



Age Ratings You Trust

188th BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Friday 10 February 2017

Present:

Patrick Swaffer	President
Alison Hastings	Vice President
Gerard Lemos	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Alexandra Evans (minutes)	Policy Director

Minutes of the previous meeting

1. The minutes were agreed.

Recent Classification Decisions

2. Compliance Manager, Craig Lapper, attended the meeting. The Board considered three recent decisions.
3. *Embrace* (12A) is a documentary by Australian filmmaker and campaigner, Taryn Brumfitt. It explores the issue of female body image and is critical of the societal pressure placed on women to conform to an unrealistic 'ideal' body shape. The film was originally classified 15 for frequent use of strong language.
4. The distributor subsequently submitted a revised version containing only three written uses of strong language. These were within the BBFC's Classification Guidelines limit for classification at 12A.
5. When considering the distributor's request for a 12A classification, the BBFC also reviewed a sequence that featured 'Pro Ana' websites. The Board viewed a sequence from the film in which Ms Brumfitt explains the nature of Pro Ana websites while footage of a Pro Ana site is shown, including close ups of images featured on a thinspiration page.
6. The BBFC considered whether this scene might have the unintended consequence of bringing the existence of such websites to the attention of younger viewers who might otherwise be unaware of them. The BBFC took advice from B-EAT, the UK's eating disorder charity. Following this advice, the BBFC determined that the scene was suitable for classification at 12A as 12 year olds are likely to be aware of Pro Ana websites and the risk of highlighting them was outweighed by the overwhelmingly positive

messages contained within the film. The Board of Classification agreed.

7. *Four Paws UK Down Campaign* (15) is a campaigning film submitted to the BBFC for classification for cinema release. The film seeks to highlight the cruel treatment of geese whose feathers are used to fill duvets and pillows. The short film begins with a scene of a child asleep in bed. The scene is intended to create an ominous, horror-style sense of foreboding that is abruptly interrupted and replaced with real footage of geese being plucked of their feathers while still alive.
8. The Board agreed that the impact of the film was strong and the real-life footage of animal cruelty was particularly distressing. Given that the film would be presented to cinema audiences unbidden, the Board agreed that the film was most appropriately placed at 15.
9. *Home Office - Consent* (12A) is a public information film that seeks to educate teenagers on the importance of active consent to sex. It features animated, talking body parts including breasts, eyeballs, and a male crotch. The animated characters (which are voiced by young people) describe non-consensual sexual scenarios to highlight the fact that sex without consent is rape.
10. The Board determined that while some of the verbal sexual references might be strong enough to warrant a 15 classification in a commercial trailer, the importance of articulating the public safety message to young people meant that the film should be classified at 12A.

Update on the Digital Economy Bill

11. David Austin provided an update on the Digital Economy Bill.
12. The Committee Debate for Part Three of the Bill took place in the House of Lords on 2 February. Mr Austin reported that the debate had covered a wide range of issues including: the importance of protecting the privacy and data security of those submitting to age verification checks; the availability of pornography on social media; the definition of "prohibited material"; and the need for an independent appeals process.

Systems Review

13. Mr Austin briefed the other members of the Board on the progress of the internal review of the BBFC's classification processes and systems. Compliance Manager, Murray Perkins, and his team completed their report on the BBFC's current systems and made recommendations for how these systems should be improved. The recommendations were agreed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
14. Head of IT, Steve Hopkins, has been appointed to project manage the implementation of the systems review's recommendations and will begin by identifying external consultants to advise the BBFC. The project will be

overseen at ELT level by Chief Operating Officer, Dave Barrett.

AOB

15. Mr Austin reported that BBFC Compliance Officer, Caitlin O'Brien, will be seconded to Ofcom for 12 months, beginning 1 March. The secondment is an opportunity for learning and sharing best practice between the two organisations, as well as for the professional development of secondees, and the BBFC looks forward to welcoming a member of staff from Ofcom, possibly later in the year.

Date of next meeting:

Monday, 13 March 2017