

Section 5.1 (c) of the Agreement associated with the BBC's Charter requires the BBC to do all it can to secure that all programmes :

“treat controversial subjects with due accuracy and impartiality, both in the Corporation's news services and in the more general field of programmes dealing with matters of public policy or of political or industrial controversy, and do not contain any material expressing the opinion of the Corporation on current affairs or matters of public policy other than broadcasting and matter contained in programmes in either House of Parliament or proceedings of a local authority or a committee of two or more local authorities;”

Paragraph 5.2 also states :

“In applying paragraph 5.1 (c) a series of programmes may be considered as a whole.”

In order to fulfil the provisions of 5.1 (c) above the Agreement requires the BBC to draw up an impartiality and accuracy code. The relevant sections of the Agreement are as follows :

Section 5.3:

“ The Corporation shall –

- (a) draw up, and from time to time review, a code giving guidance as to the rules to be observed in connection with the application of paragraph 5.1 (c) in relation to its services and programmes; and
- (b) do all that it can to secure that the provisions of the code are observed in the provision of services and programmes

and the Corporation may make different provisions of the code for different cases and circumstances.

5.4 The rules specified in the code referred to in subclause 5.3 shall in particular, take account of the following matters:-

- (a) that due impartiality should be preserved on the part of the Corporation as respects major matters falling within paragraph 5.1 (c) as well as matters falling within that provision taken as a whole; and

- (b) the need to determine what constitutes a series of programmes for the purposes of subclause 5.2.

5.5 The rules so specified shall, in addition, indicate to such extent as the Corporation considers appropriate:-

- (a) what due impartiality does and does not require, either generally or in relation to particular circumstances;
- (b) the ways in which due impartiality may be achieved in connection with programmes of particular descriptions;
- (c) the period within which a programme should be included in a service if its inclusion is intended to secure that due impartiality is achieved for the purposes of paragraph 5.1 (c) in connection with that programme and any programme previously included in that service taken together; and
- (d) in relation to any inclusion in a service of a series of programmes which is of a description specified in the rules:-
 - (i) that the dates and times of the other programmes comprised in the series should be announced at the time when the first programme so comprised is included in that service, or
 - (ii) if that is not practicable, that advance notice should be given by other means of subsequent programmes so comprised which included material intended to secure or assist in securing, that due impartiality is achieved in connection with the series as a whole;

and those rules, shall, in particular, indicate that due impartiality does not require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from fundamental democratic principles.”

Chapter 2 of the Producers’ Guidelines constitutes the BBC’s code as specified in 5.3 (a) above. Cross references given within Chapter 2 are for convenience to point to related guidance in the Producers’ Guidelines. This related guidance does not constitute part of the Impartiality and Accuracy Code.

