



Age Ratings You Trust

## 206th BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Wednesday 14 November 2018

### Present:

Patrick Swaffer	President
Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
David Miles	Director of Outreach and Business Development
Murray Perkins	Head of DEA (for item 5)
Faye Harcourt	Executive Director of Marketing (from item 6)
Craig Lapper (minutes)	Head of Compliance
Sara Aghlani	Compliance Officer

### Apologies

- 1 David Austin sent his apologies.

### Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2 The minutes were agreed.

### Matters arising

- 3 There were no matters arising.

### Classification Guidelines

- 4 Mr Lapper thanked the Board of Classification for agreeing the final text of the new Classification Guidelines. The Guidelines are now with the designers and are on track to launch in mid January and come into force in late February.

### Digital Economy Act

- 5 Mr Perkins updated the meeting on developments regarding the implementation of the Digital Economy Act.

### Communications

- 6 Mrs Harcourt updated the meeting on the new guidance to be issued to staff, in early 2019, about improving the manner in which we communicate with the industry and public.

### Public Feedback

- 7 The meeting considered public feedback received during 2018. The only films to provoke levels of feedback in double figures are: *Red Sparrow* (64 complaints about

violence and sexual violence; passed 15 after cuts); *Peter Rabbit* (51 complaints, largely about allergy 'bullying' of an adult character by CGI rabbits - and mainly received before the film opened, in response to press articles; passed PG uncut); *A Northern Soul* (three email complaints about the restriction of the film to 15 on grounds of quantity of strong language, but also 42 postcards which were given out to viewers by the film's director at screenings; passed 15 uncut); *Kaala* (43 identically worded complaints as part of an orchestrated campaign against the film's producer, rather than about the film's content *per se*; passed 12A after cuts); *Show Dogs* (31 complaints, all about crude humour relating to the inspection of a dog's genitals – and mainly received before the film opened, in response to blog and press articles; passed PG uncut); *Ready Player One* (10 complaints, chiefly about the 'reconstruction' of scenes from the 15-rated *The Shining*; passed 12A uncut).

### **Classification issues**

- 8 Ms Agglani presented a series of clips dealing with the treatment of upsetting themes at U and PG. Clips were shown from *Up!* (in which an old man ties balloons to his house so he can make the trip that he and his wife planned before he died) and from an episode of the Netflix series *Alexa & Katie* (in which a teenager is undergoing cancer treatment). The meeting agreed that the themes of bereavement, loneliness and isolation in *Up!* are sensitively handled and the film is correctly classified at U. The meeting also agreed that the head-on tackling of the terminal illness theme in *Alexa & Katie* is nonetheless positive and sensitive, with appropriate counterbalances provided, including elements of humour that are ingrained in the sitcom format. Clips were also shown from *The Red Turtle* (in which a stranded man's attempts to escape an island are thwarted by a turtle, causing him to abuse and kill the animal), from *Saving Mr Banks* (which deals in part with alcoholism and suicide) and *Wonder* (in which a disfigured boy copes with life at school). The meeting agreed that *The Red Turtle* is appropriately classified at PG. While the clubbing of the turtle is too upsetting for U, the man's subsequent remorse and the turtle's subsequent transformation offer mitigation. The manner in which the film deals with some complicated themes, including anger, violence, guilt, frustration and death is too sophisticated for a younger audience but unlikely to unduly upset a PG audience. The meeting agreed that, while the thematic issues in *Saving Mr Banks* are quite mature, there is a reassuring focus on the child's resilience and the suggested suicide is presented in an ambiguous and undetailed manner that may pass over children's heads. In terms of *Wonder*, the meeting agreed that the supportiveness of the boy's parents and the overall message of the film provide a suitable counterbalance, at PG, to the boy's upset at his condition and the bullying to which he is subjected.

### **AOB**

- 9 Patrick Swaffer thanked David Miles, who leaves the BBFC later this month, for his contributions to the Board's policy, business services and outreach work.

**Date of next meeting: 12 December 2019**