

Dame Caroline Dinéage
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Dame Melanie Dawes
Chief Executive
Email: ChiefExecutive@ofcom.org.uk

By email

21 May 2026

Dear Dame Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 2026 about Monday's BBC *Panorama* programme examining the Channel 4 series *Married at First Sight UK*. Given the Committee and the public's understandable concern about the issues raised by *Panorama*, I am writing to you today to set out Ofcom's immediate response. We will also respond to your detailed questions by 1 June.

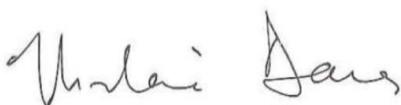
The allegations set out by *Panorama* are shocking and deeply disturbing. Protecting those who take part in television programmes is a fundamental responsibility for programme makers. Reality television is a format that many viewers value, but it can involve particularly high risks when participants are placed in highly pressured or sensitive situations. We strengthened our rules and guidance in this area in 2021 to reflect those risks, including clear expectations around due care for participants.

As the Committee will be aware, Channel 4 has commissioned two external reviews into the issues raised, one focussed on the programme's welfare protocols during its production and filming, and the other on changes required to those protocols in the future. We have been in touch over the past few days with Channel 4 management to be clear that we expect to be kept closely involved in these reviews and for them to be expedited as a matter of priority. We will examine their findings closely, as well as any action Channel 4 takes in response. We will conduct a timely review of our rules and guidance and will not hesitate to strengthen these if we need to.

I understand the Committee's interest in any complaints Ofcom may have received in relation to *Married at First Sight*. I can assure you that if an individual complains to us that they were harmed and treated unfairly in any of these programmes, we will take this very seriously and will investigate it as a matter of priority if appropriate. However, it is our longstanding policy for complaints made under our fairness and privacy rules – where individuals feel they have been unfairly treated in a programme – to keep these confidential while we investigate, because of their sensitive and personal nature and to protect complainants' privacy.

I hope this provides a clear account of how seriously Ofcom is taking these matters and the steps we are taking at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Dawes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DAME MELANIE DAWES