

# Content Guidelines

The following information is a general roundup of issues that most commonly affect material submitted to the BBC Big Screen. The same rules govern the Big Screen as govern all BBC output, be it on television, radio, online or within the field of live events. Editorial Guidelines in full can be viewed online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines> including a search facility for specific queries.

Despite the restrictions outlined below, it is screen policy to accept user generated material wherever possible.

The below topics have been selected as the most common recurring issues based upon the first few years of submissions to the Big Screens. They are by no means comprehensive and intended as guidance only.

## Big Screens & Scheduling

The Big Screens adhere to a dynamic schedule model. This enables the screens to broadcast a broader mix of content across the day/week/month. Content is not restricted to a set time each day, this allows the content to reach a wider audience. Unfortunately we are unable to specify in advance transmission times.

From time to time we may choose to have set film programmes on a weekend; this provides the filmmaker/s the opportunity to make an appointment to view. If your film is selected we will contact you to let you know the timings.

## Content Durations

To enable the right mix of content to be screened within a hour there are set time limits to film content. During our peak hours (Mon to Fri 0700 to 0915, 1200 to 1430 & 1700 to 1900) all film content needs to be between 2 minutes and 2 minutes 30 seconds. During the off peak hours (Mon to Fri 0915 to 1200, 1430 to 1700, 1900 to 0000, Weekends 0700 to 0000) content can be between 30 seconds and 7 minutes 30 seconds. Any film that exceeds 7 minutes 30 seconds will not be accepted, and we may ask you to re-edit the piece to fit in with our guidelines.

However, as already stated above there will be occasions where the screens will be showing set film programmes on a weekend, or other occasion, and this will be an opportunity for longer pieces of content to be included within our schedule.

## Big Screen & the watershed

Content scheduling decisions need to balance the protection of young people and particularly children, with the rights of all viewers, particularly those without children, to receive a full range of subject matter throughout the day. They must also be judged against the requirements of the Watershed; a concept familiar to UK television viewers by which challenging, 'adult' content of a controversial nature is reserved for broadcast after 21.00. However, unlike watching television at

home where the viewer retains the option of switching off or to another channel, the Big Screen broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Additional video material that has been submitted and accepted will be shown throughout the day and night, so anything shown in the evening when children might be expected to be at home is also shown during daytime hours. For this reason the post-watershed, 'anything-goes' period does not apply. Another example might be that in the case of a gallery exhibition, a person makes a conscious decision to enter a building with some foreknowledge of the content; if not, they can always leave if offended. The Big Screen is in the outdoor public realm, facing major transport exchanges and sited in the central shopping district.

Challenging content will be considered on its own merits – we strongly encourage you to submit material over which you feel unsure as to suitability so that we might view and advise. To summarise: contributors should remain aware that all types of people can be watching at all times and that a balance needs to be struck. Public realm programming is in its infancy and with your assistance we are leading the way forward.

## Campaigns

The BBC's need to be impartial means we have to be careful about being seen to support campaigning on issues. As a rule of thumb, we can give factual information rather than urging people to change their behaviour.

## Commercialism

The BBC Screens cannot carry advertising or promote commercial activities.

## Children & dangerous imitation

Children can be influenced by what they see, hear and read. Very careful judgments are required about material which might lead to dangerous imitation, including the use of domestic objects in violent acts (e.g. knives, hammers and scissors).

## Violence

We should take care to ensure that material does not condone or glamorise violence, dangerous or seriously anti-social behaviour and is likely to encourage others to copy such behaviour. These include violence in places normally regarded as safe such as the family home, hospitals and schools; suicide, attempted suicide or self harm; violence without showing the effect on the victim or the consequences for the perpetrator.

## Sex & nudity

Partial/full nudity cannot normally be justified and will not usually be accepted given the always-on nature of the screen; likewise material broadcast in the public realm must not portray inappropriate sexual behaviour or contain explicit sexual discussion unless clearly editorially justified.

## Language

Offensive language is one of the most frequent causes of complaint across the BBC. Judgments about its use are difficult because they depend on tone and context. There is no consensus about words that are acceptable, when, and by whom. Different words cause different degrees of of-



fence in different parts of the world. So a person's age, sex, education, employment, belief, nationality, and where they live, all impact on whether or not they might be offended. Please avoid insulting terms or curses that may fall into the above categories.

We do not reject on the basis of single or infrequent use. Instead please submit your film so that we might advise.

## Portrayal

We aim to reflect fully and fairly all of the United Kingdom's people and cultures across all BBC services. Content may reflect the prejudice and disadvantage which exist in our society but we should not perpetuate it. We should avoid offensive or stereotypical assumptions and people should only be described in terms of their disability, age, sexual orientation and so on when clearly editorially justified.

## Alcohol, smoking, solvent/drug abuse, illegal drugs

We must balance the need to reflect the range of public attitudes and behaviour realistically, with the danger of encouraging potentially damaging or illegal behaviour, particularly amongst children.

For the purposes of the BBC Big Screens, unless editorially justified we should not encourage, glamorise or condone the use of illegal drugs, the abuse of drugs, smoking, solvent abuse and the misuse of alcohol. It is understood that concert clips, musical productions, dramatisations of social activities and such contain images of some of the above. This is not in itself problematic. It only becomes an issue of debate if stylized to appear unduly appealing.

## Suicide, attempted suicide & self-harm

Suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm should not normally be portrayed, if it is then it should do so with great sensitivity whether in drama or in factual programmes. Care must be taken to avoid describing or showing methods in any great detail and content producers should be alerted to the dangers of making such behaviour attractive to the vulnerable.

## Children & consent

You should obtain written consent of parents or legal guardians before interviewing children or young people, or otherwise involving them in video projects. You should make it clear that content will be shown on the Big Screen(s) and will be repeated possibly several times in a day/week.

Please use the Contributor Consent form to obtain parental or guardian appearance permissions from those under the age of 18. In the case of large groups (school classes, short films, clubs, choirs and such), it is enough that a single form completed and signed by an adult in charge (teacher, project leader, director), providing they accept responsibility for having sought and received approval from the parents/guardians of all those taking part.

In law, Local Education Authorities license all child performances during school hours.

## Music copyright

All work submitted must have full clearances for rights including music and other talent rights covered. Completion of the Contributor Consent form is usually sufficient evidence to this end.

Occasionally we may require further assurance (e.g. emails, written communication) to irrefutably confirm that copyright has been sought and cleared, and that there will be no liability for payments to artists/ contributors/ authors/ directors etc. by showing them on the screen.

If the work includes a soundtrack you **MUST** obtain clearance for use in the work. This may incur a fee and details on how to do this are available from the MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society), telephone: +44 (0) 207 580 5544 or log on to [www.mcps.co.uk](http://www.mcps.co.uk)

Music clearance is required as standard across all professional broadcast platforms; be it film, television, radio, internet and wireless, including transmission in the public realm on the emerging network of giant digital screens, BBC or otherwise. Galleries, museums and places of exhibition also register music use in artworks. News stories increasingly refer to copyright infringement in the field of digital music downloads. Anyone wishing to pursue artistic goals beyond the home or educational environment must address this need – please visit the MCPS website for further information.

Local bands or musicians are a good source of soundtrack material and whose consent can be sought/verified with the use of the standard BBC Big Screen consent form. This explains that any material used – be it music or the film clip itself – remains the ownership of the creator(s) at all times and will not be used elsewhere except upon the Big Screen within the dates agreed.

Similarly, if you require a general style of material, rather than a specific artist – for example, techno, ambient, classical – or even by mood (excitable, reflective, cinematic), we may be able to draw upon the local BBC record library who have access to a limited amount of copyright-free material.

Elsewhere, commercial companies sell CDs in stores and online of copyright free material that can be used indefinitely and without restriction. There are also websites (try a general search for audio libraries online), where music and sound effects can be purchased or downloaded for free.

## Links to third party websites (non BBC)

On screen web links are permitted as long as these are justified within the context of the screening. For example, to provide additional information or describe the project background. Any sites must be clearly relevant to the content of the video material, suitable for the likely audience (including children), be regularly updated and refreshed, free to access and normally factually accurate. No web links to commercial sites will be accepted.

## Changing Your Mind

Any contributors are free to change their mind part-way through agreed play out and request that the clip be removed.