

TG4 JOURNALISM AND CONTENTIOUS CONTENT GUIDELINES 2019

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Section 1. Introduction and Context

News and current affairs are key elements of public service broadcasting. The daily Irish language news bulletins broadcast on TG4's television channel are compiled and presented by Nuacht TG4, a unit of RTÉ's News Division. This comprises most of the channel's news output and it forms part of the hour per day which is supplied by RTE to TG4 pursuant to s120 of the Broadcasting Act 2009. It is compiled by journalists employed by RTÉ as part of its News Division who are subject to the various BAI and RTÉ Codes and Guidelines obtaining for all RTÉ journalists and current affairs staff.

TG4's current affairs output can be divided into three categories: (i) live studio discussion programmes (ii) pre-recorded commissioned content; and (iii) content which is not necessarily current affairs but which is often a matter of current public debate, which is produced by the inhouse content team.

The content listed at (i) and (ii) is produced by independent production companies and is supplied under commission contract to TG4. The content listed at (iii) is produced by the inhouse content team.

These Guidelines specifically address issues of concern for those involved in producing Irish language current affairs programmes for broadcast on TG4's television channel. Separate considerations which apply to more general programming are addressed in TG4's Programme Standards and Guidelines (2019) <https://d1og0s8nlbd0hm.cloudfront.net/tg4-redesign-2015/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Caighdeain-Treoirinte-Clar-2019.pdf>. Programme-makers, both TG4 staff and independent production companies, should also take account of requirements found in the BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality in News and Current Affairs and the BAI Guidance on that Code, which are set out in Appendix 5 and 6 respectively.

These TG4 Journalism and Contentious Content Guidelines are subject to regular review. Please ensure that it is always the most recent edition that is consulted. The date on which the Guidelines were last reviewed can be found on the cover.

Section 2. TG4's Editorial Values

TG4's vision is:

"TG4 Gach Áit/ TG4 Everywhere" TG4's brand will be synonymous with strong creative Irish language content. Our content will be available in the home, on the go and in cinemas, both in Ireland and worldwide, through direct and syndicated provision. Through this, we will ensure universal access and the normalization of the Irish language in the daily lives of Irish people."

TG4's editorial values include a commitment to:

- Operate in the public interest, providing news and current affairs that is fair and impartial, accurate and challenging
- Be honest and transparent in all of our activities
- Take personal responsibility for pursuing the organisation's goals

These Journalism and Contentious Content Guidelines set out TG4's approach to embedding those values in all our journalistic activity no matter how it is created and however it is received by our audiences. Our guidelines are to be applied in a way which maintains independence and deserves trust without constraining legitimate journalistic enquiry.

From time to time our journalism may be so challenging that it offends or shocks; that is a sign of strength, not weakness. However the freedom to publish carries the responsibility to act with integrity and maintain the highest standards of professional responsibility. These Guidelines set out the standards expected of **everyone** making or presenting TG4's output. They are intended to provide clear advice to anyone, in-house or commissioned, on how to deal with difficult editorial issues, meet the expectations of our audience, and produce distinctive and challenging content to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Any proposal to step outside them for reasons of over-riding public interest must be discussed and agreed in advance with the Ard- Stiúrthóir.

While the Guidelines contain many imperatives, they should not be regarded as a substitute for the personal qualities and responsibility expected of TG4 staff (and independent programme-makers): integrity, fairness, open-mindedness, self-criticism and an appreciation of the potentially significant consequences of broadcast journalism, especially for vulnerable individuals or groups in society.

As well as representing the values and standards of TG4, the Journalism and Contentious Content Guidelines reflect the relevant provisions of Section 39 of the Broadcasting Act 2009. They also reflect the provisions of the Code of Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality in News and Current Affairs and the BAI Guidance in respect of the Code issued by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (referred to as the BAI in these Guidelines), which has the responsibility of drawing up codes which govern standards and practices to be observed by all broadcasters licensed in the Republic of Ireland. The BAI Code and the BAI Guidance on the Code can be found in Appendix 5 and 6 respectively and on the BAI website (www.bai.ie).

Section 3. The Broadcasting Act 2009

Section 39 of the 2009 Act lays down the duties and obligations for public service broadcasting (RTÉ and TG4) and for all licensed commercial and community broadcasters. The key duties are to ensure that:

- (1) *All news broadcast by the broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views.*
- (2) *The broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of his or her own views, except that should it prove impracticable in a single broadcast to apply this paragraph, two or more related broadcasts may be considered as a whole, if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period of each other.*
- (3) *Anything which may reasonably be regarded as causing harm or offence, or as being likely to promote, or incite to, crime or as intending to undermine the authority of the State, is not broadcast by the broadcaster, and*
- (4) *In programmes broadcast by the broadcaster, and in the means employed to make such programmes, the privacy of any individual is not unreasonably encroached upon.*

Section 4. TG4's Editorial Principles

Trust and Accuracy (section 7)

Trust is the corner stone of TG4: we seek to be honest, reliable, authoritative, impartial and independent of vested interests.

We strive for accuracy in all our output. Our reporting is well sourced, based on sound evidence, thoroughly tested and presented in clear, precise language. We are honest about what we do not know and avoid unfounded speculation.

Objectivity and Impartiality (section 8)

We provide impartial news, current affairs and factual programmes. We aim to present content that addresses a broad range of subjects and issues. We seek to:

- maintain a balance of opinion that reflects the weight of evidence
- ensure fair treatment
- be open-minded
- provide opportunities over time for differing viewpoints so that no significant strand of thought is ignored or under-represented.

Editorial Integrity and Independence (section 9)

We must maintain our independence and integrity if we are to win the trust and respect of the community. TG4's audiences should be confident that our editorial decisions are not influenced by outside interests, political or commercial pressures, or by any personal interests.

Serving the Public Interest (section 10)

We report stories of significance to our audience. We are rigorous in establishing the truth of a story and we are well informed when explaining it. We ask searching questions of those who hold public office and others who are accountable, and we provide a comprehensive forum for public debate. The concept of the public interest is treated in Section 10.

Fairness (section 11)

We respect our contributors and our audiences. We deal with them and the issues we report fairly. Our output is based on honesty and straight dealing.

Privacy (section 12)

We respect privacy and do not infringe it without good reason, wherever we are operating. Intrusion into a person's private life without consent must be justified in the public interest and the extent of the intrusion must be limited to what is proportionate in the circumstances.

Accountability (section 16)

We hold ourselves to the same standards of accountability we expect of others. We are open in correcting mistakes when they are made and encourage a culture of willingness to learn from them.

We comply with our legal and regulatory obligations set out in the Broadcasting Act and deal with the BAI in an open, timely and co-operative manner.

Section 5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Editorial Responsibility

Editorial responsibility within TG4 rests with the editorial chain of management through to the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe, for inhouse and commissioned non-news content, and through to the Príomh-Eagarthóir, Nuacht, for Irish language news content and ultimately rests with the Ard-Stiúrthóir, who is the editor-in-chief for all content output by TG4. All those involved in the creation of TG4 content including researchers, reporters, producers and editors are required to exercise editorial responsibility for it. When in doubt about an editorial matter, refer it up to the editorial management chain for advice or decision. When any editorial matter (including an editorial matter not being referred up for advice or decision) is likely to cause controversy or have an extraordinary impact, programme-makers are obliged to give proper notice of it to the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe. It is the role and responsibility of editorial managers to provide guidance, support and oversight of the editorial process and ensure it is robust.

Independent production companies should take independent legal advice and keep the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe apprised of any potential legal problems at the earliest possible opportunity in order that appropriate steps may be taken to avoid potential liability. TG4 has final editorial control over programmes. Whenever significant legal issues may be involved this must be communicated by the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe at an early stage to the Stiúrthóir Dlí.

Mandatory Obligation 1

Knowledge of these guidelines is the personal responsibility of all TG4 content production staff and TG4 management and an essential professional requirement and a matter of contractual obligation. Similarly knowledge of these guidelines is the personal responsibility of all independent production company personnel and a matter of contractual obligation.

5.2 TG4 Ard-Stiúrthóir as Editor-in-Chief

In accordance with the Broadcasting Act 2009, the TG4 Ard-Stiúrthóir acts as editor-in-chief in respect of **all** content broadcast or published by TG4. However, it is not

possible or practical for the Ard-Stiúrthóir to be involved in routine day to day editorial decision making across all of TG4's output. The Ard-Stiúrthóir's editorial role is therefore primarily a strategic one, where he/she sets overall editorial standards, priorities and direction for the organisation.

Mandatory Obligation 2

Any proposal to proceed with a programme despite legal advice of a significant or to the serious risk must be referred Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe. If the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe proposes to broadcast the programme he must bring the matter to the attention of the Ard-Stiúrthóir in accordance with procedures in section 17 *Legal Liabilities and the Relationship with the Rannóg Díl*.

Section 6. Journalism and Contentious Content

6.1 Compliance

TG4 has implemented a compliance checking system to ensure the compliance of all content, including contentious content, which is commissioned by TG4 from the independent production companies.

The Bainisteoir Sceideal is responsible for compliance in respect of contentious content which the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe refers to her for review.

The compliance system involves a compliance form which is completed by independent production companies and which is co-signed by the relevant Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe. The compliance form is in addition to and is not a substitution for the contractual warranties and indemnities provided by the independent production company to TG4 in respect of commissioned programmes. It is delivered with the programming. Contentious content which is referred to the Bainisteoir Sceideal for review is assessed to ensure the programme is compliant. While the Bainisteoir Sceideal undertakes the compliance assessment in respect of contentious content, the production company remains contractually responsible for ensuring the content it supplies to TG4 complies with the contractual commitments including the contractual warranties and indemnities.

The compliance form is set out in appendix 3.

A similar compliance form system will be introduced in respect of inhouse produced content.

6.2 TG4 Meitheal Eagarthóireachata

In addition to Eagarthóirí Coimisiúnaithe, TG4 has a Meitheal Eagarthóireachta to maintain and monitor content standards. The Meitheal Eagarthóireachta is comprised of the Stiúrthóir Oibríochtaí & Acmhainní Daonna, the Bainisteoir Sceideal and the

Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe agus Ceannacháin. Its core functions include the following:

1. Assist the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe with complex editorial questions which may arise from time to time in respect of contentious content.
2. Provide an independent assessment of the merits of formal and substantive complaints lodged against TG4 programmes and output in order to determine TG4's response to such complaints. Such response will be made following consultation with the Stiúrthóir Dlí, the Bainisteoir Cumarsáide (as applicable) and the Ard-Stiúrthóir.
3. Carry out reviews of TG4's Programmes and output, selected post-transmission, to ensure consistency with TG4's Programme Standards and Guidelines. The outcome of these reviews will be reported to the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.
4. In the event that TG4 proposes to produce an inhouse programme which seeks to investigate serious crime or significant anti-social behaviour or another issue in the public interest, the Meitheal Eagarthóireachta (following consultation with the Stiúrthóir Dlí) will analyse whether such investigation is in fact in the public interest and it will seek to ensure the fairness and reasonableness of statements made in the programme.

Section 7. Trust and Accuracy

7.1 Trust

Trust requires confidence that TG4's programme-makers and content creators are straightforward and honest in all that we do. TG4 exists to serve all the people of Ireland. Their expectation is that we will treat their interests, views and beliefs accurately and fairly; that we make our best effort to be truthful; that we do not favour one side or another of a contested issue; that we don't represent vested interests; and that we have no personal interest in what we broadcast.

7.2.1 BAI Rules

The following are the BAI rules in relation to Accuracy and Responsiveness:

17. *News and current affairs content shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting the content.*
18. *Two, or more, related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable time period and such links are made clear to the audience.*
19. *Views and facts shall not be misrepresented or presented in such a way as to render them misleading. Presenters should be sensitive to the impact of their language and tone in reporting news and current affairs so as to avoid misunderstanding of the matters covered.*

20. *A significant mistake shall be acknowledged and rectified as speedily as possible, in an appropriate and proportionate manner. A broadcast correction or clarification shall have regard to the time and circumstances of the original broadcast.*

7.2.2 BAI principles on Accuracy & Responsiveness

The BAI principles on accuracy and responsiveness are as follows:

Audiences are entitled to, and do, trust that the news and current affairs content they access from the broadcast media is accurate. Accurate information enables citizens to participate more fully in a democratic society. Accuracy is therefore a fundamental principle associated with the broadcast of news and current affairs content and should always take priority over the speed with which content can be delivered. It is also acknowledged that despite best efforts, inaccurate information can sometimes be conveyed, whether explicitly or implicitly. The principle of responsiveness is designed to ensure that broadcasters adopt fair, timely and appropriate remedies in handling the broadcast of inaccurate information.

7.2.3 TG4's standards on Accuracy

- Take all reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context
- Do not present factual content in a way that will materially mislead the audience. (In some cases, this may require appropriate labels or other explanatory information)
- Acknowledge significant factual errors and correct them quickly, clearly and appropriately in consultation with the relevant editorial manager.

We should try to witness events and gather information wherever possible at first hand. Where this is not possible, we should talk to first hand sources and, where necessary, corroborate their evidence.

We should be reluctant to rely on a single source especially if the information from that source has been given on condition of anonymity. If we do rely on a single source, a named on-the-record source is always preferable.

7.3 Accuracy

Accuracy is not simply a matter of getting facts right. If an issue is controversial, relevant opinions as well as facts may need to be considered. All relevant facts and available information should be weighed to get at the truth.

Where appropriate to the output, we should:

- gather material using first hand sources wherever possible
- check and cross check facts
- validate the authenticity of documentary evidence and material

- and wherever possible corroborate claims and allegations made by contributors and ensure that contentious statements or opinions are not cloaked by anonymity.

In news and current affairs content, achieving accuracy is more important than speed.

A commitment to accuracy includes a willingness to correct significant errors and clarify ambiguous or otherwise misleading information in as timely and appropriate a manner as possible. Swift and prominent correction can reduce harmful reliance on inaccurate information, especially given that content can be quickly, widely and permanently disseminated.

7.4 Sources of information

We normally identify sources of information and significant contributors, and provide their credentials, so that our audiences can judge their status.

We normally require two sources before we broadcast something as a fact. If we have to rely on a single source we must be very confident that the information is accurate and the source reliable. If we have been unable to verify material sufficiently, we should say so and attribute the information.

Protecting the identity of confidential sources is an important journalistic principle. However, when relying on an anonymous source, we should satisfy ourselves that extending the protection of anonymity is essential to the telling of the story. In such cases we should also give our audience whatever information we can about the source in a form that provides some evidence of their credibility but that does not materially mislead about the source's status, and does not put their anonymity at risk. It is always important to ask: how does this person know, and why are they telling us this now?

In a story originated by TG4 for a non-news programme, the relevant Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe has the right to ask for the identity of the key source. In cases involving serious allegations we should resist any attempt by an anonymous source to prevent their identity being revealed to the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe. If this happens, the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe should make it clear that the information obtained confidentially may not be broadcast.

We should record our research interviews with sources wherever possible and where consent for recording has been obtained from those being interviewed. In circumstances where recording might inhibit the source, full notes should be made, preferably at the time or, if not, as soon as possible afterwards, and preserved by the staff member concerned.

We should take accurate, reliable and, wherever possible, contemporaneous notes of all significant research and other relevant information. We must keep records of research including written and electronic correspondence, background notes and documents. They should be kept in a way that allows for double-checking, particularly at the scripting stage, and if necessary by another member of the team.

There are separate considerations for reporting social media such as Twitter or Facebook and other user generated content. We should not automatically assume that the material is accurate and should take reasonable steps, depending on how it is to be used, to seek verification both of its accuracy and origin. We must take special care over how we use any material that we suspect has been supplied by a member of a lobby group or organisation with a vested interest in the story, rather than by a disinterested bystander. See also **Guidance on reporting from the Internet and Social Media sources** at Appendix 2.

7.5 Use of reconstructions of current events

News programmes should not normally stage reconstructions of current events because of the risk of confusing the audience. Where current affairs or factual programme use reconstructions they should be authentic and neither mislead nor sensationalise. They should also be identifiable as reconstructions, for example, by using verbal or visual labelling or visual or audio cues, such as slow motion or grading. It should also be obvious to the audience where a reconstruction begins and ends.

The label “Reconstruction” should only be used where what is represented is in fact a reconstruction; where the representation does not attempt to reconstruct events but merely uses a visual or audio device to illustrate them this should be made clear to the audience.

Section 8. Objectivity and Impartiality

8.1.1 TG4’s Role pursuant to the Broadcasting Act 2009:

TG4, a broadcaster operating under statute with public funds, is a significant provider of space for public debate and is therefore expected to be different from other media. The viewing public should be able to see and hear all sides of the debate. They should be able to regard TG4 and the presenters of its programmes to be neutral on issues of public controversy as required by section 39 of the Broadcasting Act 2009.

In its programming, TG4 must reflect the main trends of thought and the major currents of opinion, but without over-simplifying complex issues or arbitrarily excluding relevant minority viewpoints. These minority viewpoints will often be critical viewpoints and TG4 recognises that those who hold such positions stand counter to the main trends of thought and the major current of opinion. It means that programme-makers accept an obligation to present fairly the weight of the evidence, and to report and interpret events in a manner that respects the context as well as the highlights of news and current affairs.

TG4 must be a key purveyor of impartial information to the Irish people. Whatever licence may exist for opinion and expression of personal views in general

programming, there is a strict obligation within current affairs programming to observe due impartiality.

8.1.2 BAI Rules on Objectivity & Impartiality

The following are the BAI rules on Objectivity and Impartiality:

17. *News and current affairs content shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting the content.*
18. *Two, or more, related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable time period and such links are made clear to the audience.*
19. *Views and facts shall not be misrepresented or presented in such a way as to render them misleading. Presenters should be sensitive to the impact of their language and tone in reporting news and current affairs so as to avoid misunderstanding of the matters covered.*
20. *A significant mistake shall be acknowledged and rectified as speedily as possible, in an appropriate and proportionate manner. A broadcast correction or clarification shall have regard to the time and circumstances of the original broadcast.*
21. *A news presenter and/or a reporter in a news programme may not express his or her own view on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate.*
22. *It is an important part of the role of a presenter of a current affairs programme to ensure that the audience has access to a wide variety of views on the subject of the programme or item; to facilitate the expression of contributors' opinions – sometimes by forceful questioning; and to reflect the views of those who cannot, or choose not to, participate in content. This being so, a presenter and/or a reporter on a current affairs programme shall not express his or her own views on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate such that a partisan position is advocated.*
23. *'Personal view' or 'authored' current affairs segments or programmes can be appropriate, subject to normal editorial controls. This does not exempt the segment or programme – or a series of related segments/programmes – from the statutory obligations to be impartial, objective and fair to all interests concerned. Similarly, an "authored" item or programme may be permitted if part of a series of related segments/programmes which, taken together, will discharge the statutory obligations.*
24. *A 'personal view' or 'authored' programme or segment shall be clearly signalled to the audience at the outset, or in the case of a series of segments or programmes, at the start of each one.*
25. *Each broadcaster shall have and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address any conflicts of interests that may exist or arise in respect of anyone with an editorial involvement in any news or current affairs content, whether such person works on-air or off-air.*
26. *Any personal, professional, business or financial interest of anyone with an editorial involvement in news or current affairs content that calls into question*

(or that might reasonably be perceived as calling into question) the fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a programme or item, shall be brought to the attention of the audience. To this end broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that they are in a position to be aware of the relevant interests of the personnel concerned, and to determine whether the interest concerned is of such extent as would warrant the withdrawal of any person from further involvement in the item or programme.

8.1.3 BAI principles on Objectivity & Impartiality

The following are the BAI principles on Objectivity and Impartiality:

The principles of objectivity and impartiality are concerned with ensuring that news and current affairs content is compiled, produced and presented in a manner which is and can be seen as independent, unbiased, and without prejudgement. The rules set out in this Code with regard to objectivity and impartiality should not be taken to imply that a presenter or a reporter cannot convey critical views or pursue vigorous lines of questioning. Indeed, this is often required in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality. What is necessary, however, is that production, reporting and questioning on any news or current affairs item is credible, trustworthy and editorially independent.

8.2 TG4's standards on Objectivity and Impartiality

- Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.
- Present a diversity of perspectives so that, over time, no significant strand of thought or belief is either knowingly excluded or disproportionately under or over represented.
- Do not state or imply that any perspective is the editorial opinion of TG4. TG4 takes no editorial stance other than its commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of expression and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity.
- Do not misrepresent any perspective.
- Do not unduly favour one perspective over another.
- News in whatever form must be treated with due impartiality, giving due weight to events, opinion and main strands of argument. This may require packages to be balanced internally and not rely on a subsequent interview.

8.3 Diversity of programming

TG4 is obliged to provide a service primarily in the Irish language which is available to all the people of Ireland and have special regard for the Gaeltachtaí. Its output should reflect their experiences and interests. As Irish society changes, TG4 must be sensitive to those changes.

TG4's output must reflect fairly the mosaic that is Ireland today with its religious and spiritual beliefs, its ethnic mix, its age and sex profile, its equality and inequalities, its

educational attainments, its political views, its geographical spread, its economic positions, its linguistic mix, its diverse interests in arts and sports, and its cultural diversity. Programme contributors and the values found in programming need to reflect that diversity.

Programming should address a broad range of subjects from a diversity of perspectives in diversity of ways and from a diversity of sources. That includes content created by TG4 staff, that generated by audiences, and that commissioned or acquired from independent programme makers. We seek to maintain a balance of opinion that reflects the weight of the evidence.

Impartiality does not require that every perspective receives equal time, or that every facet of every argument is presented. It cannot always be achieved within a single broadcast but must be achieved within a reasonable period by a balancing contribution which is clearly signposted as such.

Reflecting a range of views does not allow for the incitement of hatred towards any group on the basis of their ethnic origin, nationality, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness, age or membership of the travelling community.

8.4 Personal views of presenters, reporters and correspondents

Presenters, reporters and correspondents are the public face and voice of TG4 – they can have a significant impact on perceptions of whether due impartiality has been achieved. Our audiences should not be able to tell from our output the personal views of our journalists or news and current affairs presenters on matters of public policy or public controversy, political or industrial controversy, or on ‘controversial subjects’ in any other area. They may question vigorously or provide professional judgements, rooted in evidence, but may not express personal views in TG4 output, online or elsewhere, and must be careful in their use of social media to avoid any perception of partiality.

Personal view programmes or “authored” items are acceptable, subject to normal editorial control, but their inclusion does not exempt the programme (or a series of related programmes) from the obligation to be impartial, objective and fair to all interests concerned. Such programmes or items must be clearly signalled to the audience at the outset, or in the case of a series of programmes, at the start of each programme.

We should not automatically assume that contributors from other organisations (such as academics, journalists, researchers and representatives of charities) are unbiased and we may need to make it clear to the audience when contributors are associated with a particular viewpoint or special interest, if it is not apparent from their contribution or from the context in which their contribution is made.

8.5 Presenters and programme-makers and potential conflict of interest

Any person directly involved in content production who may have a conflict of interest in respect of an item or items, or potential for such a conflict, must bring this to the attention of the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe and the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe will bring it to the attention of the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.

Note that 'conflict' is defined as 'any personal, professional, business or financial interest of anyone with an editorial involvement in news or current affairs content that calls into question (or that might reasonably be perceived as calling into question) the fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a programme or item' (BAI Code on Fairness, Objectivity Impartiality in News and Current Affairs).

8.6 Presenters and Gifts

TG4 presenters and other TG4 staff must not accept any offers which might compromise TG4's independence and integrity. In particular the acceptance of gifts beyond those of a moderate value is not permitted.

Promotional work on behalf of any commercial organisation is not permitted. All requests for speaking engagements, chairing of meetings, etc. must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir for approval in advance. Staff members are not permitted to provide their skills/services on a paid or unpaid basis to any third party unless they receive consent in writing from the relevant line manager. Presenters are not permitted to accept offers of the use of cars from suppliers, even if there is no promotional commitment involved. Freelance contractors employed as presenters by TG4 are obliged to disclose any commercial activity they are involved in which might compromise TG4.

8.7 Presenters and commercial activity

TG4 presenters must not promote in their programmes commercial ventures that they are associated with or that they stand to gain from financially. Editorial personnel must not accept private work, for example in the media training sector, which is in conflict with their role or with TG4's broader function on the public's behalf. This includes, for example, training individuals in dealing with broadcast news or current affairs interviews. Presenters should give particular attention to this requirement.

8.8 TG4 Personnel and Social Media

All TG4 staff and contributors should be aware of and should abide by the TG4 Social Media Guidelines. Presenters and other editorial personnel should take care to preserve TG4's editorial integrity in any comments or postings made by them on social media sites, even if these are of a personal or hybrid type. Comments or criticisms on public events, issues or personalities, whether originated or copied/shared, or whether explicit or implied, which may appear to compromise

the editorial independence and impartiality of a TG4 editorial professional or TG4 itself are damaging to TG4's interest and public responsibility and should not be engaged in. TG4's Social Media Guidelines are available in appendix 2.

Section 9. Editorial Integrity and Independence

9.1 Public Service and Integrity and Independence

TG4 exists to serve the public. The public must have confidence in the integrity and independence of what they hear and see on TG4's services. We have an obligation to be independent of all vested interests and not to compromise ourselves for any reason.

TG4 must be editorially independent of government, business interests, political parties, trade unions, and pressure groups. There is no room for any perception that presenters, reporters or producers personally benefit from their decisions as to who participates in programmes, what products are featured and what issues are discussed.

Equally importantly, there must be no grounds for the perception that editorial decisions in some way reflect the personal views of production teams. As citizens, all programme-makers have rights to their own private views about topics of current debate. These views must not be seen to determine agendas, lines of questioning, or editorial decisions in programming.

9.2 TG4 Standards on editorial independence and integrity

- Maintain the independence and integrity of TG4
- Exercise TG4 editorial control over the content TG4 broadcasts or publishes.
- Ensure that editorial decisions are not improperly influenced by political, sectional, commercial or personal interests
- External activities of individuals undertaking work for TG4 must not undermine the independence and integrity of editorial content.

Mandatory Obligation 3

Any personal, professional, business or financial interest which could call into question the perceived fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a presenter or staff member should be declared to the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

If the Ard-Stiúrthóir deems that the conflict of interest might be perceived as significant, the presenter or reporter may be asked to resolve the conflict by not working on the project, or by declaring the interest on-air.

9.3 Financial journalism

To ensure that our audiences can be confident that TG4's output is not undermined by the outside activities or financial interests of any of our people, journalists and presenters covering financial news should register all their shareholdings, financial and business interests or dealings in securities.

TG4 presenters and journalists must not engage in insider dealing by using for their own profit or for the profit of a third party, any financial information they receive in advance of its general publication. In considering whether information is insider information journalists should have regard to whether it is information which is precise and on which an investor would be likely to base an investment decision.

TG4 journalists must not engage in market manipulation. In particular, journalists must not give false or misleading signals as to the supply of, demand for or price of financial instruments.

Any journalists engaged in financial journalism or any form of reporting on financial markets must not engage in insider dealing or market manipulation. Insider dealing and market manipulation are criminal offences and can potentially attract a fine not exceeding €10,000,000 and a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

Mandatory Obligation 4

Financial journalists must not promote, or give the impression of promoting, any business or financial service in our output.

The law imposes particular rules in respect of the production and distribution of investment recommendations. In this context, a recommendation has a precise statutory meaning, that is *"research or other information recommending or suggesting an investment strategy, explicitly or implicitly, concerning one or several financial instruments or the issuers of financial instruments including any opinion as to the present or future value or price of such instruments, intended for distribution channels or for the public"*.

Any such recommendations must be clear and not misleading and the source should be disclosed. If a TG4 journalist is to make a recommendation she/he must disclose all of the circumstances that may reasonably be expected to impair the objectivity of the recommendation. This includes disclosure of any interest in the financial instruments which are the subject of the recommendation held by that journalist or a member of their close family.

9.4 Acceptance of Gifts

TG4 presenters and other production staff, including freelance contractors and sole traders, must not accept any offers which might compromise TG4's independence and integrity. In particular the acceptance of gifts beyond those of a moderate value is not permitted.

Mandatory Obligation 5

All requests for speaking engagements, chairing of meetings, including of a charitable/not-for-profit nature, must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir for approval in advance.

9.5 Involvement in commercial activity and investments

Freelance or independent contractors employed as presenters by TG4 are obliged to disclose any commercial activity or investments they are involved in which might compromise TG4 to the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

Mandatory Obligation 6

TG4 presenters must not promote in their programmes commercial ventures that they are associated with or from which they stand to gain financially.

9.6 Wearing of religious or Political Badges or Symbols

TG4 does not permit presenters to wear religious or political badges or symbols on screen which could be perceived to undermine editorial independence.

Section 10. Serving the Public Interest

10.1 Public interest requirements pursuant to the Broadcasting Act 2009

TG4 is required by section 118 (2) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 to be:

- *Responsive to the interests and concerns of the whole community, be mindful of the need for understanding and peace within the whole island of Ireland, ensure that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the culture of the people of the whole island of Ireland, and have special regard for the elements which distinguish that culture and in particular for the Gaeltachtaí,*
- *Uphold the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression, and*
- *Have regard to the need for formation of public awareness and understanding of the values and traditions of countries other than the State, including in particular those of other Member States of the European Union.*

We commit to investigate stories of significance and to hold to account those who hold public office or who are in other ways responsible to the public.

Our approach to serving the public interest is by reporting on such matters and providing a forum for national debate on related and other significant issues.

10.2 Our standards on serving the public interest

TG4's investigations and reporting will be **proportionate** to what is being investigated and clearly targeted. That implies:

- a clear sense of what the public interest justification would be
- that projects will not be pursued as 'fishing expeditions'. There should be a public interest justification for commencing basic research and inquiry, and some justifying evidence if a subject is to be elevated to substantive research or active production that may encroach on privacy. When using the public interest to justify an intrusion, consideration has to be given to proportionality: the greater the intrusion the greater the public interest required to justify it
- the avoidance of subterfuge except in clearly defined and authorised circumstances
- very clear rules whenever secret recording is involved
- a clear set of authorisations from within the editorial line management chain
- a clear rationale for what is eventually put into the public domain, and how.

10.3 Our approach to serving the public interest

We base our approach on the following assumptions:

- Citizens in a democratic state have an interest in information about the workings of the state, its institutions and officials, both elected and appointed. This interest, however, is not confined to the state's institutions, but also to private corporations and individuals and to voluntary organisations which require the public's trust.
- When an individual holds an office, whether in a public institution or a private company or voluntary organisation which seeks the public's trust, it is in the public interest that that individual's actions in pursuit of these goals be open for inspection, analysis and investigation by the news media.
- Such an individual is to be judged for his/her public acts, not private ones. In this case, "private" should be taken to mean issues to do with personal relations, personal communications, beliefs and past affiliations unless these can be shown to be directly and significantly relevant to the performance of their public duties. The test is always the impact on public actions or duties.
- The division between private and public is rarely absolute: if, in an investigation, links are shown to exist between the public and the private, then the latter becomes a legitimate area of inquiry.
- We report and show the consequences of violence, tragedy, trauma or criminal exploitation with sensitivity and care. We do not flinch from revealing reality but avoid causing gratuitous distress to victims, witnesses or bereaved relatives.

Investigations are obviously an important way of uncovering matters of public interest ranging from maladministration, crime and corruption, the misuse of public funds, the

abuse of those in the care of the state, the state of anti-social behaviour to the questionable activities of individuals or groups of professionals.

Any public interest justification will include:

- Disclosing information that allows people to make a significantly more informed decision about matters of public importance
- Preventing people from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organization
- Informing debate on key issues
- Promoting accountability and transparency for decisions and public spending
- Revealing crime or significant anti-social behaviour
- Exposing fraud and corruption
- Helping people understand and challenge decisions affecting them.

10.4 Investigations and public interest

Mandatory Obligation 7

Any proposal beyond preliminary research to undertake an investigation into serious crime or significant anti-social behaviour or another issue in the public interest must be referred to the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.

Accurate and reliable note-taking is an essential and prime journalistic craft; it can also be crucial to protecting the reputation of an investigative programme, its production team and TG4.

When filmed evidence is later disputed by those under investigation, records and notes documenting the rationale for the investigation and why it is was considered to be in the public interest, what has been captured, how it was recorded and any relevant surrounding events are an important tool for validating the recording and the programme.

It is important to think through possible scenarios and dilemmas that may be faced in advance and draw up protocols on how to proceed. We should ensure that the public interest in our journalism is not outweighed by public concern about any harm that may have been caused by our methods.

If the parameters of the investigation shift significantly during production, this should be confirmed and agreed with the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe. It may be necessary to go through some of the initial procedures again to ensure the refocused investigation still has the necessary prima facie evidence and public interest.

In respect of an inhouse produced programmes of this nature, the Meitheal Eagarthóireachta will analyse the public interest thesis of the programme and the fairness of its presentation.

When making use of evidence from whistleblowers or other anonymous sources, first take the appropriate steps to protect their anonymity. It is important to interrogate

their motivation, particularly if in the case of whistleblowers they no longer work for the organisation or company concerned and their claims could be discredited by the manner of their dismissal. Whistleblowers should not normally receive any payment or other inducement for their involvement.

Throughout the editing process, it is important to ensure the finished programme reflects the evidence fairly and accurately, taking account the context in which secretly recorded incidents took place.

When the allegations to be made have been clarified, they should normally be put to the individual, organisation or company concerned in time for a response.

Mandatory Obligation 8

Sensitive documents, recorded material and other information must be kept securely and any distribution of such material kept to the minimum. Confidentiality of records and information is an obligation that applies to all journalism. Local protocols will be put in place to ensure safety and security.

Broadcasting legislation also imposes the obligation on all programme-makers not to broadcast anything “**likely to promote or incite to crime**”.

When investigating criminal activity we may, on rare occasions, want to record a specific crime. When that might raise questions about our relationship with the criminal or the crime, it must be referred to Ard-Stiúrthóir, and to the Stiúrthóir Dlí. A decision will need to be made about informing the Gardaí.

Approval to be present at or record serious illegal activity will be given only if it is clearly in the public interest. Even then we must avoid:

- condoning, aiding or abetting criminal behaviour
- encouraging or provoking behaviour which would not otherwise have occurred
- directing the activity in any way.

Anyone admitting to or carrying out an illegal act could be prosecuted. Our research notes, diaries, emails and other paperwork as well as untransmitted rushes may be obtained by court order. This material may also have to be disclosed as evidence to a court, tribunal or inquest.

Mandatory Obligation 9

We do not normally pay individuals or their intermediaries to talk about their crimes. Any proposal to make such a payment must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir and would only be approved if it justifiable in the public interest and unobtainable without such a payment.

Care should be taken to ensure that the identities of any confidential sources are protected and do not appear in any notes that might become the subject of a court order.

Section 11. Fairness

11.1.1 Broadcasting Act 2009 requirements on fairness

Section 39(1) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 requires objectivity and impartiality in news. In addition, there is a requirement for fairness in current affairs (defined as the broadcast treatment of matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate). This applies to current affairs content and not just current affairs programmes.

11.1.2 BAI Rules on fairness (BAI Code)

The following are the BAI Rules on fairness:

- 3 A broadcaster shall deal fairly with contributors to current affairs content or with persons or organisations referred to in that content.*
- 4 In the normal course of events, interviewees for news and current affairs content shall be made generally aware of the subject matter and the nature and format of their contribution, so that their agreement to participate constitutes informed consent.*
- 5 A broadcaster shall not generally broadcast any news or current affairs interview with any person without the consent of that person. The broadcast of any news or current affairs content in the absence of consent must be editorially justified. Requests for withdrawal of consent shall be given due consideration by the broadcaster, having regard to the public interest, natural justice and the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality.*
- 6 Care shall always be taken with the inclusion of interviews with children or vulnerable people in news or current affairs content. In all cases, the over-riding principle must be to avoid the broadcast of material that may be unfair or detrimental to their interest.*
The consent of a parent, guardian or legal representative shall generally be obtained prior to the broadcast of any interview with a child less than 16 years of age or a vulnerable person, where the subject matter is of a sensitive or serious matter or where not to do so could be deemed unfair. A decision to broadcast an interview in the absence of such consent must be justified in the public interest.
- 7 Where a person or organisation refuses to contribute to news and current affairs content or chooses to make no comment, the broadcast shall make this fact clear and shall report in a reasonable manner the person/organisation's explanation for declining to participate, where not to do so could be deemed unfair.*
- 8 The refusal of a person or organisation to participate will not preclude the broadcast of news and current affairs content. However, the broadcaster has*

a responsibility to reflect, as far as practicable, the views of the absent party and to do so fairly.

- 9 The editing process shall not distort the context or meaning of the original interview.*
- 10 A broadcaster shall ensure that the re-use of any material in a news and current affairs context, including the use of archive material, does not create unfairness or result in inaccuracies.*
- 11 The re-construction or re-enactment of an event in news or current affairs content shall be clearly identified as such and should be authentic in its depiction of the event(s) in question.*
- 12 The use of secret or undisclosed recording or filming in current affairs content shall only be used in exceptional circumstances. It must be warranted and a broadcaster shall have appropriate procedures in place for the authorisation of such recordings at the most senior editorial level. Such authorisation shall be in writing.*

The following considerations are essential elements in determining if secret or undisclosed recording or filming is warranted:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest and the broadcaster has evidence of matter that merits coverage;*
 - The co-operation of the subject is unlikely to be forthcoming;*
 - There is reason to believe that coverage of the subject matter will be frustrated as the content cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.*
- 13. Any person secretly filmed or recorded shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the news and current affairs content that will include the recording if, in the opinion of the broadcaster, not affording the opportunity to participate would be unfair to that person.*
 - 14. By its nature, a direct unarranged approach (“door-stepping”) to an interviewee may contravene fairness. However, in appropriate circumstances it may be justifiable to dispense with the normal practice of making arrangements for an interview directly with an interviewee, or with a representative, and with suitable notice. “Door-stepping”, may be appropriate in circumstances where:*
 - The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest;*
 - The interviewee is unlikely to co-operate if approached in the normal way, and;*
 - The approach to the individual(s) is necessary to the authenticity and credibility of the content in question.*
 - 15. Broadcasters shall have in place appropriate policies and procedures for handling contributions via social media.*
 - 16. Any undertaking given to a contributor relating to confidentiality or anonymity shall be clear and be honoured. Any associated audio-visual techniques utilised in both filming and editing shall be carefully applied to ensure complete confidentiality is achieved and commitments given are fully honoured.*

11.1.3 BAI Principles on fairness

Broadcasters must comply with the BAI rules and principles. The BAI principles on fairness are set out below:

***Fairness:** The BAI is committed to ensuring that, through the implementation of this Code, individuals and organisations that are the subject of news and current affairs content, or persons who contribute to news and current affairs programmes or items, are treated fairly and honestly. Viewers and listeners have a legitimate expectation that a broadcaster will demonstrate an even-handed approach to how news and current affairs content is presented and interrogated and how contributors are treated. The principle of fairness does not necessarily require that all possible opinions on a subject are addressed or that they should receive equal air-time.*

11.2 TG4's standards on fairness

Fair and honest dealing is essential to maintaining trust with audiences and with those who participate in or are otherwise directly affected by our content. We must be open and straightforward in our dealings with contributors and audiences unless there is a clear public interest in doing otherwise, or we need to consider important issues such as legal matters, safety, or confidentiality. In addition to complying with the BAI rules and principles in relation to fairness TG4 will comply with the following standards:

- Participants in TG4 content should normally be informed of the general nature of their participation and give their consent to take part and the general nature of the programme should be outlined and attached to the consent form to be signed by the participant in the case of contentious content. The broadcast of any news or current affairs content in the absence of consent must be editorially justified. Requests for withdrawal of consent shall be given due consideration by TG4, having regard to the public interest, natural justice and the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality. A request for withdrawal does not have to be acceded to in every case. The BAI Guidelines indicate that in certain circumstances new facts or information may arise which will validate the request for withdrawal.
- We treat our contributors and potential contributors with respect. We do not threaten, humiliate, or behave aggressively or intrusively to contributors, either to obtain their consent or during their participation in our output.
- Changes to the focus or structure of the programme or item will be notified to the contributor where not to do so could be deemed unfair or partial.
- Their contribution will be edited in a way that does not distort either the context or the meaning of the original interview.
- Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, we make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.

- We aim to attribute information to its source. Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first interrogating the source's motive and the possibility of identifying any alternative attributable sources.
- Assurances given in relation to conditions of participation and use of content, confidentiality or anonymity must be honoured except in rare cases where justified in the public interest. Any associated audio-visual techniques utilised in both filming and editing shall be carefully applied to ensure complete confidentiality is achieved and commitments given are fully honoured.

Where a person or organisation refuses to contribute or chooses to make no comment, the programme should make this clear to the audience and report the reason given in a reasonable manner where not to do so could be deemed unfair.

The refusal of a person or organisation to participate should not prevent broadcast of the item. However, we must attempt to reflect fairly the views of the absent party both in what is said and how.

When we make allegations of wrongdoing, iniquity or incompetence or a strong and damaging critique of an individual or institution, the presumption is that those criticised should be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations.

We must ensure we have a record of any request for a response including dates, times, the name of the person approached and the key elements of the exchange. We should normally describe the allegations in sufficient detail to enable an informed response, and set a fair and appropriate deadline by which to respond.

Any parts of the response relevant to the allegations broadcast should be reflected fairly and accurately and should normally be broadcast in the same programme, or published at the same time, as the allegation.

TG4 will as far as is practical take steps to ensure fairness in the re-use of archive material.

Mandatory Obligation 10

Any proposal to rely on a single unnamed source making a serious allegation or to grant anonymity to a significant contributor must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir and the Stiúrthóir Dlí.

The Ard-Stiúrthóir and the Stiúrthóir Dlí will consider:

- whether the story is of significant public interest
- whether the source is of proven credibility and reliability and in a position to have sufficient knowledge of the events featured and whether, if this is a single source, there is any corroborative evidence
- any legal issues
- safety concerns, for example, for whistleblowers
- whether a response to serious allegations has been sought from the people or organisations concerned

- sensitive and personal issues
- whether the serious allegation was made or substantiated “off the record”.

In reporting the allegation, care must be taken to explain:

- the nature of the allegation
- that the allegation is clearly attributed to the anonymous source and not TG4.
- the degree to which it has been possible to verify the allegation.

Mandatory Obligation 11

The Ard-Stiúrthóir must approve in advance any proposal to broadcast or publish material obtained by subterfuge or not to honour an assurance given in relation to conditions of participation or use of content, confidentiality or anonymity.

11.3 Live Programming and fairness

In live programming, such as phone-in shows, there may be particular difficulties in following the exact procedures and protocols set down in these guidelines. However, the same standards apply to such programmes. Programme-makers must do their utmost to ensure that fairness, objectivity and impartiality, as well as a respect for privacy, remain paramount.

In live programming dealing with rolling or breaking news issues every effort should be made to contact relevant potential contributors as early as possible. Be aware that the notice may be too short to enable contributors to be sufficiently informed or to have determined their responses. The audience may need to be informed that insufficient notice was given to interested parties where participation in a programme could be expected.

Section 12.

Privacy

12.1 Broadcasting Act 2009 requirements

TG4's approach to the public interest governs our approach to privacy. We are also required by Section 39 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 not "to encroach unreasonably on the privacy of an individual" in the making of programmes.

An individual's legitimate expectation of privacy is related to location and the nature of the information and behaviour, and the extent to which information about an individual is already in the public domain.

People's legitimate expectation of privacy in their own homes or other sensitive locations such as a hospital or medical centre are evidently greater than when they are in public or semi-public places. The reporting of, or the attempt to report, medical treatment or conditions (including psychiatric) can also encroach on privacy as can the reporting of suicide attempts. The reporting of suicidal behaviour is detailed in 12.3 below.

Consideration also needs to be given where people can also reasonably expect privacy even in a public or semi-public space, particularly when the activity or information being revealed is inherently private or its broadcast or publication could be regarded as unnecessarily intrusive, for example, the aftermath of a car crash.

There may also be occasions when someone in a location not usually open to the public is engaged in an activity where they have a low expectation of privacy, for example a sales pitch or giving public information.

There is no simple rule which can be applied in all situations.

But there is clearly less of an expectation of privacy where an individual's behaviour is criminal or seriously anti-social.

12.2 TG4 standards on privacy

- TG4 will not intrude into a person's private life without consent unless it is justified in the public interest
- the extent of the intrusion must be limited to what is proportionate in the circumstances
- we must be able to explain why an infringement of privacy is justified from the outset, as well as what is broadcast or disseminated.

We do not normally reveal information which discloses the precise location of a person's home or family without their consent, unless it is editorially justified.

We normally operate openly. When filming openly in public and semi-public places, we do not normally obtain express consent from individuals who are incidentally

caught on camera as part of the general scene, unless they are engaged in an activity where they have a legitimate expectation of privacy that is not outweighed by a public interest in showing them. Where it might not be obvious that we are recording for broadcast, we seek to provide appropriate signs or other indications and whenever practicable seek the consent of those we record.

However, if an individual or organisation asks us to stop filming or recording (whether live or recorded) because of a concern about privacy, we should normally do so, unless it is editorially justified to continue.

Where people have been killed, injured or are missing, it is important that, as far as is reasonably practicable, families or next of kin do not find out from TG4 output. We normally await confirmation from the relevant authority that they have been informed.

12.3 Guidelines applying to coverage of suicide and self harm

The BAI monitors compliance of broadcasters media coverage of suicidal behaviour. Principle 3 – Protection from Harm - specified in the BAI Code of Programming Standards, references self-harm and is monitored by the BAI to ensure responsible coverage by broadcasters around these issues in the broadcast media. The BAI Code of Programming Standards provides as follows in respect of principle 3:

In fulfilment of Principle 3, broadcasters shall:
Take due care when broadcasting programme material containing characters, actions and personal circumstances with which audiences may identify and which can cause distress, particularly in relation to content such as sexual violence, self harm or suicide, reconstructions of factual events and archive footage. Programme material of this nature shall be accompanied by some form of audience information or guidance, such as prior warnings and help line contact details.

.....Not broadcast material that encourages people to imitate acts which are damaging to the health and safety of themselves or others

Research shows that inappropriate reporting of suicide may lead to ‘imitative’ behaviour; that young people are particularly vulnerable to ‘imitative’ suicides; and that they are the group most likely to be influenced by the media. The media can play a positive role in raising awareness of suicide as a social and public health issue by informing the public about suicide, the signs to look out for and promoting the fact that suicide is preventable. The media can help reduce the risk of suicide by highlighting sources of help, such as Samaritans and other relevant agencies.

Attempted suicide and self-harm should be portrayed with great sensitivity, whether in drama or in factual programmes.

The following is an extract from the Samaritans Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide:

There are many ways for journalists to produce sensitive coverage on the issue of suicide. Samaritans' press office and its out of hours press phone are there to support the media when reporting suicide. Samaritans also offers confidential briefings for individual media outlets.

In the first instance, journalists may find the following reporting tips helpful: Do's and don'ts

1 Think about the impact of the coverage on your audience. Your story might have an effect on vulnerable individuals or people connected to the person who has died. Providing information on how to contact appropriate local and national sources of support can encourage people experiencing emotional problems or suicidal thoughts to seek help. It can save lives.

2 Exercise caution when referring to the methods and context of a suicide. Details of suicide methods have been shown to prompt vulnerable individuals to imitate suicidal behaviour. With this in mind, Samaritans recommends: – Avoid giving too much detail. Care should be taken when giving any detail of a suicide method. While saying someone hanged themselves or took an overdose is acceptable, detail about the type of ligature or type and quantity of tablets used is not. Avoid any mention of the method in headlines as this inadvertently promotes and perpetuates common methods of suicide. – Take extra care when reporting the facts of cases where an unusual or previously unknown method has been used. Incidences of people using unusual or new methods of suicide have been known to increase rapidly after being reported widely. Reporting may also drive people to the internet to search for more information about these methods. – Remember that there is a risk of imitative behaviour due to 'over-identification'. Vulnerable individuals may identify with a person who has died, or with the circumstances in which a person took their own life. For example, combining references to life circumstances, say a debt problem or job loss, and descriptions of an easy-to-copy suicide method in the same report, could put at greater risk people who are vulnerable as a result of financial stress. – Never say a method is quick, easy, painless or certain to result in death. Try to avoid portraying anything that is immediate or easy to imitate – especially where the ingredients or tools involved are readily available. Contact Samaritans' press office: +353 1671 0071 (ROI) +44 (0)20 8394 8300 (NI) Out of hours: +44 (0)7943 809 162 press@samaritans.org #reportingsuicide

3 Avoid over-simplification Approximately 90 per cent of people who die by suicide have a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health problem at the time of death. Over-simplification of the causes or perceived 'triggers' for a suicide can be misleading and is unlikely to reflect accurately the complexity of suicide. For example, avoid the suggestion that a single incident, such as loss of a job, relationship breakdown or bereavement, was the cause. It is important not to brush over the complex realities of suicide and its devastating impact on those left behind.

4 Steer away from melodramatic depictions of suicide or its aftermath. Be wary of over-emphasising community expressions of grief. Doing so may suggest that people

are honouring the suicidal behaviour rather than mourning a death. Reporting suicide as a tragic waste and an avoidable loss is more beneficial in preventing further deaths. A sensitive piece that explores the emotional devastation of a suicide on family and friends may prompt people with suicidal thoughts to reconsider or to seek help.

5 Aim for non-sensationalising, sensitive coverage Don't label locations as 'hot spots' or refer to a possible rise in suicides in a particular place or among a specific group as an 'epidemic'. Two or more people taking their own lives who, for example, share a similar background or live in a similar geographic area may be coincidence. Avoid implying a connection where there may be none. Be careful not to promote the idea that suicide achieves results. For example, that, as a result of someone taking their own life, a bully was exposed or made to apologise. When writing headlines think carefully about content and potential impact. Consider if the headline over-dramatises the story, details the method or uses sensationalist terms. Check that inappropriate language has not been used, such as referring to a death as someone having 'committed suicide'. Try an alternative such as 'died by suicide'. Avoid reporting the contents of a suicide note.

6 Consider carefully the placement and illustration of reports. Some suicides attract intense media scrutiny. However, where possible, refrain from positioning a story too prominently, for example on a front page or as a lead bulletin, as this may unduly influence vulnerable people. Take extra care with the selection and placement of imagery linked to a report about suicide. For example, question if a large or prominently placed picture of the person who has died is necessary. Try to avoid repeated use of images of a deceased person, for example in online galleries. Also avoid recurring use of images of someone who has died previously, to illustrate subsequent stories about them or someone else. This is extremely distressing for bereaved families. Avoid dramatic or emotional images and footage, such as a person standing on a ledge. Try not to illustrate a report with specific locations, such as a bridge or cliff, especially if this is a place where people frequently take their own lives.

7. Educate and inform. Whenever possible, try to refer to the wider issues associated with suicide, such as risk factors like alcohol misuse, mental health problems and deprivation. Also consider the lifelong impact that a suicide can have on those bereaved by a suicide. Discussion of such issues can encourage a better understanding of the topic. If possible, include references to suicide being preventable, and to sources of support such as Samaritans and other agencies.

Media guidelines can be found on the HSE website and are set out in Appendix 4; (1) Samaritans: Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide; (2) WHO: Preventing Suicide a Resource for Media Professionals; and (3) NOSP (National Office for Suicide Prevention); Briefing on Murder-Suicide (2017).

12.4 Secret recording

The following techniques are considered to be secret recording:

- the use of hidden cameras or microphones
- the general use of audio-video equipment including long lenses, small video cameras, mobile phone cameras, webcams and radio microphones, when people are unaware they are being recorded for broadcast
- the deliberate use of audio-video equipment including long lenses, small video cameras, mobile phone cameras, webcams and radio microphones, either to conceal the equipment from targeted individuals or to give the impression of recording for purposes other than broadcasting, for example, a holiday video
- recording telephone calls for broadcast without indicating to the other participants on the telephone call that is being recorded.
- deliberately continuing a recording when the other party thinks that it has come to an end, or starting it before the other party thinks it has begun.

Normally, TG4 will use secret recording only for the following purposes:

- as an investigative tool where there is clear prima facie evidence of behaviour, or intention to carry out behaviour, that it is in the public interest to reveal, and the recording is necessary to prove the behaviour, and there is no viable, alternative means of gathering the evidence that proves the behaviour.
- as a method of consumer, scientific or social research in the public interest, where no other methods could naturally capture the attitudes or behaviour in question

Secret recording devices, misrepresentation or other types of subterfuge must not be used to obtain or seek information, audio, pictures or an agreement to participate except where justified in the public interest, and where the material cannot reasonably be obtained by any other means; or where consent is obtained from the subject; or identities are effectively obscured.

The BAI Code provides that the following considerations are essential elements in determining if secret or undisclosed recording or filming is warranted:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest and the broadcaster has evidence of matter that merits coverage;
- The co-operation of the subject is unlikely to be forthcoming;
- There is reason to believe that coverage of the subject matter will be frustrated as the content cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.

The BAI Code further provides that any person secretly filmed or recorded shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the news and current affairs content that will include the recording if, in the opinion of the broadcaster, not affording the opportunity to participate would be unfair to that person.

Mandatory Obligation 12

The use of secret or undisclosed recording or filming in current affairs content shall only be used in exceptional circumstances. There must be prima facie evidence of the behaviour to be revealed (or intention to carry out the behaviour) before secret recording is used as an investigative tool.

The Ard-Stiúrthóir must assess any proposal to use secret recording in the production of content commissioned, produced or co-produced by TG4, including any safety or security concerns. A written record must be kept of the decision to approve or not approve the request to secretly record.

The Ard-Stiúrthóir must then give final approval to the use of such material in the programme before broadcast.

Section 13. Door-stepping for News, Current Affairs and Factual Programmes

13.1 Interpretation of door-stepping

Door-stepping involves recording, or attempting to record, an interview with someone for broadcast, or announcing that a phone call is being recorded for broadcast, when that person is not expecting to be interviewed for broadcast because we have not made a prior approach. It may involve a potential infringement of privacy and should normally be a last resort. It must not be used simply for dramatic effect.

Door-stepping can be in person or on the phone or intercom, etc. It can take place on public or private property.

Door-stepping does not include vox pops.

The obligations on door-stepping that follow are not intended to prevent the legitimate gathering of material within the regular news agenda, such as interviewing politicians as they leave meetings or by pre-arrangement.

13.2 Door-stepping with Prior Approach

Mandatory Obligation 13

Any proposal to door-step in a TG4 produced or commissioned programme, whether in person or on the phone, where we have unsuccessfully tried to make an appointment for an interview with the individual or organisation concerned must be approved in advance by the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.

Approval will normally only be given when there is evidence of crime, significant wrongdoing or if the subject matter is of significant public interest and for at least one of the following reasons:

- the subject of a doorstep has failed to respond to requests for interview in connection with the wrongdoing alleged
- a request for an interview has been refused without good reason and substantial allegations of wrongdoing have been avoided
- there is a history of failure to respond to interview requests or refusal to be interviewed.

Door-stepping should be timely and proportionate to any wrongdoing. Consideration should be given to the safety of production staff and the risk of infringing the privacy

of third parties who are not responsible for any wrongdoing, such as family members or junior employees.

13.3 Door-stepping without Prior Approach

Mandatory Obligation 14

In a TG4 produced or commissioned programme, any proposal to doorstep an individual or organisation, whether in person or on the phone, where we have not previously tried to make an appointment for an interview, must be approved in writing by the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.

Approval will normally only be given if:

- there is clear evidence of significant wrongdoing, and
- it has not been possible to request an interview, or
- there is good reason to believe that an investigation will be frustrated or allegations avoided (for example, because those under investigation might go out of contact) if a prior approach is made.

Consideration must be given to both the timing and the consequences of such doorsteps. It must always be possible to assess and evaluate any new information or legal intervention prior to transmission.

The BAI Code states that “Door-stepping”, may be appropriate in circumstances where:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest;
- The interviewee is unlikely to co-operate if approached in the normal way, and;
- The approach to the individual(s) is necessary to the authenticity and credibility of the content in question.

Section 14. Reporting of Sieges, Kidnappings, Hijackings, Hostage-taking

We need to be particularly sensitive to the impact our reporting may have on situations such as sieges, kidnappings, hijackings or hostage taking. Our reporting may be accessed by people directly involved in these events and therefore may unintentionally play a part in the unfolding of events.

Mandatory Obligation 15

We do not broadcast live interviews with known perpetrators of sieges, kidnappings, hijackings, hostage taking or similar illegal actions while such events are in progress. Consent of the Ard-Stiúrthóir is required before using pre-recorded material made by or with perpetrators.

Co-operation and communication between all programmes reporting and commenting on such events is essential to ensure consistency of approach and a strict adherence to whatever collective decisions have been taken as to the nature of TG4's coverage.

Mandatory Obligation 16

The Príomheagarthóir Nuachta has the primary responsibility on occasions such as these and all reporting no matter its source (broadcast or online) must be agreed by the Príomheagarthóir Nuachta.

Normally we respect advice from the Garda about not revealing information which may either be of help to those involved in the events or which may interfere with the security forces handling of the events.

Mandatory Obligation 17

When the Garda ask that information be withheld it is the responsibility of the TG4 journalist to inform his/her editorial line manager and any other colleagues reporting on the events. The information must be circulated throughout all relevant areas within TG4 as quickly as possible.

However, we may on occasion consider the possibility of making public information which the Garda have requested be withheld. This should not happen without the approval of the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

Section 15. Children and vulnerable people

15.1 General Principles in dealing with children and vulnerable people

Children and vulnerable people are included in TG4's News and Current Affairs programming rarely. However, when children or vulnerable people are included we consider carefully the impact of participation in the programme or news item on them (a child is normally someone under the age of 18). The BAI Code provides that the over-riding principle must be to avoid the broadcast of material that may be unfair or detrimental to their interest. Children are often eager to help programme-makers but may lack judgement about their own immediate or long-term interests. Vulnerable adults may also require the informed consent of a responsible person such as a professional carer or counsellor. A child's own consent should always be sought about being interviewed and the consent of a responsible person (parent or guardian). Interviewing children requires care. Children should not normally be questioned to elicit views of private family matters, or matters likely to be beyond their judgement, or matters more appropriate to adult discussion.

The content of the interview and the context should be explained clearly to the child in a language and terms they can understand. A child's refusal to take part should always be accepted. A child's ability to give consent depends on the stage of development and degree of understanding the child displays, as well as the child's age.

15.2 Consent and children and vulnerable people

Consent must normally be obtained from both the child and a responsible person (parents, guardian and so on).

Parental consent: As detailed in the TG4 Child Protection Policy and Procedures, where children or young people participate in programmes which are of a sensitive/contentious nature (whether factual or dramatization) it's normal practice that the consent should be provided by both parents / legal guardians; however there may be limited circumstances where this may not be possible. In this situation, the issue should be discussed and agreed with a senior manager and the circumstances recorded and kept on file by the programme team. In addition for programmes which are sensitive/contentious in nature a clear description of the programme and the contributor's role should be provided in writing prior to production to ensure informed consent and the description should be attached to the consent form signed on behalf of the child/young person.

If there is any parental refusal – the intention to proceed must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

Mandatory Obligation 18

Where content is of a sensitive/contentious nature, consent should be obtained from both parents and a clear description of the programme and the contributor's role should be provided in writing prior to production to ensure informed consent and the description should be attached to the consent form.

The matter must be referred to the senior manager if there is an intention to proceed with just the consent of one parent in respect of sensitive content. If either parent has refused consent, the consent of the Ard-Stiúrthóir must be sought before taking any decision to go ahead.

Broadcast without consent can normally be justified only if the item is of sufficient public importance and the child's appearance is absolutely necessary. The BAI Code provides that a decision to broadcast an interview without consent must be justified in the public interest.

We would consult where appropriate with professionals and experts when dealing with children and vulnerable people and sensitive subjects and may put in place support systems to protect them before, during and after the programme process.

15.3 Limits of the Parental Consent

Even where we have all relevant consents we must still consider if it is in the child's best interests to be featured before we decide to transmit the material.

15.4 Children and Investigative Journalism

Mandatory Obligation 19

When we come across situations where we believe the welfare of a child is being endangered by others, the child's interests and safety take priority. Programme-makers should, in consultation with the Ard-Stiúrthóir, consider how best to report what they have found to the relevant authority.

15.5 Filming in Schools

When recording or making programmes in schools the consent of the principal is required. It is expected that the school authorities will inform the parents of the children that a programme or report is being made and that parental approval has been sought and obtained but this should be verified by the programme team.

15.6 Reporting on children and illegal or anti-social activity

The more serious or controversial the subject matter, the more caution is required. When factual programmes or news reports feature children involved in illegal or anti-social activity, identification may raise difficult legal or ethical issues. There may be a public interest in identifying the children, but the longer-term interests of the child may argue for anonymity. Parental consent may not be a sufficient reason to identify a child, if the child's long-term future would be better served by anonymity.

Programme-makers should refer such matters to the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

When recording anti-social or criminal practices carried out by children with the intention of highlighting the practice rather than individuals, the general rule is that individual children will not be identified.

15.7 Informed Consent

During interviews or programme research an individual may disclose information or make an allegation concerning a reportable event such as past child abuse or sexual abuse. If this occurs, the individual must in good faith and in the interest of informed consent be told that TG4 may be obliged to notify or report what has been disclosed or alleged in accordance with child protection laws, the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017”.

Mandatory Obligation 20

As an absolute rule, TG4 must not publish in any programme or news bulletin, the name, address, school attended, picture, or other information which may lead to the identification of any child or young person (under 18 years) attending court in a criminal case whether that child is accused of a crime, is a witness in the case, is the victim of the crime, or is involved in a family law related case, except where any judge may have requested the media to do so.

Section 16. Accountability

16.1.1 General accountability

As a publicly funded, public service broadcaster, TG4 is accountable for what we do, and how we do it including the ways in which we spend our revenue. When called upon, we must be ready to explain and justify our editorial decisions and priorities. TG4 is committed to responding meaningfully to all complaints we receive about programme standards and other aspects of our output. All programme-makers are obliged to participate in this process.

16.1.2 BAI Principle on Transparency & Accountability

The BAI Code states that the principles of transparency and accountability are concerned with ensuring that practices and procedures adopted by broadcasters in sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs are visible, open to scrutiny, robust and accessible. This is particularly the case where a decision to broadcast may impact on an individual’s privacy.

16.2 Handling Complaints

TG4 operates under and in accordance with the BAI Codes in place to deal with complaints. TG4 has in place its own Code of Practice on Handling Complaints, based on the recommended BAI template.

All programme-makers are obliged to take complaints seriously and to report any complaints received immediately to the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe.

All significant complaints made about TG4 news and current affairs output are to be referred by production teams to the Meitheal Eagarthóireachta and Stiúrthóir Dlí before any response is issued.

The production team shall ensure that all relevant information is provided directly to the Meitheal Eagarthóireachta to enable it to properly and fully assess the complaint.

In the event that the Meitheal Eagarthóireachta's assessment is that the complaint should not be defended by TG4 (following consultation with the Stiúrthóir Dlí), this decision and the rationale why will be outlined to the Ard-Stiúrthóir.

16.3 The broadcast of Corrections, Clarifications and Apologies

No matter how carefully prepared programmes are, there will always be occasions when it will be necessary to return to a subject to clarify or correct what was broadcast. Responding quickly and on our own initiative to correct significant mistakes is usually preferable to subsequently having to deal with a complaint.

If a minor mistake is identified to TG4, the programme will not refer to the mistake on air. However every effort must be made to avoid repeating the mistake.

If the mistake is more significant and the view is taken that the public record needs amending, the programme or service responsible for the broadcast or publication of the inaccurate information will clarify matters as soon as is feasible, following consultation with the Stiúrthóir Dlí.

If the clarification is sought by a third party and there is the possibility that the issue might compromise TG4's reputation any proposed clarification must be scripted and cleared with the Stiúrthóir Dlí and the Ard Stiúrthóir in advance of broadcast.

Mandatory Obligation 21

Clarifications: If there is the possibility of any legal issues arising either from the original broadcast or the clarification, programme-makers must in the first instance consult the Bainisteoir Coimisiúnaithe. Legal advice must be sought from the Stiúrthóir Dlí before any agreement to broadcast. If it is decided to broadcast a clarification it must be scripted in advance and approved by the Ard-

Stiúrthóir. If the matter is sufficiently serious, the clarification should be recorded and not broadcast live.

Mandatory Obligation 22

Apologies: If the original broadcast requires a formal apology, the statement and the broadcast must be approved by the Stiúrthóir Dlí and the Ard-Stiúrthóir, and the apology must be recorded in advance of broadcast. The broadcast needs to take account of the tone and manner of the voice of the person reading the clarification or apology.

16.4 Accountability to the BAI

TG4 is also publicly accountable to the BAI and is **required** to observe its Code on Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs and the BAI Guidance on the Code on Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs (which are reflected in these Journalism and Contentious Content Guidelines) and honour its Right of Reply scheme. We cooperate openly and honestly with the BAI and abide by its determinations.

Section 17. Legal Liabilities and the Relationship with the Rannóg Dlí

The law has an increasing impact on the dissemination of all forms of content. In particular news, current affairs and factual type programmes run the inherent risk of claims in the civil courts for compensation and other remedies such as correction orders. There is also the risk of criminal liability which may arise in any contempt of court or breach of specific statutory reporting restrictions which may attach to a case and affecting its reporting.

Failure to take account of and deal with these inherent risks are potentially very damaging, exposing TG4 and/or the individual programme-makers to both civil and criminality liability.

Mandatory Obligation 23

Editors, journalists and factual programme makers must alert the Rannóg na gClár at the earliest moment where legal problems are encountered or suspected.

The Stiúrthóir Dlí is available to give advice to and assist TG4 when problems or questions first present themselves. Context is everything. The more accurate and detailed the information the better. This will enhance the ability of the Stiúrthóir Dlí to provide useful advice towards publication or broadcast.

Independent Production Companies must deliver programmes in accordance with the Programme Commissioning Contract in place with TG4 and they are contractually

required to alert the Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe when legal issues are encountered. Independent Production Companies must take independent legal advice in respect of current affairs and contentious content to ensure that the programme complies with the contractual warranties provided to TG4 in the Programme Commissioning Contract.

Mandatory Obligation 23A

All current affairs or contentious programming must be reviewed and approved by the independent production company's legal advisers during the course of production and before the rough cuts and transmission version of the programme are delivered to TG4. A copy of the written confirmation from the production company's lawyer to the production company confirming that the programme is approved for broadcast, must accompany the transmission version of the programme. A copy of the production company's e&o insurance should be supplied to TG4 prior to commencement of the production and prior to the first payment being made to the production company.

TG4 will require independent production companies to have e&o insurance for current affairs content and contentious programming and they must supply a copy of the insurance to TG4 prior to the commencement of production and prior to the first payment being made to the production company.

Mandatory Obligation 24

Any communications from lawyers acting on behalf of contributors or the subjects of a programme must be passed to the Stiúrthóir Dlí and the Ard-Stiúrthóir for consideration and advice. Any written communication from the legal representatives of any person or body proposed to be featured in a programme must be dealt with by the Stiúrthóir Dlí (in consultation with the relevant Eagarthóir Choimisiúnaithe).

The Stiúrthóir Dlí needs adequate time to consider an inhouse programme in its rough cut form. Programmes must be flagged at the earliest possible opportunity as requiring legal advice and a first rough-cut and a draft (corresponding) script (and as much information as possible) must be supplied to the Stiúrthóir Dlí at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mandatory Obligation 25

Any proposal to proceed with a programme or report despite legal advice of a significant or serious risk requires the consent of the Ard-Stiúrthóir. The Stiúrthóir Dlí shall make a written risk assessment to the Ard-Stiúrthóir on request.

There may also be occasions where providing accurate, impartial and fair coverage in the public interest raises issues of potential conflict with the law. Where such cases arise we must consider:

- the law's impact
- what effect breaking the law might have on TG4
- what the effect might be on the people concerned

Mandatory Obligation 26

Any proposal which may involve a potential breach of the law in the public interest must be referred to the Ard-Stiúrthóir, who should consult with the Stiúrthóir Dlí.

A general overview is given to the TG4 staff on a regular basis on Protection of Reputation / Defamation Law, Contempt of Court, Statutory Restrictions relevant to Reporting and Privacy Law.

Appendix 1.

TG4 and Political Coverage

TG4's Role pursuant to the Broadcasting Act 2009

TG4, a broadcaster operating under statute with public funds, is the major provider of space for public debate and is therefore expected to be different from other media. On our airwaves and platforms, the public should be able to see and hear all sides of the debate. They should be able to regard TG4 and the presenters of its programmes to be neutral on issues of public controversy as required by section 39 of the Broadcasting Act 2009.

In its programming, TG4 must reflect the main trends of thought and the major currents of opinion, but without over-simplifying complex issues or arbitrarily excluding relevant minority viewpoints. These minority viewpoints will often be critical viewpoints and TG4 recognises that those who hold such positions stand counter to the main trends of thought and the major current of opinion. It means that programme-makers accept an obligation to present fairly the weight of the evidence, and to report and interpret events in a manner that respects the context as well as the highlights of news and current affairs.

TG4 News and Current Affairs must be a key purveyor of impartial information to the Irish people. Whatever licence may exist for opinion and expression of personal views in general programming, there is a strict obligation within news and current affairs to observe due impartiality.

Our standards on impartiality

- Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.
- Present a diversity of perspectives so that, over time, no significant strand of thought or belief is either knowingly excluded or disproportionately under or over represented.
- Do not state or imply that any perspective is the editorial opinion of TG4. TG4 takes no editorial stance other than its commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of expression and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity.
- Do not misrepresent any perspective.
- Do not unduly favour one perspective over another.

Our approach to the coverage of elections and referenda

Much of modern electioneering and campaigning takes place on the airwaves and TG4 plays a role in these processes. Fairness and impartiality, as well as providing opportunities for political debate, are essential parts of TG4's role at election time. The performance of presenters and reporters comes under intense scrutiny. TG4 must be, and be seen to be, completely impartial in its handling of political debate.

The monitoring of output is an important part of TG4's procedures at election and referenda times. TG4 puts in place for all General Elections, European Elections, Presidential Elections and Referenda a Steering Group which consists of the Ard-Stiúrthóir and the Bainisteoir Sceideal. This group is chaired by the Ard-Stiúrthóir and co-ordinates TG4's coverage of the campaign and ensures that TG4's overall coverage is fair to all parties.

Balance and fairness have to be maintained both within individual programme strands and across all output. A formal monitoring of output is put in place in the run up to elections to

provide accurate information about election coverage on all TG4 services and to ensure that balance is achieved. Appearances by all candidates and their election teams are measured.

In the run-up to elections the appearance of politicians and candidates in non-News and Current Affairs programming may need to be restricted. **Programme-makers must seek advice from editorial management and the Steering Group in advance of making commitments to politicians and candidates.**

All programme-makers are obliged to achieve balanced coverage within their own programmes (either within individual programmes or within related programmes). Where unanticipated events occur which lead to balance not being achieved (e.g. a candidate not turning up for an interview or a link going down) the Steering Group must be informed at the earliest possible moment. Within News it is recognised that news values may over-ride considerations of apportioning of proportionate attention to candidates. At all times when this happens the Steering Group must be informed to allow full consideration of the consequences.

Opinion Polls and surveys

When we report the results of any research, especially when information is being summarised, the audience must be able to trust that the journalism behind what they see and hear is robust, the research is reliable and meaningful and the language used is both consistent and truthful. This accuracy, clarity and credibility is as important when we report on “polls” and “surveys” as it is in the rest of our journalism.

When we commission “polls” or “surveys” ourselves, we must take even more care to ensure we have made good judgements about their relative importance and the audience can trust what we are saying. We should also take care to ensure that a poll we commission is not used to suggest a TG4 view on a particular policy or issue or to imply an intervention in a current controversy.

When reporting the findings of opinion polls (especially voting intention polls):

- We should not lead a news bulletin or programme simply with the results of an opinion poll
- We should not headline the results of an opinion poll unless it has prompted a story which itself deserves a headline and reference to the poll’s findings is necessary to make sense of it.
- We should normally report the findings of opinion polls in the context of trend and must always do so when reporting voting intention polls. The trend may consist of the results of all major polls over a period or may be limited to the change in a single pollster’s findings. Poll results which defy trends without convincing explanation should be treated with particular care
- We should not use language which gives greater credibility to the polls than they deserve. For example, we can say polls “*suggest*” and “*indicate*”, but never “*prove*” or “*show*”
- We should not normally rely on the interpretation given to a poll’s results by the organisation or publication which carried it out or commissioned it
- We should report the organisation which carried out the poll and the organisation or publication which commissioned it, as well as the questions, results and sample size. This information too should always be shown in television and online graphics

- We should normally report the dates of the fieldwork, and include them in television and online graphics, and draw attention to events which may have had a significant effect on public opinion since it was done
- We should normally report whether the poll was carried out face to face, by telephone or over the internet
- We should report the expected margin of error in voting intention polls if the gap between the contenders is within the margin. Television and online graphics should always show the margin of error.

Political activities of TG4 staff

Certain categories of core TG4 staff are not permitted to participate in political activities. This constraint is not imposed to limit individual's freedom to participate, but rather to guarantee to the viewing public that TG4 is impartial and objective. There is clearly a balance to be maintained between individual rights and collective responsibility. The restricted categories who may not participate in political activity include:

- The Ard-Stiúrthóir and other members of Árd Bainistíocht.
- In TG4 Nuacht and current affairs, all journalistic staff, both those who appear before the public and those involved in the production of news.

The definition of political activity includes activity which does not involve a public dimension (for example, working as a backroom person in a political party). Minor non-party political activity such as participation in residents' groups, environment lobby groups, etc. is permissible. But caution should be exercised not to compromise TG4 in any way.

Core TG4 staff and key personnel in independent production companies engaged in commissions for TG4 must notify the Ard-Stiúrthóir if they have any intention of standing as candidates in European Parliament, Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann or local elections.

It is incompatible with TG4's statutory obligations of impartiality to allow people standing as candidates to work for TG4 in a position of editorial responsibility, in-house or on commissions. Those wishing to stand as candidates have to seek leave of absence from their positions. If they wish to return to work after the elections, TG4 cannot guarantee that they will be able to return to their previous positions. People who work in restricted categories who wish to return to TG4 after unsuccessfully contesting elections can expect a moratorium before they can return to their previous activities. Restricted categories apply to all broadcasters irrespective of contractual status. Programme-makers working for independent companies on TG4 commissioned programmes may need to be restricted also. Decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Core staff of TG4 who work in non-restricted categories must exercise their discretion in their political activity in order to avoid any conflicts with TG4's statutory obligations. It is a condition of service that no individual should do anything which would bring TG4 into disrepute.

Audience Based Election Debates

Format

- A detailed breakdown of the programme format, covering audience and question selection, should be presented to and approved by the Steering group
- The programme format should be founded on open applications to the programme from members of the public

Audience Selection

- The format should specify how the audience members selected will represent a balance of gender, region and viewpoints, and how campaign workers will be identified and treated
- Third-party methods of sifting applications to achieve that balance should be considered but are not mandatory, nor are they replacements for sound editorial judgement
- Personal friends of the production team should not be selected as audience members for election programmes

Questions

- The range of questions selected must cover all representatives in the debate, but editorial judgement can be used to ensure key issues in the election are properly addressed through use of additional questions and presenter supplementary questions
- Potential questions should be submitted to the production team in writing. The team may discuss amendments with the potential questioner to ensure clarity or legal safety, but the final wording must be left to the questioner
- Questions devised by contributors must not be given to other audience members to read
- Questioners should not be connected to political parties or candidates' campaigns in an election programme

Editorial Supervision

- A senior editorial figure must view the programme as broadcast with the sole function of ensuring editorial compliance with TG4 policy and BAI Codes
- Clear lines of editorial responsibility for the broadcast must be established in TG4 management structures

Staffing and Training

- One member of the production team should be dedicated to the production of the debate in the weeks preceding it
- Gaps in experience and training for existing staff in editorial, legal and compliance issues should be identified and addressed. Training sessions should be regularly updated with latest guidance and best practice
- All new staff, including those on short term contracts, should receive induction training in TG4 policies and procedures

Appendix 2

Guidance on reporting from the Internet and Social Media sources

1 General guidance on reporting from the Internet and Social Media sources

Great care should be taken when using online sources and material emanating from social media sites or streams. As always, be wary of reporting anything second hand and look out for the possible hidden agenda. Corroborate wherever possible and check the identity of any contributor you intend to use.

Where a site is running a story of potential public interest, seek to verify before running the story and attribute clearly so that our audiences can assess the information and its source. Remember too that websites do not necessarily produce content which meets the requirement of the law on defamation, contempt or intellectual property.

2 Hoaxes and Spoofs

Many websites and social media streams contain bogus information such as spoof news reports. Some campaign and activist sites mimic the domain name and design of an official source for reasons of satire or misinformation.

You **must** take care to perform thorough provenance checks before using material from a website or a social media stream using, for example, “about us” sections or “WHOIS”.

3 Biased Sources

As with any medium, hidden commercial or political agendas can shape a Web site’s content. You should check the links to and from a site as these can often reveal political or commercial affiliations.

4 Out of Date Information

Even trustworthy sources can contain pages that have not been updated in years. Contextual information can provide an idea of the date it was authored, but always use recognised sources to corroborate any information found.

5 Social Media Sites

Individuals post material, including pictures, audio and video, which may reveal information about themselves, generally for the benefit of friends and acquaintances. A balance needs to be struck between appropriate use of material that an individual may have unthinkingly put in the public domain and fairness to that individual and respect for their privacy even if they have become part of a news story. Any proposal to use material featuring an individual taken from a social media site in TG4 programming should normally be referred to relevant Eagarthóir Coimisiúnaithe.

6 Reporting Suicidal Behaviour

The Samaritans: Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide advises as follows:

(1) Sources

Apply extra vigilance when using online sources for a suicide story. Speculation about a death or the circumstances surrounding a person dying can easily be misreported or wrongly repeated as fact. The instantaneous and 'viral' circulation of information online makes it all the more important to double check the reliability and trustworthiness of online sources of information.

(2) Chat rooms

Take care when using content from chat rooms, pro-suicide websites and other online forums, and try to avoid identifying these sites. This can be damaging to vulnerable people, driving them to these sources, and distressing for bereaved families.

(3) Forums

If your site solicits feedback from readers or users in the form of comment threads or their own submissions, try and make sure that the terms of use are clear, including what constitutes inappropriate material. We recommend proactive monitoring and moderating of comments to guard against hosting information that could influence vulnerable people, including discussion of methods.

(4) Referencing

Websites and social networking sites may be used by some people to eulogise or memorialise a person who died as a result of suicide. Be careful if referencing such sites, especially where they refer to young people, as it may glamorise a death.

(5) Images and videos

Consider the impact on bereaved families and friends before using images from social networking sites to illustrate a story. Do the same before linking to an online video of, or about, the person who has died.

(6) Language

When using social networking tools to promote a story, apply the same caution you would if writing a headline; for example, by checking that the language is appropriate.

7 Support

Add links to sources of support, such as Samaritans and other relevant agencies, whenever possible.

TG4 Social Media Guidelines

Ní mór an polasaí seo ar na meáin shóisialta a léamh i gcomhar le polasaithe eile fostaithe. Díreann aird ar leith ar na polasaithe maidir le dínit ag an obair, comhionannas, bulaíocht agus ciapadh, idirlíon, úsáid an idirlíon, cosaint sonraí, gnáis oibre maidir le cosaint leanaí agus rúndacht gnó, agus baineann siad sin ar fad le húsáid na meán sóisialta.

Meabhraítear go bhfuil foráil sa chonradh fostaíochta a chuireann cosc ar aon fhostaí, i gcomhlíonadh a dhualgais oibre, aon rud a dhéanamh, a rá ná a fhoilsiú a tharraingeodh míchlú ar TG4. Baineann an cosc le húsáid na foirne as na meáin shóisialta freisin.

Is gné chinniúnach den obair faoin tráth seo an úsáid a bhaintear as na meáin shóisialta chun ceangal a chothú go héasca le daoine, eolas úsáideach agus ábhar nuachta a aimsiú agus lón ábhair TG4 a chur ar a súile do dhreamanna nua. Ní mór a bheith cúramach, ina dhiaidh sin, mar gheall nach furasta idirdhealú glan a dhéanamh idir an réimse pearsanta agus an réimse gairmiúil ar na meáin shóisialta agus go bhféadfadh an míbheart is fánaí baint ó iontaofacht an té a dhéanann sin ar na meáin shóisialta agus ó mhuinín an phobail sa duine sin, i gcomhghleacaithe an duine sin agus in TG4 trí chéile. Tá de chuspóir leis an treoir seo a leithéid sin a sheachaint. Baineann an treoir leis an uile dhuine atá ag obair do TG4 agus le seirbhísí den uile chineál, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, linkedin, Pinterest, gan an t-iomlán a lua, chomh maith le aipeanna comhrá de leithéid WhatsApp, Messenger, Snapchat agus eile.

Ní mór do gach fostaí a bheith ar an airdeall go ndéanann an eagraíocht monatóireacht rialta ar an Idirlíon agus ar na meáin shóisialta i ndáil lena cuid oibre agus chun bheith cothrom le dáta le tráchtairacht ghinearálta idirlín, do láithreacht brandaí agus do dhearcaí tionscail/custaiméirí. Ní dhéanann an eagraíocht monatóireacht go sonrach ar leathanaigh pearsanta meán sóisialta na bhfostaithe ar bhonn leanúnach, ach níor chóir go mbeadh fostaithe ag súil le príobháideacht maidir leis sin. Tá ceart ar cosaint ag an eagraíocht aon eolas a d'fhéadfadh tionchar diúltach a bheith aige ar an eagraíocht nó ar na fostaithe, a dtagann an eagraíocht air le linn monatóireacht rialta ar an idirlíon, nó a chuireann fostaithe, custaiméirí, daoine den phobal etc. in iúl don eagraíocht a úsáid chun críocha araíonachta. Toirmisctear ar gach fostaí eolas a úsáid nó a fhoilsiú ar aon láithreán de chuid na meán sóisialta, sa chás go bhféadfadh úsáid den sórt sin tionchar diúltach a bheith aici ar an eagraíocht nó ar an bhfoireann. Áirítear an méid seo a leanas mar shamplaí d'iompar den sórt sin, ach ní gá go mbeadh siad teoranta dóibh:

- ábhar clúmhilleach, maslach nó gránna a fhoilsiú maidir le fostaí, bainisteoir, sealbhóir oifige, scairshealbhóir, custaiméir nó cliant ar bith de chuid na heagraíochta;
- eolas rúnda nó eolas gnó-íogair faoin eagraíocht a fhoilsiú;
- ábhar a fhoilsiú a bhféadfaí a mheas go réasúnach go ndéanadh sé dochar do cháil nó seasamh gairmiúil na heagraíochta.

Tá trí phríomhchineál úsáide as na meáin shóisialta a bhaineann le hábhar:

1. Úsáid phearsanta as na meáin shóisialta nach in ainm TG4 a dhéantar é, cé go bhféadfadh úsáid a bhaineann leis an obair a bheith i gceist freisin, mar shampla, scéalta nuachta a bhailiú nó caidreamh a chothú le daoine a bheadh ar chlár nó a chuirfeadh ábhar ar fáil.
2. An úsáid a bhaineann eagarthóirí, láithreoirí, comhfhreagraithe nó tuairisceoirí ainmnithe as na meáin shóisialta agus sin á dhéanamh mar chuid de sholáthar oifigiúil ábhair TG4.
3. Úsáid oifigiúil as na meáin shóisialta in ainm chlár, fhoirne nó bhrandaí de chuid TG4.

1. Úsáid phearsanta as na meáin shóisialta

a) Is beacht cruinn an chomhairle riamh: 'Ná déan aon ní seafóideach'. Ó tharla go bhfuil tú do do chur féin os comhair an uile dhuine a fheiceann gach a ndéanann tú ar na meáin shóisialta, d'fhéadfaí a rá chomh gonta giorraisc céanna: 'Iriseoir / fostaí de chuid TG4 atá ionat; déan dá réir.' Ná bíodh aon úsáid phearsanta ina chur isteach ar chúram na hoibre.

b) Is gá a bheith cúramach an t-am go léir agus ar na seirbhísí go léir gan bheann ar shocruithe 'príobháideachais' a bheadh roghnaithe, ar an lucht féachana a bheadh i gceist nó ar theachtaireacht 'phríobháideach' nó 'díreach' chuig duine amháin a bheith á seoladh. Is furasta postáil ar shuíomh de leithéid Facebook, nó Teachtaireacht ar Twitter a sheolfaí díreach chuig duine amháin, a scaipeadh go fada fairsing ar na sluaite. Cuir i gcás i gcónaí gur féidir leis an uile dhuine a ndéanann tú agus a ndéir tú a fheiceáil.

c) Más duine den fhoireann eagarthóireachta tú, is cuma an luann tú, nó nach luann, go n-oibríonn tú le TG4. Ní miste má luaitear an comhlacht lena n-oibríonn tú i gcuntas beathaisnéise nó do do chur féin i láthair ('About'). Is maith an rud trácht ar do shaol oibre. Is é an rud é nach ceart 'TG4' a lua mar chuid den leasainm nó den ainm nó den phríomhtheideal atá agat ar aon ní ionas go seachnaítear aon mhíthuiscint gur cuid de sholáthar oifigiúil ábhair TG4 atá ann ar bhealach ar bith. Ba cheart a lua go sonrach gur tuairimí pearsanta de do chuid féin amháin atá á gcur in iúl agat agus nach tuairimí de chuid TG4.

d) Níor cheart duit roghanna polaitíochta a lua ná aon ní a rá a bhainfeadh ón neamhchlaontacht a cheapadh leat. Ná mealladh neamhfhoirmeáltacht na meán sóisialta tú ar bhealach a tharraingeodh míchlú ar TG4. Ná déantar cáineadh ar chomhghleacaithe oibre. Ná scaoiltear eolas rúnda de chuid TG4, scéalta a mbainfeadh íogaireacht leo san áireamh nó bearta a bhfuil tú féin nó daoine eile ag obair orthu. Bí cúramach an scaoilfí eolas a chuirfeadh do chuid sábháilteachta féin

nó sábháilteacht chomhghleacaithe de do chuid i mbaol. Má chuirtear i mbun oibre tú in áit a bheadh contúirteach nó i gcúinsí sochorraitheachta, múch gach ní ar ghléasanna leictreonacha agus ar sheirbhísí meáin shóisialta lena dtabharfaí le fios an áit ina bhfuil tú.

e) Is iondúil go mbíonn na daoine, na feachtais nó na heagraíochtaí a roghnaíonn tusa a bheith 'i do chara' acu nó i measc a lucht leanúna le feiceáil ag an uile dhuine. Smaoinigh an tuiscint a bheadh le baint as roghanna den sórt sin, go háirithe má tá conspóid nó claontaobhacht ag rith leo nó go mbainfidís le hábhar scéalta a mbeifeá ag obair orthu. Déan fairsingiú nó cothromú ar a réimse más gá. Baineann an chomhairle chéanna le hábhar nó postáil ar na meáin shóisialta a ndéanfaí a shábháil nó a thaispeáint go poiblí gur maith leat iad nó go bhfuil fabhar agat leo.

f) Is é bun agus barr na meán sóisialta go mbíonn ábhar ó dhaoine eile á scaipeadh agus á atvuíteáil - ach smaoinigh go bhféadfaí a thabhairt le tuiscint gur ionann a leithéid agus aontú, agat féin nó ag TG4, leis an ábhar agus go bhféadfadh gá a bheith le comhthéacs breise. Ní leor séanadh de leithéid "ní ionann atvuíteáil agus aontú" sa chuntas beathaisnéise as féin.

g) Bítear cúramach maidir leis an tionchar a bhíonn ag ráflaí neamhdheimhnithe nó ábhar nach bhfuil cinntithe a scaipeadh.

h) Tá comhrá le daoine buntábhachtach maidir leis an leas is fearr a bhaint as na meáin shóisialta. Bí múinte cúirtéiseach i gcónaí. Sa chás go mbeifí mímhúinte nó cáinteach leat féin, seachain bearta trodacha, bagracha nó feargacha, 'blocáil' nó beart dá leithéid san áireamh. Ba cheart gníomh den sórt sin a sheachaint go dtí go dtarlaíonn masla tarcaisneach dáiríre, aithis nó cás spamála..

i) Sa chás go dtagann tú i láthair ar na meáin shóisialta nó ar an idirlíon - ar bhlag, mar shampla - agus go measann tú go bhféadfadh easaontacht leasa a theacht chun cinn, ba chóir duit an cás a phlé leis an mbainisteoir líne; ní chuirfidh an bainisteoir cosc go míréasúnta ort, ach ní mór an chontúirt a d'fhéadfadh a theacht i gceist a phlé.

2. Beartaíocht 'oifigiúil' eagarthóirí, láithreoirí agus comhfhreagraithe ar na meáin shóisialta

a) Luaitear gur beartaíocht 'oifigiúil' an bheartaíocht a dhéanann cuid mhór de na heagarthóirí, láithreoirí agus comhfhreagraithe ar na meáin shóisialta, rud a chiallaíonn gur ionann stádas dó agus an gnáthsholáthar ábhair a chuireann siad ar fáil ar an teilifís, ar an raidió nó ar na meáin dhigiteacha. Déantar an lipéad 'oifigiúil' a lua leis an mbeartaíocht sin tar éis plé ar an gceist idir an duine atá i gceist, an bainisteoir líne agus Eagarthóir na Meán Sóisialta maidir leis an Nuacht, nó a chomhionann.

b) Ionas gur soiléir an stádas, ba chóir brandáil TG4 a bheith leis an mbeartaíocht (murar cuntas pearsanta atá i gceist seachas leathanach). Níor cheart go luafaí sa chuntas beathaisnéise gur tuairimí pearsanta amháin atá á gcur in iúl, ná a leithéid.

c) Sa chás go bhfuil stádas oifigiúil agat, ní mór do chuid beartaíochta a bheith ag teacht leis sin. Ní chiallaíonn sin go bhfuil cosc ar aon ní a phlé seachas do chuid oibre. Go deimhin, is é a mhalairt a mholtar: pearsantacht an duine agus saol an duine atá i gceist leis na meáin shóisialta ó bhun go barr. Is fiú a choinneáil i gcuimhne ina dhiaidh sin féin gur mar gheall ar an ról eagarthóireachta atá líon suntasach de na daoine, murarb é a mórchuid mhór ar fad é, i mbun caidrimh leat agus "do do leanúint.

3. 3. Beartaíocht ar na meáin shóisialta in ainm chláir, fhoirne nó bhrandaí de chuid TG4

a) Tá cur chuige faoi leith, atá saincheaptha go cúramach, leagtha amach maidir leis na meáin shóisialta a úsáid i ndáil le brandaí, cláir agus foirne de chuid TG4 agus tá rath agus fiúntas ag baint le réimse de phróifílí suntasacha agus de chuntais sainaitheanta atá curtha ar bun. Ní ceart tabhairt faoi aon bheartaíocht nua gan an cas a mheas go cúramach i gcomhairle leis na bainisteoirí líne agus le hEagarthóir na Meán Sóisialta

b) Tá de bhunphrionsabal maidir le gach uile chuid den bheartaíocht oifigiúil den sórt sin ar na meáin shóisialta go mbeadh seiceáil déanta ag an dara duine air sula ndéantar a phostáil, ach amháin i gcásanna fioreisceachtúla.

c) Chomh mór agus is féidir sin go teicniúil, ní mór a bheith cúramach freagrach as ábhar, tuairimí agus tráchtairacht ó dhaoine eile san áireamh, a bhíonn le feiceáil ar aon leathanach ar na meáin shóisialta agus ar aon suíomh a mbíonn ainm TG4 air.

d) Má tá cuntas oifigiúil á rith agat ar na meáin shóisialta, tá tú freagrach as a choinneáil slán ó bhradaíl agus ó aon úsáid neamhúdairithe eile, agus ní mór duit a bheith ar an eolas maidir leis an gcomhairle is deireanaí faoi chúrsaí slándála. Is den rithábhacht go mbeadh pasfhocal daingean in úsáid agat, go ndéantar a athrú go minic agus nach ndéantar a stóráil nó a sheoladh ar an ríomhphost.

D) Tá tú freagrach go pearsanta as an méid a phostálann tú nó a fhoilsíonn tú ar láithreáin de chuid na meán sóisialta. Má faightear aon eolas a sháraíonn aon pholasaí, mar rúndacht a shárú nó droch-cháil a tharraingt ar an eagraíocht, d'fhéadfá gníomh araíonachta go dtí dífhostú agus sin san áireamh a tharraingt ort féin.

e) Bí feasach ar rialacha maidir le cosaint sonraí - ní féidir sonraí ná grianghraif chomhleacaithe a phostáil gan cead a bheith faighte ón duine. Níor chóir grianghraif d'ócáidí na cuideachta a phostáil ar líne. Níor chóir d'fhostaithe pasfhocal na cuideachta a chur ar fáil nó a úsáid mar fhreagra ar aon iarratas idirlín ar phasfhocal.

f) Ní chóir ábhar a bhfuil leas dílseánaigh ag an eagraíocht ann - mar bogearraí, táirgí, cáipéisíocht nó aon eolas inmheánach eile - a tharchur, a dhíol nó a scaoileadh ar aon bhealach, mura bhfuil an t-eolas sin sa réimse poiblí cheana. Beidh údarú scríofa ag teastáil roimh ré ón mbainisteoir sinsearach má táthar chun imeacht ón bpolasaí sin ar aon bhealach.

g) Léirigh meas i gcónaí maidir leis an méid a deir tú agus an bealach a deir tú é. Bíodh meas agat ar do lucht féachana, do chomhghleacaithe agus ar chustaiméirí agus soláthróirí. Ná postáil ná foilsigh aon tuairimí nó ábhar a bhaineann leis an eagraíocht nó le fostaithe, a bhféadfaí iad a mheas mar do-ghlactha san áit oibre nó i gcoimhlint le láithreán gréasáin na heagraíochta. Cinntigh go bhfuil sé soiléir gur leat féin amháin na dearcaí agus na tuairimí a chuireann tú in iúl.

h) Chomh luath agus atá sé sa réimse poiblí, ní féidir ábhar a aistarraingt. Dá bhrí sin, glac am chun d'ábhar a athbhreithniú ar bhealach oibiachtúil sula ndéanann tú uaslódáil air. Má bhíonn amhras ort, iarr ar dhuine éigin féachaint air duit. Smaoinigh ar an tionchar a bheadh ag an méid a deir tú agus ar cad a d'fhéadfadh tarlú dá mbeadh ar dhuine de do chomhghleacaithe do thuairimí a chosaint do chustaiméir.

i) Má dhéanann tú botún, bí ar an gcéad duine chun sin a chur in iúl agus ceartaigh go tapa é. Féadfaidh tú mífhaisnéis a chur in iúl go fóraitach, ach ná cur tús le hargóint.

j) Tá sé thar a bheith tábhachtach go ndéanfaidh fostaithe tuairisciú láithreach ar aon ghníomhaíocht nó iompraíocht mhíchuí a bhaineann leis an eagraíocht, leis na fostaithe nó le tríú páirtí. Cuir do mhaoirseoir nó duine eile den bhainistíocht nó d'ionadaí Acmhainní Daonna ar an eolas. Déanfar gach líomhain a dhéantar de mheon macánta a imscrúdú go hiomlán agus go rúnda. Ceanglaítear ort comhoibriú le gach imscrúdú ar sháruithe polasaí líomhnaithe.

Eile: An Nuacht is deireanaí

- a) is fearr cruinn beacht ná luath mícheart maidir leis an scéal nuachta is deireanaí a chur ar na meáin shóisialta, is cuma cé mór agus ba mhaith le duine a bheith ar an té is luaithe leis an scéal.
- b) Comhairle ón eagarthóir / bainisteoir líne / bainisteoir sinsearach maidir le hábhar.

Eile: Ábhar ó na meáin shóisialta agus ó dhaoine nach bhfuil i mbun gairme sna meáin chumarsáide a úsáid (nó 'Ábhar a Chruthaíonn an Lucht Úsáide'/UGC).

a) Níl ábhar físeáin ná grianghrafadóireachta ar an ngréasán 'san fhearann poiblí' ná saorchead againne iad a úsáid. Chomh maith le hiontaofacht an ábhair a sheiceáil, nó mar chuid den obair sin, is gá cead úsáide a lorg chomh maith. Tugtar chun aire nach móide gur ionann an té a fheictear san ábhar agus an té ag a bhfuil cóipcheart ina leith ná nach gá ach oiread gur ionann an té a rinne an ghrianghrafadóireacht nó an scannánaíocht, ná an té a scaip an t-ábhar agus úinéir an chóipchirt.

b) Tugtar chun aire go bhfuil coinníollacha faoi leith i réimse an chóipchirt ag baint le hábhar físeáin a úsáid mar chás eisceachta i ndáil le cóirdhéileáil, coinníollacha san áireamh maidir le tráthúlacht agus suntas an ábhair ó thaobh cúrsaí nuachta, an gá iarrachtaí a dhéanamh cead úsáide a fháil agus an gá creidiúint a thabhairt. Iarrtar comhairle má táthar éiginnte ar bhealach ar bith. Ní féidir cóirdhéileáil a thabhairt i gceist maidir le grianghraf.

c) Bítear ag brath ar dhaoine nach bhfuil i mbun gairme leis na meáin chumarsáide maidir le hábhar dá gcuid a chur ar fáil a chuidíonn linne ár gcuid oibre a dhéanamh agus ní mór caitheamh ar bhonn measa leis na daoine sin. Ba cheart i ngach cás creidiúint ar a scáileán a thabhairt don té ar leis nó léi an t-ábhar, ach amháin nuair a iarrann an t-úinéir féin a mhalairt nó sa chás go ndéanfaidh creidiúint a thabhairt an t-úinéir a chur i mbaol. Ní leor ann féin ainm láithreán gréasáin - de leithéid YouTube nó Facebook - a lua.

d) Níl deacracht ar bith ag baint le caidreamh a chothú le daoine a d'fhéadfadh ábhar a chur ar fáil ó chuntas lena ngabhann branda de chuid an BBC nó ó chuntas pearsanta

ach, i gcásanna áirithe, d'fhéadfadh nach cuí sin a dhéanamh ó chuntas pearsanta dá bhféadfadh aird a tharraingt ar chuntas meán sóisialta de do chuid tú a fhágáil i mbaol.

e) Ní gá a lua go mbítear múinte i gcónaí le daoine a d'fhéadfadh ábhar a chur ar fáil do chlár; ach tugtar san áireamh chomh maith go bhféadfadh imní nó buaireamh a bheith orthu. Is iondúil gur fearr comhrá den sórt sin a aistriú go dtí bealaí cumarsáide príobháideacha (teachtaireachtaí díreacha nó teachtaireachtaí meandracha, nó an ríomhphost) a luaithe is féidir. Cuirtear san áireamh freisin go bhféadfadh caidreamh os comhair an phobail treisiú le ráflaí nó le cleas mealltach. Níor cheart ar chor ar bith daoine a spreagadh chun dul i gcontúirt ar ár son, mar shampla chun ábhar grianghrafadóireachta nó físeáin a thógáil maidir le scéal nuachta. Ba cheart iarrachtaí i ndiaidh a chéile ag Nuacht BBC caidreamh a cheangal leis an duine amháin a sheachaint.

Forfheidhmiú

D'fhéadfadh ó ghníomh araíonachta go dífhostú agus sin san áireamh leanúint as neamhchomhlíonadh phrionsabail agus coinníollacha ginearálta an pholasaí meán sóisialta seo agus is amhlaidh atá maidir leis na polasaithe idirlín, ríomhphoist agus rúndachtaábharta.

Ní polasaí cuimsitheach é seo. Maidir le cásanna nach dtagann go sonrach faoin bpolasaí seo, ní mór duit a chinntiú go bhfuil an úsáid a bhaineann tú as na meáin shóisialta agus as an idirlíon iomchuí i gcónaí agus ag teacht le d'fhreagrachtaí i dtaobh na heagraíochta. Má bhíonn aon amhras ann, ba chóir duit dul i gcomhairle le do bhainisteoir.

Déanann an roinn TF monatóireacht ar an úsáid a bhaintear as an Idirlín chun críche pearsanta agus ar an úsáid a bhaintear as chun críche gnó.

Appendix 3.

Compliance

Forms:

Ginearálta

agus

Daoine

Óga



Foirm Rialúcháin Ábhair Content Compliance Form

Teideal an Chláir Programme Title	Elpeasóid Episode	Craoladh ('Aon am' nó 'Tar éis 9pm amháin') Broadcast ('Any time' or 'Post 9pm only')	Uimhir WhatsOn WhatsOn UID
Táim ag deimhniú: 1. Má tá taifeadh déanta ar pháistí sa léiriúcháin, go bhfuil 'Polasaí Um Chosaint Leanaí' in úsáid ag an gcomhlacht. 2. Go bhfuil aon chomórtas bainteach leis an gclár ag cloí le 'Cód Ginearálta maidir le Cumarsáid Tráchtála' agus 'Cód um Chaighdeán Chláir' de chuid an UCC. I Confirm: 1. If the production includes recording of children, that a 'Child Protection Policy' is in use by the production company. 2. That any competition associated with the content complies with the BAI 'General Commercial Communications Code' and the BAI 'Code of Programme Standards'.		Cuir 'Tá' sa bhosca le deimhniú Please enter 'Tá' in the box to confirm: <input type="text"/>	

Le líonadh ag léiritheoir an chláir. Caithfear eolas a thabhairt faoin smaointeoireacht eagarthóireachta a bhain le haon chinneadh a rinne tú maidir le gach ceann de na réimsí rialúcháin. Mura bhfuil aon rud suntasach le tuairisciú faoi aon cheann de na réimsí rialúcháin, cuir "Níl aon rud suntasach ann".

Réimse rialúcháin Compliance descriptor	Cur síos ar na samplaí taobh istigh den chláir/ábhar agus smaointeoireacht eagarthóireachta. Description of occurrences within the programme/content and reasoning for editorial decisions.	Cód Ama Timecode	Craoladh ('Aon am' nó 'Tar éis 9pm amháin') Broadcast ('Any time' or 'Post 9pm only')
Ceisteanna Dlí Legal issues			
Priobháideacht, ceart agus cóir Privacy, Fairness			
Droch-chaint, geáitsí maslacha Coarse Language, offensive gestures			
Foréigean Violence			
Mi-úsáid drugaí, alcóil, substaintí Drug, alcohol, substance abuse			
Lomnochtacht, gnéas Nudity, sex			
Goillínach, scanrúil Disturbing, scary			
Meas ar ghrúpaí mionlaigh sa sochaí Respect for minority groups in society			
Ábhar eile a chuirfeadh as do dhaoine Other content that may offend			
Suíomh táirgí Product placement			
Cruinneas na bhfotheideal (i gcás clár cómhaoinithe amháin) Accuracy of subtitling (relevant to cofounded programmes only)			

Admháil: Bhreathnaigh mé ar an gclár/ábhar seo agus deimhním go bhfuil an t-eolas thuas cruinn, nach bhfuil aon cheisteanna dlí nach bhfuil réitithe agus gur féidir an clár/ábhar a chraoladh ag an am thuasluaite. Deimhním go sáionn an clár/ábhar rialacha an Chóid UCC um Chaighdeán Chláir agus gach Cód eile de chuid an UCC a bhaineann leis. Ní athraíonn an t-eolas a chuirtear ar fáil san fhoirm seo na hoibleagáidí atá leagtha ar an léiritheoir sa chonradh coimisiúnaithe.
Declaration: I have watched this programme/content and I confirm that the information above is correct, that there are no unresolved legal issues and that this programme/content is suitable for broadcast at the declared time. I confirm that the programme/content complies with the BAI Code of

Programme Standards and all applicable BAI Codes. The information supplied in this form is without prejudice to the obligations of the production company specified in the programme commissioning contract.	
An Léiritheoir thar ceann an chomhlachta léiriúcháin: The Producer on behalf of the production company:	Léiritheoir Feidhmiúcháin TG4:
Fón póca/ mobile phone:	Fón póca:
Dáta/ date:	Dáta:

Eolas faoi na réimsí rialúcháin/ Information about the compliance descriptors.

Réimse rialúcháin Compliance descriptor	Eolas/samplaí Information/examples
Ceisteanna Dlí Legal Issues	CAITHFEAR AON CHEISTEANNA DLÍ A GHLANADH ROIMH SHEACHADADH CHUIG TG4 LE SAOINEOLAÍ DLÍ DE CHUID AN CHOMHLACHTA LÉIRIÚCHÁIN. ANY LEGAL ISSUES MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE DELIVERY TO TG4 BY THE PRODUCTION COMPANY'S LEGAL EXPERT.
Priobháideacht, ceart agus cóir Privacy, Fairness	Mar shampla: Taifeadadh faoi rún, taifeadadh de dhaoine i gcrúachas, taifeadadh de pháistí nó de dhaoine fásta atá soghonta, drámaíocht bunaithe ar dhaoine atá beo, tuairimí pearsanta, ábhar conspóideach i mbéal an phobail. Má dhéantar clúdach ar ábhar tábhachtach conspóide caithfear cloí le rialacha an Chóid Cothroime, Oibiachtúlachta & Neamhchlaontachta de chuid an UCÉ. For example: Secret recording, recording of people in distress, recording of children or of vulnerable adults, dramatic reconstructed portrayal of real people, personal or authored view, major controversial topics. If a major controversial topic is covered the BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality must be observed.
Droch-chaint, geáitsí maslacha Coarse Language, offensive gestures	Mar shampla: 'F' nó 'c' i mBéarla, diamhasla, geáitsí maslacha láimhe. For example: 'F' 'c' words in English, blasphemy, offensive hand gestures.
Foréigean Violence	Mar shampla: Foréigean i ndrámaíocht nó fíor, foréigean ar pháistí, foréigean gnéis, féindochar, féinmharú. For example: Real or dramatized violence, violence to children, sexual violence, self-harm, suicide.
Mí-úsáid drugaí, alcóil, substaintí Drug, substance abuse	Mar shampla: Taispeáint nó plé ar shubstaintí mídhleathacha, nó mí-úsáid alcóil. For example: portrayal or discussion of illicit substance abuse, or alcohol abuse.
Lomnochtacht, gnéas Nudity, sex	Mar shampla: Lomnochtacht, plé ar ghnéas, téamaí gnéis, ábhar collaí. For example: nudity, sexual discussion, sexual themes, sexual content.
Goilliúnach, scanrúil Disturbing, scary	Mar shampla: íomhánna scanrúla, timpistí, tubaistí, ábhar paranormálta nó uafáis. For example: disturbing images, accidents, disasters, paranormal or horror content
Meas ar ghrúpaí mionlaigh sa sochaí Respect for minority groups in society	Mar shampla: Leithcheal ar nó gríosú chun fuatha in aghaidh grúpaí sa sochaí. For example: Discrimination against or incitement to hatred against groups in society.
Ábhar eile a chuirfeadh as do dhaoine Other content that may offend	Mar shampla: Obráidí leighis, agallaimh le coirpigh. For example: medical operations, interviews with criminals etc.
Suíomh táirgí Product placement	Níl sé ceadaithe táirgí a shuíomh i gcláracha gan cead scríofa ó TG4. Má thugtar cead, caithfear na táirgí a shuíomh de réir na rialacha cuí sa Chód Ginearálta maidir le Cumarsáid Tráchtála de chuid an UCÉ. Product placement may not be included without TG4's written consent. If consent is given the product placement must comply with the relevant rules in the BAI General Commercial Communications Code.
Cruinneas na bhfotheideal Accuracy of subtitling	Caithfear cruinneas na bhfotheidil a sheiceáil roimh sheachadadh chuig TG4. Subtitles must be checked for accuracy before delivery to TG4.

**Foirm Rialúcháin Ábhair****Content Compliance Form**

Cláracha do Pháistí/Daoine Óga

Children/Young People's Content

Teideal an Chláir Programme Title	Eipeasóid Episode	Craoladh 'Aon am' Broadcast 'Any time'	Uimhir WhatsOn WhatsOn ID

DEIMHNÍM GO bhfuil 'POLASÁI UM CHOSAINT LEANAÍ' IN ÚSÁID AG AN gCOMPAIGH.

I CONFIRM THAT A 'CHILD PROTECTION POLICY' IS IN USE BY THE PRODUCTION COMPANY.

Cuir 'Tá' sa bhosca le deimhniú

Please enter 'Tá' in the box to confirm:

Le lionadh ag léiritheoir an chláir. Cathófar eolas a thabhairt faoin smaoineoireacht eagarthóireachta a bhain le haon chinneadh a rinne tú maidir le gach ceann de na réimsí rialúcháin. Mura bhfuil aon rud suntasach le tuairisciú faoi aon cheann de na réimsí rialúcháin, cuir "Níl aon rud suntasach ann".

Réimsí rialúcháin Compliance descriptor	Cur síos ar na samplaí taobh istigh den chláir/ábhar agus smaoineoireacht eagarthóireachta. Description of occurrences within the programme/content and reasoning for editorial decisions.	Cód Ama Timecode	Craoladh 'Aon am' Broadcast 'Any time'
Ceisteanna Dlí Legal issues			
Priobháideacht, ceart agus cóir Privacy, Fairness			
Droch-chaint, geáltsí maslacha Coarse Language, offensive gestures			
Fóirgean Violence			
Mí-úsáid drugaí, alcóil, substaintí Drug, alcohol, substance abuse			
Iompar Aithriseach Imitative Behaviour			
Góillínach, scannail Disturbing, scary			
Méas ar ghrúpaí mionlaigh sa sochaí Respect for minority groups in society			
Ábhar eile a chuirfeadh as do dhaoine Other content that may offend			
Suíomh táirgí Product placement			
Cruinneas na bhfotheideal (i grás clár cómhaoineithe amháin) Accuracy of subtitling (relevant to co-funded programmes only)			

Admhúil: Bhreathnaigh mé ar an gclár/ábhar seo agus deimhním go bhfuil an t-eolas thuas cruinn, nach bhfuil aon cheisteanna dlí nach bhfuil réitithe agus gur féidir an clár/ábhar a chraoladh ag an am thuasluaite. Deimhním go sáfaíonn an clár/ábhar rialacha an Chóid UCE um Chaighdeán Chláir agus gach Cód eile de chuid an UCE a bhaineann leis.

Declaration: I have watched this programme/content and I confirm that the information above is correct, that there are no unresolved legal issues and that this programme/content is suitable for broadcast at the declared time. I confirm that the programme/content complies with the BAI Code of Programme Standards and all applicable BAI Codes.

An Léiritheoir thar ceann an chomhlachta léiritheoir:
The Producer on behalf of the production company:

Léiritheoir Feidhmiúcháin TG4:

Fón póca/ mobile phone:

Fón póca:

Dáta/ date:

Dáta:

Ní athraíonn an t-eolas a chuirtear ar fáil san fhoirm seo na hoibleagáidí atá leagtha ar an léiritheoir sa chonradh coimisiúnaithe.

The information supplied in this form is without prejudice to the obligations of the production company specified in the programme commissioning contract

Eolas faoi na réimsí rialúcháin/ *Information about the compliance descriptors.*

Réimse rialúcháin <i>Compliance descriptor</i>	Eolas/samplaí <i>Information/examples</i>
Ceisteanna Dlí <i>Legal Issues</i>	CAITHFEAR AON CHEISTEANNA DLÍ A GHLANADH ROIMH SHEACHADADH CHUIG TG4 LE SAOINEOLAÍ DLÍ DE CHUID AN CHOMHLACHTA LÉIRIÚCHÁIN. <i>ANY LEGAL ISSUES MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE DELIVERY TO TG4, BY THE PRODUCTION COMPANY'S LEGAL EXPERT.</i>
Priobháideacht, ceart agus cóir <i>Privacy, Fairness</i>	Mar shampla: Taifeadadh faoi rún, taifeadadh de dhaoine i gcrúachás, taifeadadh de pháistí nó de dhaoine fásta atá soghonta, drámaíocht bunaithe ar dhaoine atá beo, tuairimí pearsanta, ábhar conspóideach i mbéal an phobail. Má dhéantar clúdach ar ábhar tábhachtach conspóide caithear cloí le rialacha an Chóid Cothroime, Oibiachtúlachta & Neamhchlaontachta de chuid an UCÉ. <i>For example: Secret recording, recording of people in distress, recording of children or of vulnerable adults, dramatic reconstructed portrayal of real people, personal or authored view, major controversial topics. If a major controversial topic is covered the BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality must be observed.</i>
Droch-chaint, geáitsí maslacha <i>Coarse Language, offensive gestures</i>	Mar shampla: 'f' nó 'c' i mBéarla, diamhasla, geáitsí maslacha láimhe. <i>For example: 'f' 'c' words in English, blasphemy, offensive hand gestures.</i>
Foréigean <i>Violence</i>	Mar shampla: Foréigean i ndrámáíocht nó fíor, foréigean ar pháistí, foréigean gnéis, féindochar, féinmharú. <i>For example: Real or dramatized violence, violence to children, sexual violence, self-harm, suicide.</i>
Mí-úsáid drugaí, alcóil, substaintí <i>Drug, substance abuse</i>	Mar shampla: Taispeáint nó plé ar shubstaintí midhleathacha, nó mí-úsáid alcóil. <i>For example: portrayal or discussion of illicit substance abuse, or alcohol abuse.</i>
Iompar Aithriseach <i>Imitative Behaviour</i>	Mar shampla: éachtaí, féindochar nó aon rud a chuirfeadh an páiste i mbaol dá ndéanfaidís aithris ar an méid atá le feiceáil ar an scáileán. <i>For example: stunts, self-harm or any acts that would endanger a child should they imitate what's reflected on screen.</i>
Goilliúnach, scanrúil <i>Disturbing, scary</i>	Mar shampla: íomhánna scanrúla, timpistí, tubaistí, ábhar <u>paranormálta</u> nó uafáis. <i>For example: disturbing images, accidents, disasters, paranormal or horror content</i>
Meas ar ghrúpaí mionlaigh sa sochaí <i>Respect for minority groups in society</i>	Mar shampla: Leithcheal ar nó grósú chun fuatha in aghaidh grúpaí sa sochaí. <i>For example: Discrimination against or incitement to hatred against groups in society.</i>
Ábhar eile a chuirfeadh as do dhaoine <i>Other content that may offend</i>	Mar shampla: Obráidí leighis, agallaimh le coirpigh. <i>For example: medical operations, interviews with criminals etc.</i>
Suíomh táirgí <i>Product placement</i>	Níl sé ceadaithe táirgí a shuíomh i gcláracha gan cead scríofa ó TG4. Má thugtar cead, caithear na táirgí a shuíomh de réir na rialacha cuí sa Chód Ginearálta maidir le Cumarsáid Tráchtála de chuid an UCÉ. <i>Product placement may not be included without TG4's written consent. If consent is given the product placement must comply with the relevant rules in the BAI General Commercial Communications Code.</i>
Cruinneas na bhfotheideal <i>Accuracy of subtitling</i>	Caithfead cruinneas na bhfotheidil a sheiceáil roimh sheachadadh chuig TG4. <i>Subtitles must be checked for accuracy before delivery to TG4.</i>

Appendix 4.

Guidelines applying to coverage of suicidal behaviour

Media guidelines can be found on the HSE website at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/?tagid=145>

(1) Samaritans: Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide (2017):

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/samaritans-ireland-media-guidelines-for-reporting-suicide.html>;

(2) WHO: Preventing Suicide a Resource for Media Professionals (2017);

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/who-preventing-suicide-a-resource-for-media-professionals.html>

and (3) NOSP (National Office for Suicide Prevention) Briefing on Murder-Suicide (2017). <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/nosp-briefing-on-murder-suicide-dec-2017.html>

APPENDIX 5

BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality in News and Current Affairs

April 2013

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Introduction

This Code deals with matters of fairness, objectivity and impartiality in news and current affairs content. It is prepared by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) in accordance with sections 42(1), 42(2)(a) and 42(2)(b) & (e) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 ('the Act').

Section 42 of the Act provides that:

- (1) The Authority shall prepare, and from time to time as occasion requires, revise, in accordance with this section, a code or codes governing standards and practice ("broadcasting code") to be observed by broadcasters.
- (2) Broadcasting codes shall provide –
 - (a) that all news broadcast by a broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (b) that the broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (e) that a broadcaster does not, in the allocation of time for transmitting party political broadcasts, give an unfair preference to any political party.

In developing the Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs the BAI had regard to a range of matters set out in section 42(3) of the Act. It also had regard to its own statutory objectives, set out in section 25, in particular that, in performing its functions the BAI shall:

- Endeavour to ensure that the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression, are upheld,
- Provide a regulatory environment that will sustain independent and impartial journalism,
- Seek to ensure that any measures it takes are proportionate and will produce regulatory arrangements that are stable and predictable.

In devising the rules, the BAI has also taken into account the European Convention on Human Rights and in particular the provisions relating to freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the securing of rights without any discrimination on any ground.¹

Jurisdiction

The Code applies to broadcasters within the jurisdiction of Ireland. It does not apply to other services commonly received in this State, but licensed in the United Kingdom or other jurisdictions.

The term ‘broadcaster’ is understood in the context of the definition provided in the Broadcasting Act 2009, which is as follows:

“Broadcaster means a person who supplies a compilation of programme material for the purpose of its being transmitted, relayed or distributed as a broadcasting service (whether that person transmits, relays or distributes that material as such a service or not).”

Guidance Notes

It is not intended that this Code will set out each and every rule in relation to the preparation, treatment and broadcast of news and current affairs content. In this regard, broadcasters, programme makers and citizens should have regard to the Guidance Notes which have been developed in conjunction with this Code. These notes are provided as an aid to understanding the intent of the principles and rules and the manner of their application in a broadcast context. The BAI will update the Guidance Notes from time to time.

Complaints

If a viewer or listener has a complaint or is dissatisfied with the manner in which a broadcaster is complying with this Code, the matter should, in the first instance, be referred directly to the relevant broadcaster. Further information on the complaints process is available on www.bai.ie or by phoning 01 6441200.

The effective date of this Code is 1st July 2013.

¹To access a copy of the ECHR [click here](#) or go to www.ehcr.coe.int

1. Code Objectives

The objectives of the Code are:

- To set out clearly the minimum standards and practices that are expected of broadcasters in their treatment and broadcast of news and current affairs content;
- To provide general guidance to broadcasters to assist in their decision-making processes, as they pertain to news and current affairs content;
- To promote independent and impartial journalism in the provision of news and current affairs content;
- To inform and generate awareness among citizens with regard to standards they may expect in relation to news and current affairs content;
- To protect the interests of citizens, in their right to access fair, objective and impartial, news and current affairs content.

2. Principles Underpinning the Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality Rules

This section outlines the principles which underpin this Code. In addition to the specific rules outlined in Section 4, the principles provide direction as to the general standards expected in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality in the treatment of news and current affairs content. Thus, a broadcaster is expected not only to comply with the rules, but also to apply these general principles to its news and current affairs content.

The principles which shall be applied in this Code, together with a brief narrative, are set out below:

Fairness: The BAI is committed to ensuring that, through the implementation of this Code, individuals and organisations that are the subject of news and current affairs content, or persons who contribute to news and current affairs programmes or items, are treated fairly and honestly. Viewers and listeners have a legitimate expectation that a broadcaster will demonstrate an even-handed approach to how news and current affairs content is presented and interrogated and how contributors are treated. The principle of fairness does not necessarily require that all possible opinions on a subject are addressed or that they should receive equal air-time.

The approach to covering issues, including those of public controversy or current public debate, should be guided by ensuring equitable, proportionate coverage.

Objectivity & Impartiality: The principles of objectivity and impartiality are concerned with ensuring that news and current affairs content is compiled, produced and presented in a manner which is and can be seen as independent, unbiased, and without prejudgement. The rules set out in this Code with regard to objectivity and impartiality should not be taken to imply that a presenter or a reporter cannot convey critical views or pursue vigorous lines of questioning. Indeed, this is often required in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality. What is necessary, however, is that production, reporting and questioning on any news or current affairs item is credible, trustworthy and editorially independent.

Accuracy & Responsiveness: Audiences are entitled to, and do, trust that the news and current affairs content they access from the broadcast media is accurate. Accurate information enables citizens to participate more fully in a democratic society. Accuracy is therefore a fundamental principle associated with the broadcast of news and current affairs content and should always take priority over the speed with which content can be delivered. It is also acknowledged that despite best efforts, inaccurate information can sometimes be conveyed, whether explicitly or implicitly. The principle of responsiveness is designed to ensure that broadcasters adopt fair, timely and appropriate remedies in handling the broadcast of inaccurate information.

Transparency & Accountability: the principles of transparency and accountability are concerned with ensuring that practices and procedures adopted by broadcasters in sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs are visible, open to scrutiny, robust and accessible. This is particularly the case where a decision to broadcast may impact on an individual's privacy.

3. Compliance & Assessment

- In the treatment of news and current affairs content, broadcasters shall comply with the principles and rules specified in this Code. Broadcasters should be mindful of all the provisions of this Code as programme material may be required to comply with one or more applicable provision.
- News and current affairs content shall be assessed in whole and in context and with reference to:-
 - The provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009 (as amended);
 - The principles of the Code;
 - The rules of the Code;
 - Contextual factors including, but not limited to, the type of programme concerned and audience expectations;
 - The procedures, practices and policies of the BAI.
- Broadcasters shall comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the Code.

4. Rules

The following rules shall apply to the treatment of all news and/or current affairs content.

Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality - Statutory Duties of Broadcasters

1. In their treatment of news and current affairs content broadcasters shall comply with section 39 (1) (a) & (b), section 39 (2) and section 39 (5) & (6) of the Broadcasting Act 2009.

39.—

(1) Every broadcaster shall ensure that—

(a) all news broadcast by the broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,

(b) the broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of his or her own views, except that should it prove impracticable in relation to a single broadcast to apply this paragraph, two or more related broadcasts may be considered as a whole, if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period of each other,

(2) Nothing in subsection (1)(a) or (b) prevents a broadcaster from transmitting party political broadcasts provided that a broadcaster does not, in the allocation of time for such broadcasts, give an unfair preference to any political party.

(5) A broadcaster shall ensure that the broadcast treatment of any proposal, being a proposal concerning policy as regards broadcasting, which is of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, which is being considered by the Government or the Minister, shall be reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner.

(6) Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1), in so far as they require the broadcaster not to express his or her own views, do not apply to any broadcast made under subsection (5).

2. In their treatment of news and current affairs content broadcasters shall comply with the following principles as articulated in this Code:

- Fairness;
- Objectivity & Impartiality;
- Accuracy & Responsiveness;
- Transparency & Accountability.

Fairness Rules

3. A broadcaster shall deal fairly with contributors to current affairs content or with persons or organisations referred to in that content.
4. In the normal course of events, interviewees for news and current affairs content shall be made generally aware of the subject matter and the nature and format of their contribution, so that their agreement to participate constitutes informed consent.
5. A broadcaster shall not generally broadcast any news or current affairs interview with any person without the consent of that person. The broadcast of any news or current affairs content in the absence of consent must be editorially justified. Requests for withdrawal of consent shall be given due consideration by the broadcaster, having regard to the public interest, natural justice and the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality.
6. Care shall always be taken with the inclusion of interviews with children or vulnerable people in news or current affairs content. In all cases, the overriding principle must be to avoid the broadcast of material that may be unfair or detrimental to their interest.

The consent of a parent, guardian or legal representative shall generally be obtained prior to the broadcast of any interview with a child less than 16 years of age or a vulnerable person, where the subject matter is of a sensitive or serious matter or where not to do so could be deemed unfair. A decision to broadcast an interview in the absence of such consent must be justified in the public interest.

7. Where a person or organisation refuses to contribute to news and current affairs content or chooses to make no comment, the broadcast shall make this fact clear and shall report in a reasonable manner the person/organisation's explanation for declining to participate, where not to do so could be deemed unfair.
8. The refusal of a person or organisation to participate will not preclude the broadcast of news and current affairs content. However, the broadcaster has a responsibility to reflect, as far as practicable, the views of the absent party and to do so fairly.
9. The editing process shall not distort the context or meaning of the original interview.
10. A broadcaster shall ensure that the re-use of any material in a news and current affairs context, including the use of archive material, does not create unfairness or result in inaccuracies.
11. The re-construction or re-enactment of an event in news or current affairs content shall be clearly identified as such and should be authentic in its depiction of the event(s) in question.
12. The use of secret or undisclosed recording or filming in current affairs content shall only be used in exceptional circumstances. It must be warranted and a broadcaster shall have appropriate procedures in place for the authorisation of such recordings at the most senior editorial level. Such authorisation shall be in writing.

The following considerations are essential elements in determining if secret or undisclosed recording or filming is warranted:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest and the broadcaster has evidence of matter that merits coverage;
 - The co-operation of the subject is unlikely to be forthcoming;
 - There is reason to believe that coverage of the subject matter will be frustrated as the content cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.
13. Any person secretly filmed or recorded shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the news and current affairs content that will include the recording if, in the opinion of the broadcaster, not affording the opportunity to participate would be unfair to that person.
 14. By its nature, a direct unarranged approach ("door-stepping") to an interviewee may contravene fairness. However, in appropriate circumstances it may be justifiable to dispense with the normal practice of making arrangements for an interview directly with an interviewee, or with a

representative, and with suitable notice. “Door-stepping”, may be appropriate in circumstances where:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest;
 - The interviewee is unlikely to co-operate if approached in the normal way, and;
 - The approach to the individual(s) is necessary to the authenticity and credibility of the content in question.
15. Broadcasters shall have in place appropriate policies and procedures for handling contributions via social media.
16. Any undertaking given to a contributor relating to confidentiality or anonymity shall be clear and be honoured. Any associated audio-visual techniques utilised in both filming and editing shall be carefully applied to ensure complete confidentiality is achieved and commitments given are fully honoured.

Objectivity & Impartiality Rules

17. News and current affairs content shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting the content.
18. Two, or more, related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable time period and such links are made clear to the audience.
19. Views and facts shall not be misrepresented or presented in such a way as to render them misleading. Presenters should be sensitive to the impact of their language and tone in reporting news and current affairs so as to avoid misunderstanding of the matters covered.
20. A significant mistake shall be acknowledged and rectified as speedily as possible, in an appropriate and proportionate manner. A broadcast correction or clarification shall have regard to the time and circumstances of the original broadcast.
21. A news presenter and/or a reporter in a news programme may not express his or her own view on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate.
22. It is an important part of the role of a presenter of a current affairs programme to ensure that the audience has access to a wide variety of views on the subject of the programme or item; to facilitate the expression of contributors’ opinions – sometimes by forceful questioning; and to reflect the views of those who cannot, or choose not to, participate in content. This being so, a presenter

and/or a reporter on a current affairs programme shall not express his or her own views on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate such that a partisan position is advocated.

- 23.** 'Personal view' or 'authored' current affairs segments or programmes can be appropriate, subject to normal editorial controls. This does not exempt the segment or programme – or a series of related segments/programmes – from the statutory obligations to be impartial, objective and fair to all interests concerned. Similarly, an "authored" item or programme may be permitted if part of a series of related segments/programmes which, taken together, will discharge the statutory obligations.
- 24.** A 'personal view' or 'authored' programme or segment shall be clearly signalled to the audience at the outset, or in the case of a series of segments or programmes, at the start of each one.
- 25.** Each broadcaster shall have and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address any conflicts of interests that may exist or arise in respect of anyone with an editorial involvement in any news or current affairs content, whether such person works on-air or off-air.
- 26.** Any personal, professional, business or financial interest of anyone with an editorial involvement in news or current affairs content that calls into question (or that might reasonably be perceived as calling into question) the fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a programme or item, shall be brought to the attention of the audience. To this end broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that they are in a position to be aware of the relevant interests of the personnel concerned, and to determine whether the interest concerned is of such extent as would warrant the withdrawal of any person from further involvement in the item or programme.

Election & Referendum Coverage

- 27.** Coverage of an election or a referendum shall comply with guidelines and codes of practice issued from time to time by the BAI.

Legal Requirements and Guidance

- 28.** Broadcasters and programme makers shall adhere to all legislative requirements when sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs content.
- 29.** Broadcasters shall have due regard to guidance issued in respect of this Code.



APPENDIX 6

BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality in News and Current Affairs

Guidance Notes

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Foreword

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the **BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs** for both broadcasters and the public. The document should not be regarded as a complete or authoritative statement of law. These guidance notes are non-binding and are provided to assist broadcasters and the general public to interpret and apply the Code. The BAI accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of any guidance that may be given and reserves the right to revise and review any guidance provided. Broadcasters must make their own independent assessment after taking their own advice and making inquiries/research as appropriate. This document does not purport to explain all the relevant provisions of the Code or give an exhaustive list of possible applications.

The document is structured to include the relevant provisions of the Code, followed by Guidance in respect of each section. The Guidance has been developed in response to feedback on the various provisions contained within the Code.

The BAI is aware that, as the Code is implemented by broadcasters, understanding of the various provisions will evolve. Consequently, the Guidance Notes associated with the Code will be added to from time to time as the need becomes apparent.

Except where definitions are provided, the terms used in the Code should be interpreted in accordance with their natural and ordinary common meaning and/or their meaning in a broadcasting context.

The implementation date for the BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality is 1 July 2013. The Code will be the subject of a statutory review of its effectiveness four years after the date of its implementation.

Comments on the guidance notes may be emailed to codes@bai.ie or forwarded by post to:

**BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality-Guidance Notes,
Broadcasting Authority of Ireland,
2-5 Warrington Place, Dublin 2.**

Introduction

This Code deals with matters of fairness, objectivity and impartiality in news and current affairs content. It is prepared by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) in accordance with sections 42(1), 42(2)(a) and 42(2)(b) & (e) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 ('the Act').

Section 42 of the Act provides that:

- (3) The Authority shall prepare, and from time to time as occasion requires, revise, in accordance with this section, a code or codes governing standards and practice ("broadcasting code") to be observed by broadcasters.
- (4) Broadcasting codes shall provide –
 - (c) that all news broadcast by a broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (d) that the broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (f) that a broadcaster does not, in the allocation of time for transmitting party political broadcasts, give an unfair preference to any political party.

In developing the Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs the BAI had regard to a range of matters set out in section 42(3) of the Act. It also had regard to its own statutory objectives, set out in section 25, in particular that, in performing its functions the BAI shall:

- Endeavour to ensure that the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression, are upheld,
- Provide a regulatory environment that will sustain independent and impartial journalism,
- Seek to ensure that any measures it takes are proportionate and will produce regulatory arrangements that are stable and predictable.

In devising the rules, the BAI has also taken into account the European Convention on Human Rights and in particular the provisions relating to freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the securing of rights without any discrimination on any ground.²

Guidance Note

This section of the Code outlines details of the various parts of the Broadcasting Act 2009 which refer to matters of fairness, objectivity and impartiality in the broadcast treatment of news and current affairs content.

While matters of privacy are of relevance to the treatment of news and current affairs, there is separate legislation covering privacy. Individuals who believe that news and current affairs content has encroached unreasonably on their privacy should make reference to the 2009 Act when making a complaint to a broadcaster or the BAI.

Similarly, matters of harm and offence, taste and decency are covered by the 2009 Act and complainants should refer to the BAI Code Of Programme Standards if they believe news and current affairs content has caused harm or offence or is in poor taste or indecent.

Further information on making complaints about privacy, offence, harm, taste and decency is available on the complaints section of the BAI website.

Jurisdiction

The Code applies to broadcasters within the jurisdiction of Ireland. It does not apply to other services commonly received in this State, but licensed in the United Kingdom or other jurisdictions.

The term ‘broadcaster’ is understood in the context of the definition provided in the Broadcasting Act 2009, which is as follows:

“Broadcaster means a person who supplies a compilation of programme material for the purpose of its being transmitted, relayed or distributed as a broadcasting service (whether that person transmits, relays or distributes that material as such a service or not).”

Guidance Note

All broadcasters licensed in the Republic of Ireland and/or those who make use of a frequency or satellite capacity or up-link situated in the Republic of Ireland are required to comply with the Code. In practical terms, the Code shall apply to all radio and television services, including TG4 radio and television services, TG4 and national, regional, local, community radio and television services licensed further to the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009, including temporary and institutional services (where appropriate).

Programmes broadcast on services licensed in the United Kingdom or in other jurisdictions are not required to comply with this Code e.g. BBC, Sky, ITV, Channel 4. This is because of the ‘country of origin’ principle within the AVMS Directive, which is the key piece of European legislation governing television broadcasting services throughout Europe. This principle means that television stations must obey the

²To access a copy of the ECHR [click here](#) or go to www.ehcr.coe.int

rules laid down in the country in which they are licensed, in other words the country in which they 'originate'.

For the avoidance of doubt, the term 'broadcaster' as used in section 39 of the Broadcasting Act does not refer to individual presenters or programme staff but rather to the company, co-operative etc., that owns and operates the broadcast service. This should not be taken to mean that individual presenters or programme staff are exempt from the obligations of this Code. In this regard, the bulk of the rules relate to editorial decisions that are the responsibility not only of the owners of broadcast services but also their staff. Broadcasters should also note that the rules also apply to freelance staff and steps should be taken to familiarise such staff with the requirements of the Code and manage compliance by such staff.

Broadcasters should note that they are editorially responsible for all content carried and accordingly the requirements of this code apply to content commissioned and acquired by broadcasters.

The Rules and principles do not apply to website content or to other content that is not linked to content that has been broadcast. Notwithstanding this, the BAI may have regard, where appropriate, to such content should it provide information or context for the investigation of a complaint or in the context of a statutory investigation.

Guidance Notes

It is not intended that this Code will set out each and every rule in relation to the preparation, treatment and broadcast of news and current affairs content. In this regard, broadcasters, programme makers and citizens should have regard to the Guidance Notes which have been developed in conjunction with this Code. These notes are provided as an aid to understanding the intent of the principles and rules and the manner of their application in a broadcast context. The BAI will update the Guidance Notes from time to time.

Guidance Note

The BAI does not provide a clearance service for programme material. While the BAI is happy to provide general advice on the Code, it will only provide more specific advice in relation to atypical programme material which is submitted in the following manner:-

- 1. Requests for advice must be submitted in writing.*
- 2. The submission should clearly state the section/s of the Code about which advice is being sought, together with details of the issue to which the relevant section of the Code pertains.*
- 3. The BAI will view the request received and will endeavour to provide an initial response to the query as soon as possible. However, broadcasters should note that this could take up to two working days or longer if the query is especially complex.*
- 4. The BAI response will set out in writing the BAI's view in relation to the submission.*

5. *Any view expressed by the BAI in relation to the advice being sought by the broadcaster is without prejudice to any subsequent complaint which may be taken by a member of the public and which may be referred to the Compliance Committee for adjudication and decision.*
6. *Queries can be sent by post or emailed to: codes@bai.ie.*

Complaints

If a viewer or listener has a complaint or is dissatisfied with the manner in which a broadcaster is complying with this Code, the matter should, in the first instance, be referred directly to the relevant broadcaster. Further information on the complaints process is available on www.bai.ie or by phoning 01 6441200.

The effective date of this Code is 1st July 2013.

Guidance Note

The BAI website contains a section which details the complaints process and also provides supporting information in relation to how to a member of the public can make a complaint on a range of matters, including a complaint relating to fairness, objectivity and impartiality in news and current affairs content. Complaints will be assessed on the basis of the broadcast material and written submissions from the broadcaster and the complainant(s). The decisions of the BAI on complaints that have been considered are published regularly.

The BAI Guide for Listeners and Viewers in relation to the Complaints Process sets out detailed information in relation to the matters that can be complained of under legislation. The BAI also offers support, through its Executive staff, for those members of the public who require assistance and additional information in relation to making a complaint. The BAI is currently in the process of reviewing its complaints procedures and, once complete, any related material will be updated on-line.

1. Code Objectives

The objectives of the Code are:

- To set out clearly the minimum standards and practices that are expected of broadcasters in their treatment and broadcast of news and current affairs content;
- To provide general guidance to broadcasters to assist in their decision-making processes, as they pertain to news and current affairs content;

- To promote independent and impartial journalism in the provision of news and current affairs content;
- To inform and generate awareness among citizens with regard to standards they may expect in relation to news and current affairs content;
- To protect the interests of citizens, in their right to access fair, objective and impartial, news and current affairs content.

Guidance Note

In developing a set of objectives for this Code, the BAI had regard to the relationship between the regulator, the broadcaster and the citizen. Therefore the objectives of the Code are informed by: the BAI's role in facilitating independent and impartial journalism; ensuring that there is clarity as to the minimum standards that a broadcaster should achieve in how they treat and broadcast news and current affairs content and well as providing broadcasters with guidance where necessary.

The objectives of the Code are also concerned with the citizen and in particular through ensuring that their right to fair, objective and impartial news and current affairs content is protected, while at the same time providing them with the necessary information to consider whether standards in relation to news and current affairs content are being met by broadcasters.

2. Principles Underpinning the Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality Rules

This section outlines the principles which underpin this Code. In addition to the specific rules outlined in Section 4, the principles provide direction as to the general standards expected in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality in the treatment of news and current affairs content. Thus, a broadcaster is expected not only to comply with the rules, but also to apply these general principles to its news and current affairs content.

The principles which shall be applied in this Code, together with a brief narrative, are set out below:

Fairness: The BAI is committed to ensuring that, through the implementation of this Code, individuals and organisations that are the subject of news and current affairs content, or persons who contribute to news and current affairs programmes or items, are treated fairly and honestly. Viewers and listeners have a legitimate expectation that a broadcaster will demonstrate an even-handed approach to how news and current affairs content is presented and interrogated and how contributors are treated. The principle of fairness does not necessarily require that all possible opinions on a subject are addressed or that they should receive equal air-time.

The approach to covering issues, including those of public controversy or current public debate, should be guided by ensuring equitable, proportionate coverage.

Objectivity & Impartiality: The principles of objectivity and impartiality are concerned with ensuring that news and current affairs content is compiled, produced and presented in a manner which is and can be seen as independent, unbiased, and without prejudgement.

The rules set out in this Code with regard to objectivity and impartiality should not be taken to imply that a presenter or a reporter cannot convey critical views or pursue vigorous lines of questioning. Indeed, this is often required in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality. What is necessary, however, is that production, reporting and questioning on any news or current affairs item is credible, trustworthy and editorially independent.

Accuracy & Responsiveness: Audiences are entitled to, and do, trust that the news and current affairs content they access from the broadcast media is accurate. Accurate information enables citizens to participate more fully in a democratic society. Accuracy is therefore a fundamental principle associated with the broadcast of news and current affairs content and should always take priority over the speed with which content can be delivered. It is also acknowledged that despite best efforts, inaccurate information can sometimes be conveyed, whether explicitly or implicitly. The principle of responsiveness is designed to ensure that broadcasters adopt fair, timely and appropriate remedies in handling the broadcast of inaccurate information.

Transparency & Accountability: the principles of transparency and accountability are concerned with ensuring that practices and procedures adopted by broadcasters in sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs are visible, open to scrutiny, robust and accessible. This is particularly the case where a decision to broadcast may impact on an individual's privacy.

Guidance Note

The BAI was conscious that, in developing a Code of this nature, a set of principles underpinning the rules contained in the Code would be important, since no set of rules could address every eventuality. It is therefore intended that broadcasters would comply with both the rules and the principles set out in the Code.

The Guidance which has been developed in respect of the principles attempts to address the questions, views and uncertainty expressed in the consultation process to develop the Code, a workshop held with broadcasters, as well as drawing on research and experience from other jurisdictions. A number of general considerations are outlined, in addition to the provision of guidance in respect of the principles contained in the Code.

Each broadcaster has the editorial freedom to make choices in relation to what issues to cover in a news and current affairs context. The BAI cannot nor should it make decisions or have a role in requiring broadcasters to cover a news and current affairs issue. The Code is not intended to govern perceptions of 'bias' on the basis of topics and/or subject areas that a broadcaster has chosen not to cover. In the context of this Code, a decision not to cover a particular event or news story is not de facto evidence of a lack of fairness, objectivity and impartiality on the part of a broadcaster. In implementing the Code, the BAI will consider the news and/or current affairs content

contained in the broadcast that is the subject of the complaint and make a determination on that basis and having taken into account written submissions by the complainant and the broadcaster.

It is not always the case that the omission of a viewpoint/perspective in relation to a particular issue will automatically result in unfairness and indeed, there is no requirement to cover every aspect of an item in order to achieve fairness.

The principle of fairness refers to ensuring that the approach to covering issues, particularly those of public controversy or current public debate should be equitable and proportionate. From an implementation perspective what is important is that the broadcaster can demonstrate or outline the approach that it took to ensuring that its coverage was equitable or proportionate. It is important to note that the individual nature of the content in question will inevitably influence what might be seen as equitable or proportionate. Furthermore, emphasis is placed here on matters of public controversy or of current public debate.

While the principles and rules apply to all news and current affairs content, matters of public controversy or of current public debate can often be those where there is a heightened awareness of or interest in the issues at play. It is in these instances where broadcasters can have a significant impact and where additional care is called for.

Appropriate implementation of a fairness principle should not be taken to mean that an ‘artificial balance’ is required in order to comply with the Code, nor should it be taken to imply that equal allocation air-time is always necessary to achieve fairness. Conversely, demonstration of an equal allocation of air-time to different views on a particular subject may not satisfactorily discharge a broadcaster’s obligations in respect of fairness. It will be necessary for a broadcaster to consider the range of ways in which fairness is achieved and to ensure that active consideration is given to ensuring its achievement whether through the selection of contributors, the time allocated to a news and current affairs issue, the scope of the debate, the structure of the programme or the role of the presenter.

The nature of current affairs coverage is such that the presenter plays a critical role in challenging the views of guests and contributors, in the public interest. Rigorous and/or challenging questioning in the context of an interview does not necessarily constitute unfairness.

The principle of accuracy implies that material broadcast, particularly where it relates to matters of public controversy or current public debate, should be supported by evidence, which may need to be corroborated from a variety of sources, dependent on the nature of the content. There is a significant responsibility placed on broadcasters in ensuring that sources or information are valid. There is also an acknowledgement that, despite best efforts, broadcasters can get facts wrong. The principle of responsiveness requires that corrections are made speedily and, as a general principle, the correction should be proportionate to the prominence given to the original broadcast.

The principle of transparency and accountability requires that the practices and procedures adopted by broadcasters are visible, open to scrutiny, robust and accessible. This principle should not be taken to imply that broadcasters are required to divulge sources of information for the content broadcast. Rather the principle is focussed on ensuring that the broadcaster can demonstrate the decision-making process associated with the production of content. This would be particularly important in instances where the approach to programme making involves techniques such as surreptitious recording or door-stepping.

Guidance on General Considerations in relation to the Principles

Definitions: *In developing this Code, the BAI has not provided definitions in relation to terms such as news, current affairs, public interest, editorial justification and so forth. The experience of regulation has underlined the importance of being able to apply the various statutory codes in a flexible manner in order to best respond to the subject matter under consideration. Therefore, there will be terms which are easily understood by broadcaster and citizen alike, whereas in other instances a series of questions will need to be posed in order to reach a decision in relation to compliance or a complaint. In a Code, such as this one, it will often be the process adopted or the manner in which the broadcaster handled the issue that will indicate whether the correct course of action was taken, or whether the approach adopted is in breach of the Code's provisions.*

Notwithstanding this, and so as to provide some guidance as to the indicative characteristics of news and current affairs content, the following should be noted:

- *News programming includes news bulletins (including extended bulletins) providing factual information on national, international, regional, local and community events .*
- *Current affairs programming includes explanation and analysis of current events and issues, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate.*

News and current affairs content often overlap within one programme and broadcasters should be mindful of this when considering how to ensure compliance with this Code.

Current affairs programmes vs. Current affairs content: *Whereas news, by its nature is readily understood as being the broadcast of facts relating to events that have occurred, there can occasionally be less certainty as to what constitutes current affairs. Some programmes will be readily identifiable as current affairs, either through the manner in which they are promoted by the broadcaster or in the nature of the items that the programme covers. There will be occasions where light entertainment programmes, magazine-style programmes or programmes that are predominantly music-driven may contain current affairs content. It is important to note that, in the*

context of a complaint, the approach of the BAI will be to focus on the content referred to in the complaint and to determine whether it falls to be considered under the Code.

In the process of developing the Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality, the question arose as to whether it remained appropriate to place requirements on broadcasters of the nature set out in the Broadcasting Act 2009, particularly in the context of the proliferation of news and current affairs outlets and content sources where the same requirements for fairness, objectivity and impartiality are not in place. There are a number of issues which merit consideration here. Firstly, there is a legal requirement for the BAI to develop a Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality. Secondly, there is also a high volume of listenership and viewership to Irish radio and television, and in particular to the news and current affairs output of these services. Irish citizens place a high level of trust in these sources of news and current affairs. Therefore the BAI was strongly of the view that a Code of this nature should serve to strengthen and not diminish the quality of content available in this area of broadcasting.

*As the Code applies to news and current affairs content, the requirements apply to more than just news and current affairs programming as discussed. Accordingly, broadcasters are encouraged to ensure that **all** staff involved with the production and presentation of programmes that may contain news and current affairs content would familiarise themselves with the Code. The BAI also encourages feedback on the experience of implementing this Code so that Guidance can be revised and updated, as appropriate.*

3. Compliance & Assessment

- In the treatment of news and current affairs content, broadcasters shall comply with the principles and rules specified in this Code. Broadcasters should be mindful of all the provisions of this Code as programme material may be required to comply with one or more applicable provision.
- News and current affairs content shall be assessed in whole and in context and with reference to:-
 - The provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009 (as amended);
 - The principles of the Code;
 - The rules of the Code;
 - Contextual factors including, but not limited to, the type of programme concerned and audience expectations;
 - The procedures, practices and policies of the BAI.
- Broadcasters shall comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the Code.

Guidance Note

In assessing news and current affairs content for compliance with the provisions of the Code, it is important to note that regard will be had firstly to the rules relating to the content concerned, followed by a consideration of the relevant principle. Contextual factors will also be important and these can vary according to: the nature of the content; the programme and channel type; the likely audience expectation in relation to the content; and the extent to which the content and the approach to it is signalled to the audience

4. Rules

The following rules shall apply to the treatment of all news and/or current affairs content.

Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality - Statutory Duties of Broadcasters

- 25.** In their treatment of news and current affairs content broadcasters shall comply with section 39 (1) (a) & (b), section 39 (2) and section 39 (5) & (6) of the Broadcasting Act 2009.

39.—

(1) Every broadcaster shall ensure that—

- (a) all news broadcast by the broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (b) the broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of his or her own views, except that should it prove impracticable in relation to a single broadcast to apply this paragraph, two or more related broadcasts may be considered as a whole, if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period of each other,
- (3) Nothing in subsection (1)(a) or (b) prevents a broadcaster from transmitting party political broadcasts provided that a broadcaster does not, in the allocation of time for such broadcasts, give an unfair preference to any political party.
- (5) A broadcaster shall ensure that the broadcast treatment of any proposal, being a proposal concerning policy as regards broadcasting, which is of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, which is being considered by the Government or the Minister, shall be reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner.
- (6) Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1), in so far as they require the broadcaster not to express his or her own views, do not apply to any broadcast made under subsection (5).

26. In their treatment of news and current affairs content broadcasters shall comply with the following principles as articulated in this Code:
- Fairness;
 - Objectivity & Impartiality;
 - Accuracy & Responsiveness;
 - Transparency & Accountability.

Fairness Rules

27. A broadcaster shall deal fairly with contributors to current affairs content or with persons or organisations referred to in that content.
28. In the normal course of events, interviewees for news and current affairs content shall be made generally aware of the subject matter and the nature and format of their contribution, so that their agreement to participate constitutes informed consent.
29. A broadcaster shall not generally broadcast any news or current affairs interview with any person without the consent of that person. The broadcast of any news or current affairs content in the absence of consent must be editorially justified. Requests for withdrawal of consent shall be given due consideration by the broadcaster, having regard to the public interest, natural justice and the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality.

Guidance Notes

The requirement for interviewees to be made 'generally aware' of the subject and format of an interview should not be taken to mean that the detail of the questions to be asked as part of the interview should be provided. Rather, this rule should be taken to mean that enough information should be provided so as to facilitate an ability to prepare for the interview. It is important to note that the nature of the programme and the nature of the contribution will impact on the level and type of consent required. Examples of consent might include knowing who the other contributors to the item are; what the nature of the contribution is, i.e. whether live or pre-recorded, edited or unedited.

The rules in relation to consent are not intended to preclude presenters from asking supplemental questions of interviewees. In many circumstances, the nature of an interviewee's position whether in public life, by virtue of their profession, or the subject on which they agreed to be interviewed will often appropriately lend itself to supplementary or related questions.

Occasionally, a broadcaster may receive a request for withdrawal of consent on the part of an interviewee prior to broadcast. In certain circumstances new facts or

information may arise which will validate the request for withdrawal, or where the harm caused by broadcasting the item might be greater than the public interest. The rule relating to withdrawal of consent should not be taken to imply that a request for withdrawal of consent should be acceded to in every case. Rather, the broadcaster should be able to demonstrate, in the context of a complaint, the range of factors that it took into account where a request to withdraw consent was refused. In the interests of clarity, a request for withdrawal of consent refers to interviews given prior to the broadcast of a programme and not to the re-use of such interviews. Issues may arise with the re-use of an interview and this is dealt with under the rules covering archive material (Rule 10).

More generally, broadcasters should note that consent cannot reasonably be taken to endure for all time. Therefore, broadcasters should consider the extent to which the consent given for an interview can continue to be relied upon over time and in different programming contexts. In most cases, this may not be a problem. But where it might become a problem (for example, in the case of the use of archive material) then the issue of consent should be given further consideration so as to ensure continued fairness, objectivity and impartiality.

For the avoidance of doubt, a contributor to a programme is one who is actively involved in the content and not an individual whose appearance is incidental or coincidental e.g. A person(s) that appears in the camera shot but who is not participating in the programme.

The BAI has considered and rejected complaints that have been made solely on the basis that it was the view of the complainant that the people included on a discussion panel was evidence of a lack of fairness, impartiality and objectivity. A broadcaster has editorial independence and is perfectly entitled to explore an issue with a panel of its own choosing. In considering whether the people included on a discussion panel is a factor in whether a complaint should be upheld, regard will be given to the programme content in its entirety, including the contributions by the presenter, listeners and viewers or reports included in the programme, amongst other factors.

As indicated, the 2009 Act prohibits a broadcasting organisation from expressing its own views on news and current affairs content, including matters of public controversy and debate. However, the Act does permit a broadcasting organisation to give its own views on a policy concerning broadcasting and which is a matter of public controversy and being considered by the Government or the Minister for Communications. However, the treatment of any such policy issue must be objective and impartial and a broadcaster cannot use its service to pursue a preferred outcome in respect of a particular broadcasting policy.

Further guidance on party political broadcasts will be provided in guidelines issued in advance of elections and referenda. Compliance with any such guidance is required further to Rule 27 of this Code. Broadcasters should note that no payment or similar consideration is permitted for the airing of such broadcasts, including charges for the use of studios.

- 30.** Care shall always be taken with the inclusion of interviews with children or vulnerable people in news or current affairs content. In all cases, the over-

riding principle must be to avoid the broadcast of material that may be unfair or detrimental to their interest.

The consent of a parent, guardian or legal representative shall generally be obtained prior to the broadcast of any interview with a child less than 16 years of age or a vulnerable person, where the subject matter is of a sensitive or serious matter or where not to do so could be deemed unfair. A decision to broadcast an interview in the absence of such consent must be justified in the public interest.

31. Where a person or organisation refuses to contribute to news and current affairs content or chooses to make no comment, the broadcast shall make this fact clear and shall report in a reasonable manner the person/organisation's explanation for declining to participate, where not to do so could be deemed unfair.
32. The refusal of a person or organisation to participate will not preclude the broadcast of news and current affairs content. However, the broadcaster has a responsibility to reflect, as far as practicable, the views of the absent party and to do so fairly.
33. The editing process shall not distort the context or meaning of the original interview.

Guidance Notes

The involvement of children in news or current affairs content should, as a general principle, be approached cautiously. Of paramount importance is the well-being, welfare and dignity of the child, irrespective of their eagerness to participate in the content and/or the consent given by a parent or guardian. It is recognised that the nature of the subject matter will impact on the issue of consent, so for example while a report on exam results from a school might generally require the consent of the school principal, a report on youth suicide or anti-social behaviour will require much more careful consideration.

Where subject matter is of a sensitive or serious nature, for example, reporting on illegal activity or anti-social behaviour among young people, the issue of identification of the individuals involved must be carefully considered. Notwithstanding the provision of consent, the longer-term impact of the broadcast on the individual and their future must be balanced against public interest concerns.

The use of the phrase 'vulnerable people' in the Code is intended to address those individuals whose circumstances or well-being requires that extra care is taken with regard to issues of consent.

Irish and European legislation defines a child as being a person under the age of eighteen. The Code deals primarily with issues of consent relating to those

under the age of sixteen, in recognition of both maturity of young people, particularly those aged sixteen and over and of the wide variety of circumstances where a child might be interviewed ranging from less serious to more serious content. The guiding principle is that the more serious or controversial the subject matter, the more caution required in relation to consent of a young or vulnerable person.

A decision of a guest not to participate in a programme does not automatically preclude a broadcaster from coverage of an item with which the absent guest is associated. However, there is an onus on the broadcaster to provide the context for non-participation of a guest where not to do so could be deemed unfair.

In those instances where a guest refuses to contribute or states that there is 'no comment' on a matter, there is no requirement on the broadcaster to read out, in full, statements from the guest or any organisation that they represent. However, the broadcaster has a responsibility to reflect, as far as practicable, the views of the absent party and to do so fairly. In this regard, the content of a statement will often set out the views of the absent party.

The decision not to participate in a discussion on the part of an guest should not be taken to imply a deliberate attempt on the part of the guest, or an organisation that they represent, to avoid being interviewed. There are often valid reasons for non-participation in a news and current affairs item. Nonetheless, there is still a requirement for the broadcaster to achieve the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality in relation to content, so there will be an expectation that the presenter will ensure that discussion on a news and current affairs issue is not one-sided and that alternative perspectives are presented, including the views of those not in attendance insofar as appropriate and practical.

A decision not to participate is likely to impact on how the views of the absent party are presented and those who chose not to participate in a programme are advised to take this into account when considering how their views or the position of their organisation is handled in a news and current affairs item. A decision not to participate does not remove the obligation to be fair to all parties referenced in a news and current affairs item and care is required on the part of broadcaster. The approach taken to coverage of an item where one

of the parties involved has declined to participate will depend on the issues under discussion.

The production of news and current affairs content often necessitates editing in order to more effectively communicate key points of information and/or to remove commentary which is not relevant to the subject matter under discussion. The Code recognises the legitimacy of this practice but underlines the importance of ensuring that the editing process and the manner in which content is packaged does not result in a distortion of the contributor's views. It is also important to be aware that some contributors may not be familiar with the programme production process and that in some instances it may be useful to outline how the editing process works in the context of obtaining consent for their contribution to a programme. The rule should not be taken to imply that all unedited material should be retained by the broadcaster, or that an unedited copy of the recording should be provided to a contributor. In the event of a complaint or compliance issue, assessment will be on the basis of the material available and the arguments made by the complainant and the broadcaster.

- 34.** A broadcaster shall ensure that the re-use of any material in a news and current affairs context, including the use of archive material, does not create unfairness or result in inaccuracies.

Guidance Notes

In the re-use of material in a current affairs context, particularly in the case of archive footage, broadcasters should be mindful that the passage of time may have resulted in significantly changed circumstances for the person/s who are the subject of the footage. Therefore, steps should be taken to ensure fairness in the re-use of material insofar as it is practical. This may include a decision not to include certain archived footage. For example, due to the passage of time the circumstances of an individual may have changed so dramatically that the re-use of archive material may be problematic. Therefore, broadcasters have an obligation to consider whether, in such circumstances, any re-broadcast might, of its essence, be unfair and, therefore, impermissible.

35. The re-construction or re-enactment of an event in news or current affairs content shall be clearly identified as such and should be authentic in its depiction of the event(s) in question.

Guidance Notes

Some types of current affairs programmes will broadcast re-enactments or reconstructions in order to, for example recall events or to enlist the assistance of the public. The Code calls for clear signalling of such reconstructions or re-enactments in order to minimise the potential for confusion amongst the audience. It also recognises that complete accuracy would not be possible, but rather the reconstruction or re-enactment should strive to be as authentic and faithful as possible to the circumstances of what occurred.

36. The use of secret or undisclosed recording or filming in current affairs content shall only be used in exceptional circumstances. It must be warranted and a broadcaster shall have appropriate procedures in place for the authorisation of such recordings at the most senior editorial level. Such authorisation shall be in writing.

The following considerations are essential elements in determining if secret or undisclosed recording or filming is warranted:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest and the broadcaster has evidence of matter that merits coverage;
 - The co-operation of the subject is unlikely to be forthcoming;
 - There is reason to believe that coverage of the subject matter will be frustrated as the content cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.
37. Any person secretly filmed or recorded shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the news and current affairs content that will include the recording if, in the opinion of the broadcaster, not affording the opportunity to participate would be unfair to that person.
38. By its nature, a direct unarranged approach (“door-stepping”) to an interviewee may contravene fairness. However, in appropriate circumstances it may be justifiable to dispense with the normal practice of making arrangements for an interview directly with an interviewee, or with a representative, and with suitable notice. “Door-stepping”, may be appropriate in circumstances where:
- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest;

- The interviewee is unlikely to co-operate if approached in the normal way, and;
- The approach to the individual(s) is necessary to the authenticity and credibility of the content in question.

Guidance Notes

The practices of both surreptitious filming/recording and door-stepping involve a degree of infringement on the right to privacy of an individual. For this reason broadcasters need to ensure that the use of surreptitious filming/recording or door-stepping is warranted and clearly in the public interest.

Individuals who are in the public eye, or who are under investigation, their family and their friends, retain the right to privacy, notwithstanding the fact that their private behaviour can raise legitimate issues of public interest.

As a general rule, the greater the degree of intrusion into the privacy of an individual, the greater the level of justification required for use of the technique.

If consent for an interview cannot be obtained from an individual/organisation, then the infringement on privacy must be warranted. Where secret filming is used, the subject of the filming should be offered the right to respond in advance of the broadcast.

The use of secret filming should be clearly based on evidence available to the broadcaster and the use of secret or undisclosed recording as a 'fishing expedition' is not permitted i.e. where it is undertaken, where no prima facie evidence exists, with a view to uncovering by accident incriminating or newsworthy information.

It would be important that practices and procedures in respect of door-stepping and surreptitious recording are developed and implemented by broadcasters and that, in the event of complaint, contemporaneous records are available to outline the course of action which was taken in each case.

Door- stepping, in the context of the rules, should not be taken to mean vox pops, nor are they intended to prevent legitimate questioning at certain events, e.g. the interviewing of politicians after meetings or asking representatives for a comment after talks, or the A.G.M. of a meeting etc.

39. Broadcasters shall have in place appropriate policies and procedures for handling contributions via social media.

Guidance Note

This code pertains to the use of social media in a broadcasting context. The requirement to have in place policies, procedures and the use of social media in current affairs, as set out in this Code, relates to the manner in which social media is used on-air. Notwithstanding this, the BAI may have regard, where appropriate, to a broadcaster's social media output, on- and off-air, should it provide information or context for the investigation of a complaint or in the context of a statutory investigation.

Media consumption has changed significantly over the past number of years and as a consequence, there has been a proliferation of sources of information, not least through social media platforms such as Twitter. Two of the principles underpinning the rules contained in this Code are accuracy and responsiveness. Accuracy in respect of news and current affairs is of paramount importance in sustaining the high levels of trust that Irish audiences currently have in Irish broadcast media.

Accuracy is often not just about getting the facts right. Where there are matters of public controversy or matters of current public debate, a variety of views and opinions often need to be considered, in addition to the stated facts. Often, in the case of social media it is important to be aware that online sources of information are not subject to the same degree of regulation and from a news and current affairs perspective, there is no statutory requirement for fairness, impartiality and objectivity.

Therefore, in utilising online sources for the production of news and current affairs broadcast content, whether in the compilation of a programme or in the broadcast of contributions, there is a particular onus on the broadcaster to ensure accuracy and to adhere to the principles outlined in the Code. In this regard, the BAI has set out a number of points that broadcasters may find useful when considering the use of social media:

- *Reliability of the social media source: Is the information first hand? Is it authentic? Has it been cross-checked against other possible sources? Is any further consent required before the information is broadcast (for e.g. information relating to a child?)*
- *Veracity of information: what steps have been taken to verify the information? Is there any possibility that the information is a 'wind-up' or hoax? Is the information current?*

- *Potential for bias: is the information emanating from a lobby or representative group? Are there any political/ religious/commercial affiliations?*
- *Respect for privacy: although information may have been posted to a social media or on-line site, will the privacy of an individual or their family be unreasonably encroached upon as a consequence of broadcasting the information? Is the broadcast of the information in the public interest?*

- 40.** Any undertaking given to a contributor relating to confidentiality or anonymity shall be clear and be honoured. Any associated audio-visual techniques utilised in both filming and editing shall be carefully applied to ensure complete confidentiality is achieved and commitments given are fully honoured.

Guidance Note

There will be instances and circumstances where news and current affairs content can only be broadcast on the basis of retaining the confidentiality of a source or of protecting the identity of a contributor through the use of various audio-visual techniques such as image pixilation, voice distortion or the use of a 'voice-over' by another person. Where a commitment is given to retain confidentiality or anonymity, a broadcaster should clearly agree the extent of the anonymity that will be provided with the contributor/source.

Where the identity of an individual is obscured on-screen, broadcasters should ensure that attention is also given to other possible identifiers of an individual, for example their home/locality, their car, descriptions of the circumstances surrounding their contribution etc.

In the course of programme compilation, care should also be taken with regard to records relating to a confidential/anonymous source

Objectivity & Impartiality Rules

- 41.** News and current affairs content shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting the content.
- 42.** Two, or more, related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable time period and such links are made clear to the audience.
- 43.** Views and facts shall not be misrepresented or presented in such a way as to render them misleading. Presenters should be sensitive to the impact of their language and tone in reporting news and current affairs so as to avoid misunderstanding of the matters covered.
- 44.** A significant mistake shall be acknowledged and rectified as speedily as possible, in an appropriate and proportionate manner. A broadcast correction

or clarification shall have regard to the time and circumstances of the original broadcast.

Guidance Note

The rules in relation to news and current affairs content refer to presentation with 'due accuracy'. The use of the word 'due' is important in that it recognises that the accuracy required is adequate and appropriate, having regard to the circumstances known at the time of broadcast. The rule also recognises that stories will evolve and are not static and they will therefore require updating and revision over the course of a broadcast or a news cycle.

The Broadcasting Act 2009, in addressing the duties of broadcasters provides that, in order to achieve fairness, objectivity and impartiality two, or more related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period of each other.

The Act does not stipulate what constitutes a reasonable period and neither does the Code or the guidance seek to establish hard and fast rules in respect of timeframes. To do so would unnecessarily restrict the editorial freedom of broadcasters; would not appropriately recognise the sometimes evolving nature of news and current affairs broadcasting and; would not acknowledge the nature of a broadcast schedule where programmes are broadcast daily, weekly or indeed seasonally. However, the key principle that should guide the broadcaster's decision in respect of linked broadcasts is audience knowledge. Broadcasters should use appropriate mechanisms to notify audiences whether the subject covered is as part of a series or whether alternative views will be covered in another programme. The BAI will not generally consider a broadcast to be linked if such a link is made 'retrospectively' following receipt of a complaint.

The rules require that presenters should be sensitive to their use of language and tone when presenting news and current affairs content. Broadcasters should broadly be mindful of the impact of language in its ability to sensationalise or conversely underplay a story. In respect of tone, while there is a clear acknowledgement that the presentation of news and current affairs can often involve robust and heated exchanges, nevertheless the requirements in respect of tone relate to the respect and dignity of an individual, which should be afforded to them regardless of their viewpoint or public standing.

45. A news presenter and/or a reporter in a news programme may not express his or her own view on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate.
46. It is an important part of the role of a presenter of a current affairs programme to ensure that the audience has access to a wide variety of views on the subject of the programme or item; to facilitate the expression of contributors' opinions – sometimes by forceful questioning; and to reflect the views of those who cannot, or choose not to, participate in content. This being so, a presenter and/or a reporter on a current affairs programme shall not express his or her own views on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate such that a partisan position is advocated.
47. 'Personal view' or 'authored' current affairs segments or programmes can be appropriate, subject to normal editorial controls. This does not exempt the segment or programme – or a series of related segments/programmes – from the statutory obligations to be impartial, objective and fair to all interests concerned. Similarly, an "authored" item or programme may be permitted if part of a series of related segments/programmes which, taken together, will discharge the statutory obligations.
48. A 'personal view' or 'authored' programme or segment shall be clearly signalled to the audience at the outset, or in the case of a series of segments or programmes, at the start of each one.

Guidance Notes

Presenters of news and current affairs programmes play a critical role in ensuring objective and impartial coverage of items, particularly matters that are of public controversy or the subject of current public debate. In the case of news presenters and reporters, in light of the fact that news is centrally concerned with the presentation of facts it would be inappropriate that personal views be expressed in relaying such facts.

Often the format for a news programme will involve a mixture of news reportage, followed by an interview between the news presenter and the reporter on a particular item. In these instances, a reporter can often be asked their opinion in relation to outcomes on the matter that they are reporting, based on their professional, journalistic assessment on the matter. These types of exchanges are permissible under the Code, but, similar to the rule on current affairs presenters, they should not be a vehicle for the biased views of the reporter.

It is acknowledged that some current affairs output can be synonymous with personalities, where the manner in which the presenter presents or interviews

contributors can be keenly anticipated by audiences. Often the nature and style of the presenter is a key factor in what engages audiences and draws them into consideration and debate on matters of public controversy and current public debate.

The audience will also often trust that the presenters' approach may be instrumental in getting to the heart of the issues at hand. These factors contribute to some of the key reasons why news and current affairs coverage is trusted to such an extent by Irish audiences. However, with this level of trust comes a significant level of responsibility on the part of the broadcaster and in the case of these particular rules, the presenter. The Code seeks to prevent a partisan position being advocated by the presenter and to guard against a presenter using his/her programme to pursue an agenda, via comments, choice of guest etc., such that a biased view on an issue is articulated.

Authored programmes can be seen as being somewhat similar to an opinion piece in a newspaper. They are currently most easily identified as regular insert pieces in current affairs programmes and often cover a wider variety of topics from a regular contributor. However, presenters of the authored programmes or inserts are not permitted to pursue a persistent point of view against a particular group or person which is not justified by the context or the public interest.

25. Each broadcaster shall have and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address any conflicts of interests that may exist or arise in respect of anyone with an editorial involvement in any news or current affairs content, whether such person works on-air or off-air.
26. Any personal, professional, business or financial interest of anyone with an editorial involvement in news or current affairs content that calls into question (or that might reasonably be perceived as calling into question) the fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a programme or item, shall be brought to the attention of the audience.
To this end broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that they are in a position to be aware of the relevant interests of the personnel concerned, and to determine whether the interest concerned is of such extent as would warrant the withdrawal of any person from further involvement in the item or programme.

Guidance Note

A broadcaster's reputation for fairness, impartiality and objectivity is an important part of its relationship with its audience. Regular listeners and viewers have a right to trust the integrity of the news and current affairs content that they hear and expect that editorial decisions are not influenced by the outside activities or personal or commercial interests of programme makers or those who appear on air.

News and current affairs output may at any time deal with any issue, cause, organisation or individual and it will be to the detriment of audiences and broadcaster should there be doubts over the integrity and objectivity of editorial teams.

Conflicts of interest can arise for anyone who is responsible for news and current affairs content and relevant staff and their managers need to be conscious of this possibility. It is also important that broadcasters take appropriate measures to ensure, insofar as possible, that independent producers or freelance staff do not have any interests which could undermine the fairness, objectivity and impartiality of the output they produce for the broadcasters.

The nature of the conflict and the appropriate response by the broadcaster to the conflict will vary depending on the nature of the conflict and the news and current affairs item to be covered. Accordingly, a list of the categories of conflicts is not provided in the guidance. Broadcasters and programme makers are best placed to make a determination on this matter in terms of day to day programming.

The rules under this heading are not intended to preclude outside activities, rather, they require broadcasters to actively manage the potential for conflicts and to take appropriate steps to ensure that outside activities and interests are managed.

In the context of a complaint, broadcasters are expected to be in a position to demonstrate that steps have been taken to monitor and handle any potential conflicts of interest.

Election & Referendum Coverage

- 27.** Coverage of an election or a referendum shall comply with guidelines and codes of practice issued from time to time by the BAI.

Guidance Notes

Prior to the development of the Code of Fairness, Impartiality and Objectivity, the BAI had in place a Broadcasting Code on Referenda and Election Coverage. On the implementation date of this Code, July 1st 2013, there will be a requirement for broadcasters to adhere to guidelines and codes of practice issued by the BAI from time to time in relation to election or referendum coverage.

These guidelines will be issued in advance of a forthcoming election or referendum and will include guidance on the application of the requirement for fair, objective and impartial news and current affairs in the context of an election or referendum. Guidance on the implementation of a moratorium, the allocation of airtime and on the use of party political will also be provided.

Legal Requirements and Guidance

- 28.** Broadcasters and programme makers shall adhere to all legislative requirements when sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs content.
- 29.** Broadcasters shall have due regard to guidance issued in respect of this Code.

Guidance Note

Whereas broadcasters are not required to comply with the Guidance Notes provided in this Code, there is a requirement to have due regard to them in arriving at decisions in respect of the compilation and production of news and current affairs content.