

NORTHERN VISIONS EDITORIAL & BROADCASTING POLICY (including privacy)

Northern Visions is regulated by Ofcom and must ensure it meets the requirements of Ofcom's Standards and Fairness Codes and the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

Ofcom also considers complaints against Northern Visions content if the complainant is dissatisfied with the Northern Visions' response.

Ofcom will give an opinion as to whether the relevant content meets these Editorial Guidelines, and may require Northern Visions to reconsider the complaint.

Where Ofcom finds a breach of its Broadcasting Code, it may require Northern Visions to broadcast a statement of its findings. Where Ofcom considers its code has been breached 'seriously, deliberately, repeatedly or recklessly' it can impose sanctions, which range from a requirement to broadcast a correction or statement of finding to a fine.

Northern Visions operates in the public interest. It is the responsibility of all employees to read the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and maintain compliance.

This includes:

- All video content, news, current affairs, documentary programmes; clips and trailers
- Text, images, applications and other interactive elements
- Advertising, advertising funded campaigns, content and sponsorship
- User generated content

Accuracy

If an issue is controversial, relevant opinions as well as facts may need to be considered. When necessary, all the relevant facts and information should also be weighed to get at the truth.

Where appropriate:

- Gather material using firsthand sources wherever possible
- Check and cross check facts
- Validate the authenticity of documentary evidence and digital material
- Corroborate claims and allegations made by contributors wherever possible.

Breadth & Diversity of Opinion

Across Northern Visions output, we must be inclusive, reflecting a breadth and diversity of opinion. Breadth and diversity of opinion may require not just a political and cultural range, but reflection of the variations between urban and rural, older and younger, poorer and wealthier, it may involve exploration of perspectives in different communities, interest groups and neighbourhoods.

Fairness

The unfair treatment of individuals or organisations in programmes should be avoided.

Informed consent. Contributors should take part in programmes on the basis of their informed consent. Any deviation from this rule must be justified by the public interest or otherwise.

Parental consent will normally be required for contributors who are under 16. For over 16s unable to give informed consent, consent should be sought from an appropriate responsible adult.

Fair editing. Interviews and contributions must be edited and presented fairly within programmes.

Fairness and accuracy. Factual programmes should be fair and accurate.

Opportunity to respond. Any programme which is critical of, or alleges wrongdoing or incompetence on the part of an individual or organisation should normally give that person or organisation the opportunity to respond. Any relevant response should be fairly included.

Privacy

Any infringement of privacy in programmes, or in connection with obtaining material, must be must be warranted e.g. by consent, or that it's in the public interest.

Consent. Most filming (and broadcast) involves an infringement of privacy and, therefore, should normally be done with consent. Even when filming in public places, individuals may have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Suffering and distress. When reporting on emergencies, accidents or personal tragedy, the public interest in reporting and right to freedom of expression must be balanced with the need to be compassionate and the privacy of those involved.

'Doorstepping' or interviews without prior arrangement should not take place.

Secret filming and recordings. All secret filming and recording (except for entertainment purposes) must comply with the Code and be justifiable by the public interest.

Revealing private information without consent is likely to infringe privacy and is only likely to be justifiable if the public interest in revealing the information 'outweighs' the privacy infringement.

Broadcasters must pay particular regard to the privacy of people under 16. Those under 16 do not lose their right to privacy because of the fame or notoriety of their parents.

Protecting Under 18s and Harm and Offence

Under 18s must be protected from potentially harmful and offensive material. One of the main ways of achieving this is through the appropriate scheduling of programmes.

The watershed is 9 pm. Nothing unsuitable for children should, in general, be shown before 9pm or after 5.30 am. After 9 pm, there should then be a gradual transition to more adult material, not an abrupt change.

Potentially harmful or offensive material includes strong language, violence, and sexual behaviour. Its inclusion must be justified editorially and by the context.

Viewers should be forewarned of potentially harmful or offensive material so they can make their own informed choices about what they and their children watch. This usually requires clear on-air pre-transmission warnings.

Programmes must be true, accurate and not materially misleading.

Programmes should not condone or glamorise violent, dangerous or seriously anti-social behaviour, especially where it is likely to encourage others to copy such behaviour.

Any discriminatory treatment or language for example on grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion, beliefs and sexuality must be justified by the context. Nothing transmitted should be intended or likely to stir up racial hatred.

Programmes should show respect for human dignity. In news and factual programmes, showing people in distress and in sensitive situations requires clear editorial justification. In entertainment programmes, consideration must be given to humour based on the plight or misfortune of real-life individuals, which again must be justifiable editorially and by the context.

There are specific rules regarding programmes including exorcism, the occult and the paranormal.

Encouraging or Inciting Crime

Programmes must not contain material that is likely to encourage or incite the commission of crime, or lead to disorder.

Material, which contains hate speech must not be included in television programmes except where it is justified by the context.

Material, which contains abusive or derogatory treatment of individuals, groups, religions or communities, must not be included in television services except where it is justified by the context.

Descriptions or demonstrations of criminal techniques which contain essential details, which could enable the commission of crime must not be broadcast unless editorially justified.

Payments

Confessed or convicted criminals should not be paid (or benefit financially in some other way) for interviews about their crimes unless it is in the public interest to do so.

Any programmes featuring convicted or confessed criminals should be referred for legal advice. No payment or commitment to pay a criminal should be made before legal advice.

In criminal legal proceedings, no payment or promise of payment may be made to a witness or potential witness until proceedings have ceased, that is the defendant has been convicted or acquitted. Only actual expenditure or loss of earnings necessarily incurred during the making of a programme contribution may be reimbursed. Legal advice must be sought in advance.

Where criminal legal proceedings have not commenced but are likely and foreseeable, for example following an undercover investigation into criminal activity, payments to those who reasonably may be expected to become a witness should only be made if it is in the public interest, for example the criminal activity could not reasonably have been uncovered without the payment being made. Where such a payment is made the Code states that the payment should be disclosed to both the defense and the prosecution if the person goes on to become a witness in any subsequent trial. Legal advice must be sought in advance.

Under 18s

When reporting on legal proceedings, any under 18s involved must not be identified, even indirectly, where to do so would breach the law. Even when reporting on pre-trial investigations where there may be no legal prohibition on identifying under 18s, careful consideration should be given to the position of potentially vulnerable young people and children before identifying them or broadcasting personal details about them.

Religion

Fairness and accuracy. Religious programmes require careful and responsible handling. They must always be fair and accurate.

'Abusive treatment'. The beliefs and practices of religious groups featured in programmes must not be misrepresented or abused.

Transparency. The identity of any religion featured should be clear to viewers. Religious views must not be promoted by stealth.

'Special powers and abilities'. Claims that living individuals or groups have special powers or abilities should be considered with due objectivity and avoided in programmes when significant numbers of children are likely to be watching.

'Direct appeals'. Religious programmes should not make direct appeals to viewers to join a particular religion, that is directly seek recruits.

'Exploitation'. Religious programmes should not improperly exploit any susceptibilities of the audience.

Due Impartiality, Due Accuracy and Undue Prominence of Views & Opinions

In News Programmes

News, in whatever form, must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality. Presenting a story or item with "due impartiality" means presenting it in an appropriately balanced and fair way.

Significant mistakes in news should normally be acknowledged and corrected on air quickly. Corrections should be appropriately scheduled.

Politicians must not be used as newsreaders, interviewers or reporters in news programmes unless, exceptionally, it is editorially justified, in which case that person's political allegiance must be made clear to viewers.

In Non-News Programmes

Programmes dealing with matters of political or industrial controversy or matters relating to current public policy must be duly impartial. Whilst in most cases individual programmes should be duly impartial in themselves, impartiality can be achieved over a series of programmes taken as a whole. However, wherever impartiality is to be achieved over two or more programmes, this should be made clear to viewers, for example by an on-air announcement immediately prior to each programme. In addition, views and facts must not be misrepresented and should be presented with due weight over appropriate timeframes.

Any personal interest of a reporter or presenter, which would call into question the due impartiality of the programme, must be made clear to the audience.

Presenters and reporters (or a chair in a discussion programme) can express their own views on matters of political or industrial controversy or matters relating to current public policy as long as alternative viewpoints are represented and due impartiality is achieved either within the programme itself or within a series of programmes taken as a whole.

"Personal view" or "authored" programmes, which present a particular view or perspective, must be clearly signalled to viewers as being so at the outset. Producers must seek legal advice in advance.

Major matters. In addition to the above rules, in relation to major matters of political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy, for example matters

of national or international importance, a programme or clearly linked programmes must include and give due weight to an appropriately wide range of significant views. Views and facts must not be misrepresented.

Elections

The reporting of elections and referendums must be duly impartial and facts must not be misrepresented.

Due weight must be given to coverage of parties and independent candidates depending on evidence of past electoral support and/or current support, and those with significant views or opinions during the election period.

When the election period begins will depend on the exact nature of the election but invariably ends with the close of the poll.

On polling day, discussion and analysis of election issues must finish when polling stations open.

During the election period, candidates in UK elections must not act as news presenters, interviewers or presenters of any type of programme. However, other appearances in non-political programmes planned or scheduled before the election or referendum period may go ahead.

From the start of the election period, if a candidate appears in a report about his/her constituency or electoral area, all other candidates should be offered the opportunity to take part. Constituency reports should also contain a list of all candidates standing in that constituency.

After an election has been called, politicians must not be allowed to make constituency points in any type of programme where no other candidate will have a similar opportunity.

Editorial Independence & Commercial References

Programme content and advertising must be kept clearly separate.

Products and services must not be promoted within programmes (subject to a few specific exceptions). Programme related material is excluded from this rule, although generally where it is paid for material e.g. books or videos, the Ofcom expectation is that it is to be promoted immediately after and outside the body of the programme it is directly derived from.

The broadcaster must retain complete editorial control over programme content.

Programmes must not give undue prominence to commercial products and services. Product placement is permissible but there are restrictions, and detailed legal advice should be sought.

Programme-related material e.g. factsheets, websites, helplines, premium rate services, etc. may be promoted within programmes or around the programmes to which they relate as long as it is editorially justified to do so and the broadcaster retains responsibility for the material.

Premium rate services should not be included in programmes unless their inclusion is editorially justified and they fall within the definition of programme-related material.

All competitions within programmes (including premium rate telephone, text, web and red button interaction), whether free to enter or not, should be referred for legal advice in advance. Consideration should also be given to the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005.

Generally advertisements must be clearly separated from programmes. However, all types of programming may contain advertisements or clips from advertisements, if editorially justified. Seek legal advice.

Charitable appeals within programmes are permissible. However, there are specific rules that broadcasters and programme-makers must follow.

Television broadcasters are now allowed to broadcast appeals for donations to make programmes or fund their service. However, this must never be done without Northern Visions' consent, having taken legal advice.

There are complex rules in relation to broadcasting financial promotions. Seek legal advice.

News and current affairs programming may not be sponsored, advertiser funded or contain product placement.

Generally, programmes cannot be sponsored by organisations that are prohibited from advertising on television, e.g. the tobacco industry.

Other laws Affecting Broadcasting

Bribery Act
Misconduct in Public Office
Protection of Sources
Section 10 Contempt of Court Act 1981
Police Enquiries
Police Search & Powers & Journalistic material
Terrorism
Official Secrets Act 1989
Telephone tapping, eavesdropping and inception of mail.
The Obscene Publications Act 1959
Communications Act 2003
The Director of Public Prosecutions
Protection of Children Act 1978
Child Performance licenses
Election Reporting
Competitions & Lotteries
The Modern Slavery Act
Health & Safety

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Chairperson