

Complaining about Television and Radio Programmes and Advertisements

A guide to complaining effectively if you see or hear something on television or radio which concerns you.

Information about the various bodies who could help.

The DCMS works closely with the broadcasting industry and viewers and listeners to help increase choice, ensure competition and maintain programme standards and quality.

Our role is to set a framework designed to encourage high quality broadcasting.

We do not intervene in complaints about individual programmes and advertisements or schedules. The Government has created regulators to do that. The 'Regulators' section of this leaflet explains more about these bodies.

① More information on the work of the Department can be found on our website www.culture.gov.uk

or via our **public enquiry unit** on

☎ 020 7211 6200

10:00-12:00pm & 2:30-4:30pm Mon
to Fri

e-mail: enquiries@culture.gov.uk

Broadcasting Regulation

Broadcasters are regulated to make sure they meet high standards of quality and choice.

The regulatory bodies are the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the Governors of the BBC and the Welsh Fourth Channel Authority (S4C).

Who appoints the regulatory bodies?

These bodies are appointed by the Government, but operate independently. They are responsible for safeguarding the public interest in broadcasting and set out the rules and guidance with which broadcasters must comply.

The regulators have a duty to ensure that programmes and advertisements contain nothing which offends or is harmful against generally accepted standards.

Within this framework the broadcasters have to make judgements about what individual programmes contain and the time of broadcast. **It is a longstanding principle that the Government does not intervene in programme matters, either on the content of programmes and advertisements, or arrangements for scheduling.**

Codes of Practice

The regulators maintain Codes of Practice for programme makers, which set out the rules for programmes and advertisements on:

- Content and nature
- Timing
- Calculating advertising time
- Separating advertisements clearly from programmes
- Commercial sponsorship



The Codes also recommend when warning announcements about programmes should be made.

Viewers can obtain copies of the Codes from the individual regulators and on the regulators' websites.

Ofcom: www.ofcom.org.uk

BBC: www.bbc.co.uk

S4C: www.s4c.co.uk

The Regulators




Who should I complain to?


- First consider contacting the television or radio company directly. You can find contact details for all television and radio broadcasters on the OFCOM website www.ofcom.org.uk
- If, after contacting the broadcaster, you are still seriously concerned about a programme or advertisement, or you want OFCOM to deal with it straight away and consider that regulatory codes have been breached you should contact the regulators.


! When you make a complaint you need to provide as much information as possible, including channel, date and time of broadcast and the nature of the broadcast.

The regulators do not preview programmes and can consider a complaint about a programme only after it has been broadcast.

Contacting the regulators

 BBC (Board of Governors)
Broadcasting House
London W1A 1AA

 The Viewers' Hotline
S4C
Parc Ty Glas
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5DU

 0870 600 4141

OFCOM www.ofcom.org.uk

The Office of Communications (OFCOM) is the new communications regulator.

On 29th December 2003, the Communications Act transferred powers from the Independent Television Commission (ITC), Radio Authority and Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) to OFCOM, which took on legal responsibility for licensing and regulating all commercially broadcast TV and radio material in the UK.

OFCOM also regulates the BBC and S4C in issues of harm and offence and fairness and privacy.

OFCOM has inherited all previous broadcasting codes and keeps on-line archives of recent research.

You can contact OFCOM at:

 OFCOM Contact Centre (OCC)
OFCOM
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA
 0845 456 3000 or 020 7981 3040
 **0845 456 3333**

Textphone: is available on 0845 456 3003

E-mail: contact@ofcom.org.uk

Website: www.ofcom.org.uk