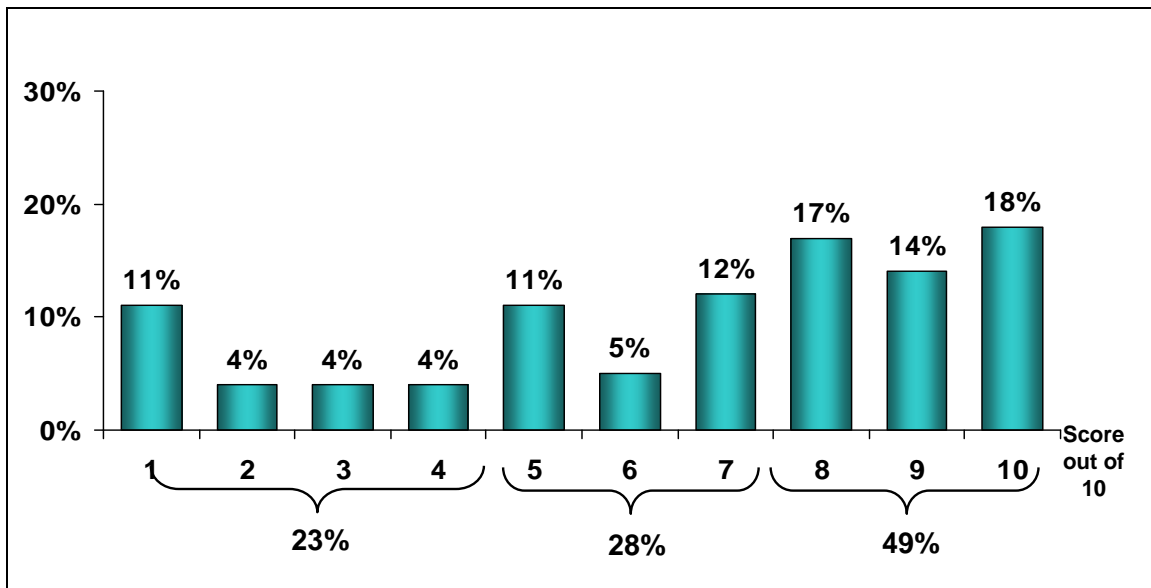
Description

A clip from a documentary series broadcast from 23:00 on Five exploring attitudes to sex with an educational and entertainment purpose. The programme was presented by a doctor and included contributions from sexual health experts and other medical professionals on a range of subjects including group-sex. It featured material of a strong sexual nature including blurred and pixellated images of consensual group-sex, and footage, filmed inside a vagina, of the entry of an erect penis.

Summary of reactions

Once again a similar overall pattern of responses to clips two and three emerged, with just under half of all participants (49%) finding this clip broadly acceptable, a further 28% were neutral, and just under one quarter (23%) finding it broadly unacceptable. Views were however slightly more polarised for this clip, with approximately one in ten (11%) finding this clip totally unacceptable and just under two in ten (18%) finding it totally acceptable.

Figure 8: Reactions to clip 4



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 169 participants

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- Despite the fact that some participants believed the images shown were strong, the fact that they were shown within an educational programme, which included footage of a doctor, provided some editorial justification;
- The programme's title gave a clear explanation of its content: it contained the word 'sex', therefore participants felt they would have been pre-warned that it was likely to show material of a sexual nature;
- Some participants believed it was shown at a suitable time: it was shown at 23:00 which was seen as being far enough past the watershed by many participants for more graphic images to be allowed. Both younger and older children were no longer expected to be watching television at this point;
- Participants said they expected to see material of a sexual nature shown on this channel. Therefore their expectations upon viewing this channel would be, to an extent, managed; and
- Genitalia were pixellated which meant that some participants felt this material was acceptable given they actually saw very little detail.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants believed this material was too graphic to be transmitted without some form of access restriction: the images shown shocked some participants, particularly because they were shown on a PSB channel which participants presumed showed the least amount of sexual material out of all channels (See section 3.2);
- Some participants worried that this clip could cause offence;
- Concerns were raised that adults who stumbled across this might be offended by the content. They assumed that children would be in bed by 23:00 and therefore protection of under-eighteens was less of an issue;

- Not all the content was seen as editorially justified; and
- While some participants considered that the first images of an internal camera (footage, filmed inside a vagina, of the entry of an erect penis) and different sex positions could be seen as educational, the second half of the clip featuring group sex was seen by some participants as “soft porn”. The lighting of the images also changed from quite a clinical light to a soft focus blue, which was felt to highlight the difference between the two sections. Some considered the primary purpose of this “educational documentary” to be just an excuse to show explicit sexual content.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

Some participants commented on the use of the sound of people having sex in the soundtrack over the doctor’s dialogue, which for some undermined the educational purpose.

Some participants felt that the programme should have had information or guidance from the broadcaster at the beginning of the programme and then repeated throughout, in case people tuned in half way through. (This was the case in the broadcast programme.)

“Every so often it should say coming up is sexually explicit content.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, parent of older children, Birmingham

A minority of participants thought it would have been more acceptable if shown later, i.e. after midnight, as they still had concerns about older children being up that late.

“It’s just that it’s on Channel Five and that’s normal telly. It might offend my nan if she switched over at that time of night, it needed a warning or to be shown much later.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, older children, Birmingham

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

For this clip, age and gender worked together to reveal differences in perceived acceptability. Men, particularly younger men aged under 35, were more likely to say this clip was acceptable than women. However younger women found this clip more acceptable than older women.

Once again there was a difference by the age of participants’ children. Those with older children were more likely to find this clip less acceptable than those with younger children. This is because they presumed only older children would still be awake at this time of night and might seek out this content. Those with more conservative views found this clip significantly less acceptable than those with liberal views.

Clip 5

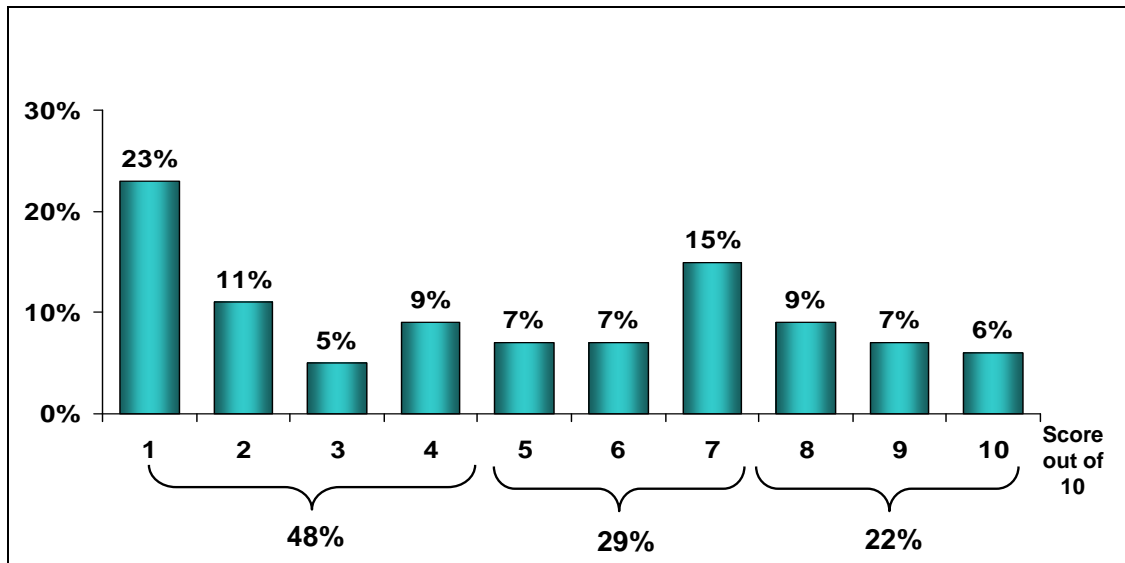
Description

An observational or “fly-on-the wall” documentary broadcast after 22:00 on Virgin 1 which took a light-hearted look at the sex industry and included material of a strong sexual nature. This episode focused on the issue of men who are married to actresses who work in the adult film industry. This clip opened with an interview with one of the actresses who removed an anal plug and placed it in her mouth in front of the presenter. There followed an interview with her husband on a film set. In the background, as he and the interviewer looked on, the actress was shown engaged in several sex acts, including anal and oral sex, with three male actors. The images of the actual sex acts were masked and limited so as not to reveal any genital detail, although the nature of the sex was clear to the viewer.

Summary of reactions

Just under half of all participants (48%) believed this clip was unacceptable overall, with approximately one in four (23%) believing it was totally unacceptable. Twenty-nine per cent (29%) were neutral. One in five participants believed this material was acceptable overall (22%) – the smallest proportion of any clip – with just one in twenty (6%) believing this was totally acceptable.

Figure 9: Reactions to clip 5



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 163 participants. (Total does not add up to 100 due to rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- Some participants believed there was a place for this type of material on television (although often those with this view said that the place for this type of material was either very late at night – 23:00 or midnight onwards – or with some form of access restriction);

- Despite being quite shocked by the content and stating that they would not want to watch it themselves, some participants felt that it should be shown because others might want to watch it. They thought that just because it was not personally appealing to them that did not mean it should not be shown on television;
- It took a humorous approach which made the content more acceptable for some – particularly younger participants;
- It was on a channel provided on digital satellite and cable and digital terrestrial. As stated in section 3.2, some participants expected to see more graphic material on these platforms;
- The people featured in the clips were all consenting adults; and
- Some participants believed this material to be justified for the time of day: the programme was shown an hour after the watershed, which was when some participants expected stronger sexual material to start appearing on television.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants believed it was shown too early: many of these participants felt that 22:00 was not late enough after the watershed as many older children were still watching television at this time, therefore they were concerned about protection of under-eighteens;
- The content was not seen as editorially justified by some: many of these participants did not see this as a real documentary or believe it provided strong enough editorial justification for some of the imagery. Some participants also questioned the motivation of the programme maker, believing that the purpose was arousal rather than entertainment or education;
- Some of the content was seen as gratuitous: these participants did not think there was a reason to show some of the material; particularly the woman removing an anal plug where the shot was perceived to linger for longer than necessary;
- The title of the programme did not signpost the content adequately for some: it did not contain the word “sex” and did not automatically make them think of sex, and therefore some thought the content was inappropriate. Furthermore some participants commented that the name of the programme is also the title of a film, which could mislead some potential viewers;
- Some participants believed this material should not be shown without mandatory access restrictions. The material was not seen as appropriate by some because it was on a channel located close to other channels that transmit general entertainment as opposed to ‘adult-sex’ material. It was therefore seen as more readily accessible and available to view than ‘adult-sex’ channels located in the adult section of the EPG which have mandatory access restrictions. Some participants believed it therefore should not have shown ‘adult-sex’ material or stronger sexual content as there was a greater potential for offence of both adults and under-eighteens;
- The material was seen by some to break perceived sexual norms: many participants raised concerns with the type of sex this clip portrayed and the messages it could potentially send out – it showed group sex and the woman in the documentary was having sex with three men who were not her husband;
- Some concern about offence: some said they would be personally offended if they came across the programme by accident and were worried about the impact on others too; and

- Some older female participants said they disliked the way the presenter made reference to how old the woman in the clip was, believing he was making fun of their age group.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

This clip would have been more acceptable to more participants if it had been shown much later. Many participants suggested from midnight onwards, although some were happy with a transmission time after 23:00. Participants believed that this would reduce the possibility of causing offence, both to under-eighteens and adults viewing.

“I thought it was too early. If it was maybe about 11 or 12pm (midnight) it would have been ok.”

Female, 35-54, C2DE, no children, Cardiff

Some participants felt that it should have been shown on a channel with mandatory access restrictions in place, as they believed it to be pornographic material designed to arouse the viewer and therefore should have been PIN protected.

“I think it’s okay if it’s on one of the sex channels or something like that where you pay to view it.”

Male, 55+, ABC1, no children at home, Leicester

Some participants felt that it could have been made more acceptable by showing less graphic imagery, for example a shorter clip of the scene involving an anal plug, and potentially with some pixellation.

Some participants felt the sounds of the woman having sex were on a par with the images as they were very loud and clear whilst the presenter was speaking. It could have been more acceptable if it had not included these noises.

For some however this type of material would never be acceptable on television without mandatory access restrictions regardless of the context.

“It shouldn’t be on open channel television that anyone can watch at all.”

Male, 55+, C2DE, no children at home, Belfast

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

As with clip 4, age and gender combined to reveal differences in perceived acceptability. This was the key factor driving responses to this clip. Young men were the group who were most likely to find this clip acceptable, and the programme was aimed at them. Older men and women of all ages were more likely to find this clip unacceptable, with older women being the most likely to find this clip unacceptable.

Those with children tended to find this clip less acceptable than those without children, in particular younger males (who are less likely to have children) believed this clip to be acceptable. There were also differences according to the age of participants’ children. Participants with older children were more likely to find this clip less acceptable than those with younger children because they were concerned about the possibility of their older children staying up later and/or deliberately viewing this content.

Differences in views between those with conservative and liberal opinions were less pronounced in relation to this clip than all others given the importance of age and gender in driving responses.

Clip 6

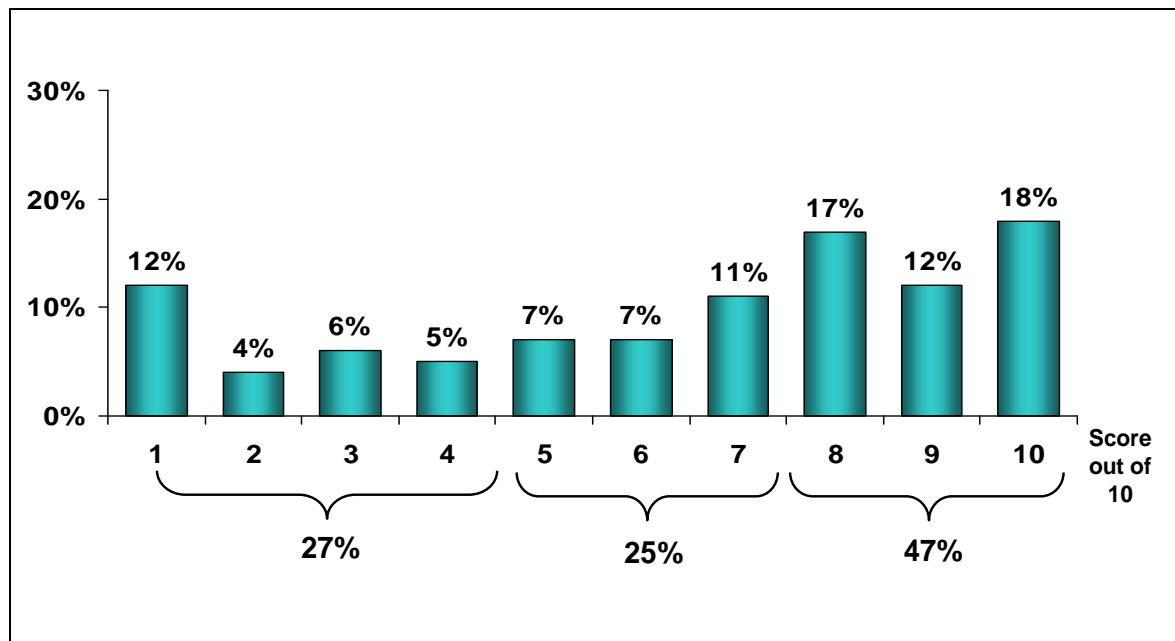
Description

This clip was taken from a documentary series broadcast after 23:00 on Virgin 1, which provided commentary and observation on sexual behaviour and fetishes and which included material of a strong sexual nature. This clip featured interviews with a film maker who makes sex films about his stockings fetish. The material included scenes from the making of the films which included both women and men performing oral sex on women wearing stockings. The more graphic images were blurred and pixellated.

Summary of reactions

Just under half of all participants (47%) thought this material was acceptable overall with just under one in five finding it completely acceptable (18%). Twenty-five per cent (25%) were neutral. At the other end of the scale, over one in ten (12%) found it completely unacceptable whilst one in four (27%) thought it was unacceptable overall.

Figure 10: Reactions to clip 6



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 165 participants (Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- Some believed it was shown at a suitable time, late enough after the watershed for most children to no longer be watching. Therefore the possibility of causing offence to under-eighteens was seen to be minimal;
- The title had the word “sex” in it which participants said provided an indication beforehand that the programme would be containing sexual material;
- Participants particularly compared this clip with clip 5 which showed anal sex. They found this clip more acceptable because it did not involve anal sex;
- Genitalia were pixellated and the images shown were not seen as very strong as a result;
- There was a long introduction by the presenter before any sexual images were shown and this was seen by some participants to give an adequate indication of the content to enable viewers to switch off if they preferred not to watch;
- There was quite a lot of dialogue which reassured participants as to the motivation of the programme maker; and
- This editorial justification, perceived by some participants meant that they considered that the clip was not just about sex and arousing the viewer, but also had an informative purpose.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants believed this programme was shown too early and would expect this kind of material only to be shown after midnight;
- Some did not believe the content was editorially justified;
- Some believed that the programme contained ‘adult-sex’ material aimed at arousing the viewer and questioned the motivation of the broadcaster;
- It was not seen as appropriate for the channel by some; and
- The programme was shown on a mainstream digital channel, generally located close to other general entertainment channels on the EPG. This led some participants to consider that the content was not justified because it was broadcast on a channel more accessible to viewers with greater potential to cause offence to both adults and under-eighteens.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

If this clip had been shown later (to reduce the possibility of causing offence) it would have been more acceptable to more participants.

Some felt that it should have been shown on a channel with mandatory access restrictions, as they believed it to be pornographic material aimed to arouse the viewer and so should be PIN protected. For some if there had been less graphic imagery and more dialogue to accompany the images shown they would have found it more acceptable.

Whilst this material would never be acceptable on television to some participants without mandatory access restrictions, others believed it could have been shown earlier. These participants suggested that if the times of clips 5 and 6 had been swapped so that clip 5 had been broadcast at 23:00 and clip 6 had been on at 22:00, then both clips would have been acceptable.

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Age and gender again worked together to reveal differences in perceived acceptability. Men, particularly younger men (under 35), were more likely to say this clip was acceptable than women. However younger women found this clip more acceptable than older women.

Those with children tended to find this clip less acceptable than those without children, however, this correlated to a certain extent with younger participants being less likely to have children. If the subgroups were examined by age of children, participants with older children were more likely find this clip unacceptable than those with younger children, because they were most concerned about older children stumbling across this content. Those with more conservative views found this clip significantly less acceptable than those with liberal views.

Clips 7-9: Post-watershed 'adult-sex' material and associated trailers

Clip 7

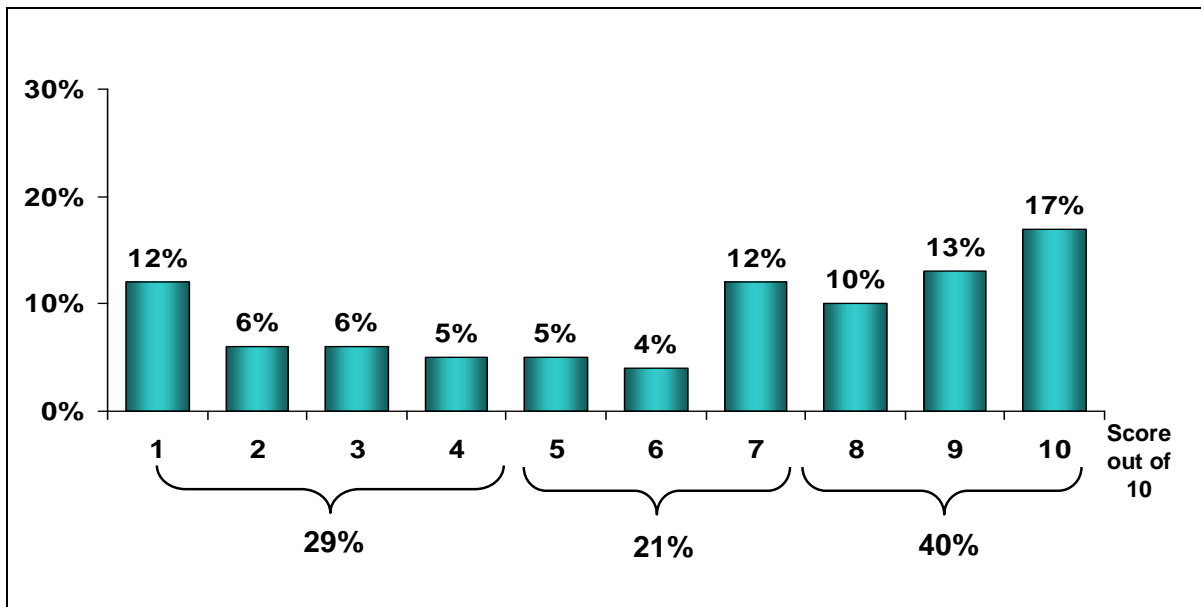
Description

This clip was taken from a TV sex-drama series transmitted from 23:00 on Playboy One (an adult channel broadcast without mandatory access restrictions). The full programme featured strong and repeated sex scenes, of which one short scene was viewed in the clip shown to participants. This clip featured a male and female actor engaged in what appeared to be real sex acts including oral sex and sexual intercourse (although no sexual organs i.e. neither a penis nor vagina, were visible).

Summary of reactions

All participants considered this material to be “porn”. However, they were divided on its acceptability. Approximately three in ten participants (29%) believed this clip to be unacceptable overall, whilst two in five believed it to be acceptable (40%). Looking at the most and least acceptable scores, just under one in five (17%) believed this material to be completely acceptable, whilst just over one in ten (12%) believed it to be completely unacceptable. Twenty-one per cent (21%) were neutral.

Figure 11: Reactions to clip 7



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 166 participants (Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- The channel was associated with strong sexual content: participants said that the channel was synonymous with soft pornography content – both in terms of television and other media content – and therefore people said they knew what to expect from the channel;
- Some participants believed it to be acceptable for the time of broadcast: it was on after the watershed at a time when participants said they would expect to see stronger sexual material. This helped allay concerns over both offence and the protection of under-eighteens; and
- The name of the programme signposted the content: it included the word “sex” which served to signpost the nature of the content to participants and so managed their expectations.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- The sex shown was gratuitous;
- Some participants did not believe that the material shown was in any way editorially justified, as the plot appeared to revolve around sex rather than sexual material being incidental to it (as was considered the case in clip 3). This led to many participants saying that the programme should have had mandatory access restrictions as it clearly contained adult sex material;
- Some participants felt that this clip sent out the message to young girls that it is acceptable to sleep with strangers and therefore this made the material unacceptable to some; and
- The material was perceived by some as “degrading” to women: they felt that this clip objectified women, that it was designed for a male audience and that the

woman in the clip was just there to be “shown off”. Some younger female participants felt that this clip portrayed their demographic group in a poor light (i.e. as readily undertaking sexual activity).

Participants did not distinguish between the portrayal of real sex shown in clip 7 and the representation of sex seen in clip 3. The portrayals of sex in both clips looked quite similar to participants as neither clip showed genitals. Most participants’ main concern about clip 7 was a perceived lack of editorial justification: the programme was not considered to be a “real” drama in the way that clip 3 was, as there was little evidence of a plot and was seen to be “porn”. It was also not thought that the amount of sex shown in even the very brief clip was necessary to the development of any plot there may have been.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

This clip would have been more acceptable to participants if it had had greater editorial justification and more evidence of a plot, as they considered the sex to be gratuitous.

“It was just porn, it wasn’t a drama, that’s just an excuse for showing it.”

Female, 18-24, ABC1, no children, Glasgow

Many participants felt it should have been shown on a channel with mandatory access restrictions, to protect both under-eighteens and adults from the content.

“There is a place for this in TV but it does need to be paid for.”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, older children, Birmingham

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Once again a key difference in perceived acceptability by sub groups was evident by looking at age and gender together: this was the key factor driving responses to this clip. Younger men (under 35s) were the group who were likely to find this clip most acceptable, while older men, and women of all ages, had similar views and tended to find it significantly less acceptable than younger men. Younger women, in particular, tended to find this clip degrading to women and therefore shared similar views with older women.

Those with children generally found this clip less acceptable than those without children; however the age of their children did not impact on views.

Those with more conservative views found this clip significantly less acceptable than those with liberal views.

Clip 8

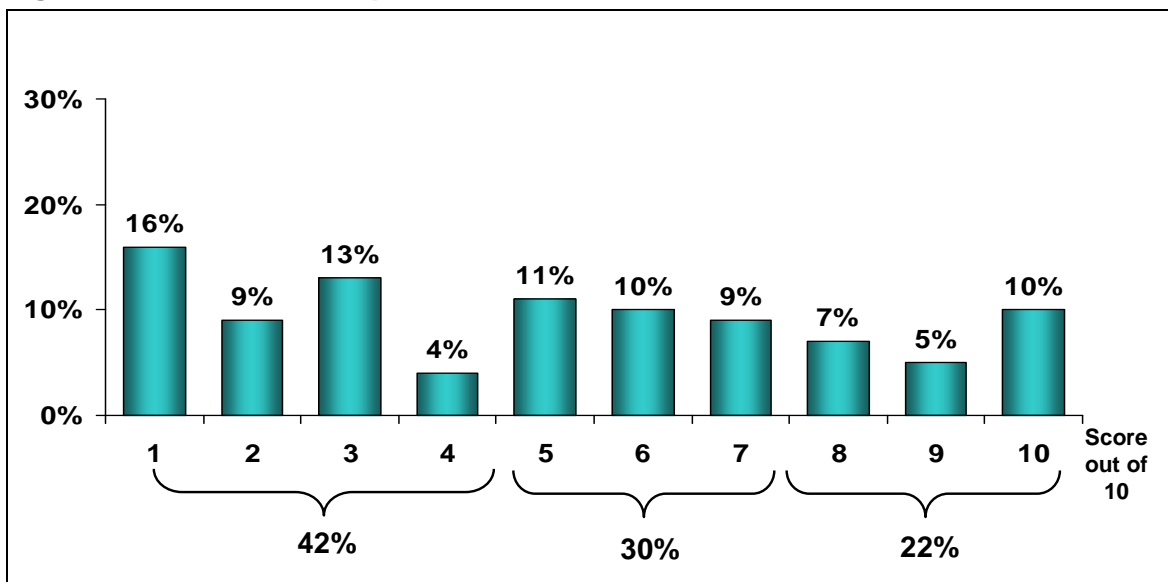
Description

A promotional trailer transmitted free-to-view without access restrictions at 20:00 on the channel Spice Extreme to promote the premium subscription adult-sex channel (which was subject to mandatory access restrictions). It contained material of a strong sexual theme although did not feature any nudity or sex acts. The material featured images of women and men in fetish clothing.

Summary of reactions

Four in ten participants (42%) believed this material to be unacceptable overall, whilst two in ten (22%) believed it was acceptable. Looking at the most and least acceptable scores, one in ten (10%) believed this was totally acceptable, whilst one in six (16%) believed this was totally unacceptable. Thirty per cent (30%) were neutral.

Figure 12: Reactions to clip 8



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 166 participants (Total does not add up to 100 because of rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- The imagery shown here was not considered very strong by some participants: there was no nudity and no scenes of sexual intercourse. Participants tended to compare the strength of the material with previous clips and some found this clip comparatively more acceptable;
- It was located on an adult channel in the adult section of the EPG (albeit free-to-view), which some participants felt limited the likelihood of both under-eighteens and adults stumbling across it or similar material by accident. They considered that this managed viewer expectations; and
- Trailers broadcast free-to-view which promoted adult-sex channels (which are otherwise subject to mandatory access restrictions) were seen as acceptable in principle; provided they were shown at an appropriate time of day and that the material was not too strong. This was mainly because of concerns about protecting under-eighteens.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants believed it was shown too early: the transmission time was not before the 21:00 watershed and it was felt that children might have been watching. Parents also said they did not think they had to police television at this time and were concerned that children might have seen it and been scared by

- the images, or that older children might have seen it when seeking sexual content out;
- Some believed the material to have violent undertones; and
 - Some participants found the images “scary” and “perverse”, as they showed images relating to what participants perceive as more extreme forms of sex, such as bondage and masochism. These participants had concerns that young teenagers exposed to it might be encouraged into violent behaviour.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

Most participants felt that this clip would have been more acceptable to more participants if it had been shown at a later time to prevent children seeing it. Suggested times mentioned ranged from after the 21:00 watershed to after midnight.

“I think it was on far too early, 8pm is ridiculous.”

Female, 35-54, C2DE, no children, Cardiff

A minority thought that this content would never be acceptable on television unless it had mandatory access restrictions.

“I think again this should be a full encrypted one [i.e. subject to mandatory access restrictions] or something that somebody has to make a choice and say ‘yes, I want to watch that specifically and I will pay.’”

Female, 35-54, ABC1, older children, Birmingham

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Once again age and gender worked together to reveal differences in perceived acceptability, with young men aged under 35 being more likely to say this clip was acceptable than both women or older men. However younger women were more likely to find this clip more acceptable than older women.

Those with children were more likely to find this clip less acceptable than those without children; however the age of their children did not have an impact on participants’ views.

Those with more conservative views were much more likely to find this clip less acceptable than those with liberal views.

Clip 9

Description

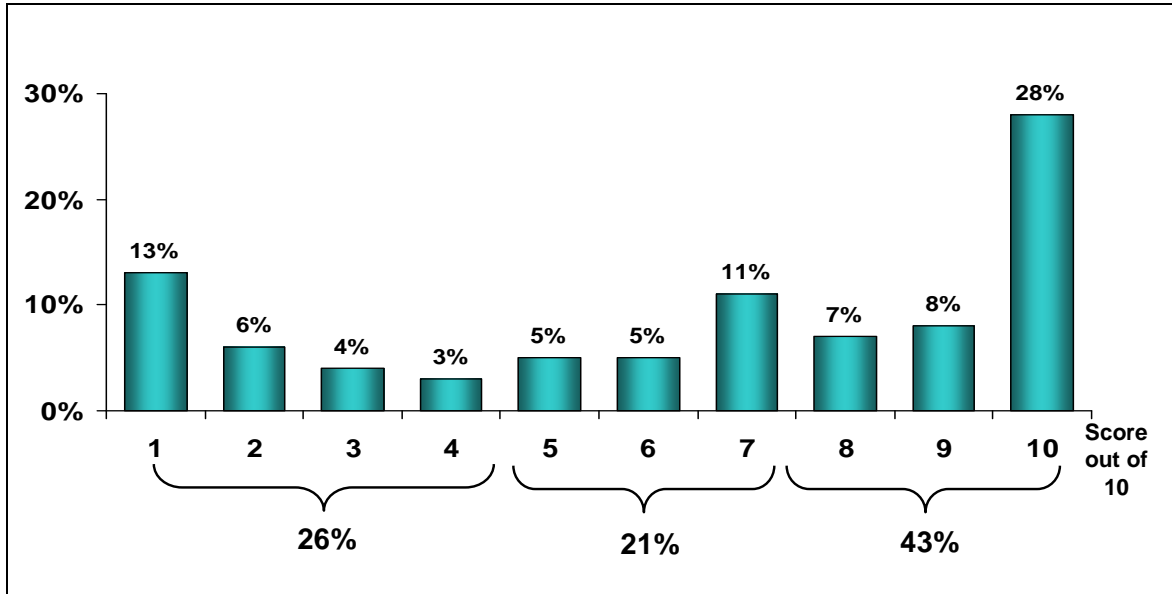
A trailer to promote a mandatorily restricted adult-sex channel transmitted free-to-view from midnight on RedHot 40+. It contained material of a strong sexual nature and featured images of what appeared to be real sexual activity.

Summary of reactions

Just under half of all participants (43%) believed this clip to be acceptable overall, whilst just over one in four (26%) believed it to be unacceptable. However, this clip had the highest number of participants (28%) saying they believed it to be totally acceptable,

whilst at the other end of the scale over one in ten (13%) believed it to be totally unacceptable. A further 21% were neutral.

Figure 13: Reactions to clip 9



Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is completely unacceptable and 10 is acceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is? Base = 165 participants (Total does not add up to 100 because of rounding and because not all participants answered the question.)

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was acceptable

- Most participants believed it was shown at a late enough time; it was broadcast sufficiently after the watershed (at midnight), at a time when participants would expect to see more explicit content. This helped prevent concerns over both offence and protection of under-eighteens;
- The fact it showed “straightforward” sex between adult couples made it more acceptable to some: some participants found this more acceptable than sexual material in earlier clips, for example the fetishes referred to in clips 6 and 8;
- The sex was clearly consensual: the couple in the clip were clearly making a choice as to whether they wanted to appear on television having sex. For some participants this made a difference compared to clip 7, where the couple having sex were apparently “acting”; and
- It was located on an adult channel, which some participants felt limited the likelihood of both under-eighteens and adults stumbling across it by accident as such channels are normally located in the higher numbers of the EPG.

Free-to-view promotional trailers for adult channels were seen as acceptable in principle; provided that they were shown at an appropriate time of day and the material was not too strong for the time of broadcast. This was mainly because of concerns about protecting under-eighteens.

Reasons why some participants felt this clip was unacceptable

- Some participants were concerned that older children would try and seek out this type of content. However in discussion most felt that the time shown would limit this and most participants accepted that parental responsibility rather than broadcaster responsibility should apply at this time of night. It was also felt that only very much older children, who would be less likely to be harmed by the content, would be up at midnight.

Factors which would have made this clip more acceptable to more participants

A minority thought that this content would never be acceptable on television without mandatory access restrictions.

Sub-group differences in responses to the clip

Age and gender worked together in terms of how acceptable different groups were likely to see this clip. Younger men (under 35) were the group who found this clip most acceptable, as they considered it to be aimed at their demographic. Older men and younger women of all ages held similar views, whilst older women were most likely to believe this clip was unacceptable.

Those with children tended to find this clip less acceptable than those without children, however this correlated with younger age groups being less likely to have children and finding this more acceptable generally.

As seen before those with more conservative views found this clip significantly less acceptable than those with liberal views.

3.5.3 Conclusions to clip responses

In relation to the daytime/pre-watershed clips, it was clear that respondents understood that the watershed was in place to ensure appropriate scheduling of material in relation to under-eighteens, including material of a sexual nature. In general, participants deemed most sexual content apart from the mildest (e.g. mild sexual innuendo, kissing) to be unsuitable to be shown before the watershed. The type of sexual content that participants considered should be scheduled after the watershed was material that included representations of sexual activity or nudity. However, it was recognised that there would be occasions, for example in a sex education documentary aimed at older children, where representations of sex before the watershed could be shown. This was on the basis that there would be appropriate editorial justification for doing so and that it would be both signposted and scheduled so that younger children were not likely to stumble across it.

In terms of sexual material broadcast after the watershed, participants considered that stronger sexual material required stronger editorial justification. In particular, the purpose of the sexual material and the time of broadcast were key factors in relation to its acceptability, with stronger material becoming more acceptable after 22:00 and especially after 23:00. At 21:00 participants said they did not expect to see much more than a brief sex scene or brief nudity. Where sexual material was considered to be “too strong” to be broadcast without mandatory access restrictions in place, it was because it

appeared to have the primary purpose of arousing viewers, i.e. it was an excuse to show what participants referred to as “porn” which could not be justified in terms of plot, character development or editorial context.

In considering post-watershed ‘adult-sex’ material, participants were divided on their views on clip 7. While all agreed that the material was “porn”, some considered that it was appropriate to broadcast without mandatory access restrictions, given the channel and transmission time. Others did not believe that the material was editorially justified which led them to say it should have been subject to mandatory access restrictions as it clearly contained ‘adult-sex’ material.

With regard to free-to-view promotional trailers broadcast on adult-sex channels, (clips 8 and 9) most participants did not object in principle to these trailers being broadcast without any form of access restriction. This was however conditional on them only being available (in the case of Sky) in the adult section of the EPG and, for other platforms, if parental controls (voluntary protection systems) could remove them from view, thereby restricting access by under-eighteens. Participants also thought that such promotional trailers should only show content that was no stronger than that which would be shown on non adult-sex channels at the same time.

4. Conclusions

The broadcasting landscape has changed since 2005 when Ofcom carried out its last consumer research study into generally accepted standards on television, which included researching attitudes regarding sexual material. This latest research into sexual material was therefore carried out in a different environment to that conducted four years earlier. The purpose of this research was to gauge whether attitudes towards sexual material have changed in the intervening years.

This research found that television was not the medium of greatest concern to participants. They were more concerned about the content available on the internet. While sexual content on television was a concern for participants it was also not their area of greatest concern, with violence, sexism and racism also being cited as examples of unacceptable content that were of equal or greater concern.

Irrespective of developments in the broadcasting landscape, participants nonetheless raised similar concerns to those raised in 2005 regarding the broadcast of sexual material. These were the need to:

- protect under-eighteens from viewing unsuitable content; and
- avoid personal offence.

Overall, protection of under-eighteens was the main concern with respect to sexual material, as this group was seen to be at risk of harm from exposure to such material. For most participants, personal offence was less of a concern than protecting the under-eighteens, given that they believed adults could simply choose to switch off the television or change channel. However, there were some exceptions: personal offence was more of an issue for some participants (especially older viewers or those with more conservative views) if the sexual content was perceived to be particularly strong. In addition, stumbling across sexual content was more of a concern for participants in general when viewing television with others.

Whilst the amount and strength of sexual material was considered to be on the increase, overall, the research found that there was a place for it on television, with the 21:00 watershed generally acknowledged as a protection for younger children against the inappropriate scheduling of unsuitable sexual material. However, there was some concern that the watershed was not always adhered to and that it may not provide sufficient protection for older children who were likely to be watching after 21:00. Many participants suggested that stronger sexual material should be shown much later at night, i.e. from 22:30 or 23:00.

As in the 2005 research, participants fully accepted their own role both as individuals and as parents in preventing both themselves and their children from accessing unacceptable content. Thus the individual was felt to be able to switch off or change channel if offended, and parents to have a duty to monitor their children's viewing.

However, participants were also keen that broadcasters and regulators understand that this is not a perfect process: for example they said they might miss pre-programme information or scroll to a channel accidentally, or their children may view sexual content without their knowledge (including older children who have sought it out intentionally).

They also stressed that not all parents monitor viewing or set PIN controls on behalf of their children, and believed that the need to protect under-eighteens should be considered in this respect by erring on the side of caution in scheduling and applying mandatory access restrictions.

A range of views were offered regarding what should be available to view with or without access restrictions. It was clear that participants felt there was a place for the full range of sexual material on television. However, a wide range of factors such as context, editorial justification and mandatory access restrictions were extremely important when considering generally accepted standards.

Participants' levels of concern varied according to demographics (particularly age and gender), life-stage (particularly whether they have children) and attitudes (liberal or conservative). Many participants were not opposed to sexual content of varying strengths and most saw a place for at least mild or moderate contextualised sexual content within their own television viewing in the home. (In addition, some said they enjoyed viewing 'adult-sex' material on adult channels with mandatory access restrictions.) Most considered that stronger sexual material required stronger editorial justification and should be subject to a wider range of contextual conditions. Participants voiced the need for mandatory restrictions where appropriate, depending on the type and strength of sexual material. For example material for the purpose of arousal needed to be appropriately restricted.

In terms of the different types of sexual content, on the whole, participants were comfortable with kissing being shown at all times of day, and were also reasonably relaxed about the use of sexual innuendo. Nudity was deemed to be acceptable before 21:00 in the right context such as a documentary, but otherwise to be more appropriate for broadcast after the watershed. "Straightforward" sex scenes were expected to be shown after the watershed, to be justified by the narrative or editorial context, and to be fairly brief and inexplicit. Anything other than this (e.g. longer sex scenes, more explicit sex scenes or nudity, group sex, fetishes) was likely to divide participants and generally to be seen as being more suitable for late-night viewing (at least after 23:00) or viewing on channels with mandatory access restrictions.

With regard to showing stronger forms of sexual material, parental control (in particular using voluntary access restrictions such as PIN protection) was considered by some to mean that, in general, programmes could feature some forms of stronger sexual material in programmes likely to be viewed by a primarily adult audience. This is notwithstanding the need for mandatory access restrictions for content perceived to be for the primary purpose of sexual arousal.

With regard to free-to-view promotional trailers broadcast on adult-sex channels, most participants did not object in principle to these trailers being broadcast without any form of access restriction. This was however conditional on them only being available (in the case of Sky) in the adult section of the EPG and, for other platforms, if parental controls (voluntary protection systems) could remove them from view, thereby restricting access by under-eighteens. Participants also thought that such promotional trailers should only show content that was no stronger than that which would be shown on non adult-sex channels at the same time.

5. Glossary of Terms

Adult section of the EPG: Category on an EPG which groups together channels which are exclusively aimed at over-eighteens.

Adult-sex channels: Premium subscription/pay per view channels which transmit 'adult-sex' material under mandatory access restrictions. Such channels also broadcast long-form promotional trailers free-to-view (and therefore without mandatory access restrictions) from 20:00, for the purpose of promoting the premium subscription/pay per view adult-sex channels.

'Adult-sex' material: Programmes that contain images and/or language of a strong sexual nature which are broadcast for the primary purpose of sexual arousal or stimulation. This material must only be broadcast on premium subscription/pay per view services between 22:00 and 05:30 and only when mandatory access restrictions are in place. Commonly referred to as "porn".

Analogue terrestrial broadcasters: BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five and S4C.

Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights: Article 10 expresses the right to freedom of expression. It 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 society.

Audio Visual Media Services (AVMS) directive: This is European legislation which requires television-like on-demand services within the EU to comply with certain minimum standards (for instance with regard to protection of minors and incitement to hatred).

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic groups

Digital cable television: A term used in the UK to refer to the digital cable platform. For example, Virgin Media.

Digital satellite television: A term used in the UK to refer to the digital satellite platform. For example, Sky or Freesat.

Digital terrestrial: A term used in the UK to refer to the digital terrestrial television platform. Currently most commonly delivered through Freeview.

EPG: Electronic Programme Guide. A programme schedule, typically broadcast alongside digital television or radio services, to provide information on the content and scheduling of current and future programmes.

Free-to-view: For the purposes of this document 'free-to-view' means broadcast content that is generally available i.e. it excludes any channels and/or programmes which have mandatory access restrictions. However, what determines free-to-view material will

depend on whether consumers have or subscribe to 'pay-basic' or 'pay-premium' channels or have access to the five main public service channels (see below).

General entertainment programmes: For the purposes of this research 'general entertainment programmes' refer to mainstream programming with a wide-spread appeal.

Generally accepted standards: Standards which broadcasters licensed by Ofcom must apply to the content of their television services to provide adequate protection to viewers from harmful and/or offensive material. Ofcom's Broadcasting Code Guidance states that generally accepted standards will change over time and will also vary according to the context. It also states the understanding of what are generally accepted standards should be underpinned by relevant research.

iPlayer: BBC service that provides on-demand access to BBC radio and television programmes broadcast over the past week. This can be accessed either through a computer or in some cases through the set-top boxes of television platform operators.

Mandatory access restrictions: A broadcaster must have in place access restrictions on 'adult-sex' material to limit access to adults authorised to view the material. This includes a Personal Identification Number ("PIN") protected system and measures to ensure that the subscriber is an adult.

On-demand television/Video-on-demand (VoD): A service or technology that enables TV viewers to watch programmes or films whenever they choose to, not restricted by a linear schedule.

Pay per view services: A service which the viewer can pay for separately, without a long term subscription. For example, a one-off payment for a sporting event or a film, or a pay-per-night subscription relevant to adult-sex channels.

Pay-TV services: Television packages which are subscribed to (such as Sky).

Personal Video Recorders (PVRs): Also known as a digital video recorder (DVR), are devices that record TV onto a hard drive in digital format. Unlike video and DVD recorders, there is no need for tapes or discs.

PIN Protection: A Personal Identification Number ("PIN") which users must enter in order to access programmes or services. PIN protection can in some cases be implemented by the broadcaster as a result of a mandatory access restriction (imposed by the regulator) or by the householder as a voluntary access restriction.

Platform: The distribution system that enables consumers to receive digital broadcasts. For example, Sky on digital satellite or Virgin Media on digital cable.

Premium subscription services: Additional channels viewers can subscribe to over and above the basic package. For example, films, sport and adult-sex channels.

Public service broadcasters (PSBs): BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five, S4C

Qualitative research: Collecting, analysing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. The nature of this type of research is exploratory and open-ended. Discussion groups and in-depth interviews are among the many formal approaches that are used. Samples tend to be smaller compared with quantitative research.

Quantitative research: Used to measure how many people feel, think or act in a particular way. These surveys tend to include large samples and the use of structured, closed questions.

Terrestrial (analogue) public service broadcaster: BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five and S4C.

Voluntary access restrictions: Protection to restrict access which can be utilised by the householder usually via the set-top handset, for example a Personal Identification Number ("PIN").

Watershed: The watershed is at 21:00 and only applies to television. Material unsuitable for children should not, in general, be shown before 21:00 or after 05:30.

Annex 1: Recruitment screening questionnaire



OFCOM Sexual Imagery Research

Recruitment questionnaire

Recruit 11 per group

Q1 Have you or any member of your family been employed in any of the following occupations?

Market Research Public relations
Advertising Journalism
Marketing Media (including radio, internet, television and newspapers)
TV broadcasting

Q2 Have you ever attended a market research group discussion?

Yes		<u>Ask Q3 & Q4</u>
No		<u>Go to Q5</u>

Q3 When did you last attend a market research group discussion?

In the last 12 months		<u>CLOSE</u>
12 – 18 months ago		<u>Ask Q4</u>
Over 18 months ago		<u>Ask Q4</u>

IF DISCUSSION ATTENDED IN LAST 12 MONTHS – INTERVIEW MUST BE CLOSED

Q4 What were the subjects discussed in the group(s) that you attended?

DO NOT RECRUIT IF ATTENDED A DISCUSSION ON THE SAME OR SIMILAR SUBJECT

Q5 Record gender

Male		Recruit to male groups
Female		Recruit to female groups

Q6 Record Age

Under 18		CLOSE
18-24		Recruit to relevant groups (ensure spread of ages within this)
25-34		Recruit to relevant groups (ensure spread of ages within this)
35-54		Recruit to relevant groups (ensure spread of ages within this)
55-75		Recruit to relevant groups (ensure spread of ages within this)
Over 75		CLOSE

Q7 Which of the following best describes you?

I have children who live at home		Go to Q8
I have children but they have left home		Recruit to no children groups where relevant
I do not have children		Recruit to no children groups

Q8 [Parents with at home children only] What age is your oldest child?

Under 6		Recruit mix for parents of younger children groups (at least 3 of each category – ideally 5 of each)
Aged between 6 and 11		
Aged between 12 and 15		Recruit mix for parents of older children groups (at least 3 of each category – ideally 5 of each)
Age 16-17		

Q9 What type of television do you have on your main TV set at home?

Channel 1-4 / 1-5 only		Recruit 1 or 2
Freeview (BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4, Five and a range of digital channels including BBC Three, BBC Four, E4 etc)		Recruit at least 3
Cable (Virgin, Telewest, NTL Sky)		Recruit mix of Sky + cable (at least 3 per group)
No TV at home		CLOSE

Q10 How often do you watch television at home?

Every day		Recruit some of all categories for all groups. Ensure <u>not more than 4</u> per group who watch once a week or less.
Most days		
Once a week		
Less than once a week		
Never		CLOSE

Q11 People hold different attitudes towards many social issues. I am going to read out some social issues where people's opinions might vary, and I would like you to tell me how you think your attitude compares to other people in the country. Don't worry if you don't know much about the issue – I'm just interested in how you *think* your attitudes compare.

	Very liberal	Quite liberal	Average	Conservative (i.e. traditional)	Very conservative (i.e. very traditional)	RECRUITER
Violence in computer games/films						
Swearing in the media						
Discipline in schools						
Sex in the media						RECRUIT AT LEAST 3 LIBERAL AND AT LEAST 3 CONSERVATIVE TO EACH GROUP
The relaxation of drug laws						

CLASSIFICATION SECTION

Q12 Could you tell me what the occupation of the head of your household is?

Write in

--

Q13 What is your occupation and is that full or part time employment?

Occupation of respondent – write in

--

Full time (30hrs+)	
Part time (18-29 hrs)	
Full time education	
Part time education	
Not working	
Retired	

AT LEAST HALF TO BE IN EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL GROUPS, except 55+ group where it would be fine to have two thirds retired

Record social class

A		Recruit mix for ABC1 groups – at least 4 to be AB
B		
C1		
C2		Recruit mix for C2DE groups – at least 4 to be C2
D		
E		

Q14 Could you tell me which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

WHITE		Recruit at least 2 BME for all groups (except N.I as this will be too difficult) Recruit at least 4 BME for groups in Leicester Recruit at least 3 BME for each group in London
British		
Irish		
Any other white background		
MIXED		
White and Black Caribbean		
White and Black African		
White and Asian		
Any other mixed background		
ASIAN / ASIAN BRITISH		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladesh		
Any other Asian background		
BLACK / BLACK BRITISH		
Caribbean		
African		
Any other black background		
CHINESE		
MIDDLE EASTERN		
Middle East, including Arabic		
Iranian		
ANY OTHER BACKGROUND: PLEASE WRITE IN		

SCRIPT FOR RECRUITING IF FIT QUOTAS

We are conducting this research on behalf of Ofcom - the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across TV, radio and telecommunications. Two of Ofcom's main regulatory roles with regards to TV are to **protect the under eighteens** and to ensure that **generally accepted standards** are met to provide adequate protection for members of the public from harmful or offensive material.

Ofcom wants to conduct some research into the general public's views on **sexual imagery**. Sexual imagery refers to discussions of sex, and portrayals of sex in programmes. We would like to know what type of sexual imagery the public feels is **acceptable** on 'Free-to Air' TV. Free to Air means that you or anyone in your family can turn your TV on and watch it. E.g. you don't have to prove you are over 18 each time you want to watch it.

We recognise that everyone has their own views on what they are comfortable with and consider as acceptable content on television. It is however, **very important** that we speak to a wide range of ordinary members of the public, to hear everyone's views on the subject. This is to make sure that Ofcom understands and can represent the perspectives of people from all walks of life and with **different views** on this topic.

The groups will all be single sex – the only people present, including the moderator, will be (male/female)

We are running a series of discussion groups with members of the public on behalf of Ofcom around the UK over the next couple of weeks. This research will involve completing a questionnaire in confidence to state your private views, as well as the opportunity to discuss the acceptability of sexual content on TV. It will also include viewing a series of **clips containing sexual imagery**. The clips will range from pre-watershed material before 9pm to some more sexually explicit images (some of which are shown late at night).

Only clips that are necessary to help Ofcom understand the public's views on acceptability will be used. **All the clips have been on free-to-air TV recently**. We would really like you to take part in this research. Please rest assured that if you decide to participate you will be given the opportunity to **choose not to view** any clips. We will let you know what is in the clip beforehand to enable you to make a personal decision and to feel comfortable throughout the research.

Are you happy to come along and give us your views?

YES – RECRUIT

NO – CLOSE

CONTACT DETAILS

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL NO:

INTERVIEWER'S DECLARATION:

I DECLARE THAT NO 2 PEOPLE IN THIS GROUP KNOW EACH OTHER AND THAT THIS IS A TRUE RECORD OF AN INTERVIEW WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH A RESPONDENT WHO IS NOT A RELATIVE OR FRIEND OF MINE

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE DATE

Annex 2: Pre-task (to fill in before discussions)

Pre-task activity

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in our discussion group.

What we would like you to do before the group is to fill in this activity book. Please remember to bring this along with you to the group - part of your payment is for the completion of this task.

Please write your full name here _____

Your task – part one

Please can you fill this in every time you watch TV in the week before you are due to come to the group. Every time you watch something on TV please complete the following grid...

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day one			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day two			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day three			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day four			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day five			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day six			

	What did you watch? (name of programme, time of day and channel shown on)	Was there anything about the programme that you liked? If yes please give details.	Was there anything about this programme that concerned you or that you found offensive? If yes, please give details.
Day seven			

Your task – part two

Please answer the following questions...

Q1: Thinking generally about when you're watching TV, what sorts of things concern or offend you, if anything? Please be as specific as possible.

Q2: Now thinking about your family and friends, what sort of things shown on TV do you think might offend or concern them? Please be as specific as possible both in terms of what might offend them and who might be offended.

Annex 3: Discussion guide – main group



Ofcom Sexual material Research

Discussion guide – 2.5 hours

Introduction (5 mins)

- Participant consent forms
- Moderator welcome and introductions. Explain that:
- As they were informed when they were recruited, we're here on behalf of Ofcom, the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across TV, radio and telecommunications. Amongst other things Ofcom has a statutory duty to ensure that the interests of viewers and listeners are met and that general standards are met by programming on television and radio stations. You may or may not know anything about Ofcom, don't worry about that – we will be explaining more about Ofcom a little bit later on. To put things in context however:
 - We're here today to talk about what people think is acceptable, and unacceptable content on TV, particularly thinking about sexual material
 - We recognise this topic is something that people are likely to have a range of views on and that it would be unlikely if everyone in the group shared the same views. It is therefore really important to us that people are as honest as possible in their responses and that we want to hear from each and every person in the room.
- Confidentiality, no right or wrong answers, permission to record etc.
- They will be completing individual questionnaires to give a personal, private view. Obviously we are also interested in capturing their views in discussion too, but please don't feel under any pressure to speak
- Introduce observers where groups are being viewed
- Participant introductions:
- First name, bit about themselves (where they live, whether working / studying / retired etc, who they live with and age of any children in household)

Warm up discussion: TV viewing and concerns (10 mins)

- *Ask participants about their pre-task:*
- Establish platform (show of hands: who has terrestrial TV only, freeview, Sky, cable)
- What sort of programmes did people watch on TV?
- What did they particularly like about them?
- Anything they disliked?
- Was there anything that they watched during the course of this exercise which concerned them or that they found offensive?
 - Explore what, why and how offensive they found it
 - Note any references to sexual content (particularly imagery but also plotlines, innuendo) as well as non-sexual offensive content (including swearing or violence)
- Thinking about TV viewing more generally, what sort of things concern / offend them (if anything)?
 - Probe for things that people may choose not to watch but are happy to have shown vs. things they think shouldn't be shown at all
- What about your family and friends, do different things offend / concern them?

Introduction to sexual material (5 mins)

- *If sexual content or imagery have not come up automatically – ask what people think about sex on television in general. Open discussion to capture any top of mind thoughts.*
- *This research is interested in understanding what people think specifically about sexual material on television. Explain: By sexual material we mean discussions of sex on television, and portrayals of sex in programmes.*
- *Hand out individual questionnaire and ask participants to fill in name on front sheet and complete **part 1** capturing their initial views of sexual material on TV and then put them to one side.*
-
- Discuss responses to the questionnaire
- What do you think about the amount of sexual material on TV today?
 - Explore views of amount of sexual material on TV – is there too much / too little / about right?
- Do you think the volume of sexual material on TV has changed at all over the last few (e.g. 3-5 years)?
- What are your overall views of sexual material on TV?
 - Gauge early reactions to context

Exploring boundaries of acceptability and offence (15 mins)

Introduction to section

Explain that we want to give them a bit more information about the different types of TV channels there are when it comes to thinking about sexual material on TV. [GIVE OUT HANDOUT EXPLAINING GENERAL OPENLY AVAILABLE (FREE TO AIR) VS. ADULT ENCRYPTED SUBSCRIPTION CHANNELS WITH PIN PROTECTION] AND GO THROUGH AS A GROUP. MAKE SURE ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE CLEAR ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHANNELS BEFORE MOVING ON.

Explain that in the next section we are focusing on what each person thinks are generally acceptable standards on television. There are no right or wrong answers and we want to hear your views

- Where do you think you are most likely to find sexual material on TV?
 - Explore perceptions of channels, genres, times of day programmes are shown, programme titles and whether or not warnings are shown
 - Need to ensure that participants maintain proportionality – there is a lot that isn't sexual material on TV

- *Explain that we'd now like participants to work individually to think about what they personally believe is and is not acceptable to be shown in terms of sexual material on TV. No right or wrong answers, interested in their views on acceptability*

- *PARTICIPANTS TO FILL IN PART TWO OF INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE (5 mins)*

- *BRING PARTICIPANTS BACK TOGETHER TO DISCUSS RESPONSES AS A GROUP (emphasise that people don't have to reveal their exact answers if they don't want to, more to think about the sorts of things they considered in their responses): (10 mins)*

- Sorting exercise (5 minutes) Go through responses to both grids in turn:
 - Time programmes shown
 - Type of programmes
 - Use the categories from the individual questionnaire on two sets of cards as a sorting/enabling exercise – they can be sorted into any piles (e.g. acceptable on encrypted, Pin protected channels, acceptable on any channel; acceptable pre-9pm, acceptable post 11pm). Make notes or read out the names of the piles and the cards that are in each. (Cards are numbered to save time.)

- Explore reasons for answers, focusing on any differences that exist in perceptions
 - Where is it clear cut? Why?
 - What are the grey areas? Why?

- (5 minutes) Thinking about their responses so far...
 - What other factors influence their views? Probe on:
 - The extent to which stronger content needs stronger editorial justification
 - Programme title, channel, description in TV listing, warning at start of programme

- Whether openly available or on encrypted subscription channel with PIN protection only
 - And perceived importance of PIN codes (do they affect how concerned they are about stumbling across sexual material)
- Extent to which people are concerned about stumbling upon content unawares (themselves/minors, e.g. by flicking through the channels)
- How, if at all, do perceptions of acceptability change when thinking about other people that might be viewing?
 - Explore responses for different types of viewers - encourage participants to think about both other adults, teenagers and children, but stress that the emphasis is on whether they think the sexual content **is acceptable to be on TV**

Reactions to specific clips (70 mins – 30 mins clips + intro, 40 mins questionnaire completion + discussion)

- **Introduction to section:**
- *Explain that we are now going to see a short video from Ofcom about the purpose of the research*

• 1.	• Today you will be giving Ofcom your views on sexual material in programmes.
• 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, though, here's some background information about Ofcom and its role: Television channels and radio stations in the UK are subject to Ofcom's licensing and regulation. Ofcom – or The Office of Communications – is an independent organisation. Ofcom has a statutory duty to ensure that the interests of viewers and listeners are met by both individual television channels and radio stations and by the market as a whole. Through this statutory duty Ofcom has in place a Code which sets standards in television and radio programmes on certain types of content. It's called the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. The Code sets out standards relating to matters ranging from offensive language, violence and sex through to accuracy, impartiality and sponsorship. • The Code is designed on the one hand, to protect the interests of viewers and listeners from harmful material and on the other, to promote freedom of expression (as set out in the Human Rights Act). Ofcom's statutory duty also extends to ensuring that it removes unnecessary regulation; ensuring that what remains is targeted, consistent and proportionate and that it does not unnecessarily inhibit the broadcaster's right to freedom of expression.
• 3	• Today you will be asked about sexual material on television so we want to explain a little about what we mean by 'sexual material' and how Ofcom already regulates it. Sexual material includes anything that you see or hear on television which relates to sex. This might be in the form of an item on sex aids in an afternoon talk show, a programme about sex education or quite explicit late-night documentaries about the porn industry. It would also include the use of sexual language. When regulating sexual material Ofcom focuses on two main principles: Firstly we have a duty to protect under-eighteens from material that is unsuitable or potentially harmful to them. Secondly, we have a duty to provide the public with adequate protection from harmful and offensive material. In so doing, Ofcom ensures that generally accepted standards are preserved and maintained
• 4	• The reason we're asking for your views on sexual material is because we're currently reviewing our Broadcasting Code, which came into effect in July 2005 and it is important that the Code remains fit for purpose. We are particularly keen to evaluate whether the rules regarding sex remain pitched at the right level with regard to the type of sexual material that can be transmitted openly i.e. without any form of controls or protection, particularly after the watershed.
• 5	• What is the purpose of the changes Ofcom is proposing to make? Ofcom is proposing a number of revisions to Section One of its Code the purpose of which is to encourage more detailed consideration from broadcasters as to whether stronger sexual material can be transmitted on channels which are 'openly accessible' to anyone who has Freeview, digital or satellite television in their home.
• 6	• What is today's session primarily concerned with? We are concerned with material of

	<p>a sexual nature. This material could have been broadcast either during the day, in the early evening and/or after the watershed. However, what all of the clips you are going to see have in common is that all of them have been taken from programmes which were transmitted 'openly' and were therefore freely available to view. You will see that the programmes are quite different and that there is a different form of context for each of them. This should be considered quite carefully when assessing whether you think they contained acceptable sexual material or not. And we want you to focus on whether you consider all of what you have seen, some of which will be explicit, is acceptable for 'open' transmission on television. And if so, why and when would it be acceptable to broadcast it?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your assistance today will help us understand your views, so your reactions to what you see and hear will be extremely valuable to us. I should add at this point that some of the material you are about to see has the potential to cause you offence. Before you are shown this material you will be asked whether you want to watch it and, if you don't, it will not be shown to you. Ofcom has taken great care in selecting the material you are about to see and would not intentionally wish to cause offence. However, in order to gain accurate views about the type and range of material that is currently openly accessible to all, Ofcom must show some brief clips of it. The choice will ultimately be yours though and your moderator will give you ample opportunity to be excluded from seeing certain clips. • Thank you for listening to this introduction, which we hope has placed today's session in context.

- *Explain that we're going to watch a series of clips from TV programmes selected by Ofcom which show different types of sexual material.*
- ***All clips were shown openly on television, although some of them are only available for people who have cable/Sky.***
- ***Ofcom has selected these particular clips as some recent examples of the types of programmes they regulate and make decisions about acceptability.***
- ***All of these clips have had complaints made about them – some of which were upheld and some of which weren't.***
- *They really want participants' help to decide what is and is not appropriate, e.g. what is acceptable and why? We would like participants to try to put themselves in Ofcom's shoes and imagine they had to regulate sexual material of this nature on TV – what is acceptable and why? Explain that we want people to try to move beyond their own personal views of clips and to think about how acceptable these clips are to be on TV. (we're not concerned about whether you would personally choose to watch it or not.).*
- *Explain process: We are going to show 9 clips in total. We are going to watch clips 1-4 now. We would like everyone to view these unless they really feel uncomfortable, as they were all on Channels 1 to Five. After each clip please could they fill in the relevant part of their questionnaire – 2 pages for each clip.*
- *From clip 5 onwards they can choose either to watch or to have another discussion in the room next door. We will provide a detailed description of what each batch of clips will contain before showing them and they will get to choose*

whether or not they want to view each batch of clips. We are not going to force anyone to watch anything they don't feel comfortable with, although we are keen to stress that all of these clips have been included because Ofcom really want feedback on them.

- *Check all participants are happy with the process.*

Moderator note: Process for this section:

- No opt in and out for clips 1-4. Ask participants to opt in and out of clips 5-6 as a batch. Then ask participants to opt in and out of clips 7-9 as a batch.
- Show clips in three stages:
 - clips shown on channels 1 to 5s (clips 1-4);
 - clips from general entertainment free-to-air channels (clips 5 and 6);
 - clips from adult channels: all were openly available and not PIN protected. There are 2 clips from promotions which aim to drive subscription to encrypted PIN protected adult channels (clips 8,9) and a clip from an adult channel that was broadcast unencrypted and openly available (clip 7)
- Procedure is:
 - For clips 5 onwards – ask all stand up
 - Read out descriptions of the clips to be shown
 - Say participants have two choices: to view the clips in the room they are in, or to go and have a discussion with moderator 2.
 - For those who choose to watch – ask participants to fill out questionnaire while watching
 - Those who do not wish to view the clips move out of the room for the duration of each batch of clips, fill in relevant section of the questionnaire, and the second moderator conducts a discussion about why they chose not to view.
 - Play clips within main group
 - All participants return at the end of each batch of clips for discussion as a group

First set of clips – *These first four clips are from programmes that were shown on terrestrial TV (channels 1-5), they include representations of sex and sex related themes and materials.*

- *Structure for discussing each clip*
 - *get top of mind reactions*
 - *probe in relation to context*
 - *probe further on specific code areas that the clip is illustrating*

Read out Clip 1: *This is taken from a daytime light entertainment programme, “The Alan Titchmarsh Show” which features a regular slot with a resident ‘sexpert’ who in this clip discusses and shows images of sex aids. It was shown at 3pm on ITV1, and the programme is shown in term time when most children are at school. Please fill in the questionnaire while you’re viewing.*

- Play clip 1

Questions for clip 1 (5 minutes):

- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
- Probe on harm and offence/generally acceptable standards on television
- Probe on protection of minors
- Probe on context – time of day, programme, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions:

- Do you think the subject of sex is acceptable before the watershed?
- Are there limits and, if so, what are they?
- Is it acceptable for broadcasters to discuss matters of sexual nature during the day, during term time, when the majority of children are at school? If not, why not?

Read out Clip 2: *This is taken from a one-off documentary which investigated why the teaching of sex education in Holland differs from that which is taught in the UK. The programme explored the reasons why the UK has such high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. It featured clips taken from a Dutch sex education video. It was from a programme on Channel 4 called "Let's Talk Sex" and was broadcast at 8pm. Please fill in the questionnaire while you're viewing.*

- Play clip 2

Questions for clip 2 (5 minutes)

- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
- Probe on harm and offence/generally acceptable standards on television
- Probe on protection of minors
- Probe on context – time of day, programme, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions:

- Was the image necessary or seen as gratuitous?
- Purpose of the programme (whether the image was necessary or seen as gratuitous) – explore this in detail – probe around the issue of context –
 - What, if any, difference does the fact that it is educational make – (issues are editorial context_ and no representations of sexual intercourse before the watershed)
- Was it appropriate for transmission before the watershed?
 - Why/not?

Read out Clip 3: *This is taken from serialised TV drama, Rome, shown on BBC2 at 9pm – (the clip shown was aired at around 9.30pm) which dramatised the lives of Roman citizens. This specific clip includes a representation of a couple having sex, and a further scene containing nudity. Please fill in the questionnaire while you're viewing.*

- Play clip 3.

Questions for clip 3:

- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors

- Probe on context – time of day, programme, channel, editorial context
- Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions:

- How acceptable/unacceptable is this type of scene in a drama after the watershed?
- Why/not?
- Did the use of filming/lighting make a difference to how acceptable/unacceptable it is? (Dimly lit, brief, not very explicit)
- Do you think that it could have gone further – i.e. been more explicit without offending people?

Read out Clip 4: *This clip is taken from a series of sex education programmes broadcast on Channel Five. It is from a series called A Girls' Guide to 21st Century Sex shown at 23:05. It features some images of real sexual activity together with advice and information. Please fill in the questionnaire while you're viewing.*

- **Play clip 4.**

Questions for clip 4 (5 minutes):

- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
 - Probe on harm and offence/ general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, programme, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions:

- This was a post-watershed educational documentary transmitted at 23:05. What did you think to the depiction of “real sex”? Was this too strong/OK/could have gone further? (It was transmitted two hours after the watershed.)
 - Why/not?
 - If 23.05 was too early would any other time have been better?
 - Does the fact that it is a documentary/educational make it more acceptable?
 - Explore impact of presence of the doctor
- Summing up for clips 1-4
 - Did any of this first set of clips use sexual material in a more or less acceptable way than others? Why, explore reactions

Second set of clips – *These next clips are from programmes that were shown on openly available, free-to-air digital entertainment channels (i.e. anyone with Freeview, Sky or cable has access. It is not an encrypted adult PIN protected premium subscription channel) which include stronger sexual content*

- *Read through the descriptions for clips 5 and 6*
- *Ask everyone to stand up*
- *Ask who would like to stay and view the clips, and who would like to move next door for another discussion while the clips are being shown (where moderator 2*

will conduct a short discussion and supervise the completion of questionnaires for the duration of the clip)

Read out Clip 5: *This is taken from an ‘adult’ observational documentary focused on the issues of men who are married to actresses who work in the adult film industry. It was shown on Virgin 1– an openly available free-to-air general entertainment channel – at 2200. Throughout the programme there were repeated scenes of pornography actresses engaged in sexual acts interspersed with clips from interviews with the actresses, their husbands and the pornography actors they were performing with. This clip features a 50 year old female who decides she wants to become an adult film actress. The clip shows her talking about why she got into pornography and includes scenes of her engaging in anal sex and removing and playing with a butt plug. Body parts are pixellated.*

Read out Clip 6: *This is taken from a documentary series about the sex industry which provided commentary and observations on a variety of sexual activities. This programme – Sexcetera – was shown on Virgin 1 at 2300 – an openly available general entertainment channel. This clip looks at people with a pantyhose/tights fetish and shows images of male and female nudity and real sexual activities. Body parts are pixellated.*

- Those who do not wish to view Clips 5 and 6 move out of the room for the duration of this batch of clips, fill in relevant section of the questionnaire, and the second moderator conducts a discussion about why they chose not to view.
- **Ask participants to fill out their questionnaire while viewing the clip**

VIEW CLIP 5

- Initial impressions
- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, programme, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
- Questions:
 - Would you expect to find a programme like this on a channel like Virgin 1? (Probe on whether would expect to find on general entertainment channel, probe on whether would expect to find on openly available channel)
 - Are programmes featuring real sex acceptable after the watershed at all?
 - Do you think that this clip could have gone further – i.e. been more explicit without offending people?
 - Anything in this clip that you found unacceptable for transmission after 22:00? If so, what? If not, why?
 - Is there a time in the schedule where you would consider this material to be acceptable if you found its transmission at 22:00 unacceptable?
- Was the way in which this programme was presented i.e. in a light-hearted manner, acceptable given what some might consider to be the strength of some of the material?

- Could this programme have been presented in a different way to make it more acceptable if you found it unacceptable?
- **Where would you expect to find a programme such as this?**

Ask participants to fill out their questionnaire while viewing the clip

VIEW CLIP 6

- Initial impressions
- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
 - Probe on harm and offence/generally acceptable standards
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, programme, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
- Specific questions:
 - Would you expect to find a programme like this on a channel like Virgin 1? (Probe on whether would expect to find on general entertainment channel, probe on whether would expect to find on openly available channel)
 - Are programmes featuring real sex acceptable after the watershed at all?
 - Was there anything in this clip that you found unacceptable for transmission after 23:00? If so, what? If not, why?
 - Is there a time in the schedule where you would consider this material to be acceptable if you found its transmission at 23:00 unacceptable?
 - Was the way in which this programme was presented i.e. in a light-hearted manner, acceptable given what some might consider to be the strength of some of the material?
 - Could this programme have been presented in a different way to make it more acceptable if you found it unacceptable?
 - **Where would you expect to find a programme such as this?**

AFTER DISCUSSING CLIPS 5&6 INDIVIDUALLY

- **Does the time at which this material is shown effect how acceptable it is i.e. clip 5 was shown at 10pm and clip 6 at 11pm**
- **How much difference (if any) does this make to how acceptable the material is?**
- **Are there other factors which are more important in determining how acceptable the material is?**
- Halfway wrap-up:
 - **Bring back those who chose not to view**
 - **Have these clips changed their views on what is and is not acceptable to show on TV**
 - **What content do they think is acceptable on openly available television?**
 - Before 9pm
 - 9-10pm
 - After 10pm

- **What is acceptable bearing in mind the need to avoid harm and offence**
- **What is acceptable bearing in mind the need to protect minors**

Third clip set: *These clips were all openly available. They are taken from adult channels and the clips were unencrypted with no need for a PIN.*

- *Read through the descriptions for clips 7-9*
- *Ask everyone to stand up*
- *Ask who would like to stay and view the clips, and who would like to move next door for another discussion while the clips are being shown*

EXPLAIN THAT THIS MATERIAL IS STRONGER AND THEREFORE WE DON'T WANT TO ASSUME THAT PEOPLE WILL BE COMFORTABLE WATCHING IT. ASK WHICH PARTICIPANTS ARE HAPPY TO VIEW THE CLIPS. FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT, MODERATOR 2 WILL CONDUCT A SHORT DISCUSSION AND SUPERVISE THE COMPLETION OF INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRES.

Read out Clip 7: *This clip is taken from a dramatised adult 'reality-style' programme. It was openly available and transmitted at 23:30 on an adult channel, requiring no subscription or pin protection. The programme featured repeated scenes of sexual intercourse. This clip features a woman coming into a house, engaging in conversation with a man, removing her clothes and engaging in sexual activities, culminating in sexual intercourse with the man.*

These last clips are taken from openly available promotions for premium subscription, encrypted adult channels that are PIN protected. They were shown on these adult channels as openly available, unencrypted trailers. These promotions are typically 10 minutes long and are broadcast after 9pm.

Clip 8: *This clip is taken from an openly available promotion for a premium subscription encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected. It was broadcast at 20.00. The trailer featured adult themes and sexual material such as fetish and bondage clothing (gas masks, straitjackets etc.)*

Clip 9: *This clip is taken from an openly available trailer for a premium subscription encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected, It was broadcast at midnight. It featured material of a sexual nature which is at times strong. The clip features amateur home videos of individuals engaging in sexual acts (body parts are pixellated). It contains nudity and images of sexual intercourse.*

- **THOSE WHO DO NOT WISH TO VIEW THE CLIPS GO OUTSIDE WITH MODERATOR 2 FOR A SHORT DISCUSSION AND FILLING IN OF INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRES**
- **Ask participants to fill out their questionnaire while viewing the clip**

VIEW CLIP 7

General impressions

- Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV
 - Why
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
 - Extent to which concerned about self/minors stumbling across this

Questions:

- It was labelled as a 'drama'. How, if at all, does it differ from the clip of Rome?
- Is a sex scene such as this one acceptable in a drama that is transmitted after the watershed? If not, why not?
- How does the use of sexual material in a drama such as this one compare in terms of acceptability to the use of sexual material in documentaries such as those shown in clips 5 and 6? Explore answers
- Do you think that sexual material like this is acceptable in a drama that is transmitted openly available at 23.30 hours? Explore answers
- Do you think it should have been encrypted/pin protected or not

Ask participants to fill out their questionnaire while viewing the clip

VIEW CLIP 8

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
 - **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions

- What do you think of the time that this trailer clips was transmitted (8pm)? Explore reactions to acceptability and appropriateness of scheduling
- Do you think trailers such as this should be allowed on openly available channels? If yes, what are conditions of acceptability?
- Is material such as this ever acceptable free-to-air, i.e. unencrypted, without PIN protection?
- Could this material have been transmitted later?

Ask participants to fill out their questionnaire while viewing the clip

VIEW CLIP 9

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
 - **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/generally acceptable standards on television
 - Probe on protection of minors

- Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions

Specific questions

- What do you think of the time that these trailer clips were transmitted (midnight)? Explore reactions to acceptability and appropriateness of scheduling
- Do you think trailers such as this should be allowed on openly available channels? If yes, what are conditions of acceptability?
- Is material such as this ever acceptable free-to-air, i.e. unencrypted?
- Could this material have been transmitted later?
- *OPT OUT GROUP REJOINS MAIN GROUP*
- Ask moderator 2 to summarise the discussion from the opt-out group
- Moderator 1 to summarise the discussion from the group which watched the clips

Wrapping up

- **Have these clips changed their views on what is and is not acceptable to show on TV**
- **What content do they think is acceptable**
 - Before 9pm
 - 9-10pm
 - After 10pm
 - **What is acceptable bearing in mind the need to avoid harm and offence**
 - **What is acceptable bearing in mind the need to protect minors (under eighteens)**
- **What do you think about the idea of the need for stronger editorial justification for stronger sexual material?**
- **Go round the group and ask people to summarise their main views on acceptability of sexual material on TV**

Incentives + signing sheet

Thanks

- While participants are filling in the sign-in sheet
- **Ofcom fined the broadcaster for clip 7 as it was in breach of the code. Further judgments can be found on their website – give handout to anyone interested**
- **Their views are important for Ofcom to understand what people find acceptable and unacceptable so they can regulate. Re-emphasise confidentiality. If they have any questions or issues please contact Opinion Leader.**
- **Reactions to the research process**
 - What did they think to the group
 - Did they think it was OK viewing the clips in a group context, or was it difficult? Why/not?
 - Were there any questions they felt uncomfortable answering?
 - Any point at which they felt uncomfortable during the group?

- Any concerns after the group then please do contact us - It is really important to stress this!

Need to hand out the thank you sheet.

Annex 4: Discussion guide – opt outs



Discussion guide for those who do not wish to view clips

- Those who do not wish to view the clips move out of the room for the duration of the clip
- Moderator 2:

Read out Clip 5: *This is taken from an ‘adult’ observational documentary focused on the issues of men who are married to actresses who work in the adult film industry. It was shown on Virgin 1– an openly available free-to-air general entertainment channel – at 2200. Throughout the programme there were repeated scenes of pornography actresses engaged in sexual acts interspersed with clips from interviews with the actresses, their husbands and the pornography actors they were performing with. This clip features a 50 year old female who decides she wants to become an adult film actress. The clip shows her talking about why she got into pornography and includes scenes of her engaging in anal sex and removing and playing with a butt plug. Body parts are pixellated.*

Please fill in the questionnaire.

Initial reactions:

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
- **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, programme, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
 - Is this always unacceptable on television?
 - Is there anything that would make it acceptable (e.g. purpose of programme, time of day, channel, shown on a PIN protected encrypted subscription channel)?
- **Questions:**
 - Anything in this clip that you found unacceptable for transmission after 22:00? If so, what? If not, why?

- **Is there a time in the schedule where you would consider this material to be acceptable if you found its transmission at 22:00 unacceptable?**
 - Would you expect to find a programme like this on a channel like Virgin 1? (Probe on whether would expect to find on general entertainment channel, probe on whether would expect to find on openly available channel)
 - Are programmes featuring real sex acceptable after the watershed at all?
- **Where would you expect to find a programme such as this?**

Clip 6

Read out Clip 6: *This is taken from a documentary series about the sex industry which provided commentary and observations on a variety of sexual activities. This programme – Sexcetera – was shown on Virgin 1 at 2300 – an openly available general entertainment channel. This clip looks at people with a pantyhose/tights fetish and shows images of male and female nudity and real sexual activities. Body parts are pixellated.*

Please fill in the questionnaire.

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
- **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, programme, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
- **Specific questions:**
 - Was there anything in this clip description that you found unacceptable for transmission after 23:00? If so, what? If not, why?
 - Is there a time in the schedule where you would consider this material to be acceptable if you found its transmission at 23:00 unacceptable?
 - Would you expect to find a programme like this on a channel like Virgin 1? (Probe on whether would expect to find on general entertainment channel, probe on whether would expect to find on openly available channel)
 - Are programmes featuring real sex acceptable after the watershed at all?
- **Where would you expect to find a programme such as this?**

AFTER DISCUSSING CLIPS 5&6 INDIVIDUALLY

- **Does the time at which this material is shown effect how acceptable it is i.e. clip 5 was shown at 10pm and clip 6 at 11pm**
- **How much difference (if any) does this make to how acceptable the material is?**
- **Are there other factors which are more important in determining how acceptable the material is?**

Read out

Clip 7: *This clip is taken from a dramatised adult ‘reality-style’ programme. It was openly available and transmitted at 23:30 on an adult channel, requiring no subscription or pin protection. The programme featured repeated scenes of sexual intercourse. This clip features a woman coming into a house, engaging in conversation with a man, removing her clothes and engaging in sexual activities, culminating in sexual intercourse with the man..*

Please fill in the questionnaire.

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
- **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
 - Extent to which concerned about self/minors stumbling across this
- **Questions:**
 - It was labelled as a 'drama'. How, if at all, does it differ from the clip of Rome?
 - Is a sex scene such as this one acceptable in a drama that is transmitted after the watershed? If not, why not?
 - How does the use of sexual material in a drama such as this one compare in terms of acceptability to the use of sexual material in documentaries such as those shown in clips 5 and 6? Explore answers
 - Do you think that sexual material like this is acceptable in a drama that is transmitted openly available at 23.30 hours? Explore answers
 - Do you think it should have been encrypted/pin protected or not

Clip 8: *This clip is taken from an openly available promotion for a premium subscription encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected. It was broadcast at 20.00. The trailer featured adult themes and sexual material such as fetish and bondage clothing (gas masks, straitjackets etc.)*

Please fill in the questionnaire.

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
- **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/general acceptability on television
 -
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
- **Do you think these trailers should be openly available? If yes, what are conditions of acceptability?**
- **Specific questions**
 - What do you think of the time that this trailer clips was transmitted (8pm)? Explore reactions to acceptability and appropriateness of scheduling
 - Do you think trailers such as this should be allowed on openly available channels? If yes, what are conditions of acceptability?
 - Is material such as this ever acceptable free-to-air, i.e. unencrypted, without PIN protection?
 - Could this material have been transmitted later?

Clip 9: *This clip is taken from an openly available trailer for a premium subscription encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected, It was broadcast at midnight. It featured material of a sexual nature which is at times strong. The clip features amateur home*

videos of individuals engaging in sexual acts (body parts are pixellated). It contains nudity and images of sexual intercourse.

Please fill in the questionnaire.

Initial impressions

- **Perceived level of acceptability of the sexual material in this clip to be on TV**
- **Why**
 - Probe on harm and offence/generally acceptable standards on television
 - Probe on protection of minors
 - Probe on context – time of day, channel, editorial context
 - Would it be more/less acceptable under other conditions
- **Specific questions**
 - What do you think of the time that these trailer clips were transmitted (midnight)? Explore reactions to acceptability and appropriateness of scheduling
 - Do you think trailers such as this should be allowed on openly available channels? If yes, what are conditions of acceptability?
 - Is material such as this ever acceptable free-to-air, i.e. unencrypted?
 - Could this material have been transmitted later?

Annex 5: Individual questionnaire (for use in groups)

Individual Questionnaire

Please write your full name here	
Please write your location here	
Time of discussion group:	

Part One: Initial Views

1. People have all sorts of different opinions about sexual material on television nowadays. How concerned or unconcerned are you personally about sexual material on TV? By sexual material we mean discussions of sex, and portrayals of sex in programmes.

Not at all concerned	Not very concerned	Quite concerned	Very concerned

2. And why do you say that?

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Part Two: Views on different types of sexual material

Please complete the following two grids; ticking the box relating to acceptability that you think applies for each type of sexual material. Please explain your answers as fully as possible thinking about the impact of following factors in your response:

- When programme is shown
- The purpose of programme
- How the use of sexual material relates to the plot / story line
- Where the programme is shown (the type of channel)
- How the programme is signposted i.e. whether the title of the programme or the name of the channel clearly indicates the sexual content of the programme

GRID 1: Whether the time the sexual material is shown changes acceptability (Please tick ONE BOX per row)

	This material is acceptable on all channels at any time - I do not think this type of content should be restricted	This material is acceptable on free to air channels after 9pm if the context demands	This material is acceptable as an openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	This material is acceptable premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	This material is never acceptable on any television channel
1. Sex scenes where you don't actually see much					
2. The sound of people having sex					
3. Sex scenes where you can clearly see body parts					
4. Close up shots of people kissing each other					
5. Male genitals					
6. Female genitals					
7. Naked men					
8. Naked women					
9. Group orgies or group sex					

10. Suggestive or sexual behaviour involving teenagers or young adults					
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GRID 2: Which types of programme do you regard the sexual material as acceptable in? (Tick as many boxes as apply)

	General entertainment programme (e.g. chat show, lifestyle programme)	Documentary	Drama	Educational programme	Reality TV programme	Films
1. Sex scenes where you don't actually see much						
2. The sound of people having sex						
3. Sex scenes where you can clearly see body parts						
4. Close up shots of people kissing each other						
5. Male genitals						
6. Female genitals						
7. Naked men						
8. Naked women						
9. Group orgies or group sex						

10. Suggestive or sexual behaviour involving teenagers or young adults							
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Part Three: Views of specific clips

CLIP 1 – Alan Titchmarsh Show, ITV1, 3pm:

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 2 – Let’s Talk Sex, Channel 4, 8pm:

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 3 Rome, BBC2, 9pm (clip aired at around 9.30pm):

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 4 – A Girl’s Guide to 21st Century Sex, Five, 11.05pm:

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 5 – Sin Cities, Virgin 1, 10pm:

Did you view this clip?

Yes	
No	

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

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c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 6 – Sexcetera, Virgin 1, 11pm:

Did you view this clip?

Yes	
No	

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

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c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 7 - Openly available programme - Sex House, Playboy One 11.30pm:

Did you view this clip?

Yes	
No	

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

--

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 8 – Openly available trailer for Spice Extreme channel, 8pm:

Did you view this clip?

Yes	
No	

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

--

c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	

CLIP 9 Openly available trailer for RedHot 40+, midnight:

Did you view this clip?

Yes	
No	

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is completely acceptable and 1 is completely unacceptable, how acceptable do you think this clip is to be on TV? Please bear in mind the type of material, the channel and the time of day the clip was shown

1 Completely unacceptable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Completely acceptable

b) (WHETHER YOU DECIDED TO VIEW THE CLIP OR NOT) Please explain your answer to a). If there was anything specific that concerned or offended you, can you be as specific as possible, and give reasons. If you did not view the clip, please describe what it was in the description that you felt was acceptable or unacceptable to be on TV.

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c) Tick the response that best describes when you think it is acceptable to show this material

Shown in daytime while most children are at school	
Shown in the evening before the watershed (pre 9pm)	
Shown shortly after the watershed (after 9pm but before 10pm)	
Shown later at night (after 10pm)	
No restrictions on this material – show any time	
This material is never acceptable	

d) Tick the response(s) that best describe which channels you think are suitable to show this material – tick all that apply

Shown on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 or Five	
Shown on openly available general entertainment digital channels	
Openly available promotional trailer for premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
Shown on a premium subscription, encrypted adult channel that is PIN protected	
This material is not acceptable on any channel	