

24th May 2007



Press Release

Channel 4 accepts Ofcom Celebrity Big Brother ruling

Channel 4 has accepted Ofcom's adjudication of viewer complaints about the fifth series of Celebrity Big Brother, which concludes that the series breached the regulator's broadcasting code on four separate occasions.

The channel has also accepted Ofcom's decision to impose a sanction, which requires Channel 4 to broadcast a summary of the adjudication on three separate occasions.

Channel 4 has today published the findings of a review commissioned by the channel's board with a view to understanding what lessons could be learned from the reaction to the programme. The review has prompted Channel 4 management to take several initiatives including introducing a new intervention policy for Big Brother, bringing back a 'right to reply' style programme to Channel 4, appointing the channel's first Viewers' Editor and commissioning a major research programme into diversity in the UK. **See separate release.**

Chief Executive, Andy Duncan, said: "We accept Ofcom's judgement that on the occasions in question we did not ensure that Big Brother intervened with the necessary promptness or strength. We would like to say sorry once again for the offence caused to viewers as a result.

"Ofcom did not rule this material should not have been broadcast, but that we should have done more to contextualise it by challenging and reprimanding the offending housemates. We believe the initiatives we have announced will help prevent a repeat of the public offence caused by the programme."

Chairman, Luke Johnson, added: "We feel the sanction imposed is proportionate given Ofcom's ruling that the breaches were not deliberate and that the channel did not act recklessly and in the light of Channel 4's good compliance record generally and on Big Brother in particular."

Ofcom's adjudication refers to untransmitted material supplied by Channel 4 to the regulator – this footage, from a short period in the house late at night on Tuesday 16th January 2007, was not broadcast and therefore could not be in breach of Ofcom's code. Nevertheless, the footage was cited by Ofcom as evidence of compliance failings on Channel 4's behalf because its existence was not brought to the channel's attention by the production team at Endemol until several days after it had occurred. The full untransmitted exchanges from that evening were only uncovered by Channel 4's own investigations after the series had ended.

Andy Duncan added: "It's a matter of regret that we and senior managers at Endemol weren't aware of these conversations immediately they occurred –

as soon as we were made aware of them we ensured that the relevant housemates were reprimanded. While Ofcom's investigation was on-going it was not appropriate to publish this material, but we are publishing a transcript today to end speculation about these conversations."

Notes to editors

- 1) Celebrity Big Brother 5 was broadcast from 3rd to 28th January.
- 2) Big Brother is produced by Brighter Pictures, part of the Endemol UK group.
- 3) A detailed report of the review panel's findings, an accompanying press release and a transcript of the untransmitted material referred to in Ofcom's adjudication is available from www.channel4.com/about4.

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