



Meeting of the BBC Editorial Standards Committee

MINUTES

12 May 2026

Boardroom 3028, Broadcasting House, London

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Minutes of the 11 March Meeting and Matters Arising
3. BBC Arabic Update
4. Editorial Risks and Issues
5. Editorial Reviews: Update
6. Editorial Compliance and Complaints
7. Committee Report for the Annual Report and Accounts
8. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Members:

- Caroline Thomson Chair
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive Director
- Chris Jones Non-executive Director
- Marinella Soldi Non-executive Director

With:

Adam Baxter	External Editorial Adviser (observer)
Alexandra Evans	External Editorial Adviser (observer)
Kate Phillips	Chief Content Officer
Jason Horton	Chief Operating Officer, Nations
Jonathan Munro	Interim CEO News and Current Affairs
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Standards and Policy
Peter Johnston	Director, Complaints and Editorial Reviews
Paul Oldfield	Chief of Staff to the Chair and Director-General
Jo Clarke	Secretary to the Committee
Rizwana Rahmani	Executive Lead, Editorial Policy and Standards
David Grossman	Senior Editorial Adviser
George Achi	Head of Editorial Quality and Standards, BBC World Service (item 3)
Simon Coates	Senior Editorial Adviser (item 5)

APOLOGIES

None

EDITORIAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Chair's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the new external Editorial Advisers to the Committee meeting. Following their appointment, Adam Baxter and Alexandra Evans, joined the meeting as observers prior to the formal commencement of their terms on 21 May. The Committee noted that a full induction programme was already underway.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.
- 2.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

3. Minutes from the 11 March Meeting and Matters Arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on the 11 March were approved.

Matters Arising

- 3.2 The Committee noted that the new political labelling guidance had now been published as part of the News Style Guide.
- 3.3 Directors noted an update from News and the Nations on Election night coverage. A full de-brief would come to the July meeting of the Committee.

Dashboard

- 3.4 The Committee noted the data presented on the Dashboard. Directors asked for a briefing on how the general impression tracking data was compiled.
- 3.5 Committee members noted the action-tracker and agreed minor amendments to the format.

Forward Business

- 3.8 The Committee noted the items of business scheduled for upcoming meetings of the Committee in July and September.

4. BBC Arabic Update

- 4.1 The Committee welcomed George Achi, Head of Editorial Quality and Standards, BBC World Service, for an update on the work taking place in the BBC Arabic service.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the implementation of planned improvements, which included: the recruitment of a single service editor; new, expansive editorial training which had been delivered to around 180 staff across BBC Arabic; enhanced due diligence provided by BBC Monitoring; and an updated compliance process across the service.
- 4.3 Directors also noted the introduction of a new and enhanced editorial review process across World Service, including in BBC Arabic.
- 4.4 The Committee requested a further update in six months' time.

5. Emerging Editorial Risks and Issues

- 5.1 The Committee received an update from David Jordan on emerging editorial risks.
- 5.2 Committee members noted a briefing from David Jordan and Rhodri Talfan Davies on how the Executive managed risks around individual programmes ahead of broadcast.
- 5.3 The Committee noted an update on preparations for the live broadcast of Eurovision at the weekend.

6. Editorial Reviews: Updates

Senior Editorial Adviser Report

- 6.1 The Committee discussed the Senior Adviser Report, which contained a review of BBC coverage of the two-child benefit cap as a case study for the application of the recommendations from the first thematic review. The Committee noted that as part of the newly introduced processes for ESC the report had been discussed at the Editorial Standards and Complaints Committee prior to submission.
- 6.2 ESC welcomed the thoroughness of the report. The Committee discussion focussed on the editorial issues identified predominantly in local and regional coverage. These

included an over-reliance on individual case studies, which could potentially impact impartiality.

- 6.3 Directors discussed the implementation of findings from thematic reviews and how learnings might be embedded more fully.
- 6.4 The Committee requested a response to the Senior Editorial Adviser report from BBC Nations at the next meeting. As well as addressing the editorial issues identified in the report the response should include a plan for improved implementation of learnings from thematic reviews.

Thematic Review of Middle East Coverage: Update

- 6.5 The Committee noted an update on the search for the leadership of the review.

Thematic Review of BBC Coverage of Energy Policy and Climate Change

- 6.6 The Committee agreed that the scope of the thematic review should be narrowed to include climate change and Net Zero only.
- 6.7 The Committee also agreed that preparation of the reviews would continue in tandem.

Implementation of the Thematic Review of Portrayal and Representation

- 6.8 The Committee noted that an update on the implementation of the thematic review of portrayal and representation had been to the Executive Committee on 16 June and would come to the July meeting of the Committee.

7. Editorial Compliance and Complaints

Stage 2 Complaints Analysis

- 7.1 The Committee considered the Stage 2 complaints report. Directors discussed the meaning of a “resolved” finding.

Response to Internal Audit on Editorial Compliance and Actions

- 7.2 The Committee noted the internal audit on editorial compliance and resulting executive actions.

Editorial Whistle-blowing Report

7.3 The Committee noted the Editorial Whistle-blowing report.

Stage 1 Complaints Reporting

7.4 The Committee noted the complaints reporting for Stage 1 complaints handling.

Ofcom Complaints Reports

7.5 The Committee noted the complaints reports which had been submitted to Ofcom over the period.

8. Committee Report for the Annual Report

8.1 The Committee approved the Committee's report for inclusion in the Annual Report, subjecting to drafting changes.

9. AOB

9.1 There was no other business.