

Editorial Policy



Conflicts of Interest Guidelines

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with BBC Editorial Guidelines (www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines).

In cases of doubt, further assistance can be sought from the duty Editorial Policy Adviser by telephoning

Section One - General

The BBC's reputation for impartiality and objectivity is crucial. The public must be able to trust the integrity of BBC programmes and services. Our audiences need to be confident that the outside activities of our programme makers or presenters do not undermine the BBC's impartiality and that editorial decisions are not influenced by any commercial or personal interests.

Conflicts of interest can arise for anyone who appears on air or has responsibility for the content of a programme or service or associated activity. Presenters, reporters, producers, editors and researchers are all affected. There may be particular sensitivities concerning on-air talent. For editorial staff the greater the level of responsibility the greater the need to avoid any possible conflict of interest. Each programme department or team will need to identify its area of vulnerability.

The BBC should be satisfied that everyone involved in editorial decisions and programme making is free from inappropriate outside commitments. The principles apply equally to freelances or staff. It is also important that independent producers should not have any interests which could undermine the integrity and impartiality of the programmes or websites which they produce for the BBC.

It may also be appropriate to consider whether the position of families and close personal contacts presents a likely conflict of interest.

When drawing up contracts for presenters, freelances and production staff, the provisions of these guidelines should be taken into account.

BBC production and editorial staff are required to declare any personal interest which may affect their work with the BBC. These interests will be registered with Human Resources and copied to the relevant manager or Head of Department. Interests should be declared on a Declaration of Personal Interest Form. The staff handbook "Conflict of Interest" available on gateway or from Human Resources Departments

gives further details. Production and editorial staff will be asked to up date their declarations on a regular basis.

Freelance presenters, reporters, producers and researchers will be required to declare any personal interests which may affect their work with the BBC.

Section Two - Maintaining Impartiality

2.1 News and Current Affairs

News and current affairs programmes may deal with any issue, cause, organisation or individual. People who work on these programmes should have no outside interests or commitments which could damage the BBC's reputation for impartiality, fairness and integrity.

Presenters and reporters primarily associated with the BBC

Those known to the public primarily as presenters of, or reporters on, BBC news programmes or programmes about current affairs, must be seen to be impartial. It is important that no off-air activity, including writing, the giving of interviews or the making of speeches, leads to any doubt about their objectivity on-air. If such presenters or reporters publicly express personal views off-air on controversial issues, then their on-air role may be severely compromised. It is crucial that in both their BBC work and in non BBC activities such as writing, speaking or giving interviews, they do not:-

- state how they vote or express support for any political party
- express views for or against any policy which is a matter of current party political debate
- advocate any particular position on an issue of current public controversy or debate
- exhort a change in high profile public policy.

If, in an exceptional case, such a presenter or reporter writes or speaks off-air in favour of one position on an issue of current public controversy, this could give rise to concerns about impartiality. The relevant Director or Head of Department should give very careful consideration as to whether there is an actual conflict of interest and whether they should declare their interest on-air or not present items or conduct interviews on the issue.

Permission must be sought from the relevant Director, Head of Department or their nominee before outside writing or speaking commitments are undertaken about current affairs or matters of current public controversy or debate.(See section 3 below).

When making judgements about what off-air activities are acceptable, the Director or Head of Department should take into account the degree to which a news or current affairs reporter or presenter is directly identified with the BBC and therefore how far their views are likely to be construed to be the views of the BBC. There may be particular constraints on those who bear titles such as "BBC...Editor" or "BBC...correspondent".

Occasional presenters whose primary identity is not the presentation of News and Current affairs programmes

In some cases, the BBC may employ as presenters people whose primary occupation or identity is not the presentation of broadcast news or current affairs. These presenters may be newspaper editors, newspaper correspondents, columnists, writers or academics and in some cases they will be known to hold specific views on current topics. Use of such freelance presenters should not undermine the BBC's reputation for impartiality and it may be advisable in some cases to state on air what their main occupation is or the position which they hold. If relevant it should be made clear that they hold partial views on a particular topic. Such presenters should not be used to present news bulletins, nor would they normally be used as presenters of major daily current affairs programmes.

Editors, producers and researchers

These concerns and restraints about off-air activities also apply to editors, producers and researchers on news and current affairs programmes. It is important that they do not make public statements or write articles about public policy issues in a way that could undermine the perceived impartiality of their role or the programmes they produce. They must seek the permission of their Head of Department or Director before undertaking any non-BBC activity of this kind.

2.2 Serious factual programmes

In general the same constraints apply as for news and current affairs. The objectivity of the programme, programme maker or presenter must not be undermined by any outside commitment or activity. However, if a programme maker, editor or reporter only works in one area, such as science, then it may be acceptable for them to express an opinion publicly on a totally unrelated area such as the arts. Heads of Department must judge what is appropriate.

2.3 Consumer and Lifestyle Programmes

People working on these programmes, either as presenters or producers, must have no commercial or other links which could appear to influence their attitude towards any product, service or company. (See section 5 below Commercial Interests.) Any non-BBC activity undertaken by presenters, such as writing or advertising should not undermine their integrity, in particular they should not promote or advertise any product they might review on air (see section 7 below on Commercial Advertising.)

2.4 Other programming

In all other areas it is essential that programme makers and on-air talent do not undermine their own integrity and the integrity of their programmes by off-air involvement in inappropriate activities or commercial interests.

2.5 Presenters of Factual Programmes Appearing in Drama

Presenters of factual programmes should be aware that simulating their normal role in drama or comedy might carry risks for their own credibility and the credibility of the programmes in which they usually appear. Any proposal to use a current BBC news presenter to present a fictional bulletin must be approved by the head of the relevant news department who should also specifically read and clear the script. It is important that there is no danger of the audience confusing fiction with reality.

Section Three – Acceptability of Outside Commitments

3.1 Writing Commitments

Programme makers, editorial staff, reporters and presenters may all wish to undertake journalistic work or write books. Any such activity should not bring the BBC into disrepute or undermine the integrity or impartiality of BBC programmes or presenters.

Programme makers and editorial staff

No BBC staff journalist can write a regular newspaper or magazine column dealing with current affairs or matters of current public policy debate or political or industrial controversy. The only circumstances in which BBC staff journalists may write such an article will be in the context of BBC marketing for one of its programmes, or in support of the BBC or its interests, where the article has been submitted in good time to a divisional manager responsible for vetting such articles, and sent in for publication by the BBC Press Office or syndication after publication by BBC News Online.

Non-controversial columns, covering such matters as restaurant or cultural reviews may be agreed, subject to the vetting procedure set out above.

Presenters and freelance reporters

The same rules apply to news and current affairs freelance presenters and reporters in News, Global News and Nations and Regions, except where the relevant divisional Director has agreed in advance and that the individual does not derive their main external status from their work for the BBC.

In other programme areas, the relevant Director or Head of Department should normally ask to see articles about subject matter which could give rise to a conflict of interest.

In some cases, with permission from the relevant Director or Head of Department, presenters or reporters may write a book about a current topic provided it is not likely to compromise the integrity or impartiality of the BBC. In such cases, if the viewpoint expressed turns out to be controversial or one-sided, editors should consider whether to allow the presenter to cover on-air the issue which they have written about. If there is any possibility of a conflict of interest, the relevant Director or Head of Department should give very careful consideration as to whether there is an actual conflict and whether they should declare that interest on air or not present items or conduct interviews on the issue.

Letters to the press

Programme makers, editorial staff, reporters and presenters primarily associated with the BBC should also clear with Heads of Department any letters to the press if they deal with the subject matter of the programmes, any political, public policy or controversial issue, or relate to the BBC or broadcasting. Even presenters who only occasionally present programmes for the BBC should normally clear letters relevant to the subject matter of their programmes if they are to be published around the time of transmission.

3.2 Public speaking and other public appearances

Programme makers, those with editorial responsibility and any other BBC employees should seek permission from their Head of Department before undertaking outside public appearances or public speaking commitments. It is important that no such commitment should be seen to undermine the objectivity or integrity of the BBC or its programmes. Public appearances which are promotional for a particular commercial concern are unlikely to be acceptable.

Presenters

Presenters of BBC programmes may well gain a significant proportion of their income from off-air public appearances. However, presenters in all genres must guard against appearances which undermine their on-air role. Promotional appearances have to be considered very carefully and must not imply BBC endorsement. Presenters should consult the relevant Heads of Department about any appearance connected with the subject matter of their programme.

Presenters of News and Current Affairs programmes

In the case of those known to the public primarily as presenters of, or reporters on, BBC news programmes and programmes about current affairs, there is a greater possibility of conflict of interest. Care must be taken to ensure that they remain impartial when speaking publicly (see section 2.1 above) and do not promote any political party, campaigning organisation or lobby group which may jeopardise their status as an impartial broadcaster. The chairing of conferences may well be acceptable, but it is essential that the conference is not a promotional exercise or one-sided on an issue of public controversy. They should consult the relevant Head of Department about the suitability of public appearances and conference work. The

onus is on the presenters and reporters to inform the relevant Head of Department about the range of public appearances which they undertake.

3.3 References to the BBC

BBC people, freelancers or presenters clearly associated with BBC programmes should not speak or write publicly about the BBC without specific, prior approval from the relevant Head of Department or Director. BBC people should also clear any references to the broadcasting industry.

As well as concerns about bringing the BBC into disrepute, it should be borne in mind that the BBC cannot be seen to endorse outside organisations and it is essential that no promotional use is made of the BBC's name or brand.

3.4 Media Training

It may be appropriate for BBC presenters, editorial people or programme makers to speak publicly at conferences or to interested bodies about broadcasting.

However, there are considerable dangers of a conflict of interest if BBC people train individuals or organisations in how to present themselves on television, radio or online. Producers, editors and journalistic staff must obtain permission from their manager before undertaking any outside training work. Presenters, producers and editors should not train people they are likely to interview or who are likely to appear on the programmes for which they are responsible. We should ask freelance presenters about their commitments in this area to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

Presenters involved in News, Current Affairs, topical programmes or consumer programmes should not interview anyone they have trained and it is very unlikely that it will be acceptable for producers or editorial people in these areas to undertake any outside coaching on how to appear on air.

3.5 Charities and campaigning organisations

Any work undertaken for a charity should not imply BBC endorsement for a particular cause, or endorsement of one charity over another. There are particular difficulties if the charity deals with matters of controversial public policy and is a campaigning organisation. Programme people in all areas should be careful of involving themselves in lobbying campaigns.

Presenters and editorial people in news, current affairs, topical and consumer programmes should take particular care and they should not normally associate themselves with any campaigning body, particularly if it backs one viewpoint in a controversial area of policy. It is unlikely to be appropriate for a news presenter to front a campaign for a charity or campaigning body as this could undermine the BBC's reputation for impartiality.

Heads of Department should be consulted about any work for charities and campaigning groups and advice may be sought from Editorial Policy. For further guidance see Chapter 30: Social Action Programming, Campaigning Groups and Charities. There are separate guidelines for the BBC Children in Need Appeal.

Section Four – Political Activities

Some individuals wish to become involved in political activity and they will be free to do so when it is consistent with the nature of their work for the BBC and the BBC's public service obligations. Political activity is not acceptable if it is likely to compromise the BBC's impartiality or undermine public confidence in the BBC. Judgements about what is acceptable will reflect individual circumstances and advance discussion with managers is vital.

Staff should declare any active political involvement on the Declaration of Personal Interest form. In some cases it will also be appropriate to declare the political activities of close family members.

The Chief Political Adviser is responsible for providing advice to individuals and to Divisions in order to ensure fairness and consistency in dealing with these matters.

4.1 Levels of Political Involvement

Anyone is entitled to be a member of a political party or organisation.

However, active political involvement and commitments can give rise to conflicts of interest for people who are involved in programme making or have any editorial responsibilities in any BBC service, particularly if they deal with political or public policy issues.

Active political involvement can give rise to questions about the impartiality of the individual, the impartiality of the area in which they work and the impartiality of the BBC. Individuals should inform their manager about any political involvement so that it can be fully considered in the light of the guidance below. If individuals or managers have any doubts they can seek advice from the Chief Political Adviser:

There are three general considerations:

- the level of political involvement
- the nature and level of the individual's job
- the extent of involvement in editorial decisions, programme making and/or BBC policy

In any individual case it will be necessary to consider:

- whether they are known to the public or whether their contribution is acknowledged on-air or on-line during the course of a programme or through beginning or end credits
- the level of the individual's political involvement at national or local level:
 - being publicly identified as a candidate or prospective candidate for a parliamentary assembly or local authority election; no matter that the date of the election is not confirmed;
 - holding office in a party political organisation which impacts on party politics as it affects elected bodies;
 - speaking in public on matters of political controversy and matters of controversial public policy;
 - expressing views on matters of political controversy and matters of controversial public policy in books, articles, leaflets and letters in the press;
 - canvassing on behalf of a political party or candidate for election
 - promoting a partisan view on an issue put to local or national referendum
- The nature and level of their work. In some cases, if they wish to maintain their level of political activity, it may be necessary to move them to a less sensitive position
- The type of programme. News and current affairs programmes for international, national, regional and local output are subject to the most stringent tests of impartiality. For more general output considerations will be less stringent but the managers will consider the implications for those in more senior editorial roles, those involved in presentation and those who are or might become known to the public.

4.2 Elections

Anyone who intends to seek nomination as a candidate for election at national or local level should notify their manager at the earliest opportunity so that the implications can be discussed. They may not be able to undertake high level or high profile programme responsibilities whilst seeking nomination as a candidate.

When an individual has been selected to stand for election at national or local level and becomes a prospective candidate, he or she may not engage in programme work which could be linked to political issues, even if the date for the election has not been confirmed. Prospective candidates campaign actively to obtain support, and as such become the focus of public attention.

An individual who has been selected as a candidate must notify their manager, who will inform the Chief Political Adviser. A list of all BBC prospective candidates will be maintained. Individuals who currently hold an elected position in Local Government at any level must ensure that their manager is notified. The manager will inform the Chief Political Adviser.

When BBC employees stand for election for the European Parliament, the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly or the Northern Ireland Assembly unpaid leave of up to six weeks is granted for the period to the election date. The leave is unpaid in order to avoid any suggestion that the BBC is subsidising the individuals' election campaign.

Individuals may stand for local government elections provided there is not a conflict of interest with their programme duties. They will be expected to conduct their campaign activity in their own time and ensure that there is no conflict with their BBC duties. Polling day itself should be taken as unpaid leave.

Presenters and regular contributors who are candidates for elections should not appear in any programmes in their normal programmes roles during election campaigns or when elections they are involved in are imminent. This avoids unfair publicity for them at a critical time. They may of course appear as candidates under the usual election (see BBC Election Guidance)

Outside election periods, the BBC will not discriminate against politically active people on the grounds that they gain publicity from working for the BBC. The appropriateness of a role will be dependent solely on whether there is a conflict of interest with programme making or policy making responsibilities. When an individual is seeking nomination or has been selected as a candidate, but prior to the election campaign, it may be necessary to transfer the person immediately to less sensitive activities. In these circumstances the individual must be placed in gainful employment and not sent home on paid leave. In addition it will be the responsibility of the Director of the relevant Division or their nominee to ensure a suitable alternative substantive job is found within four weeks of the individual being moved to less sensitive work.

If individuals are unsuccessful in seeking nomination or decide not to pursue their candidacy, they may return to their original substantive job. However if an individual's actions in pursuing nomination as a candidate have been such that the BBC's reputation for impartiality could be undermined should they return to their original job, they would continue in a suitable alternative job.

If an individual is elected to the European Parliament, UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly or Northern Ireland Assembly he / she will be required to resign from the BBC immediately.

If an individual is not elected he/she may return to work immediately but there may have to be an appropriate gap in time before resuming the original substantive job. However if the actions of the individual in seeking election have been such that the BBC's reputation for impartiality could be undermined should they return to their

original substantive job, the person may be placed in a less sensitive job (at the same grade and salary). In the event of such a decision becoming necessary there will be full discussion of the issues with the individual concerned and the advice of the Chief Political Adviser will be sought to ensure consistency.

If a family member or close personal contact is standing for election, it is acceptable for an individual to express personal support, but there should be no use of the BBC's name and where support extends to political support the considerations outlined above apply.

4.3 Non-political voluntary public office

This may be acceptable even for editorial people in news programmes. This includes school governorships and being a magistrate. Programme people should be very careful about involving themselves in controversial matters of public policy related to organisations which campaign on political or public policy issues.

Section Five – Commercial, Business and Financial Interests

It is essential that the integrity of BBC programmes or other editorial output is not undermined by the commercial, business or financial interests of any programme makers, journalists, or presenters. There must never be any suggestion that commercial or financial interests have influenced BBC coverage or the subject matter of programmes or the choice of items.

The onus is on the journalist, programme maker or presenter to let the BBC know if they have any interests which could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

BBC production and editorial staff are required to declare any personal interest which may affect their employment with the BBC. These interests should be declared on a Declaration of Personal Interest Form (see section 1) and further advice is given in the staff handbook "Conflicts of Interest".

Declarations should include

- any directorships or any consultancy work for outside organisations
- any significant shareholdings, loans (other than private mortgages) or financial interests which they, their partners or dependant relatives have and which may in any way constitute a conflict of interest or affect the impartiality or perceived impartiality of their work
- any holding whatsoever of shares, debentures or securities held for investment purposes when the holding exceeds 5% of the company
- any shareholding, securities or debentures in media related companies Very senior BBC people (for instance those at Controller level and above) may be

required to sell any financial interest in other broadcasting or related organisations.

Freelancers are also asked to declare any commercial interests which may impinge on their work with the BBC. Independent producers should make a declaration at the time of commissioning.

Significant shareholdings should be declared by all programme people if they are in any way connected with the area in which they work or the subject matter which they cover. Some people working in news, current affairs and factual programming may be involved in investigations about a wide range of topics and may be required to declare any significant holding in any organisation. Managers will give specific advice about the detail and range of the declarations required for those working in their area.

The area of most sensitivity is financial journalism where additional rules apply. Anyone who is working on an edition of a current affairs programme or factual programme which is dealing with finance or business is in effect involved in financial journalism and should follow the specific guidance in section 5.3 below. On no account must early information acquired in the course of BBC programme work be used to trade ahead of the markets. It is illegal and unethical.

Heads of Department will be aware of other particular sensitivities in their areas and will ask for particular detailed information concerning some financial or commercial interests (see section 5.2 below on music production).

Although efforts should be made to declare any interests well in advance, in some cases people will be asked to work on stories or programmes at relatively short notice and may find that they have some financial connection with the area to be covered. It is essential that presenters, reporters and production teams should have no significant connection with products, businesses or companies featured in the programmes they make or the stories they are covering. If they have any financial, commercial or business interest which might involve a conflict of interest or might be perceived to involve a conflict of interest they must inform their editor or Head of Department as soon as possible. If the editor or Head of Department considers that there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest, they should deploy another journalist or programme maker.

5.1 Presenters

In some cases the commercial activities or interests of presenters could lead to a conflict of interest. To avoid this, when contracts are negotiated, presenters should be asked to declare any commercial interests which may impinge on their on-air role or which are connected with the subject matter of the programme they present. Such information is kept entirely confidential by the BBC. In some cases, particularly for presenters of journalistic or factual programmes, commercial interests may be deemed incompatible with their on-air role.

5.2 Popular Music

In popular music programming, some key presenters have links with the record industry and particular care needs to be taken with regard to commercial interests. A range of safeguards are in place in BBC Radio music networks and in BBC Television and Online to ensure that those working in these areas declare all relevant outside interests, and do not allow those interests to influence their choice of music. In BBC Radio 1 tracks with which a DJ has any commercial connection are clearly highlighted in advance to the Editor of Music Policy.

5.3 Financial Journalism

There are additional constraints on financial journalists. People working in financial programmes for the BBC should register all their shareholdings and other financial interests or dealings. Clear advice on this is given in the BBC Guidelines for Financial Journalism which are available online and from the Editor, Economics and Business Centre.

These additional guidelines for financial journalists protect the integrity of the BBC's output in this area. It is also important to remember that there are particular legal constraints which affect financial journalism. As stated earlier, it is illegal to use financial information acquired in advance to trade ahead of the markets.

It is also illegal to promote financial services without proper authorisation from the relevant regulatory authorities. It is vital that no BBC financial journalist ever calls their integrity into question by appearing to promote any financial product or investment, especially if they or members of their immediate family have a financial interest in that product or investment.

Section Six – Personal Benefits

Individuals must not accept personal benefits or benefits for themselves, their family or close personal relations from organisations or people with whom they might have dealings on the BBC's behalf. Unacceptable personal benefits would include goods, discounts, services, cash, loans, gratuities, or entertainment outside the normal scope of business hospitality. Accepting significant hospitality from individuals or organisations outside the BBC could lead to a conflict of interest. Anyone working for the BBC should consult their Head of Department before accepting such hospitality.

Strict rules apply to the acceptance of free or reduced cost facilities by programmes: see the BBC Editorial Guidelines, Section 13, Editorial Integrity and Independence.

Section Seven – On-air talent and Commercial Advertising

Increasingly advertisers and manufacturers are seeking to employ presenters to endorse products. Although the BBC does not seek to place unnecessary constraints on talent, it is essential that promotional activities do not constitute a conflict of

interest and do not undermine the editorial integrity of presenters or the programmes they present.

This section outlines what outside promotional work may be undertaken by those who “front”, “anchor” or present BBC radio or television programmes in any genre. It applies to the whole range of presenters from news presenters to those who host entertainment programmes, but the nature of the presenter’s on-air role will affect what is appropriate and section 7.2 below outlines what is acceptable for presenters in each genre.

Any presenter who appears on-air in a journalistic capacity will have considerable restrictions on what, if any, promotional activities they may undertake. There will be fewer restrictions on entertainment presenters or lifestyle presenters providing their integrity and the integrity of the programme they present is not undermined.

Contractual arrangements

The guidance in this section should be reflected in contractual arrangements for regular presenters or presenters of a series of programmes. On-air talent should be made aware of these guidelines and presenters who work for the BBC other than on an occasional basis should be required to consult the BBC before undertaking any outside advertising work. Some existing contracts may not reflect the principles of these guidelines, but renewed contractual arrangements should conform to them.

7.1 Basic Principles for non-BBC Promotional Work by Presenters in all Genres

No advertising campaign or advertisement should give the public reason to doubt the objectivity of BBC presenters

- there should be no conflict of interest between the presenter’s on-air activities and the promotion of a particular product or service
- the product or service they promote must not be shown, featured, reviewed or discussed in the programmes they present
- no presenter should replicate their on-air role to endorse a product or service either in traditional advertising or on any personal or third party website
- no promotional activity should undermine the values of the BBC brand
- some key presenters who are on long term contract or who have long standing associations with the BBC may be subject to particular restrictions on their promotional activities. There may be fewer restrictions on a presenter who is seen as an independent outsider, who presents a few programmes or a one-off series, but who is not considered in the main as a BBC presenter

- presenters in all genres will often be permitted to undertake some promotional activities for a book they have written, whether or not it is published by the BBC. However, such promotions must not undermine the programme they present or jeopardise the presenter's reputation for objectivity or impartiality
- the BBC may need to be more cautious in allowing presenters to undertake television or radio advertising than advertising in newspapers or on billboards as television or radio adverts will more clearly replicate their role in a BBC programme.

7.2 Presenters' outside promotional activities – guidance for specific genres

News, current affairs and business programmes

Presenters and reporters on news, current affairs and business programmes are not permitted to take part in any promotions, endorsements or advertisements for third parties.

Serious factual programmes outside news and current affairs

Presenters or reporters who appear in serious factual programmes which consider controversial public policy or matters of political or industrial controversy would not normally be permitted to take part in any advertisements for third parties. The degree to which they are regarded as an objective journalist in their on-air role will affect decisions as to whether any outside promotional work is permissible at all. It would not be appropriate for presenters or reporters who are involved in investigative programmes to undertake any outside promotional work.

In other cases the key consideration must be that presenters or reporters should not be allowed to undertake promotions for any product or service related to the subject matter of the programme they present. If their on-air role is restricted to a particular subject area they might be permitted to advertise something entirely unrelated.

General consumer programmes

Presenters and reporters on consumer programmes which cover a wide range of topics, such as Watchdog, may not undertake any promotional work for third parties as there is no product or service outside the remit of the programme.

Consumer programmes about specific topics

These are programmes which provide serious journalistic analysis on a particular topic or which undertake consumer reviews in a specific area. Presenters of such programmes may only be permitted to undertake promotions for products entirely unassociated with the subject matter of the programme.

Lifestyle programmes

These are non journalistic programmes which do not undertake specific reviews. Areas of lifestyle programming include makeovers, gardening programmes and cookery.

Presenters of lifestyle programmes

Sometimes lifestyle programmes give a degree of consumer advice and this will affect the presenter's ability to undertake promotional activities. Lifestyle presenters who give advice on what branded products to buy or use should not undertake any advertising in any medium for products or retailers associated with the subject matter of their programmes. Presenters who give clear objective advice on how to solve problems should not advertise products or services which aim to solve these specific problems.

Presenters of lifestyle programmes, such as makeovers, which refer to specific branded products, should not advertise any products which might be featured. For example, some makeovers give details in astons of which paint or other materials are used. In these cases the presenters should not advertise brands of paint or other materials used.

No lifestyle presenter should undertake radio or television advertising for a product or retailer associated with the subject matter of their programmes. Nor should they undertake any off-air advertising for products related to the subject matter of their programmes. However, in some cases, lifestyle presenters who do not give consumer advice may undertake off-air adverts for retailers who sell products covered in their programmes. Such adverts for retailers should not feature any particular branded or own brand product directly related to the subject matter of the programme they present. (See also section below on advertising presenters' own products).

Chefs and Cookery Presenters

Television cooks or chefs should not undertake any radio or television advertising for any product or retailer associated with the subject matter of their programmes. They should also not undertake any off-air advertising for specific branded food products. However, if chefs do not give consumer advice on air, they may undertake some off-air advertising in this area as long as it does not compromise their on-air role. Television chefs who do not give consumer advice may undertake off air adverts for a food retailer provided the advert does not feature any particular branded or own brand food product. The advertisements should not replicate their programmes in any way and should not use recipes from their programmes. Producers should ensure that the retailer's products are not used, shown or referred to in their programmes.

Lifestyle presenters, including chefs, may undertake advertisements in any medium for products which are not associated with the subject matter of their programmes.

However, these advertisements must not replicate their on-air role or imitate the programme in any way.

Presenter's Own Products

Increasingly lifestyle presenters are developing their own products associated with their on-air role and in some cases are distributing these products through their own websites, as well as by more traditional means. Presenters can develop their own products, but care needs to be taken to ensure that such products do not give rise to a conflict of interest. Presenters on long term contract should be asked to inform the BBC about any products they are developing. In no circumstances, however, should presenters' own products be shown or referred to in any of their programmes.

Advertising of presenters' own products

Any promotion of such products needs to be treated with great care to ensure that the presenter's objective role is not undermined. The BBC would not agree to presenters advertising their own products on television or radio as such adverts would tend to replicate the presenter's on-air role.

However lifestyle presenters who do not give consumer advice may be able to advertise their products in newspapers, magazines, on billboards or online, providing they do not use these products or ones closely resembling them in their programmes.

If lifestyle presenters give advice on specific problem solving, in order to preserve their reputation for objectivity, they should not undertake any on-air or off-air adverts for products aimed to solve the specific problems about which they give on-air advice.

Where both on-air and off-air advertising is ruled out, point of sale promotions and promotions on the presenter's own website are usually acceptable. However any promotions on their websites must not be used to exploit their BBC connections - no material from their BBC programmes may be used and they should not sell products on their websites when they are featured on their programmes.

Sport

The suitability of any commercial activities undertaken by sports presenters will depend on the nature of their on-air role, the nature of the programme and whether they are perceived primarily as a sports journalist, a sports entertainment presenter or a sportsman/woman who also presents programmes. Careful judgements need to be made about the acceptability of any advert which is related to sport in any way. Presenters who are clearly undertaking sports journalism should not advertise sports products, such as sports kit, or do adverts for sports sponsors. However, they may advertise products not directly associated with sport or sports sponsorship.

Children's Programmes

Presenters of children's programmes should not promote products directly connected to the subject matter of the programmes they present. They also should not undertake any advertisements for products specifically aimed at children or products likely to be harmful to children such as alcohol.

Entertainment

Entertainment presenters should not appear in adverts which are closely associated with the subject matter of any programme they present or which mimic the style of the programme. (See section 7.7 below concerning style of permitted advertisements.)

7.3 Advertising Commitments and the Editorial Agenda

As is made clear in section 7.2 above, it is essential that products or services which a presenter promotes should not be shown or featured in a programme they present. When engaging talent, consideration should be given as to whether their existing advertising commitments will undermine the programme's editorial agenda. There are dangers to the editorial integrity of a programme if a presenter's promotional activities distort the agenda of a programme by forcing the programme to omit items or change what it covers.

Entertainment programmes

In exceptional circumstances producers of an entertainment programme may think that it is editorially justifiable to make a joke about a presenter's outside promotional activities, or a guest on a programme may make such a joke. On the whole it is advisable to avoid such jokes as it may be difficult to ensure that they are non-promotional for the product or service advertised.

7.4 Unsuitable Products or Services

Even when there is no obvious conflict of interest with the presenter's on-air role, there are some products or services which the BBC would not wish its presenters to promote as the association might be damaging to the BBC's reputation. This prohibition would include tobacco or tobacco products, escort agencies and sex chat lines.

7.5 Timing of Advertisements

Some presenters are only contracted to the BBC for specific time periods to coincide with series of programmes which they present. However, as far as possible, contractual safeguards concerning advertisements should also cover the periods when programmes are repeated.

7.6 Guidance for Contributors to programmes

Consideration also needs to be given to promotional work undertaken by contributors who appear in programmes regularly, but who are not engaged as presenters. The BBC is not in a position to restrict the advertising activities of these outside contributors and in many cases it would be unreasonable to do so. However, the BBC should not use contributors who undertake promotional work which could give rise to doubts about their objectivity. In particular expert contributors who give specific advice about what to buy should not endorse products or services in the areas on which they give advice.

Some contributors, who are not main presenters, may play a significant role in every programme in a series. In such cases the BBC may decide that they need to be subject to the same restrictions as presenters in that genre.

7.7 Style of Advertisements

Any adverts in which BBC presenters appear should not copy or make play of BBC programmes as it is important that no impression is given that the BBC is endorsing any commercial product or service. It is also important that the style of the advert does not bring the BBC into disrepute.

The following key points should be observed

- No advert should replicate, imitate or pass off BBC programmes, titles or logos
- No adverts should replicate or pass off the role the presenter plays in the programme
- Adverts should not replicate editorial elements of a programme e.g. BBC television chefs should not feature recipes from their programmes in any adverts
- No music or graphics associated with the programme should be used
- Adverts should not replicate the look of the programme. There should be no use or direct imitation of BBC programme sets or the key venues used in the presenter's programme
- No adverts should refer to the BBC or any of its services or programmes
- There should be no use of more than one BBC presenter from the same programme in any advert for an outside product. It is also unlikely to be acceptable for several presenters from different BBC programmes to appear in the same advert

- The overall style of the advert should not be tasteless and should not bring the BBC into disrepute.

7.8 Actors and artists who perform in programmes

Actors should not appear in television adverts in a way which directly replicates their on air role in BBC programmes.

7.9 Who decides what is appropriate?

An assessment of whether advertising or promoting third parties is acceptable will be made by the Controller responsible for the relevant output in consultation, where necessary, with Editorial Policy and Controller, Talent Management.

Section Eight – Talent/Agent owned Independent Production Companies

Potential conflicts of interest can also arise where an independent production company is owned by an on screen presenter or performer or their agent. To avoid such potential conflicts:

- Agents or their production companies should not be commissioned to produce factual programmes about the talent they represent unless there is clear editorial justification.
- In very exceptional circumstances, where the programme and its subject are of such importance and cannot be commissioned unless it is produced with the associated agent or talent-owned independent, the issue should be referred to the Controller, Editorial Policy. If the commission is agreed, the commissioning team should ensure objectivity is achieved by means of thorough executive production on behalf of the BBC. An active BBC role in all stages of the programme's production, from research to the final edit, will be required.
- When commissioning teams receive proposals for factual programmes concerning talent from another genre (for example, a factual commission about a sports personality), they should seek advice on any connections between the independent producer and talent that could provide an editorial conflict of interest.
- Commissioning teams should actively review guests and their associated products featured on agent-owned independent productions, ensuring:
 - Guests from associated talent agencies are always editorially justified
 - Records are kept of all guests on programmes produced by agents and checked with their client-list to avoid a cumulative promotional effect

- Access to talent should never be accepted if it is directly connected to product promotion by the agent's production company, unless there is clear editorial justification.

Revised 20 January 2004