

I should like to respond to the current consultation on amendments to the Broadcasting Code but feel I do not have the time or detailed knowledge to respond adequately to all the detailed questions featured in the online response form. I therefore propose to restrict my comments to a few points, largely, of a general nature.

1. It seems to me that if the recent "high profile compliance failures" with the current Code have resulted in significant financial penalties then it must be working properly and should not be "clarified" to accommodate the aspirations of broadcasters.
2. A number of artists and broadcasters have expressed an ambition to "push the envelope" of public opinion through their work. However, it is not the role of unelected individuals (however talented) to commandeer the public broadcast network for such purposes, particularly in the realm of sexual content, where the possibility of damaging the lives of the young and vulnerable is so great.
3. I consider it would be best if both material with a "strong sexual content" and "adult sex material" should not be broadcast on public networks but be confined to adult channels with mandatory access restrictions.
4. At a time when the Government is considering what further measures can be utilised to reverse our tragic rise in the international league table of teenage pregnancies, it would seem to be both appropriate and probably cost effective to utilise the code to combat the damaging influence of the self-appointed public opinion formers referred to earlier.
5. If there is, as I believe, a need to protect the abuse of the public network from sexual libertarians pursuing their damaging ethical agenda, there is also a need to protect it from the "tyranny of the market." Sadly there will always be broadcasters (and those in other walks of life) who will want to exploit a potential market wherever one appears, regardless of the moral or social consequences. The existence of sex trafficking, drug dealing and other "trading" activities demonstrates that the mere exist of "demand" does not mean that it should be met. The Code is needed to protect the network from the unscrupulous who will use the evidence of "market research" to advance the unacceptable.
6. For the same reason I believe the new "Public Information Programming" rules should not be allowed to admit the advertising for abortion clinics.

Thank you for the opportunity to express an opinion on this important issue.