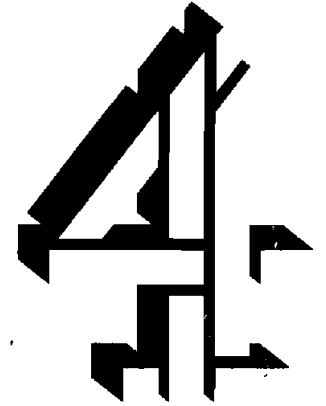


Channel 4  
124 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 2TX

Telephone: 020 7396 4444  
Textphone: 020 7396 8691  
channel4.com

Direct Tel: 020 7306 3771  
Direct Fax: 020 7306 8367  
hpickett@channel4.co.uk



01 August 2007

Dear Independent Producer

## **VIEWER TRUST**

In recent months a number of regrettable instances have come to light where programmes have misled viewers. These instances have involved a number of broadcasters, including Channel 4 and the BBC. Channel 4 takes the issue of viewer trust extremely seriously. No broadcaster or production company can afford to be complacent about this issue.

It is of paramount importance that our audience can trust our programmes. The reputation of the Channel and the reputation of your company and other production companies depend on it. Viewers simply must not be misled and any programmes which come to our attention where this has happened will be investigated. If the allegations are proven there will be repercussions.

I am sure that you will share the Channel's view of the importance of this matter and agree that any practices which lead to the audience being misled should have no place in our industry. We have produced and enclose with this letter the **Channel 4 Viewer Trust Guidelines** designed to promote best practice in this area. Crucially they apply to ALL programmes of whatever nature and genre and are not limited to documentaries or conventional factual programmes. Programmes designed primarily to entertain must uphold the same high standards as a documentary programme as far as viewer trust is concerned. The key is being clear and straightforward with the viewer about the terms on which we engage them. It may be in many cases that this simply requires a line of commentary, a caption on screen or an announcement before the programme to make this clear.

Please ensure that every member of your teams that are making programmes for us read and follow the Viewer Trust Guidelines. We also expect you to have established effective procedures so that any issues of potential concern are escalated within the production team to the Executive Producer (or most senior production executive) and promptly referred to the Channel for advice.

As we announced last week, Channel 4 has been working in partnership with Five to produce a comprehensive guide to the legal and regulatory rules governing the making and broadcast of programmes, the Independent Producers' Handbook, so that there is a 'one stop shop' for all our

Channel Four Television Corporation  
Luke Johnson, Chairman. Lord Puttnam, Deputy Chairman.  
Andy Duncan, Chief Executive. Anne Bulford, Group Finance Director. Andrew Barnes, Sales Director.  
Kevin Lygo, Director of Television. Rod Henwood, New Business Director.  
Sue Ashtiani, Karren Brady, Tony Hall, Andy Mollett, Martha Lane Fox, Stephen Hill.  
Paola Tedaldi, Secretary.



programme-makers. Once the Handbook is published in autumn 2007, all individuals making programmes for us will be expected to have read and to follow its provisions. The Channel 4 Viewer Trust Guidelines will be appended to the Handbook, along with all our best practice guidelines, including updated guidelines for factual programmes.

Following the launch of the Independent Producers' Handbook we will embark upon a programme of industry training designed to foster best practice in the industry, putting viewer trust at the forefront. We will be discussing the best way to achieve this with other broadcasters, particularly Five, our partner in the Handbook, and with Pact. We'd like to explore the introduction of an agreed industry standard for the training of freelance production staff.

Channel 4 will introduce new provisions in production contracts that will place clear positive obligations on all producers to ensure programmes are not misleading and outline sanctions Channel 4 may impose if companies fail to fulfil their contractual duties. Crucially our commissioning team will take the lead on setting editorial standards and encouraging best practice in the production process, ensuring that viewer trust is given paramount importance in editorial decision making.

We are also introducing new clearance procedures for all promotional materials, including non-broadcast clips packages, to ensure all material has been approved by producers and commissioners as well as a programme lawyer. Finally we are launching a major audience research project to examine the changing nature of the relationship between broadcasters and audiences and the issue of viewer trust.

The Channel plans to consult further with staff, Pact and independent producers on a range of further initiatives including measures to support production staff who may feel the need for further guidance and training on issues relating to viewer trust. The Channel has already started discussions with Ofcom about the measures it is taking and the issues raised by recent editorial breaches affecting the industry as a whole.

At Channel 4 we are immensely proud of our programmes, programme makers and our track record and reputation for excellence, innovation and creative risk-taking. We will not tolerate those who undermine this and breach viewer trust and so we will not hesitate to take appropriate action where we find viewers have been misled.

I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation. We rely on our producers working to the highest standards and I regret that it has been necessary to write to all our suppliers in these terms but I hope that the steps outlined above represent a very positive move forward.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Lygo', written over a horizontal line.

**Kevin Lygo**  
**Director of Television & Content**