

Analysis of complaints

From 1 April to 30 September 2016 the Unit reached findings on 105 complaints concerning 100 items (normally a single broadcast or webpage, but sometimes a broadcast series or a set of related webpages). Topics of complaint were as follows:

Table 1
Topics of Complaint

	<u>No of Complaints</u>	<u>No of Items</u>
Harm to individual/organisation	6	6
Infringement of privacy	2	2
Bad example (adults)	1	1
Bad example (children)	1	1
Political bias	6	6
Other bias	33	31
Factual inaccuracy	39	36
Offence to public taste	2	2
Offensive language	1	1
Offence to religious feeling	1	1
Sensitivity and portrayal	2	2
Racism	5	5
Commercial concerns	2	2
Standards of interviewing/presentation	4	4
Total	105	100

In the period 1 April – 30 September 2016, 21 complaints were upheld (6 of them partly) – 20% of the total. Of the items investigated in the period, complaints were upheld against 17 items (17% of the total). 6 complaints, about 6 items, were resolved. The bulletin includes summaries of these cases.

Standards of service

The Unit's target is to deal with most complaints within 20 working days of receiving them. A target of 35 days applies to a minority of cases (8 in this period) which require longer or more complex investigation. During the period 1 April – 30 September 2016, 82% of replies were sent within their 11.04 Tfa -4(arg)4()-4(somet)-4(ere)-4(sen)360182 Tc[9arg somefa -1 (

Steve Wright in the Afternoon, Radio 2, 3 December 2015

Complaint

The programme included an interview with the editor of the monthly magazine “What Doctors Don’t Tell You”. A representative of Good Thinking Society complained that it was not made clear that the interviewee represented a particular viewpoint on the efficacy conventional medicine, and had been allowed to make unchallenged claims in support of that viewpoint.

Outcome

The ECU agreed that the interview did not make clear that the magazine is attended by a degree of controversy, and that Ms McTaggart’s views weren’t challenged in an appropriate way. As a result, listeners might well have formed an impression of the relative efficacy of orthodox medicine and alternative therapies which was less than accurate or balanced.

Upheld

Further action

The Editor of **Steve Wright in the Afternoon**

an interpretation of what he had said in Seoul which was the subject of ongoing controversy (a reflection reinforced by the suggestion that contrary interpretations were ~~not~~ ~~also~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~nature~~). In this respect, the tweet fell below the standards of due accuracy and impartiality which apply to material broadcast or published by the BBC.

Partly upheld

Further action

The programme team has been reminded that BBC editorial standards apply to

contribution4(an)3(da)3(r)-3(ds appnsy)9(m3(i)-4(B)4((y)17(y)11 pa(al)6(i)5(t)-4esT1 0 0 1 72.024 669.342

Further action

The programme team will ensure that presenters are appropriately briefed on issues of political controversy which may be touched on in the course of particular interviews.

Newshour, World Service, 22 February 2016

News bulletins, World Service, 22 February 2016

... .. , (Al Qaeda fighters in Yemen are “on the same front with the Saudi coalition” against the Houthis), BBC Arabic online

Tweets, Mohamed Yehia, 22 February 2016

Yemen conflict: Al-Qaeda joins coalition battle for Taiz, bbc.co.uk

Complaint

The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates complained that these items gave the misleading impression that troops from coalition forces (including those of the UAE) had been fighting alongside those of al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Outcome

Although it was made clear in the body of **Newshour** that coalition forces had not engaged the Houthis on the same occasions and in the same places as al-Qaeda, the introduction to the programme, and the further items which drew on it, gave the impression that they had been fighting alongside each other. This was misleading.

Upheld

Further action

The online items were edited to remove the misleading impression.

News (00.15am), News Channel, 10 March 2016,

Has Fukushima’s radiation threat been exaggerated?, bbc.co.uk

A viewer complained that an expert who took part in Rupert Wingfield-Hayes’ report from Fukushima had made a serious error when calculating annual exposure on the basis of radiation measurements taken on the spot (an error reproduced in the associated online article), thus giving a misleading impression of the level of risk to health in the Fukushima exclusion zone.

Outcome

The expert had made a miscalculation, and the level of annual exposure would have been about 25 times more than she suggested. However, BBC News had published a correction before the complaint reached the ECU. In view of the fact that, taken as a whole, the report did not give a misleading impression of the risk to health in the Fukushima exclusion area, the correction sufficed to resolve the issue of complaint.

Resolved

Praise or Grumble, BBC Radio Sheffield, 16 April 2016

Complaint

A listener complained about the use of the f-word by two callers to this live programme.

Outcome

The presenter had acted quickly to terminate the calls and offer appropriate apologies. In the view of the ECU, this was sufficient to resolve the issue of complaint.

Resolved

Vanessa Feltz, Radio London, 26 May 2016

Complaint

The programme included an interview with Simon Woolley of Operation Black Vote (OBV) about their poster, featuring an elderly Asian woman apparently being harangued by a white skinhead, which had given rise to controversy. Mr Wooley complained that Ms Feltz had displayed partiality in relation to the controversy, and that the extent and tenor of her interventions had resulted in unfairness to himself and OBV

correct the impression created by the combination of footage and soundtrack that the call was contemporaneous with the incident.

Upheld

Further action

The website team has been reminded that edited material may affect the audience's understanding of the timeline of a story if it is not set in context by accompanying text.

Heysel disaster: 30th anniversary marked in England, Belgium & Italy

Heysel disaster: English football's forgotten tragedy?, bbc.co.uk

Complaint

A reader of these articles had complained about the statement (which occurred in both of them): [%Thirty-nine fans died](#) when an internal wall collapsed at the ground in Brussels as a result, it was changed to read: [%Thirty-nine fans died](#) when people were crushed against a wall that then collapsed at the ground in Brussels before the 1985 European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus. He then complained to the ECU that the new form of words was also inaccurate as a description of a situation in which deaths had occurred at some distance from the wall, and there was no reason to believe that the wall's collapse had caused any