

# British Board of Film Classification

Annual Report and  
Accounts 2015

# British Board of Film Classification Annual Report and Accounts

1 January 2015 – 31 December 2015

**Presented to Parliament  
pursuant to Section 6(2)  
of the Video  
Recordings  
Act 1984**

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## President's introduction

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*Patrick Swaffer – President*

### **Evolution of new online services for the public**

2015 saw the continued evolution in how the public accesses and views audio visual content. The BBFC responded to these changes, including continuing public concerns about the need to protect children online, by setting up new voluntary regulatory partnerships with industry, the better to protect children and empower consumers.

In August, the Government announced that following a successful pilot for the age rating of online music videos, the UK's three major record labels, along with Vevo and YouTube, had agreed that BBFC age ratings on music videos made by artists on those labels would continue permanently. In addition, Government declared that the UK's independent labels would take part in a pilot project with the BBFC for the age rating of videos produced by their artists.

In parallel, the BBFC commissioned independent research into the public's attitude towards online music videos. There was strong support for voluntary regulation. 78% of parents value and want music videos that are unsuitable for younger children to be

classified. The majority of younger children also want classifications with which they are familiar. However, the public also told us that more needs to be done. Three quarters of parents would like the ability to link parental controls to BBFC classifications and for more platforms to carry age ratings and trusted BBFC content advice. Consumers are also concerned about unrated videos of artists from the United States and elsewhere overseas and would like the BBFC to classify these as well. We therefore look forward to working with Government, record labels and platforms during 2016 and beyond to make improvements to the services we provide the public in this area.

Another key improvement towards protecting younger children online was the appointment of the BBFC, by EE, in March 2015 as the voluntary regulator of EE's 'Strict' setting. Under this new service, the BBFC determines what website content, accessed via EE's mobile network, is suitable for younger children, based on the BBFC's PG standard. Using the 'Strict' setting, parents are able to restrict their children's viewing to safe and appropriate content, suitable for under 12s. The BBFC also provides a free service to deal

with individual cases of purported over- and under-blocking.

In parallel, the BBFC's Watch & Rate voluntary service which can be used for works exclusive to digital platforms or for online distribution prior to a DVD/Blu-ray release grew once again in 2015. There was an annual increase over 2014 of 41.2% to 1,143 viewed hours and we also welcomed three new members to the service: Amazon, DisneyLife and We Are Colony. This continued growth represents both the home entertainment industry's desire to help consumers make informed viewing decisions and, as we see below, the public's desire for a trusted guide to online content.

During the summer, following research we commissioned in 2011, we once again asked the public – both adults and children – whether they found it helpful to have BBFC classification for film and video content released online. We published the research findings in September. 85% of parents said that it was important to have consistent classifications both online and offline. This was almost identical to the 2011 figure of 84%. Again, consumers were clear that some platforms

needed to improve how they display BBFC age ratings and content advice and we will be encouraging our partner platforms to do this during 2016.

Meanwhile, our classic statutory classification services remained in high demand. We classified 983 films for theatrical distribution, a rise of 2.7% over 2014, reflecting a thriving sector, with alternative content taking its place alongside more traditional releases. DVD and Blu-ray classification under the Video Recordings Act were down 5.6% over 2014, at 8,362 hours. Nevertheless, this figure still represents a healthy market for packaged media.

### **Improving the classification service to industry**

We are engaged in a continuous dialogue with the film, video, mobile and music industries to reduce the regulatory burden on them and improve the service we provide. 2015 was no different.

We introduced digital delivery for cinema content, mirroring the service we created for the video industry the previous year. As a result, by the end of 2015 it was cheaper, faster and more secure for film customers to submit content to the BBFC for classification.

We also improved our Extranet offering in response to customer feedback. Following consultations with customers, we will make further improvements to the Extranet in 2016, in particular to its look and feel, its ease of use and functionality.

### **New steps to protect children online**

One area where there is general agreement that steps need to be taken to protect children is in relation to online pornography. In 2015, the Government declared its intention to bring forward a consultation on how better to protect children from accessing pornography online. I look forward to the BBFC working with Government, industry, fellow regulators and child protection groups, to contribute our expertise in this area.

### **Hails and farewells**

I should like to thank Laurie Hall of the Video Standards Council, Pete Johnson, former Chief Executive of The Authority for Television On Demand, Detective Superintendent David Gray of the Metropolitan Police and Councillor Tommy Williams of Renfrewshire Council who stepped down from the Consultative Council in 2015. I am grateful to them for their constructive and positive contributions to the work of the Council.

I should also like to welcome to the Consultative Council Detective Superintendent Wendy Morgan of the Metropolitan Police, Melissa Dring, Director of Policy of the Trading Standards Institute, Councillor Manjinder Shergill of East Dunbartonshire Council and Ian Rice of the Video Standards Council.

Finally, I should like to thank David Cooke for his indefatigable work since 2004 that has made the BBFC the envy of other film and video classification bodies around the world. Not just in terms of providing families with a trusted guide to the suitability of content for them, but also through developing partnerships with industry that have made it significantly easier for content to be released to market in a safe way, both in the statutory and non-statutory space.

David has been a pleasure to work with during my time as BBFC President and I wish him all the best in the future.

**Patrick Swaffer, 2016**



*Alison Hastings – Vice President*



*Gerard Lemos – Vice President*



## Director's report

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This is my final report as BBFC Director. After twelve years leading this organisation, I step down in March 2016.

For this Annual Report I will therefore depart from my usual practice and look back at what the BBFC has achieved over those twelve years.

### **Serving the public**

The most crucial factor in explaining the strong levels of public trust in the BBFC is that we consult the public regularly on the standards we apply.

During my tenure as Director, I have overseen three major public consultations, involving over 30,000 people, including teenagers, into our standards. In each consultation, we asked the public what they considered acceptable at the different age ratings across the full range of classification issues, including sex, violence, horror, discrimination and drug and alcohol misuse. And we applied what they told us when developing each new iteration of our Classification Guidelines.

In addition, I oversaw more targeted public opinion research into issues as diverse as online glamour content, racist language and behaviour, music videos, and sexual and sadistic violence. In each case, the public told us where we should draw the line between our age categories in respect of this content, and in the case of sexual violence, when we should not classify content at all.

As well as standard setting, I wanted to find out what sort of information the public – particularly parents – found most useful when seeking to make fully informed decisions about what they and their families view. As a result of what parents told us, I created BBFCinsight. This rich content information explains, in a handful of easy-to-digest bullets, the key classification issues that led to an individual film being awarded a particular classification, as well as highlighting other issues that parents have told us they would find useful when making viewing decisions.

The insight service, which is available both on our website and our free app, has evolved in response



*David Cooke –  
Director*

to feedback. I firmly believe that no media regulator in the world listens to consumers and provides them with the level of information that the BBFC does now.

### **Working with our industry partners**

Serving the public is our most important function. However, I have been acutely conscious that we also need to provide the film and video industries with a classification service that they can trust and that offers strong value for money. The BBFC must help film and video distributors get content to market in the most straightforward way possible.

Over the past few years, the film and video industries have told me above all else that they need three things. First, classification decisions on which they can rely. Second, classifications delivered at high speed. Third, classifications delivered at low cost. I believe that we have achieved all three.

In terms of reliable classification decisions, on average over 90% of the public agreed with some of the most controversial BBFC film classification decisions in our most recent consultation in 2013. This constitutes an enviable approval rating and means that industry has the reliability and certainty it needs when marketing and releasing film and video content.

In terms of speed, by the end of 2015, the average time it took us to classify a video work was six days, three times lower than in 2004 when I became Director. Film classification turnaround times are even faster, and we offer a same-day classification service for very urgent works. The fastest time we have so far achieved was a few minutes to classify an online music video.

In terms of cost, my tenure has seen a significant real terms fall in the fees we charge for classification. Between 2007 and 2014, the cost of classification fell by 22% in real terms. From 2015 we have agreed

with industry a fee increase formula that is 1% below inflation, guaranteeing that the regulatory burden will continue to decline in real terms going forward. It is now faster and cheaper than ever to submit content through the BBFC and get it to market.

### **Technology has changed how we all view content**

The third major challenge I have faced as BBFC Director is the speed of changes in technology. As a country, we are now watching more content than ever in more ways than ever before. Not just at the cinema or on DVD but online on mobile 'phones and tablets, for example.

Our statutory remit does not extend online. So, in order to protect children and empower consumers, we have developed a suite of best-practice, voluntary regulatory services in partnership with industry. I should like to mention three of them here.

In 2011, we began to classify content for online distribution only. We have licensed platforms such as iTunes, Netflix and Amazon to carry our trusted age ratings. A number of online platforms link parental controls to those ratings. We work with platforms to ensure they are providing accurate classification information to parents in the most user-friendly way.

In 2013, we became the regulator, again on a voluntary basis, of website content delivered via the mobile networks of EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. In this way, when filters are turned on, content from hundreds of millions of websites from around the world are filtered, for UK mobile users, according to standards set by the BBFC, with those standards derived from the public themselves. Because filters are imperfect, we provide a free appeals service to website owners and the public to deal with cases of over- and under-blocking.

In 2015, working with the UK's record labels, we began classifying music videos by artists signed to UK labels. YouTube and Vevo display those ratings. Public opinion research we carried out in 2015 strongly

supported this voluntary scheme and the Government announced in August that the initial pilot with the UK's major record labels would become permanent.

There is still some way to go to improve online child protection still further in 2016 and beyond. At the time of writing we are seeking to bring US record labels into the voluntary music video classification service. And parents have asked that platforms such as Vevo and YouTube link parental controls to age ratings.

In addition, in February 2016, the Government launched a consultation into protecting children from online pornography through age verification mechanisms. My successor will be working with Government, industry fellow regulators and child protection groups to bring the BBFC's expertise in this area to bear. Our experience, particularly with the Mobile Network Operators and through our present legal regulation of pornography, enables us to contribute significantly to this important work.

### **Stepping down**

As I retire after twelve marvellous years at the BBFC, I should like to pay tribute to all my colleagues, many of whom have worked tirelessly to make all the changes I describe above possible. I should like to thank my fellow members of the Board of Classification and the Council of Management for their support and advice. I should like to thank the members of the Consultative Council and Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing for their invaluable counsel and expertise, which have benefitted the BBFC tremendously over the past decade and more.

Finally, I should like to wish my successor, David Austin, all the best as he takes over the Chief Executive role. I have worked with David for a number of years and am confident he will continue improving what we do for parents and children, reducing the regulatory burden on industry and developing new online partnerships, the better to protect children and empower consumers.

**David Cooke, 2016**



## Accountability

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The BBFC is accountable to both the public and Parliament. It takes this accountability seriously. This Annual Report is a key part of its fulfilment of this requirement. The Report provides a review of the activities and classification decisions of the BBFC during 2015 as well as information about our financial position as required by law. Our Reports are available on our website and placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

The BBFC views providing the public, especially parents, with detailed and accessible information about the works it classifies as another essential element of its function and accountability. This service is called BBFCinsight. BBFCinsight is published on our website and our free mobile apps. BBFCinsight empowers parents and other viewers to make informed choices about what they and their families watch both at home and in the cinema.



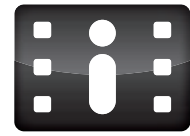
### Helping viewers make informed decisions

The BBFC's main website, [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk), provides information about all works classified by the BBFC. Works classified at U, PG and 12A may also be found on the BBFC's website for children, CBBFC.

All BBFC film age ratings come with BBFCinsight. BBFCinsight includes both a summary sentence and a longer explanation about why the film received the classification it did. BBFCinsight provides details that parents have told us they like to be

aware of, including examples of mild bad language, or themes such as divorce or bereavement that might not impact on the age rating but which might upset some children. Parents can find a short summary of BBFCinsight on DVD and Blu-ray packaging and on the theatrical BBFC black card shown before a film at the cinema. We publish more detailed BBFCinsight on the BBFC website and the BBFC iPhone and Android apps. BBFCinsight is available for every film and video game classified since Autumn 2007.

In 2013 the BBFC Classification



**bbfcinsight**

Guidelines review found that 75% of the British public understand that a film rated 12A is generally suitable for children aged 12 and over, but a younger child may see the film if accompanied by an adult. Following a three-month cinema advertising campaign in 2014, the BBFC continued to promote the 12A certificate in 2015. David Cooke published a Huffington Post UK blog about the classification of *Jurassic World* at 12A and questions about the certificate were answered as part of the BBFC's regular Twitter Q&A sessions.

The BBFC also took part in Safer Internet Day in 2015, publishing a video about how the BBFC works with young people, their parents, other partners and VoD platforms to help create a safer internet. The video demonstrates how the BBFC consults teenagers as part of its regular Classification Guidelines review, as well as what parents and teenagers said about the classification of film content available online during the most recent review of the Guidelines (90% of parents with children under 16 said it is important to have consistent BBFC classifications for video-on-demand content). The Safer Internet Day video is on the BBFC and CBBFC websites.

In 2015 we reviewed the format of the BBFC podcast, leading to shorter and more frequent bi-weekly episodes. Themes and film case studies covered in these podcasts included classifying sci-fi films, classifying discrimination, and the films *Django* (1967) and *Alien* (1979).

In addition to the podcast, the BBFC continued to communicate with the public through the @BBFC Twitter account and regular email newsletters.

**MAZE RUNNER THE SCORCH TRIALS**

**12A** MAZE RUNNER: THE SCORCH TRIALS  
THE MAZE WAS JUST THE BEGINNING  
[2D] IN CINEMAS SEPTEMBER 10 IN 3D

Duration: 130m 52s  
Release date: 10 September, 2015  
frequent moderate threat, violence

**insight**  
May contain plot details or spoilers

**Post-production changes**  
The distributor sought advice to secure a desired rating.  
Details may contain spoilers

At the cinema Latest decisions About our ratings



## Letters from the public

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The BBFC generally receives a relatively small number of complaints about its classification decisions, and this continued to be the case in 2015. The BBFC responds to every email and letter, providing the rationale for its decision and addressing any specific points raised by the correspondent. Public feedback is important to the BBFC. It provides an immediate response to BBFC decisions and helps shape the research and large scale public consultations carried out at each review of the BBFC Classification Guidelines.

**Spectre** and **Kingsman: The Secret Service** generated the highest numbers of public feedback during 2015, with **Spectre** receiving 40 complaints and **Kingsman: The Secret Service** 38. Given the relative box office figures of the two titles, however, a larger proportion of the audience for **Kingsman: The Secret Service** wrote in to complain.

One of the issues raised by the public with regards to **Kingsman: The Secret Service** was the level of violence at 15, particularly in regards to a fight scene in a church.

The BBFC saw a version of the film before it was complete and offered

advice as to how the film distributor's desired 15 rating could be achieved. Otherwise, the film would have been classified 18. The distributor chose to make changes before formally submitting the film for classification. While there are some strong moments of violence in the film, they are relatively brief and do not 'dwell on the infliction of pain or injury' to the extent they require an 18 classification. The BBFC therefore classified the film 15.

Other complaints focussed on a scene involving a crude sex reference which is unexpected but intended to be funny. In part thanks to the comic context, this line did not require the entire film be restricted to an adult audience only by way of an 18 classification.

The BBFC also received some complaints regarding the fact that the distributor chose to change parts of the film to achieve a 15 rating. The decision to release the film at 15 with cuts, rather than 18 uncut, is not one for the BBFC.

Complaints about **Spectre** focussed on scenes of violence. During post-production, the distributor sought advice on whether it could secure a 12A classification and if so, how. One

scene involving an eye-gouging was slightly too strong for the company's preferred 12A classification. We therefore suggested reductions to this scene. What remains in the classified version of the scene is a brief implication of what is happening, with only limited visual detail.

There is also a torture scene. Although the idea is unpleasant there is limited detail depicted. Given the lack of detail in the scene and the context of an action film featuring a larger-than-life hero character who always defeats his enemies, this moderate violence is acceptable at 12A. Another scene, showing the bloody aftermath of a suicide, was similarly reduced.

**Absolutely Anything** attracted complaints because of strong language and sex references.

The distributor reduced the frequency of strong language in the film following advice prior to the film's submission to the BBFC for formal classification. The film originally contained over 20 uses of strong language. The 12A version of the film contains six uses of strong language (f\*\*k) and some moderate and mild bad language. The

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1 *Kingsman: The Secret Service* '15'

2 *The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* '15'

language in ***Absolutely Anything*** was therefore within the Guidelines at 12A. Nevertheless, 22 members of the public complained about the number of uses of the 'F word' as well as some references to sex.

The BBFC's Guidelines state that strong language (e.g. 'f\*\*k') may be passed at 12A, depending on the manner in which it is used, who is using the language, its frequency and any special contextual justification. Verbal sex references should not go beyond what is suitable for young teenagers in a 12A film. Comedy may lessen the impact of some moderate sex references or innuendo but frequent crude sex references are unlikely to be accepted in this category. The language in ***Absolutely Anything*** was therefore within the Guidelines at 12A.

***Minions*** received 16 complaints, mainly focussing on a scene set in a medieval-style torture dungeon. The Minions are stretched on a rack, where it is apparent that they do not come to any harm, and this develops

into them slipping unharmed through a noose and playing with the gallows. The scene takes place in an unrealistic, comic and slapstick manner which is likely to be familiar to young viewers, who expect the Minions to survive. The realistic risk of harmful imitation is very low indeed.

Some of the ***Minions*** complaints concerned a chase scene involving a pale-faced man holding a chainsaw, and a clown juggling bombs. At U, scary or potentially unsettling sequences should be mild, brief and unlikely to cause undue anxiety to young children. The outcome should be reassuring. The fantastical and animated context significantly distances the scenes from real life. Within the wider context, ***Minions*** is a well-known franchise which plays off the idea of 'villains', so images of villainous characters are to be expected. Furthermore, the Minions remain unfazed and unthreatened. They instead appear to have lots of fun working together, adding to the comic tone which runs throughout. After careful consideration the BBFC

classified the film at U.

There were 21 complaints about violence and threat in ***The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials***. Scenes include gangs of people operating in a lawless environment, and infected zombie-like people attacking other characters.

The distributor sought advice on how to secure the classification it was aiming to achieve. The BBFC advised that the film was likely to receive a 15 certificate but a 12A classification could be achieved by making some changes, including reducing moments of threat and horror involving zombie-like characters, and reducing the focus on injury in a scene in which a man is beaten for information. When the film was formally submitted for classification, these changes had been made and, consequently, the film is within the Guidelines at 12A where moderate physical and psychological threat is permitted, as long as horror sequences are not too frequent or sustained and the overall tone is not disturbing.





## Media education

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Our education programme continued successfully during 2015 with BBFC staff delivering 152 teaching sessions to 10,000 people across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Audiences included cinema-goers, adult learners, students, teachers, parents, industry professionals, local government officials and young children. Most of our presentations focused on current cinema regulation, though some groups asked specifically to hear about historical classification decisions, and our non-statutory partnerships including our Watch & Rate service for online content, our Classification Framework for Mobile Network Operators, and BBFC research.

We continued to hold regular in-house seminars for schools and universities, as well as international educational tour operators, completing 50 seminars (up from 39 in 2014) during the year. In addition to in-house seminars, we also promote remote learning opportunities and hosted Skype calls with young filmmakers and university students.

Our external visits programme makes up the majority of our face-to-face outreach work. Over 2015 we travelled to eighty external locations to deliver 99 sessions across the UK. Many of these were at schools, colleges and universities. We also attended the Media Live! conference in Paris, talking to 540 media and film studies students from the UK, and took part in events for teachers and learners at the BFI.

Outside traditional education settings, we delivered sessions to participants at Picturehouse's CINEMANIA events, the Hampshire Discovery Centre, the Trash Cannes Festival, the UCL Film Society and the Stony Scala Film Club.

We maintained our successful collaboration with education charity Into Film, hosting events at the Hay Festival and the Into Film Festival 2015. During the Festival we travelled to 14 locations in England, Scotland and Wales, introducing 19 film screenings to over 2800 attendees from secondary and primary schools. The Festival also attracted

over 110 home-educated learners and adults, plus a small number of young people from pupil inclusion units.

We supported the BFI Academies, working with groups in Belfast, Bradford and Manchester both in person and via Skype, addressing a new generation of directors, producers and technicians. We delivered similar sessions to industry newcomers, with our Head of Education and Head of Operations speaking to delegates on the FDA foundation course.

We spoke to Local Authority licensing committee representatives at the North East Region Training Day in York and to staff at the Empire Cinema Conference, introducing our current Classification Guidelines and BBFCinsight.

New education web content included case studies as well as historical podcasts about films and genres of particular interests to students.

In response to requests from parents,

teachers and students, we published BBFCinsight for 30 older film titles classified prior to the introduction of BBFCinsight. We also answered student queries from university students, A-level students, younger learners and teachers. Subjects included sex in films aimed at a teen audience, product placement, age rating music videos and employment opportunities in the industry.

We updated our website for children, CBBFC, in line with the i-Rights campaign and expanded our database of films on the site to include 12A releases. As the year ended we started a project to improve CBBFC further by adding modified long form BBFCinsight for all new releases, allowing children to read about classification issues in new films and directing adults to our main website and free app.

The education team continued to run its annual survey asking teenagers about their viewing habits and the classification of recent cinema releases and presented the findings to internal stakeholders.



<sup>1</sup> *Hotel Transylvania 2* 'U'

## Research

We commissioned two pieces of original research in 2015. Bernice Hardie Market Research Ltd. carried out both, on behalf of the BBFC.

The first research project gauged public feedback on the BBFC's joint pilot project for the age rating of online music videos. We carried out the pilot in tandem with the British Phonographic Industry (BPI), the UK's major music labels and video-hosting platforms. The research, backed by the Government, canvassed the opinions of over 3,000 members of the public across the UK, and we published it in September. It found that:

- 70% of parents of under 12s are concerned about their children being exposed to inappropriate content in music videos
- up to 60% of children said they have seen content in online music videos of which their parents would disapprove
- 78% of parents value age ratings for online music videos

- 75% of parents would like online channels to link music video age ratings to parental controls
- given the choice, 86% of parents would encourage/ensure their children watch online channels with clear age ratings

The research concluded that the public positively received the online age ratings used in the pilot scheme, but to be fully successful in terms of protecting children and empowering consumers, more platforms and more labels (particularly US labels) would need to participate and age ratings would need to be linked to parental controls. Work is continuing with Government and others in this area.

The second piece of research for the BBFC looked at the classification of content available on video-on-demand (VoD) services, and involved parents, adults over 18 and children, from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and built on similar research carried out in

2011 to measure attitudes toward the classification of streamed/downloaded videos. In total, the researchers conducted 3421 interviews.

The research showed that UK parents want to see the same classification information provided for films at the cinema, and on Blu-ray and DVD, applied to film and video content available on VoD services. Other findings included the statistic that 85% of parents consider it important to have consistent classification online and offline, and that 70% of viewers noticed and correctly recalled VoD content labelled with BBFC age rating symbols, whereas only 9% noticed plain numeric or text age rating labels. The research also showed that prominent display of identifiable and trusted age ratings next to film titles on VoD, and before the prompt to buy, stream or download content, is the most helpful form of labelling. Finally, over 78% of adults find BBFCinsight information useful, with our app considered useful by 82%.



## BBFC digital services

In addition to the BBFC's work classifying music videos online and regulating internet content delivered via the UK mobile networks, we continue to drive child protection and consumer empowerment online through voluntary classification services for video distributed via the internet – an area where classification is not required by UK law.

The BBFC provides two key digital services. Firstly, we enable VoD services to license the use of BBFC age ratings. Any BBFC classification issued for home entertainment formats (DVD, Blu-ray) can be used when the equivalent digital version is made available online.

This allows UK consumers to make the same informed viewing choices when consuming video online as they do at the cinema and on DVD/Blu-ray.

Certain VoD services, including iTunes and BT TV, insist that any feature without a BBFC classification is clearly labelled as 'Unrated'. Increasingly, services such as iTunes are ensuring this unrated content is handled as 18-level content when parental controls are enabled.

In 2015 the digital video sector captured a 48.5% share of the video market compared to physical media\*. Annual revenues from all forms of Video On Demand broke the £1bn barrier for the first time, showing a 30.3% year-on-year growth.

These changes in the market are reflected in the growth of our other key service to the digital sector. Our non-statutory classification service is aimed at encouraging the voluntary classification of works that bypass release on traditional packaged media formats (where classification is required by UK law).

The industry's take-up of our digital-only Watch & Rate service grew significantly in 2015, when units submitted and minutes viewed increased by 74.5% and 41.2% respectively on 2014.

Established in 2010, the Watch & Rate service is mainly used by distributors



of features and TV episodes that are either not being released on packaged media, or premiere first online. This year the BBFC continued to evolve the service to ensure that digital-only classification was accessible to producers of all types of content.

The consolidation of VoD services first seen in 2014 continued this year. 28 brands operating VoD services continue to license and display BBFC age ratings on their service. However, Samsung, Film4OD and CinemaNow discontinued their transactional VoD offerings in the UK, while Tesco's Blinkbox service was acquired, and replaced, by TalkTalk.

Services operated by Amazon and Disney subscribed to licences to display BBFC age ratings and other classification data for the first time this year.

2015 also saw the explosion of web TV. This relates to original programming being produced for, or acquired by, VoD services. In the UK this is driven by Netflix and Amazon.

Both services are premiering drama, comedy, specials, documentaries and children's content. In 2015 the BBFC extended its work with Netflix in this area by classifying its original

children's and documentary content for the first time. In addition, Amazon also submitted its first run and original content for classification.

Finally, while the BBFC has made great strides establishing its classifications as the standard for film age labels online, we are still developing our work with transactional TV content online. The BBFC has a long history of classifying television works when released on DVD, but those classifications do not always directly translate to how these works are released online.

In 2015 the BBFC began a multi-year project to address issues with its catalogue of historical data for television ratings. When complete, Video On Demand services will be able to easily and accurately identify existing BBFC classifications for this TV content. The aim is to enable easy use of these trusted and understood age labels, and provide the public with much more informed labelling information than the current binary 'Caution' or 'Guidance' labels often used against TV content online.

Source: \*  
<http://www.cueentertainment.com/digital-helps-uk-entertainment-business-to-all-time-high/>

1 Carol '15'



## Mobile content

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During 2015, the BBFC regulated, on a best practice, voluntary basis, commercial and internet content delivered via the mobile networks of EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. Part of this service involves setting the standard through the independent Classification Framework the Mobile Operators use to filter access to that content.

The Classification Framework defines content that is unsuitable for customers under the age of 18 and is based on the BBFC's Classification Guidelines for film and video. The Framework is used by Mobile Operators to filter and restrict access by those under 18 to age inappropriate internet content.

In March 2015, the BBFC launched an additional Classification Framework specifically for EE network customers who wish to set filter levels to 'Strict' level. This is designed to ensure that all content is suitable for children under the age of 12. Again, we base this on our Classification Guidelines for film and video.

A free appeals procedure operates under these Classification Frameworks. It is open to any website owner, content provider, consumer or any other person who is dissatisfied with the application of the Classification Frameworks in respect of a piece of content available via mobile networks. In the first instance, appellants contact the appropriate mobile network operator. If the issue is not resolved, they may contact the BBFC for an adjudication.

During 2015, the BBFC received 36 appeals, complaints or requests for advice relating to 49 websites. These came from website owners, members of the public and the Mobile Operators themselves. There were 18



appeals or enquiries where we found content to be over-blocked. These related to issues or areas of interest that would not be restricted to a classification of 18 or above according to the Classification Framework or BBFC Guidelines, but which could in some cases potentially cause offence or be unsuited to viewing by younger children. Such website content included information about a network of specialist sexual assault referral centres in London; gun trading websites; a support network for marijuana addicts and various political blogs.

There were two appeals where material was correctly placed as suitable for people under the age of 18. These related to politically minded sites containing a large number of posts and/or articles. The views expressed in these blogs or websites, while open to debate, were in the spirit of providing a legitimate side to an argument.

In 2015, 16 of the appeals or enquiries received related to websites correctly placed behind adult filters, or required placing behind adult filters. Such material included the promotion of cannabis use; the invitation to participate in 'adult chat'; strong references to sexual activity; sexualised nudity; the sale of sex toys and aids; material

which had been classified 18 by the BBFC; the promotion of potentially harmful attitudes, and attitudes which carried the potential to constitute both religious and racial hatred. The BBFC considered the content on these websites to be unsuitable for people under the age of 18 according to the Classification Framework and the BBFC's Classification Guidelines, and in some cases the BBFC would have refused to classify said content.

The BBFC also adjudicated appeals under the new EE 'Strict' Classification Framework. As a result, some websites were considered by the BBFC to be unsuitable for children under the age of 12. These included a website about specialist sexual assault referral centres in London; political blogs containing strong sex references, violence and language; discriminatory content; and a lifestyle blog containing strong and occasionally crude references to sexual activity.

The BBFC published four quarterly reports during 2015 detailing each appeal made to the BBFC under the Classification Framework, including the outcome of each case. These reports are available on the BBFC website. In addition, we published three EE 'Strict' Quarterly Reports.

The Mobile Classification Framework demonstrates how the Classification Guidelines can be successfully applied to very large volumes of online content. It has become an efficient self-regulatory model and the Mobile Network Operators should be commended for their responsible and innovative approach to child safety online.

## Music videos

In March 2015, the BPI and BBFC, in partnership with Vevo and YouTube, and UK record companies Sony Music UK, Universal Music UK and Warner Music UK, announced the second phase of the pilot to age rate music videos online.

The first phase, beginning in 2014, was successful. The three major UK record companies (Sony Music UK, Universal Music UK and Warner Music UK) submitted to the BBFC for age rating any music videos for release online in the UK for which they would expect to be given at least a 12-rating (around 20% of all music videos released by these labels within the pilot were likely to be subject to a rating). These ratings included bespoke BBFCinsight content advice, explaining in more detail why an age rating has been given: for example, that scenes include sexual imagery or other content inappropriate for younger viewers. The second phase of the pilot involved these age ratings and BBFCinsight being displayed on music videos uploaded to digital service providers Vevo and YouTube.

On 18 August 2015 the pilot was made permanent, with Sony Music UK, Universal Music UK and Warner

Music UK agreeing to continue to submit online music videos for classification. The Government also announced that independent UK music labels would take part in a further six-month phase of a pilot to classify music videos released by artists signed to their labels.

BBFC research into the pilot, published in September 2015, found 70% of parents of under 12s are concerned about their children being exposed to inappropriate content in music videos and given the choice, 86% of parents would encourage/ensure their children watch online channels with clear age ratings.

Among the music videos to receive a 12 classification in 2015 were DC Breaks' *This Is Love*, for moderate drug use, Foxes' *Better Love*, for moderate sex references, The Vaccines' *Dream Lover*, for moderate violence and threat, and Florence + the Machine's *Queen of Peace/Long & Lost*, for moderate violence and nudity.

A number of music videos were classified 15, including Ellie Goulding's *Love Me Like You Do*, which contains strong sex references,

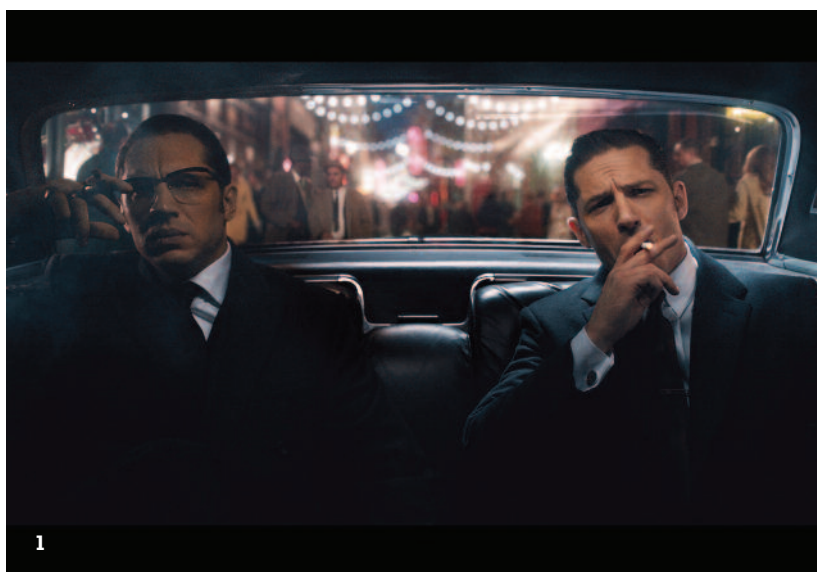
and U2's *Every Breaking Wave*, which includes strong bloody injury detail.

Dizzee Rascal's *Couple Of Stacks* contains strong bloody violence, gore and very strong language, and was the only online music video to require an 18 classification during 2015.

We would like to thank the BPI, Sony Music UK, Universal Music UK and Warner Music UK, as well as Vevo and YouTube, for their commitment in working with Government and the BBFC to establish the classification service. In independent research, parents and teenagers told us that they welcomed this service and we look forward to continuing these partnerships in 2016. The BBFC is committed to continuing to work with Government and other partners to deliver its pledge that all music videos shown online in the UK display clear age ratings. To this end, we will support efforts to engage with key stakeholders to ensure that artists signed to UK independent and international labels are brought within the scope of the classification system.

## Enforcement

Under the terms of the Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA) it is illegal to supply an unclassified video work on DVD, Blu-ray or any other physical format in the UK, unless the work is exempt from classification. The BBFC assists Trading Standards Officers and the police by providing Certificates of Evidence in respect of seized works. In 2015, the BBFC provided evidence on 275 works. In June, the BBFC hosted an exhibition stand at the annual Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) conference; this promoted the BBFC's services and provided the opportunity to discuss a range of matters with Trading Standards Officers.



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1 Legend '18'

2 Inside Out 'U'







**U – Universal**



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The BBFC's Classification Guidelines state that 'a U film should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over' and 'should be within a positive framework and should offer reassuring counterbalances to any violence, threat or horror'. Although U is the lowest of the BBFC's classifications, U works are rarely entirely free of issues. When deciding whether a work can be classified U, the BBFC takes into account specific issues including threat, violence, distressing images, drug use, discrimination, bad language, crude humour and nudity, while also considering more general aspects such as genre, theme, tone and impact.

Threat is an issue that is carefully considered by the BBFC, particularly at the junior categories. At U, the Classification Guidelines state that 'potentially unsettling sequences should be mild, brief and unlikely to cause undue anxiety to young children. The outcome should be reassuring.' A film that contains some scary moments is Disney Pixar's *Inside Out*, which is about the emotions inside an 11-year-old girl's

head – Joy, Sadness, Fear, Disgust and Anger – and how they work together to help her overcome changes in her life. There are several scenes in which characters must avoid danger, including one in which the ground is falling away beneath them, and another in which they have to avoid a slightly scary clown character. There is also a sad scene in which a character sacrifices himself to save his friend. Although some of these moments are a little upsetting, all the scenes are brief and are balanced by reassuring outcomes that promote positive messages suitable for young audiences. The threat also occurs within a clear fantastical setting, which is likely to mitigate any potential anxiety in children, thus permitting the film's classification at U.

A slightly greater degree of realism occurs in the Iranian animation *Princess of Rome*, though by being set in the ninth century, the context of the film is somewhat distanced from present day reality. Human characters are threatened by natural disasters, such as an earthquake which causes the walls and ceiling of a building to

collapse. There are also scenes in which a city is attacked by an army, which shoots fireballs over its walls, causing people to rush around in panic. There is an impression of people being hit or killed, but injuries are merely suggested. In a further scene a woman has a sword held to her throat, but this threat is brief and the woman comes to no real harm. Although the threats are from dangers that are less fantastical than those in *Inside Out*, the overall tone of the film is light, with a firm emphasis on good overcoming evil. The threat is unlikely to confound parental expectation at U, and is therefore classified at the most junior category.

In *Cinderella*, there are no specific moments of threat that are of concern at the U category, but there are scenes of emotional upset, such as when family members die and when the central character is mistreated by her stepmother and stepsisters. Thematically, these scenes are treated sensitively and are counterbalanced by reassuring moments, which focus on the heroine's courageous and resilient

1 *The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water* 'U'

2 *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* 'U'

nature. The positive messages that arise from the more emotionally challenging moments help to create an overall light-hearted and magical tone that is suitable for younger viewers, particularly given the well-known fairy-tale origins of the story. It is classified U with the short BBFC insight of 'very mild scenes of emotional upset'.

The Guidelines state that, at U, 'violence will generally be very mild. Mild violence may be acceptable if it is justified by context (for example, comedic, animated, wholly unrealistic).' In *Minions*, a comedy spin-off from the *Despicable Me* films, there are several scenes of mild slapstick violence. In one scene, set in a medieval torture chamber, an attempt is made to torture the Minions using various devices, including a rack. The scene also features a Minion slipping, unharmed, through a noose, as well as subsequent sight of other Minions

playing with the gallows. None of the Minions are injured by the torture devices and the scene is both comic and wholly unrealistic. The characters' pliable physicality and naughty nature is likely to be familiar to even the youngest of audiences, who expect the Minions to be able to survive actions no human could. The comic slapstick is a typical feature of works aimed at children, such as *Tom and Jerry*, and is unlikely to provoke harmful imitation. The film is classified U.

Older works that are resubmitted to the BBFC for a modern classification can also raise issues. Dziga Vertov's 1929 documentary *Man with a Movie Camera*, was submitted for theatrical classification for the first time in 2015 having been classified U for DVD release in 2008. It contains some potentially distressing images, including a dead body being carried away on a funeral wagon and a woman giving birth to a child, with

sight of the baby in-between her splayed legs. Although there is some detail shown, the images in question are brief and entirely natural. They also occur within a historical documentary context in a film that is neither aimed at, nor likely to appeal to, young audiences. The images are unlikely to cause undue distress in this context and the film is therefore once again classified U.

Rude humour is an issue the BBFC takes into account when classifying films for a junior audience. In the comedy sequel *Hotel Transylvania 2*, there is a comic reference to a character's wig looking like a 'baboon's butt' and a pair of 'grandma boobies'. In another scene, a green monster appears to go to the toilet and green liquid is seen spurting from his bottom. These mild examples of rude humour are not the main focus of the film and take place within the context of a generally good-natured work about





## U – Universal

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acceptance and belonging, which offers positive messages to young audiences. Accordingly, it is classified U. Similarly, ***The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*** also contains mild rude jokes about bodily functions, with references to farting, 'dirty bottoms' and the smells left in toilets. This kind of comedy is familiar to young audiences from the TV programme and is long established as the kind of humour that appeals in particular to younger viewers. It is classified U.

At U, 'occasional nudity, without sexual context' may be allowed. In the Japanese animation ***The Tale of Princess Kaguya***, there are examples of nudity when children are seen playing naked outdoors, and also when a mother breastfeeds her child. As the nudity is all completely natural, without any sexual element or sexualisation, it does not challenge the Guidelines at U. This is also true of the nudity in the documentary ***The Impressionists and the Man Who Made Them*** which features images of nude men and women in impressionist paintings. In this work, the educational and artistic context of the nudity are mitigating factors which also permit the issue to be classified at U.









## PG – Parental Guidance



Works classified PG are generally suitable for children aged eight years and over. PG films may contain a level of intensity that exceeds what is appropriate for the youngest children, although they will generally contain elements such as humour or fantasy that provide sufficient balance to allow slightly older children to enjoy them. 2015 saw a number of releases in which characters that children can identify with are involved in exciting adventures.

**The Good Dinosaur** is an animated adventure about a dinosaur who finds himself lost in the wilderness, and must face his fears in order to find his way back home. The heroic central characters of the story encounter various threats and challenges, including falling into rushing rivers, travelling through storms, and being menaced by hungry predators. The emphasis on the bravery and resourcefulness

which they find to overcome these physical and emotional challenges allows the film to be classified at PG, alongside BBFCinsight advising of mild threat and violence.

Threat to a young character also features in **Pan**, a live action fantasy adventure in which Peter Pan is kidnapped and taken to Neverland by pirates, where he must confront their dangerous leader, Blackbeard. The film contains a number of scenes of threat, including children being taken from their beds by pirates, characters being made to walk the plank, and characters having swords held to their throats. These scenes bring some intensity to the action, but the film carries sufficient humour and quieter moments to balance any threat and violence. The fantasy element is a strong mitigating factor, as is the fact that the central character of Peter is rarely seen to be scared and manages to confront any adversity with a brave face. The

handling of these issues in the film as a whole allowed it to be classified PG.

Of course, the fact Peter Pan is such a well-known story means audiences might approach **Pan** with particular expectations. This 'known quantity' element can also be helpful in classifying feature films adapted from more recent stories. **Up All Night** is a comedy feature based on the popular BBC children's show 'Friday Download' and is about a group of teenage friends who go on holiday together and find themselves staying in a haunted house. The film contains some scary moments as the characters explore the house, including a man being pulled under a bed, reflections in a mirror moving by themselves, glowing spirits passing through a man, and characters turning into ghosts. These moments are brief and accompanied by comedy that undercuts any unduly intense sense of threat. These

1 *Up All Night*  
'PG'

2 *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2* 'PG'

mitigating factors, together with the expectations brought to the film by audiences' knowledge of the television show, allows the presentation of ghostly threats to be suitable for a PG audience.

In a similar vein, *Goosebumps* is an adventure horror based on the popular series of spooky books for children by R.L. Stine. The film follows a teenager who tries to save his town when a swarm of fictional monsters escape from the book collection of his neighbour, who happens to be R.L. Stine. The film contains scares and threats posed by various evil entities such as a talking ventriloquist's dummy, a giant praying mantis, evil garden gnomes and a yeti. There are occasional jump moments and scenes in which characters scream or run in fear from monsters, with one scene featuring an evil clown leading other monsters in a parade through the halls of a high school as terrified students flee in panic. These scenes are balanced

by a focus on adventure and action, and by the characters' attempts to solve their problems together. There are also comic resolutions to these predicaments, with the film employing frequent jokes and a light tone throughout. The evil characters are, for the most part, relatively unthreatening in their appearance and are similar to those seen in other PG works with ghostly horror themes such as *Paranorman*, *Jumanji* and the early *Harry Potter* films. However, one scene involving a levitating poodle that suddenly turns vicious was slightly too scary for PG. In the scene in question, the creature's face contorts in a demonic snarl, its eyes turn red and it foams at the mouth, making it appear more 'horrific' than the funnier, sillier monsters that appear elsewhere in the film. Because the film was shown to the BBFC for advice, ahead of its formal submission, it was possible for reductions to be made to this sequence before the film was completed. Advice screenings can

assist distributors in ensuring they achieve their preferred classification, though a higher classification is normally available to them. The BBFC classified the finished version of *Goosebumps* PG for frequent scary scenes.

The comedy *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2* was not submitted for advice prior to its formal classification. When it was submitted for formal classification with a PG request, the BBFC advised that to achieve that rating cuts were necessary to remove elements of violence, and to reduce a focus on weapons. The film is a sequel in which Paul Blart, a shopping mall security officer, travels to Las Vegas for a convention and stumbles across an art heist. Like the original film, the sequel contains numerous scenes of moderate comic and slapstick violence. These include characters being shot and tasered, struck on the head with vases, and being hit in the chest with a fork which is connected to an electric cable. The comedy







## PG – Parental Guidance

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context of the film removes the edge from most of these moments of violence, but one fight sequence featured glamorised the brandishing and twirling of knives, and another scene showed a head-butt delivered by the central character. These moments exceed the allowances of the Guidelines at PG and the distributor chose to remove the display of weapons, and to manipulate the head-butt so it looks as if the blow being delivered is a comic 'belly shove'. With these cuts made, the BBFC was able to classify the film PG for moderate comic violence.

Real-life violence is likely to be more upsetting to children than comic slapstick violence of the type seen in *Paul Blart*. Nonetheless, provided such issues are handled sensitively and presented in an educational manner, they can be acceptable at PG. For example, 2015 saw the release of *He Named Me Malala*, a documentary about the life of Malala

Yousafzai, the Pakistani schoolgirl who was shot and seriously injured by the Taliban. Malala has since become a potent advocate for the education of girls and the co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. The film contains brief images of the aftermath of attacks by the Taliban, including a sequence that shows the bloodstained seats on the bus in which Malala and her friends were shot. There are also verbal accounts of the shooting and the injuries suffered by Malala, together with undetailed footage of the surgery performed on her before she embarked on the difficult road to recovery. The film establishes at the very beginning that Malala survived her injuries, which reduces the potential for children seeing the film to be unduly upset by the story of her shooting and by the footage of her surgery. The overwhelmingly positive and inspirational nature of Malala's story, along with its educative qualities for young people, meant the BBFC was able to classify the film PG

with the BBFCinsight advising that it contains brief bloody images.

In another documentary, *My Nazi Legacy*, a human rights lawyer who lost several members of his family in the Holocaust brings together the sons of two Nazi war criminals, who take very different positions on the acts committed by their respective fathers. Throughout the film there are references to what happened in the Holocaust, including accounts of mass murder, as well as accounts of death on a more personal scale. There is also archive footage of concentration camp victims and post-mortem images of bodies in the aftermath of executions, although none of these images contain unduly strong detail. The film's deliberately sober and restrained handling of the subject matter in an educational documentary context were key factors in enabling its classification at PG for brief images of Holocaust victims.

**1** *He Named Me Malala* 'PG'

**2** *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* '12A'







## 12A Cinema 12 Home Ent



The 12A category is awarded to films that are suitable, in general, for those aged 12 and over. An adult may take a younger child if, in their judgement, the film is suitable for that particular child. In such circumstances, responsibility for allowing a child under 12 to view the film lies with the accompanying adult. To help adults make such decisions, the BBFC provides BBFCinsight, available on the BBFC website and free apps, which describes significant issues in the film that influenced its classification, such as bad language, sex, nudity and violence. The 12 classification is the equivalent category for video works, and no one under 12 may buy or rent a video classified 12.

Action blockbusters are frequently submitted to the BBFC with a 12A

category request, which is helpful in determining the audience the distributor is hoping to reach. At 12A, BBFC Classification Guidelines allow for the depiction of moderate violence and threat, although instances of violence must not be accompanied by emphasis on blood or injury detail. 2015 saw the release of numerous action films containing scenes of moderate violence and threat which obtained 12A classifications. Examples include the spy thriller *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*, and the concluding part of *The Hunger Games* series, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*. Similarly, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, the seventh episode of the sci-fi saga which began in 1977, features scenes of moderate violence and threat, including lightsaber duels, shoot-outs, and

aerial dogfights. Although the films in the franchise's original trilogy are all classified U, the level of violence and threat in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* led this latest instalment being classified 12A without cuts.

By contrast, cuts were required to *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials*, in order to obtain a 12A. Based on the second book in a trilogy of young adult novels by James Dashner, the film is a sequel to 2014's *The Maze Runner* and features the survivors of the eponymous maze facing a new series of threats, including zombie-like creatures. When its predecessor was formally submitted for classification in 2014 it required cuts to remove stronger moments of threat and violence to secure the requested 12A certificate. The sequel was shown to the BBFC for advice ahead

1 *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* '12A'

2 *Avengers: Age of Ultron* '12A'



of its submission for formal classification. In some cases, companies choose to submit unfinished versions of films to the Board for advice on how to achieve a particular classification. The BBFC advised the distributor of *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* that the film was likely to be classified 15 for prolonged scenes of intense threat. As a result, the distributor made reductions to certain sequences prior to formal submission and the film was classified 12A.

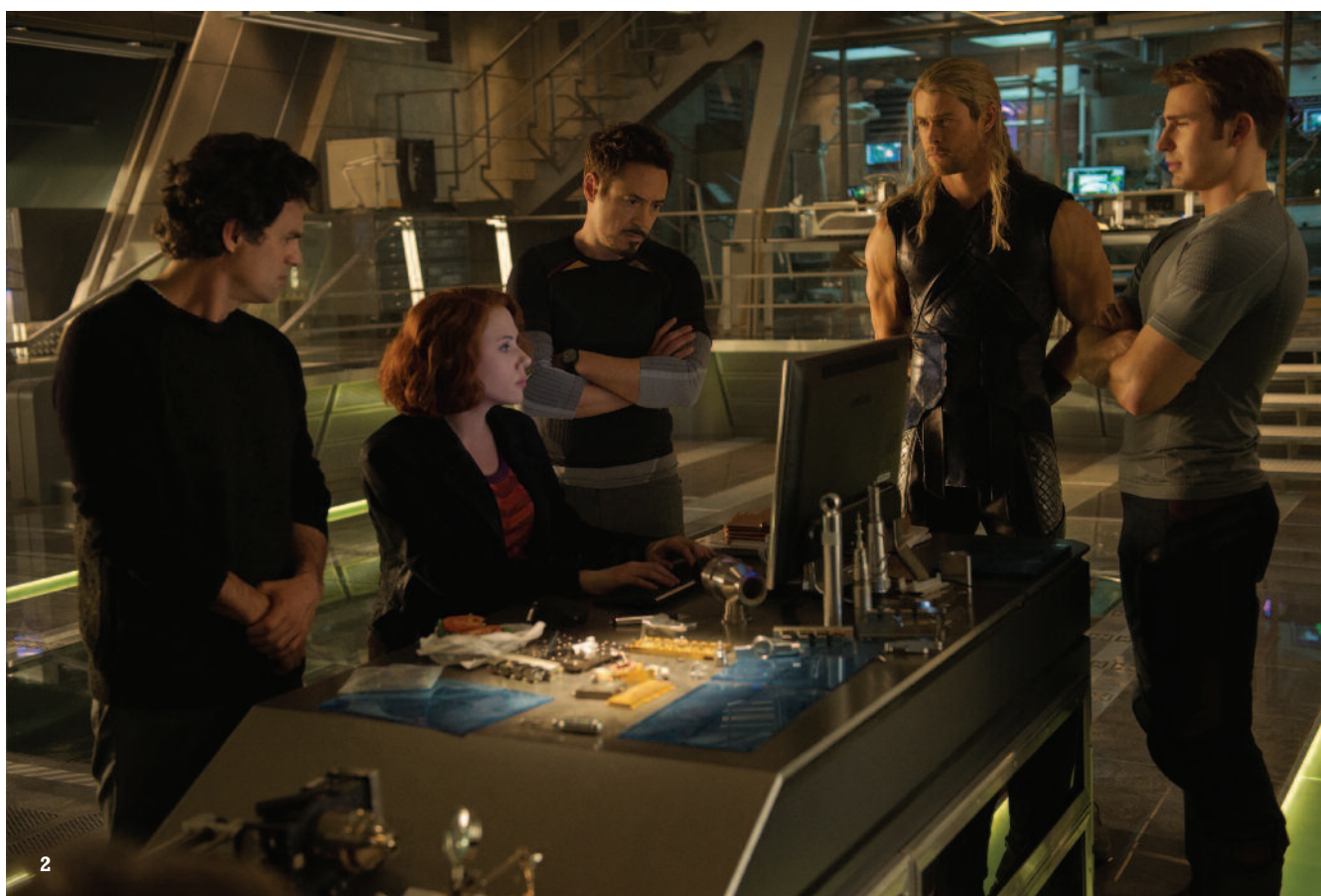
2015 also saw the release of the latest instalment of the James Bond series, *Spectre*, in which 007 is confronted by a mysterious and deadly figure from his past. The distributor of *Spectre* first submitted the film to the BBFC in an unfinished form, for advice as to whether the film met the 12A Guidelines standard. The BBFC considered that it did not and advised the distributor

that the film would likely be classified 15 for brief but strong bloody detail during a scene of eye-gouging, and for bloody detail in the aftermath of the suicide of a terminally ill man. The distributor chose to reduce or remove elements of these scenes. *Spectre* also features a scene of torture in which Bond is strapped to a chair and a micro-drill inserted into points in his head. The scene features no graphic sight of blood or injury detail, and instead uses sound and Bond's facial expressions to suggest his pain. Given the lack of detail, and the audience expectation that Bond will inevitably escape and survive such threats, the scene is within the BBFC Guidelines' allowance for depictions of violence at 12A.

Another high-profile 12A release was the fourth entry in the *Jurassic Park* franchise, *Jurassic World*. The film sees the dinosaur theme park proposed by the 1993 original now

welcoming visitors, until one of the carnivorous attractions, a genetic hybrid, escapes from captivity. The previous three films in the series were classified PG. While *Jurassic World* contains similar material to its predecessors, the intensity of some action sequences in the film is greater than in the previous instalments. Under current BBFC Guidelines, *Jurassic World* is more appropriately placed at 12A, which does not preclude admission to more robust viewers under the age of 12 as long as they are accompanied by an adult.

Films such as *Jurassic World* and the *Star Wars* and *Maze Runner* series all present violence, threat, and injury within a context that is action-driven, fantastical, and distanced from reality. By contrast, other films in 2015 presented violence within a more realistic context. The civil rights drama *Suffragette*, about women's





## 12A Cinema 12 Home Ent

struggle for equal voting rights during the early decades of the twentieth century, depicts scenes of rioting between protestors and police. Blood is seen on characters' faces and police are glimpsed lashing out with truncheons, but there is no clear focus on injuries or how they have been inflicted. The film also features a scene of force-feeding, in which a woman is held down as a tube is inserted into her nose to inject milk into her body during a hunger strike. The BBFC considered the historical context of these distressing scenes, where the strong focus on the women's bravery and humanity counters the brutality. Accordingly, *Suffragette* is classified 12A.

Some films intended to be viewed by people of all ages in their countries of origin feature stronger levels of violence than are permissible under the BBFC Guidelines for 12A in the UK. This is sometimes true for South Asian films, a large number of which are submitted to the BBFC each year. In 2015, this included Shah Rukh Khan's *Diwale*, a Hindi-language

romantic action comedy about a young couple who encounter problems between their respective families. The original version of the film contained some moments of strong bloody violence, including a stabbing, which the company chose to re-edit in order to secure a 12A classification.

Just as depictions of violence, threat, and injury detail must remain moderate in order to qualify for a 12A, so must depictions of, and references to, sex. *A Little Chaos* is a romantic period drama following a blossoming romance between two gardeners at the Palace of Versailles. The film features two scenes that establish sexual activity is taking place. The first scene is brief and features no nudity. The second scene is slightly longer and features the impression of nudity and thrusting, but no strong detail. As such, the film conforms to BBFC Guidelines at 12A which state that sex may be 'briefly and discreetly portrayed'. Sex was similarly an issue in *The Longest Ride*, adapted from Nicholas Sparks'

romantic novel about a young arts student who falls in love with a rodeo rider. The film was submitted for advice in an unfinished form and included a scene of sex that was too strong for the requested 12A. The distributor chose to reduce some elements of the scene in order to obtain a 12A classification, but reinstated some of the cut material for the film's home entertainment release which is classified 15 for 'strong sex'.

Bad language is also a key issue in classifying films at 12A. The frequency of strong language ('f\*\*k') at this category is not always the sole determining factor. Contextual justification, such as the manner in which language is used, is also taken into account. One such example is *The Lady in the Van*, based on the true story of writer Alan Bennett's friendship with an elderly homeless woman. The film contains four uses of strong language, although only one is said aggressively towards another person. The film is therefore classified 12A.



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1 *Suffragette* '12A'

2 *A Little Chaos* '12A'

3 *Love and Mercy* '12A'





**Roger Waters: The Wall**, a concert film and part-documentary in which the singer performs the iconic Pink Floyd album live, features six uses of strong language in total. Four are spoken uses, although none are directed at a specific person, and the other two uses are written, appearing during the concert as a form of anarchic protest. Considering the

context of these uses, the BBFC classified the film at 12A. However, it is still unusual for this number of uses to be to be classified at this category. Indeed, the comedy film **Absolutely Anything**, which originally contained over 20 uses of strong language when seen for advice, had its language significantly reduced to obtain a 12A classification. The 12A

version of the film contains six uses of strong language (f\*\*k) and some moderate and mild bad language.

When depicting scenes of drug use, BBFC Guidelines at 12A state that they 'must be infrequent and should not be glamorised or give instructional detail.' This is the case in the historical biopic **Love and Mercy**, which depicts two periods in the life of The Beach Boys' singer-songwriter Brian Wilson. In one scene, it is implied that the young Wilson has taken LSD, but this is shown to exacerbate or trigger the psychological condition from which he suffers. The historical, real-life context of the drug use, the discretion with which it is shown, and the depiction of its negative impact of Wilson's life allowed the film to be classified 12A. There are also infrequent scenes of drugs use in **X+Y**, a drama about an autistic boy who is encouraged to compete in an international maths competition by his teacher. In some scenes, the boy's teacher, who has multiple sclerosis, is seen smoking marijuana. It is suggested that he smokes the drug to relieve pain rather than for recreational purposes, and his drug







## 12A Cinema 12 Home Ent



use is not encouraged or condoned by the film's narrative, especially where the younger characters are concerned. This depiction adheres to BBFC Guidelines at 12A.

Occasionally, classification issues that are not of a typical nature will arise and present an interesting challenge for the BBFC. ***A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence***, for instance, is a Swedish comedy film featuring an extended dream sequence in which a number of families are locked in a large metal cylinder by soldiers. A fire is lit under the cylinder which proceeds to rotate, producing ethereal music from trumpets built into the cylinder. The whole scene is observed by a number of aristocrats in a symbolic depiction of colonialism. Although the sequence implies an incredible act of cruel violence, we do not see or hear what is happening inside the cylinder, and the scene is surreal and

quietly disturbing rather than graphically violent. However, as this and similar scenes could prove distressing for some audiences, the film is classified 12A, with accompanying BBFCinsight advising that it contains 'disturbing images'.

A range of category-defining issues can also be seen in our ongoing work classifying music videos online. Among the music videos which received a 12 classification in 2015 are DC Breaks' ***This Is Love***, for moderate drug use, Foxes' ***Better Love*** for moderate sex references, The Vaccines' ***Dream Lover***, for moderate violence and threat, and Florence + the Machine's ***Queen of Peace/Long & Lost***, for moderate violence and nudity.

Recordings of live performances of theatre, opera, and dance productions are occasionally submitted to the BBFC for

classification if they are to have a cinematic release. ***National Theatre Live: A View from the Bridge*** is a live recording of a performance of Arthur Miller's play about an Italian-American family in Brooklyn. This production features an implied stabbing, and as the characters huddle in the centre of the stage a red liquid, representing blood, rains down on them. Although a symbolic image rather than a direct act of violence, it is nonetheless a powerful, impressionistically strong scene. The film is classified 12A, with the BBFCinsight stating that it contains 'one bloody scene'. Similarly, ***Carmen*** is a recording of a live performance of Bizet's opera about a gypsy girl's relationship with a soldier, performed by the English National Opera. It features a scene of moderate violence in which a character's throat is cut, and infrequent use of moderate bad language. The work is classified 12A.

1 *X+Y* '12A'

2 *Mad Max: Fury Road* '15'







In 2015, the BBFC classified more films at 15 than at any other category. Unlike the 12A, which permits children under the recommended age to be admitted subject to adult accompaniment, the 15 is a restrictive classification. Accordingly, films classified 15 may include significantly stronger content than films classified 12A and may also deal with more challenging themes and issues.

**My Skinny Sister** is a contemporary Swedish drama about a young girl who discovers her older sister has an eating disorder. The film focuses on her illness, and there are frequent references to it, including distressing sight of vomiting and force-feeding. The emphasis on the eating disorder theme could be confusing and disturbing to younger viewers and so the BBFC awarded a 15 classification.

In a more fantastical vein, but with similar thematic relevance to older teens, the US horror film **Unfriended** concerns a group of young 'cyber

bullies' who are forced into apparent acts of suicide, thus avenging the death of their victim. The film's treatment of suicide is thematically most appropriately placed at 15 along with scenes of strong violence, threat and sex, and uses of strong and very strong language.

Potentially distressing scenes and themes also feature in a number of documentaries classified at the 15 level, even though these works are less likely to have immediate appeal to teenagers. **A Fuller Life** is a documentary about the film-maker and author Samuel Fuller. In one scene, Fuller's journal entry describes the case of an Italian woman who claimed she was raped and mutilated by a fascist. There is a reconstruction of the assault and consequent injuries in the form of animated drawings. These visual and verbal references to rape and sexual assault resulted in a 15 classification. **Tales Of The Grim Sleeper** concerns a serial killer who killed women in Los Angeles over a 25-

year period. It contains more frequent verbal references to acts of sexual violence than **A Fuller Life**, including to the violent penetration of women with sharp objects. This, together with strong language, drug references, nudity, and scenes showing actual dead bodies, led the film to be classified at 15. Graphic descriptions of killing and torture feature in **The Look Of Silence**, a documentary about genocide in Indonesia in the 1960s. It includes interviews with various people in which they refer to beheading prisoners and throwing dead bodies into a river. They also describe acts of genital and breast mutilation, and drinking human blood. These graphic descriptions adhere to the Guidelines at 15 where there may be detailed verbal references to violence.

At 15, BBFC Guidelines on violence state 'Violence may be strong but should not dwell on the infliction of pain or injury. The strongest gory images are unlikely to be acceptable.

- 1 *Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse '15'*
- 2 *Turbo Kid '15'*



Strong sadistic violence is unlikely to be acceptable'. ***The Revenant*** (classified in 2015; released in 2016), is a US drama about a frontiersman who is abandoned by his fellow fur-trappers and left for dead, but who survives and sets out to seek revenge. Scenes of strong violence and bloody injury detail include people being hit by arrows and bullets, and exchanging blows including with bladed weapons. In one scene a man is attacked and tossed about by a bear, resulting in some focus on deep bloody wounds to the victim. There is also brief focus on bloody injuries resulting from various acts of violence, including implied scalping. The film also contains a scene of sexual violence in which a man rapes a woman; however, the sequence is brief and lacking in nudity. These scenes required a 15 classification.

While ***The Revenant*** was passed uncut at 15, ***The Boy Next Door***, a US thriller about a divorced woman embarking on a dangerous affair with a much younger neighbour, required a cut to remove a sequence in which a person's eye is gouged out, in close-up. The subsequent DVD release reinstated the cut material and it is classified 18.

Strong violence also features in some of the year's South Asian releases. ***Aazaadi*** is a Punjabi language drama about a man seeking revenge against the fake revolutionaries and corrupt police who killed his family. It is classified 15 for strong violence. There are multiple scenes of violence as various characters are shot, with blood spurts from bullet impacts, as well as some still images of real dead bodies lying on the ground. The film also contains sexual threat as a young woman is dragged into a room and an attacker lies on top of her. However, both characters are fully clothed and the scene ends before anything happens to the woman.

In the Hindi language drama, ***Detective Byomkesh Bakshi!***, a detective investigates the mysterious death of a chemist in 1943 Calcutta. Much of the violence in the film could be contained at 12A; however, some scenes of strong bloody violence were more appropriate at 15, including two stabbings, focus on a knife being twisted in a wound and a man stabbing out his own eye. Another Hindi language crime drama, ***Talvar***, which concerns a police investigation following the murder of a teenage girl, also contains strong violence and bloody

images. There are scenes showing the teenage girl being murdered in different possible scenarios, as well as several moments of bloody throat slashing, a close-up of a man's badly battered face, and several photo images of the bloodstained teenager's corpse. Both films are classified 15.

A fantasy context may be a mitigating factor in passing scenes of violence at 15. ***Deathgasm***, ***Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse*** and ***Turbo Kid*** all have a comic tongue-in-cheek feel, which diminishes the impact of their scenes of strong and bloody violence, often featuring deliberately implausible and over-the-top fountains of blood and several dismemberments. Accordingly, these films are classified 15. ***Crimson Peak*** is a Gothic horror film, set in the nineteenth century, in which a young American woman marries a British baronet and returns with him to his ancestral home. In addition to fantastical moments featuring nightmarish ghosts, there are some more realistic scenes of strong violence, including a man having his head smashed several times against the side of a porcelain wash basin and a male character being stabbed in the chest and face.



While strong, these scenes are mitigated by the overall fantastical nature of the film.

Another horror film, ***Sinister 2***, features an evil spirit manipulating children into killing their families. A character watches home videos of violent murders that took place in his house. The violence is strong, but not sustained. There are also frequent scenes of strong sustained threat in which characters are pursued by supernatural spirits. These scenes led to the film's 15 classification.

Some films classified PG-13 in the USA (a category which allows films to be shown to children of all ages, with the caveat that parents are strongly cautioned that 'some scenes may be inappropriate for children under 13') were classified 15 in the UK during 2015. This frequently happens in the case of horror films featuring strong tonal elements, such as the remake of ***Poltergeist***, which involves strong threat and horror, and ***Krampus***, which contains strong threat.

Tone also plays a part in the classification of more realistic films. ***Son of Saul*** (classified in 2015; released in 2016) is a Hungarian drama about a man who is forced to work at Auschwitz, disposing of the bodies of victims. The film contains scenes in which naked victims are forced into gas chambers, as well as sight of their naked bodies being cleared away. There are further scenes in which victims are subjected to violence by Nazi guards and scenes depicting riots, including



one in which a man is shot. While the scenes contain limited visual detail, the tone is harrowing and the pervasive strong threat puts the film most suitably at 15.

***Mad Max: Fury Road*** is a post-apocalyptic action drama in which 'Mad Max' teams up with a new ally, Furiosa, to rescue a group of women from an evil warlord. There are frequent scenes of violence and threat, including sustained vehicular chase scenes in which people fight, are shot and stabbed, or run over by vehicles, as well as a scene in which a man's mask is ripped from his face, with a brief gush of blood. Although injury detail is limited, the intensity and sustained nature of the film's despairing apocalyptic tone takes

the film to within the Guidelines at 15.

Bad language is still a classification issue at 15, where the BBFC's large scale public consultation exercises repeatedly demonstrate a concern about the use of very strong language at this level. ***We Are Monster*** is a UK drama, based on a true story, in which a racist convict murders his Asian cellmate. When originally shown to the BBFC for advice, the film contained fourteen uses of very strong language, some of which were aggravated by aggression or violence. The BBFC's Guidelines at 15 state 'Very strong language may be permitted, depending on the manner in which it is used, who is using the language, its frequency within the work as a whole



1 *Son of Saul* '15'

2 *Krampus* '15'

3 *45 Years* '15'

4 *Mommy* '15'



and any special contextual justification'. This means that it is unusual to permit more than a handful of uses of very strong language in a submission of normal feature length at 15. In order to achieve its preferred 15 rating, the BBFC advised the distributor to reduce the number of uses of very strong language, in particular addressing the more aggravated uses. When the film was submitted for formal classification, the number of uses were approximately halved and the uses accompanied by violence or other aggravating factors, including one use directed towards a child, were no longer present. The remaining uses, which are mainly self-directed within the central character's head, were acceptable at 15 in this particular context.

The French Canadian drama **Mommy** contains three uses of very strong language. The film focuses on the relationship between a single mother and her troubled teenage son, who is attempting to regain control of his life following the death of his father, while also battling a psychiatric disorder. The first use of very strong language is undirected, while the second use occurs during an angry and emotional outburst by the teenage son against his mother. The third use occurs when the teenage son is provoked by a drunken older man in a bar and briefly fights back before being ejected. The BBFC considered the very strong language in this



particularly emotional context to be acceptable at 15 and also recognised the potential relevance of the film to mid-teenagers. Accordingly, the film is classified 15.

At the lower end of the 15 classification, films are sometimes excluded from the 12A category by the inclusion of occasional strong language. For example, **45 Years** is a British relationship drama about a secret which is uncovered in the week leading up to a couple's 45th wedding anniversary. While the film is fairly gentle, eight uses of strong language exceed the 12A Guideline requirement that strong language should be infrequent. In this case, further weight was given to the 15 by the presence of a sex scene. Although the scene is both honest

and comic, with an implication that the initially enthusiastic male character is forced to stop when he loses his erection, the suggestion of sexual movement on top of his wife, accompanied by some discussion of possibly changing position, is not sufficiently discreet for 12A, where the Guidelines state 'Sexual activity may be briefly and discreetly portrayed'. By contrast, the BBFC's Guidelines on sex at 15 state that 'Sexual activity may be portrayed, but usually without strong detail'.

**Carol** is an example of a film that was pushed into 15 by a single sex scene. The film is a US drama set in the 1950s about the relationship between a shop girl and a glamorous older woman. The one sex scene between the two women features sexualised breast nudity and the suggestion of oral sex, which are more appropriately classified at 15. Another British drama, **The Falling**, which concerns a fainting epidemic that develops amongst a group of schoolgirls after a tragic incident, also contains strong sex, including a troubling incestuous encounter. Although most of the sexual activity is implied and could be acceptable at 12A, one scene features sexual thrusting and partial nudity, although there is no strong detail. There are also a few stronger verbal sex references to orgasms and virginity. Accordingly, the film is classified 15.

**The Danish Girl**, a period drama based on the novel by David Ebershoff about an early recipient of





gender reassignment surgery in the early 1930s, contains some scenes featuring nudity in a sexual context. One scene shows nudity as the central couple prepare to have sex, while another scene shows the central character watching a female striptease act. The latter scene includes some focus on the woman rubbing her hands over her naked body. These scenes go beyond the Guidelines at 12A where nudity in a sexual context must be brief and discreet, so the film was classified 15.

**52 Tuesdays**, an Australian drama about an adolescent girl who is sent to live with her father for a year when her mother starts the process of gender transitioning, resides at the upper end of the 15 category. There are several uses of strong language, as well as scenes of strong sex. There are also strong verbal sex references, as well as references to adolescent characters creating and sharing indecent images of themselves. However, it is made clear that such behaviour has negative consequences, and the film is classified within the 15 Guidelines.

In a lighter vein, the US action comedy **Spy**, which concerns a female CIA analyst who volunteers for an undercover mission, also contains strong sex references. There are a number of verbal references to sexual activity, pornography and



genitalia. In one scene, a character flicks through photographs on a camera screen and briefly sees a still image of an erect penis. The emphasis is on the comic reaction to the image, rather than on the image itself. There is also brief suggestion of a woman performing fellatio, but without strong detail. Accordingly, the film is classified 15.

Drug use, along with strong sex, sex references and strong language, is a major classification issue in **Dope**, a US drama about a 'straight A' high school student who finds himself in possession of illegal drugs, which he

then has to get rid of. Scenes of drug use show characters taking pills and smoking marijuana, whilst others use MDMA in pill and powder form. These activities have negative consequences, and do not condone drug use, and this allowed the film to be classified at 15.

**Amy** is a documentary exploring the life and work of singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse. The film contains very strong and strong language. There are also frequent references to the use of various illegal drugs, as well as extensive alcohol abuse. Although these references are occasionally accompanied by the sight of drugs and associated paraphernalia, the work as a whole does not glamorise or condone drug use. Therefore, the film is classified 15.

As in previous years, some older films with 18 ratings were submitted for re-release on film, DVD and Blu-ray. In some cases, the films are over 20 years old and their power or impact has diminished to the extent that they are now acceptable at 15. These films included **Mad Max**, **Mad Max 2** and **Love Is The Devil**.



1 *Carol* '15'

2 *The Danish Girl* '15'

3 *Legend* '18'







Where concerns arise about content in works at lower categories they can usually be dealt with by giving a higher classification. But at 18 the only option may be to cut or refuse to classify a work. Guidelines at 18 therefore reflect a desire to balance concerns about protecting rights to freedom of expression with a need to protect vulnerable individuals, and wider society, from the possible harmful effects of some film and video material. This position corresponds with the legal framework within which the BBFC operates, including the Human Rights Act 1998, the Video Recordings Act 1984, and the Obscene Publications Acts 1959 and 1964. The BBFC's Classification Guidelines, underpinned by strong public support, respect the right of adults to decide for themselves what to watch. The BBFC tries to keep exceptions to this principle to a minimum. Since its amendment in 1994, the Video Recordings Act has placed a duty on the BBFC to have 'special regard (among other relevant factors) to any harm that may be caused to potential viewers or, through their behaviour, to society by the manner in which the work deals with: criminal behaviour; illegal drugs; violent behaviour or incidents; or human sexual activity'. Throughout 2015 the BBFC continued to give special regard to harm issues

using classifications at 18 where appropriate and cutting material were necessary. Some of the most challenging material considered by the BBFC in 2015 concerned representations of sexual violence. The BBFC's Classification Guidelines state that we may refuse to classify content which makes sexual or sadistic violence look appealing or acceptable; reinforces the suggestion that victims enjoy sexual violence; or invites viewer complicity in sexual violence or other harmful violent activities.

The BBFC classified at 18 *I Spit on your Grave III: Vengeance is Mine* and *The Human Centipede III (Final Sequence)*. Both contain scenes of sexual violence. However, neither raised the level of concern which the BBFC had in relation to earlier films in their respective series; both being notably different in terms of content and tone compared with their predecessors.

The 1972 Italian horror film *What Have You Done to Solange?* was passed 18 with previous cuts relating to stabbings to women's crotches waived. The original film submission in 1973 failed to receive a certificate, after which it was cut for video release in 1995. The dated nature of the film and the relative lack of detail

in the most challenging scenes enabled the film to be passed without intervention. The 1984 film *Blastfighter* and Walerian Borowczyk's 1981 film *Dr. Jekyll Et Les Femmes* were both also passed uncut after previous cuts to sexual violence from the 1980s were no longer judged necessary under the BBFC's current Guidelines.

The 1991 German horror film *Nekromantik 2* was passed without cuts at 18, with scenes of sex and sexualized violence, including a scene in which a woman decapitates a man she is having sex with, meaning that no lower rating could be considered.

*Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals*, a 1977 horror film which was originally cut for X before being cut again for 18 in 2002, was passed uncut. The BBFC considered previous cuts to sexual and sexualised violence against current Guidelines and policy and, while still requiring restriction to adult audiences, the film's limited detail and lack of credibility meant that the intervention of cuts was no longer necessary.

The psychological thriller *Return to Sender* sees a woman dealing with the complex consequences of a rape

1 *Hyena* '18'

2 *Rec: Apocalypse* '18'

which is shown in an early scene. While there is no nudity, the scene is protracted and brutal in its focus on the humiliation and suffering of the woman. This harrowing scene goes beyond the Classification Guidelines at 15 and consequently the film is restricted to adult viewers.

The British crime drama *Hyena* was also restricted to an 18 rating in part for a scene of sexual violence in which a drugged and unconscious woman is raped by a man whose erect penis is briefly seen as he approaches her. Despite the detail, in this case, particularly when the film is taken as a whole, the scene is aversive rather than serving to titillate. While it required an adult restriction, it did not require any further intervention.

The BBFC is confident that the differentiation in its treatment between sexual and non-sexual violence is substantiated by the available evidence and, additionally, research undertaken to inform the BBFC Guidelines shows the general public supports this position. In 2015, as in previous recent years, no cuts were made on grounds of

violence alone. There were, however, several films placed at the adult category by the BBFC because of the strength of their depictions of violence. These included *Legend*, a film starring Tom Hardy as both of the Kray twins, which contains a drawn out scene in which a man is repeatedly brutally stabbed and left heavily bloodied.

In the UK thriller *Bait*, a young couple fall foul of a loan shark. The film includes scenes in which victims of the loan shark are attacked when they cannot pay. The results of such scenes, as well as scenes of fighting, see teeth cracked, fingers pushed through a man's cheek, and a person's head partially decapitated and brain matter exposed. These gory and sadistic scenes could not be contained at 15.

A sustained sequence of torture contributed to the 18 rating for the Alejandro Jodorowsky film *The Dance of Reality*. A man is tortured by soldiers in a variety of ways, including electrocution and water boarding. There is an element of sadistic relish on the part of the torturers which adds to its strength.

There were films which were re-released in cinemas which retained their restriction to adult audiences despite the many years since their original releases. The 1993 film *True Romance* remained an 18 for bloody violence, in particular a scene in which a woman is repeatedly punched and beaten with dwelling on her injuries. *The Long Good Friday*, the British crime drama from 1980, also retained its restriction to adults, having originally been passed X. A scene in which a man is repeatedly stabbed in the neck with a broken bottle still carries a shocking impact and a focus on pain and injury which is best placed at 18.

In respect of horror films, the BBFC does not intervene merely because these works might alarm or shock. Indeed the likely audience chooses to watch such films because they enjoy being frightened. However, the BBFC does ensure that the young and vulnerable are protected. Works featuring strong threat and menace which is sadistic or sexualised are likely to be classified at 18. Horror works at 18 are also likely to contain stronger gory images that are







unacceptable at 15. Other 18 indicators may include the work being rooted in the real world, as opposed to having a fantastical setting or supernatural elements, horror that is played straight with little or no humour or irony, and the sexual terrorisation of women.

**Rec: Apocalypse**, the fourth in the *Rec* franchise, is a horror film about a parasitic infection that turns humans into zombies, which then run amok on an oil tanker. Strong gore in the film includes numerous bloody stabbings, the sight of flesh being torn by zombie bites and a sequence showing a zombie's head being torn apart by the blades of an outboard motor. Further disturbing sequences show a parasite emerging from the mouth of one host and forcing itself into the mouth and throat of another. These scenes went beyond the Guidelines at 15 where violence should not dwell on the infliction of pain or injury and the strongest gory

images are unlikely to be acceptable.

The US horror thriller **The Asylum**, about a group of teenagers who accidentally summon a vengeful spirit that takes possession of them one by one, contains frequent scenes of very strong bloody violence and gore requiring an 18 rating, including stabbings, impalings, mutilations and a gory body dismemberment.

**Hooked Up**, a horror film shot entirely on an iPhone, was taken to 18 for violence including stabbings and a man's tongue being ripped out, as well as a scene of implied sexualised violence when a man reveals his bloodied underwear and claims that a woman bit him during oral sex.

The British horror film **Howl**, about a small group of passengers on the last train home attempting to survive an attack by mutant creatures, contains sight of a disemboweled corpse, repeated beating with a fire

extinguisher, and a woman, having been strung up, being eaten by monsters. The strong gore in these scenes required the adult rating.

In 2015 a number of films were classified at 18 for scenes of strong sex including **Fifty Shades of Grey**, a drama about a young student's sexual relationship with a wealthy businessman. There are several scenes in which the couple have sex, including scenes of sadomasochistic activity in which the woman is blindfolded, restrained, and struck with a riding crop or whip. **Fifty Shades Uncovered**, a documentary about the popularity of the original book and the BDSM world it explores, also required an 18 rating for scenes of sadomasochistic sex.

The drama **The Duke of Burgundy** also features a sexual fetish theme which required the adult rating. Several scenes show a couple exploring dominant-submissive role-play including imprisonment in a small locked chest, breath restriction, and implied urination over another character.

Several strong sex scenes in **The Diary of a Teenage Girl**, a drama about a teenage girl having an affair with her mother's boyfriend, led to the film's 18 classification. These scenes contain breast and buttock nudity and implied oral sex. The teenage character also experiments with prostitution, and in some scenes sex is combined with drug misuse.

Strong sex also features in **Straight Outta Compton**, a US biographical drama about the hip hop group



1 *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* '18'

2 *Blind* '18'

3 *At Any Price* '18'

4 *The Duke of Burgundy* '18'



N.W.A. Although the level of sexual detail was permissible at 15 on film, the subsequent DVD release contained an extended 'Director's Cut' featuring a threesome incorporating drug use, and a scene in which characters watch a porn film; neither of these scenes were present in the cinema version. Therefore, the DVD release is classified 18 for strong sex and drug use.

Strong real sex featured in several films classified at 18 in 2015. **Blind** is a Norwegian drama about a woman who blurs the lines between fantasy and reality when she loses her sight. In one scene a man looks at pornographic images on a laptop, including thumbnail photographs and video featuring explicit sight of oral sex, masturbation and penetration. **At Any Price**, a US drama about the relationship between a father and his rebellious son, has a scene in which a young woman looks through a pornographic magazine and reveals a bare-breasted woman engaged in oral sex. As with **Blind**, the explicit sexual imagery is brief and isolated and in the context of a dramatic work where the intention is neither sexual arousal nor stimulation. Consequently, both features were passed uncut at 18.

Strong images of real sex also appeared in documentary films in

2015. **Kink** is a documentary about the work of a porn producer and features behind the scenes footage of porn being filmed, including a brief moment of explicit penetration. Another documentary, **Chemsex**, about the practice of mixing sex and drugs on London's gay scene, also features explicit images of real sex. Both documentaries are genuine explorations of their subject matter in which the brief explicit detail was illustrative of the subject rather than serving any primary intention to arouse.

Depending on the manner in which very strong language is used, who is using the language, its frequency within the work as a whole and any special contextual justification, very strong language may mean a film is restricted to the 18 classification. In 2015 there were several British films which featured multiple uses of very strong language. **Hackney's Finest**, a drama about a gang of British drug dealers, **North V South**, about the rivalry between two criminal organisations, **Rise of the Footsoldier II**, about an Essex gangster who considers leaving his violent life behind him, and **Essex Boys: The Truth**, a documentary about the murder of gang members in Essex, all required 18 ratings for multiple uses of very strong language, often accompanied by aggression or violence.

In 2015 there was a small but significant increase in the number of explicit pornographic works submitted to the BBFC. The 583 works in 2015 represent a 7.5% increase on 2014, continuing the trend of year-on-year increases over the preceding two years and making 2015 the highest annual figure since 2011. The proportion of R18 works subject to cuts in 2015 was 13%, a decrease of 6% over the previous year. This continues to reflect the Board's strict policies on material which combines sexual detail with activity which is illegal, harmful, abusive, or involves a lack of consent or the infliction of pain or injury.

The BBFC made cuts to a number of works to remove abusive and potentially harmful activity, including choking and gagging during deep throat fellatio and instances of oxygen being restricted during sexual activity. Cuts were also made to remove abusive scenarios encouraging an interest in underage sex. The BBFC continues to cut material in accordance with current interpretation of the Obscene Publications Acts 1959 and 1964 (OPA), which includes, but is not limited to, sexualised urination and the expelling of other fluids from genitals. In consultation with enforcement agencies, and in order to ensure intervention is consistent with current interpretation of the legislation, the BBFC may pass brief and isolated examples of limited sexualised urination so long as there are no harm concerns arising under the Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA) and where there is no realistic prospect of successful prosecution under the OPA. Aside from OPA considerations, the BBFC does not allow at R18 penetration with objects likely to cause actual harm, or objects associated with violence. Consequently, in 2015 cuts included the removal of potentially harmful penetration with objects which could cause physical damage. In making these decisions the BBFC continues to draw upon expert research which can be found on the BBFC's website.



## Video games and associated media

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Since 30 July 2012, and with a few exceptions, the responsibility for age rating video games lies with the Video Standards Council (VSC), applying the PEGI system. The BBFC continues to be responsible for classifying any video game content attached to primarily linear submissions and the VSC must send non-integral linear material, which may form part of a game, to the BBFC for a determination of suitability, as this content may affect the overall classification of a game. In 2015, this included add-on material for five video games. The BBFC is also responsible for classifying any video games containing R18 level material, although no video game has been given an R18 classification since 2007.

In April, the BBFC viewed linear material from **Gears Of War: Ultimate Edition**, a remake of the original **Gears Of War**. This comprised behind-the-scenes documentary material about the making of the game, with numerous clips of gameplay. The game footage included sight of both human and alien characters being stabbed or shot with accompanying blood spurts, and a sequence in which a

soldier attacks an alien creature with a chainsaw, reducing it to bloody chunks. The BBFC considered this material suitable at the 15 category rather than 18, due to the fantastical nature of the violence and a lack of dwelling on detail. We informed the VSC of this determination.

In May, a remastered version of the game **God Of War III** contained linear material requiring a BBFC determination. This footage included interviews, test footage and final gameplay excerpts. Strong violence in the footage, included sight of blood during combat, a character stabbing himself in the torso, a decapitation and the ripping out of a monster's eye. Strong language was also present, as was breast nudity, when a character approaches a fantastical female character (Medusa). Accompanying conceptual art also included sight of captive female characters in chains, with reference to bondage. This content was suitable at the 15 category.

In June, a compilation of historic games by the studio Rare, **Rare Replay**, required a determination because of the presence of bonus material including documentaries on

various games. The BBFC considered this material suitable at 15 primarily due to one of the compilation's games, a horror title, featuring artwork depicting various mutilated individuals, including a character with skin missing from their face (revealing the exposed tissue and teeth beneath), knife-wielding, infected children, and a figure with exposed innards.

The BBFC viewed a short collection of extra material for the music game **Guitar Hero Live** in June, which depicted the production team creating rock concert footage in a studio for inclusion in the finished product. This material was suitable at U.

In July, the BBFC made a determination of the horror game **Until Dawn**. The game's extra material included numerous gameplay clips, production footage and interviews. The footage included sight of a supernatural creature attacking human characters, a character with a noose tightened around his neck, bloody injury detail in some scenes and occasional strong language. As such, the BBFC informed the VSC that the material in question was suitable at 15.

## Unclassified works

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Films, DVDs or digital media which contain unlawful or potentially harmful material will, where possible, be cut. If this is not possible because, for instance, the cuts are so extensive that a viable release cannot be salvaged from the remaining material, or if the distributor refuses to make the required cuts, then a work may be refused a classification altogether. In 2015 the BBFC refused to classify one video feature.

**Hate Crime** is a US horror feature from 2013 which was submitted for an online-only release. It uses a 'found footage' format, purporting to show a video recording of the events which unfold when a Jewish family's home is invaded by Nazi-inspired thugs. The family is terrorised and racially abused throughout, the mother and daughter are sexually

abused and raped, the son is abused and raped, the son is branded with a swastika and later has his eyes removed. The son is also forced to have sex with his mother and most of the family are eventually killed. Although the film concludes with captions which suggest some of the attackers were brought to justice and that hate crime remains a live issue in the US, these cautionary elements do nothing to mitigate the overall effect.

The BBFC's Guidelines on violence state that 'Any depiction of sadistic or sexual violence which is likely to pose a harm risk will be subject to intervention through classification, cuts or even, as a last resort, refusal to classify. We may refuse to classify content which makes sexual or sadistic violence look appealing or acceptable or invites viewer

complicity in sexual violence or other harmful violent activities. We are also unlikely to classify content which is so demeaning or degrading to human dignity (for example, it comprises strong abuse, torture or death without any significant mitigating factors) that it may pose a harm risk.'

After careful consideration the BBFC concluded that the unremitting manner in which **Hate Crime** focuses on physical and sexual abuse, aggravated by racist invective, meant that to issue a classification to the work, even if confined to adults, would be inconsistent with the BBFC's Guidelines, would risk potential harm, and would be unacceptable to broad public opinion.

The BBFC must have regard to several pieces of legislation that sometimes affect the classification of works. The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) requires the BBFC to consider, among other things, the requirement that a filmmaker's freedom of expression is not unfairly infringed by its classification decisions. The Act permits such restrictions on that freedom of expression as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of health and morals or the prevention of crime and disorder. If the BBFC does intervene with a work the intervention must be proportionate to the breach concerned.

In refusing to classify the feature **Hate Crime**, the BBFC gave serious consideration to the requirements of the HRA before reaching its decision. In this, as in all cases, the application of the HRA remains at the forefront of the BBFC's thinking when classifying material.

The Video Recordings Act 1984 (VRA) is the legislation that underpins the supply and classification of age-rated audiovisual works in the United Kingdom. It is a piece of legislation that features prominently in the BBFC's deliberations.

Apart from setting out the requirement to have works classified, the VRA also requires the BBFC to pay special regard to material that could be said to cause harm to its potential audience. It goes on to provide a list of subjects which the BBFC must consider. Those subjects are: criminal, violent or horrific behaviour, illegal drugs and human sexual activity.

The application of the Obscene Publications Acts (OPA) of 1959 and 1964 tends to be limited to the BBFC's work with pornography. If a work is deemed likely to be obscene under the current interpretation of the OPA, the BBFC is required to intervene. A work will be considered obscene if it has a tendency to deprave and corrupt a significant proportion of the audience likely to see it. In 2015 a number of works required cuts to remove material that was deemed likely to be obscene

under the current interpretation of the Act and this discussion is continued in the R18 section of this Report.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1978 (POCA), it is a criminal offence to exploit children by making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of them. It is also an offence to distribute or advertise indecent images. The BBFC will refuse to classify works that contain indecent images of children (those under 18). This can often be a difficult decision to make, especially since the definition of the term 'indecent' is wide and open to various interpretations. The BBFC has sought legal advice on the meaning of this term and returns to lawyers where necessary on a case-by-case basis. The BBFC also seeks proof of age for younger looking performers in pornographic works.

The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 introduced an offence of possessing a 'prohibited image of a child'. Under this legislation a prohibited image of a child covers non-photographic pornographic images of child abuse which must portray any of a specific range of acts. It strengthens the law on child pornography.

The Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937 prohibits the exhibition of a film if any scene within it has been 'organised or directed' in such a way as to involve the cruel infliction of pain or terror, or cruel goading to fury of any live animal. The word 'animal' is defined as any domestic animal (tame or sufficiently tamed to serve some purpose for the use of man) or any vertebrate which is in captivity or confinement. It is the BBFC's policy to apply the Act equally to films and DVD submissions.

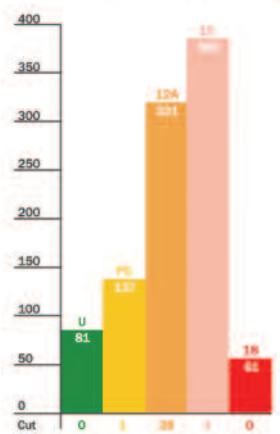
The Telugu language drama **Srimanthudu** required cuts to the sight of two roosters in a cockfighting scene. The BBFC sought assurances and the distributor provided documentation from the Animal Welfare Board of India. While this suggested the animals were not injured in the filming of the scene, the action nonetheless involved the animals in 'cruel goading to fury'. Consequently, cuts were required

under the Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937. Compulsory cuts were also required to the 1971 film **The Hunting Party**, to remove sight of a horse being tripped dangerously. An episode of the Netflix series **Bloodline** featured a cockfight which also raised animal cruelty concerns. In this case the company confirmed that the construction of the scene involved trained animals and a puppet when physical contact was required and the episode was classified uncut.

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 is relevant to the BBFC's work. A key feature of this legislation is the offence of the possession of extreme pornography. Material classified by the BBFC under the VRA is excluded from the definition of extreme pornography. In order for a work to be in breach of this legislation it must be pornographic (produced solely or principally for the purpose of sexual arousal), be grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character and, in an explicit and realistic way, portray either an act which threatens a person's life; an act which results, or is likely to result, in serious injury to a person's anus, breasts or genitals; an act which involves sexual interference with a human corpse; or a person performing an act of intercourse or oral sex with an animal (whether dead or alive). Cartoon images are not caught by this Act.



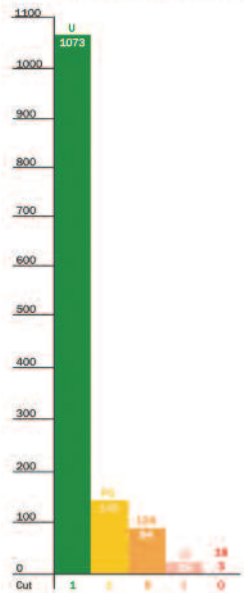
Cinema Film 983



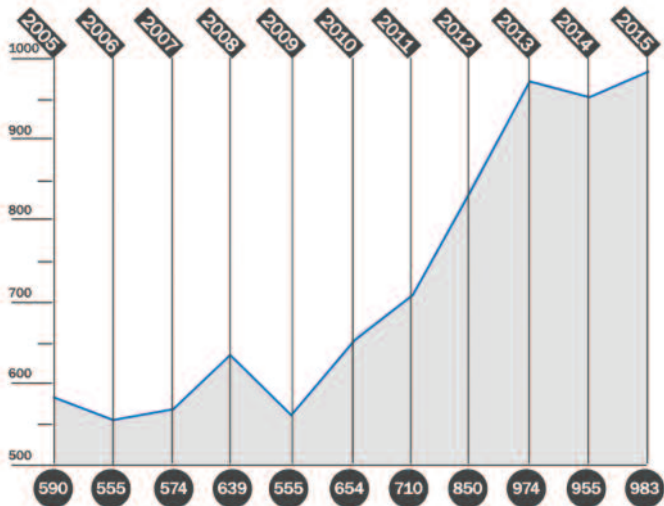
Film statistics 2005-2015

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
U	63	53	36	69	53	81	102	87	127	128	81
PG	100	92	104	117	83	110	98	150	145	147	137
12A	153	160	159	178	143	174	215	234	321	275	321
15	218	198	222	227	226	239	315	313	372	383	
18	55	52	53	48	50	63	56	64	68	33	61
R18	1										

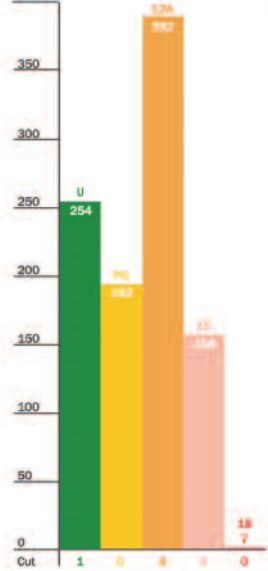
Cinema advertisements 1347



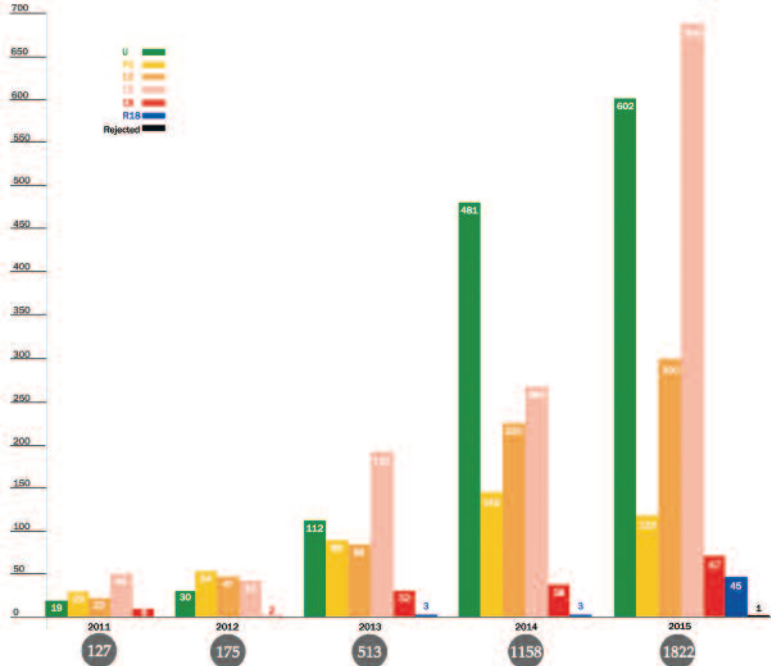
Film submissions 2005-2015



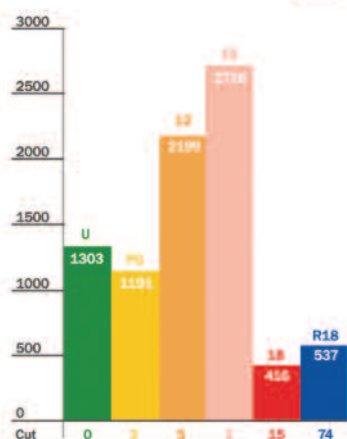
Cinema trailers 1003



Watch & Rate (VOD Only)



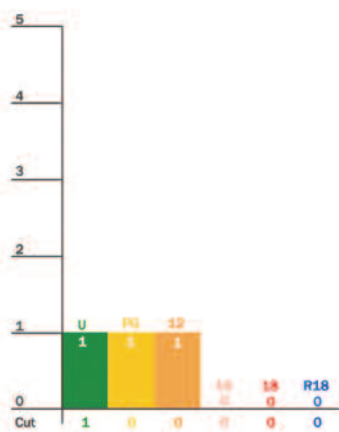
### Video 8362



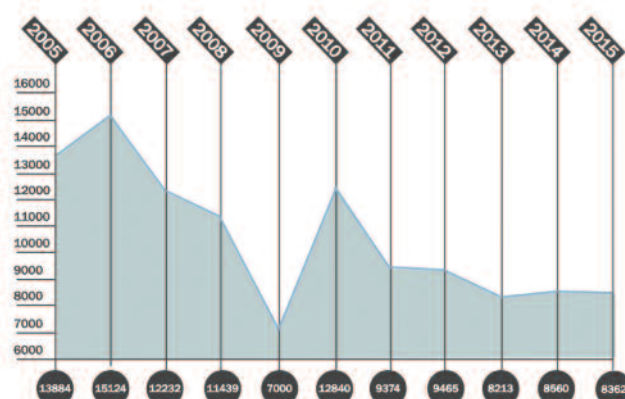
### Video statistics 2005-2015

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Uc	65	66	12	15	7						
U	3106	3010	2482	1967	981	2190	2127	1798	1387	1333	1303
PG	3383	4102	2722	2609	1502	2567	1538	1520	1307	1433	1191
12	2277	2807	2563	2613	1768	2963	2250	2284	1992	2283	2199
15	2672	2890	2343	2432	1728	3204	2327	2739	2454	2590	2716
18	1137	1031	950	904	456	790	507	424	368	379	416
R18	1237	1217	1159	897	555	1125	623	555	520	542	537
Rejected	7	1	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	0

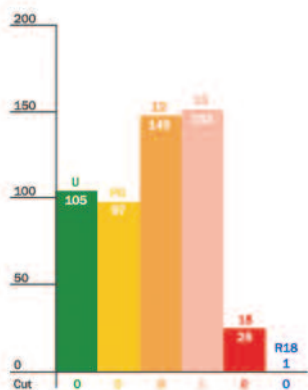
### Video advertisements 3



### Video submissions 2005-2015

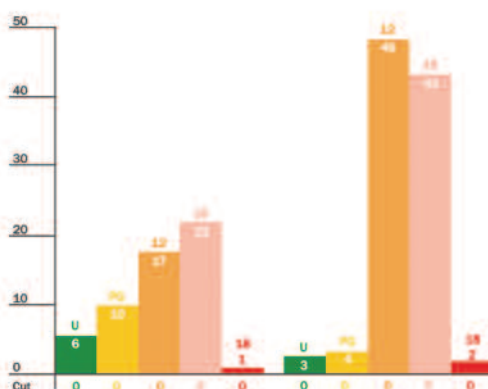


### Video trailers 530



### Online Music Videos

Submissions to the Online Music Video plot  
beginning 3 October 2014





## Video Appeals Committee

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During 2015 there were no appeals to the Video Appeals Committee (VAC). The VAC is an independent body constituted under Section 4(3) of the Video Recordings Act 1984 to hear appeals from submitting companies against BBFC decisions they consider stricter than warranted.

At the end of 2015 the full membership of the VAC was as follows:

### Video Appeals Committee Chair

**Professor Andrew Burrows QC, FBA:** Professor of the Law of England at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls College. Barrister at Fountain Court Chambers, London and a part-time judge.

### Members

**Athene Heynes:** Chairman of the NHS Disciplinary Panel. Chairman of both the Disciplinary Committee and the Competency Scheme, of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. Qualified Mediator in alternative dispute resolution.

**Judy Clements:** Former Director of the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Now Adjudicator for HM Revenue and Customs.

**Clare Dodgson:** Former Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commission. Now an External Reviewer for the Parliament and Health Services Ombudsmen and Public Appointments Ambassador for the Government Equalities Office.

**Salman Momen:** Head of Interactive Media Group, IBM. Former Head of the Media Industry Sector at Capgemini and former Project Director of the BBC.

**Valerie Owen, OBE :** Managing Director, Le Vaillant Owen. Former Managing Director of London First and Director of Jones Lang LaSalle. Non-Executive Director of the Dover Harbour Board, Church Buildings Council and East Kent Hospitals University Foundation NHS Trust.

**Professor Samuel Stein:** NHS Consultant Psychiatrist in Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatry, Bedfordshire. Qualified Family Mediator.

## Consultative Council

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The Consultative Council is the BBFC's chief stakeholder body. Its members include representatives from the film and video industry, local authorities, other media regulators, enforcement agencies and parenting and family groups. The Council is an independent source of expert advice and the meetings are an opportunity to examine industry, legislative and media policy developments.

During 2015, the Council contributed to discussions in relation to the BBFC's research into 'glamour' material, the deregulation of cinema advertising, and the BBFC's continued work to classify online music videos.

In February, the Council discussed the film *The Duke of Burgundy* (18). Council members agreed that some material in the film went beyond the BBFC's 15 category in its portrayal of a relationship involving sexual fetishes, including scenes of implied urolagnia and breath restriction. Members noted that the film's treatment of this material was sensitive and visually discreet, but that the strongest sex references and focus on a BDSM relationship could confound

audience expectation at 15, and had greater appeal to adult viewers.

The Consultative Council agreed with the BBFC's 18 classification of the film.

In June, the Council viewed the film *Little Chaos* (12A). The film contains two scenes of moderate sex, one of which depicts very brief thrusting between a man and a woman who are both clothed, while the other is a visually discreet sequence that largely lingers over a woman's face rather than displaying nudity or sexual detail. The Council noted that, while the sequences established sexual activity, neither exceeded BBFC Guidelines at 12A, and to raise the category to 15 may have given audiences an unrealistic expectation of the film's content, thus deterring some viewers.

The Consultative Council agreed with the BBFC's 12A classification of the film.

In October, Council members discussed the film *52 Tuesdays* (15), about the relationship between a teenage girl who is exploring her

developing sexuality and her mother who is undergoing gender transition. Council members agreed that the film discreetly handled the depiction of teenage characters recording their sexual experiences, with sufficient focus on the potential legal and social ramifications of their actions for the film to be classified 15. Some members compared the film to *Diary of a Teenage Girl* (18), but considered the depiction of sex in *52 Tuesdays* to be more visually discreet. Members noted that the sex scenes featured two teenagers rather than a teenager and an adult, and did not feature any use of drugs during sex.

The Consultative Council agreed with the BBFC's 15 classification of the film.

We would like to thank the members of the Consultative Council for their input into discussions on BBFC Classification and associated matters. We would like to give special thanks to Detective Superintendent David Gray, Metropolitan Police; Pete Johnson, Chief Executive, The Authority for Television On Demand; and Councillor Tommy Williams,

1 *Diary of a Teenage Girl* '18'

Renfrewshire Council, who all stepped down from the Consultative Council in 2015. During 2015 we welcomed Detective Superintendent Wendy Morgan, MBA, Metropolitan Police; and Melissa Dring, Director of Policy, Chartered Trading Standards Institute.



### Membership of the Council in 2015

#### Reg Bailey

*Independent Reviewer of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood*

#### Liz Bales

*Chief Executive, British Video Association*

#### Mark Batey

*Chief Executive, Film Distributors' Association*

#### Kim Bayley

*Chief Executive, Entertainment Retailers Association*

#### Leanne Buckle

*Senior Editorial Complaints Adviser, BBC Trust*

#### Phil Clapp

*Chief Executive, Cinema Exhibitors' Association*

#### Patrick Down

*Criminal Law and Licensing Division, Scottish Government*

#### Melissa Dring

*Director of Policy, Chartered Trading Standards Institute*

#### Alison Edwards

*A leading expert in legal issues relating to the provision of film and DVD works under the Video Recordings Act*

#### Susie Hargreaves

*Chief Executive, Internet Watch Foundation*

#### Councillor Mervyn Jones

*Northern Ireland Local Government Association*

#### Hamish MacLeod

*Chairman, Mobile Broadband Group*

#### Alison Marsden

*Head of Complaints, Licensing and Enforcement, Ofcom*

#### Det Superintendent

#### Wendy Morgan, MBA

*Metropolitan Police*

#### Jo Poots

*Head of Operations (Complaints and Investigations), Advertising Standards Authority*

#### Justine Roberts

*Founder & CEO, Mumsnet & Gransnet*

#### Natalie Rose

*Senior Editorial Strategy Adviser, BBC Trust*

#### Manjinder Shergill

*East Dunbartonshire Council*

*There is currently no representative from the Welsh Local Government Association on the Council.*

### Members who stepped down in 2015

#### Det Superintendent David Gray

*Metropolitan Police*

#### Laurie Hall

*Director of Business Affairs, Video Standards Council*

#### Pete Johnson

*Chief Executive, The Authority for Television On Demand*

#### Councillor Tommy Williams

*Renfrewshire Council*

### New members of the Council

#### Detective Superintendent

#### Wendy Morgan, MBA

*Metropolitan Police*

#### Melissa Dring

*Director of Policy, Chartered Trading Standards Institute*



## Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing

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The Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing (APCV) provides the BBFC with access to a wide range of skills and expertise connected with child welfare and development. The views of the Panel feed into the development of BBFC policy.

During 2015, the APCV contributed to discussions on both the amendment to the Video Recordings Act, whereby certain material that would be classified 12 or higher is no longer exempt from classification, and the BBFC and music industry pilot scheme to classify online music videos. The Panel also discussed the BBFC's ongoing research projects, including how depictions of discrimination affect classification.

In March the Panel viewed ***The Falling*** (15), a drama about an outbreak of mass hysteria in an all-girls school. The Panel noted that the film contained scenes of strong sex, including one of incestuous sex. Members discussed the appropriateness of these sex scenes at the 15 category: some felt sympathy for a 12A classification, but overall the Panel considered that the detail in the scenes were more suitable at the 15 category. Panel

members also considered the depiction of incest, which some films have confronted at 12A, but in this context concluded was more appropriate at 15.

The Panel agreed with the BBFC's 15 classification.

In July, the Panel watched ***Mean Guns*** (18), an action thriller about a crime syndicate who force their enemies to fight each other for money. The film was classified 18 in a version, pre-cut by its distributor upon its original release in 1997, but was submitted for video release in an extended cut in 2015, including a sequence juxtaposing violent imagery with that of a child. Members noted how the film contains frequent scenes of strong violence, including gunfights and fistfights. The Panel perceived that there were no issues of potential harm in the film's depiction of a child among the violent imagery, and that the dated style, unrealistic storyline and largely bloodless depiction of violence lessened the impact of the violent scenes.

The majority of the Panel supported the BBFC's classification of ***Mean***

***Guns*** at 18, although some members suggested the film could be classified 15.

In November, the Panel viewed ***Chemsex*** (18), a documentary about the amalgamation of drugs and sex within communities in London. The Panel noted that the film contains scenes of strong unsimulated sex and features frequent references to the effects of drug use on sexual experiences. Members agreed with the BBFC's 18 classification, although some argued that the film had important messages for younger teenagers. The Panel acknowledged the film's educational value in exploring the issue of HIV and AIDS. They also noted that it is sympathetic to its subjects and highlighted their loneliness and the dangers inherent in 'chemsex', and in general presented an aversive portrait of the activity.

The Panel agreed with the BBFC's 18 classification.

We would like to thank the members of the APCV for their input into BBFC Classification issues and for their continued expert advice with regards to child protection.

### Membership of the Panel in 2015

**Margo Boye-Anawomah**  
*Childcare barrister and family judge*

**John Carr, OBE**  
*Expert on child protection in relation to new media*

**Naomi Eisenstadt**  
*Senior Research Fellow, Oxford University Department of Education*

**Joe Godwin**  
*Director of the BBC Academy and BBC Birmingham*

**Professor Charlie Lewis**  
*Professor of Family and Developmental Psychology, Lancaster University*

**Andrew Mackereth**  
*Principal of The Parker Academy in Daventry*

**Annie Mullins, OBE**  
*Director of Ask.fm Europe Trust & Safety and Co-founder of the Institute for Digital Well-Being*

**Martyn Percy**  
*Dean of Christ Church, Oxford*

**Professor Ann Phoenix**  
*Co-Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit*

**Honor Rhodes, OBE**  
*Director of Strategic Development, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships (TCCR)*

**The principal officers of  
the British Board of Film  
Classification in 2015***President*

Patrick Swaffer

*Vice Presidents*

Alison Hastings

Gerard Lemos

*Director*

David Cooke

*Assistant Director, Policy and Public  
Affairs*

David Austin

*Chief Operating Officer*

Dave Barrett

*Head of Technology*

Dave Harding

*Head of Finance and Personnel*

Imtiaz Osman

*Senior Examiners*

Craig Lapper

Murray Perkins

*Head of Business Services*

Tom Cairns

*Head of Communications*

Catherine Anderson

*Head of Education*

Lucy Brett

**Council of Management***Chairman*

Graham Lee

*Vice Chairman*

Steve Jags

*Treasurer*

Jon Teckman

**Members**

Sonita Alleyne

Maggie Carver

Joanne Shaw

Alison Hastings

Gerard Lemos

**Auditors**

Wilkins Kennedy LLP

Chartered Accountants

Bridge House

London Bridge

London SE1 9QR

**Solicitors**

Goodman Derrick LLP

10 St Bride Street

London EC4 4AD

**Bankers**

Barclays Bank PLC

27 Soho Square

London W1D 3QR

**Registered Office**

3 Soho Square

London W1D 3HD

**Registered number**

117289



## Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 2015

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The Directors present their report with the financial statements of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2015.

### Principal activities

The company, which is limited by guarantee, is responsible for the classification of cinema films on behalf of local authorities and, in accordance with the terms of the Video Recordings Act 1984, for the classification of video works. It also classifies under voluntary self-regulatory services, video content distributed over the internet and commercial and internet content distributed via the UK's mobile networks. Its revenue is derived principally from fees charged to distributors for the classification of their product.

### Review of the business

The BBFC continues to focus on providing trusted classification for film and video and online services.

The results for the last financial year are shown in the annexed financial statements. The key financial indicators, used by management to monitor performance and to assess risks, continue to be sales volumes, turnaround times, operating costs and level of cash generated from operations.

Turnover for the year increased by 2% to £5.5m (2014: £5.4m). This was mainly due to an increase in fee income from films and the expansion of the non-statutory works. Income from DVD classification, which forms 68% of total fee income (2014: 72%) declined by a further 3% during the year. This decline will continue as the demand for online product increases.

Online submissions continue to rise as anticipated, but the current rate of increase is not expected to offset further declines in DVD income.

Turnaround times for DVD works to be processed were maintained at 6 days. This demonstrated an efficiency improvement of 31% over the last five years.

The increase in film submissions over the past four years has continued with a further rise of 7% last year to £1.14m (2014: £1.06m). It is anticipated that the current level of submissions will continue to be maintained

Operating costs have been reduced by a further 2% to £4.4m (2014: £4.5m). This is mainly due to savings in staffing costs and website operating costs. The Board continues to monitor and review its operational procedures with the aim of providing the best and most cost effective services to its customers.

The BBFC continues to work in partnership with different industry sectors (for example, VoD platforms, mobile network operators, broadcasters) to develop for the voluntary space consistent, transparent, best-practice self-regulatory services which apply trusted BBFC standards. Although current levels of income for such services are low at 8% of total fee income, this represents an increase of 38% on the previous year and the Board expects demand for this line of service to rise significantly in future.

The Board also continues to review its investment policies.

The Board has reviewed its funding and liquidity positions and current performance forecasts which indicate that a trading surplus is likely to be generated in 2016. It therefore considers that the company has adequate resources to continue its operations for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the Board continues to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the financial statements.

### Financial instruments

The company's financial instruments at the balance sheet date comprised bank loans, investments, cash and liquid resources. The company has various other financial instruments such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations.

### Interest rate risk

The company has no interest rate exposure as all the long-term debt is at a fixed rate.

### Liquidity risk

The company has significant net cash balances as at the balance sheet date.

### Foreign currency risk

The company's risk to foreign exchange transactions does not arise as all the company's financial instruments are denominated in sterling.

### Borrowing facilities

As at 31st December 2015, the company had undrawn committed borrowing facilities of £536,000 (2014: £536,000)

## Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 2015

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### Directors

The directors of the company are the members of the Council of Management together with the President, Vice Presidents and the Secretary.

The directors who served during the year were:

Patrick Swaffer  
Alison Hastings  
Gerard Lemos  
Graham Lee  
Maggie Carver  
Jon Teckman  
Sonita Alleyne  
Joanne Shaw  
(resigned 22 April 2015)  
David Cooke  
(resigned 10 March 2016)  
Steve Jags

### Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom

Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

### Environment, Health and Safety

The company is firmly committed to managing its activities so as to provide the highest level of protection to the environment and to safeguard the health and safety of its employees, customers and the community.

### Results

The surplus for the year, after taxation, amounted to £1,247,453 (2014: £836,229).

### Fixed assets

Information relating to changes in the tangible fixed assets is given in note 11 to the financial statements.

### Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this Directors' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that directors is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware, and
- that directors has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

### Auditors

The auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the board and signed on its behalf.

**David John Robert Austin**  
*Secretary*  
20 April 2016



## **Independent auditors' report to the Members of the British Board of Film Classification**

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We have audited the financial statements of the British Board of Film Classification for the year ended 31 December 2015, which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Equity and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors**

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the

preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

A description of the scope of an audit of financial statements is provided on the Financial Reporting Council's website at [www.frc.org.uk/auditscopeukprivate](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditscopeukprivate).

### **Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 December 2015 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### **Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion the information given in the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### **Tom Davies (Senior Statutory Auditor)**

for and on behalf of  
Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Accountants  
London

20 April 2016

## Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Note	2015	2014
		£	£
<b>Turnover</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5,472,923</b>	5,370,318
Operating costs		<b>(4,363,395)</b>	(4,535,472)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Gross surplus</b>		<b>1,109,528</b>	834,846
Other operating income	<b>4</b>	<b>107,813</b>	87,298
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>936,476</b>	(28,563)
Operating surplus		<b>1,217,341</b>	922,144
Gain on financial assets at fair value		<b>172,150</b>	(66,394)
Interest receivable and similar income	<b>5</b>	<b>146,460</b>	126,668
Interest payable and similar charges	<b>6</b>	<b>(43,993)</b>	(57,812)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation</b>		<b>1,491,958</b>	924,606
Tax on surplus/ (loss) on ordinary activities	<b>10</b>	<b>(244,505)</b>	(88,377)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus for the financial year</b>		<b>1,247,453</b>	836,229
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>1,247,453</b>	836,229
		<hr/>	<hr/>

There were no recognised gains and losses for 2015 or 2014 other than those included in the income statement.

The notes on pages 59 to 67 form part of these financial statements.



## Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2015

	Note	2015 £	2014 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	3,033,561	3,086,405
Investments	13	6,108,886	5,065,851
Investment property	12	3,589,335	3,589,335
		<u>12,731,782</u>	<u>11,741,591</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	14	749,554	543,610
Cash at bank and in hand	15	2,156,712	2,276,326
		<u>2,906,266</u>	<u>2,819,936</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,600,328)	(1,488,065)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>1,305,938</u>	<u>1,331,871</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>14,037,720</b>	<b>13,073,462</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	17	(407,773)	(663,659)
<b>Provisions for liabilities</b>			
Deferred tax		(194,346)	(221,655)
		<u>(194,346)</u>	<u>(221,655)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>13,435,601</u>	<u>12,188,148</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Profit and loss account		13,435,601	12,188,148
		<u>13,435,601</u>	<u>12,188,148</u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf on 20 April 2016.

K G Lee – Chairman

J S P Teckman – Treasurer

The notes on pages 59 to 67 form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of Changes in Equity as at 31 December 2015

	Retained earnings	Total equity
	£	£
At 1 January 2015	12,188,148	12,188,148
<b>Comprehensive income for the year</b>		
Surplus for the year	1,247,453	1,247,453
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	1,247,453	1,247,453
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total transactions with owners</b>	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>At 31 December 2015</b>	13,435,601	13,435,601
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Statement of Changes in Equity as at 31 December 2014

	Retained earnings	Total equity
	£	£
At 1 January 2014	11,351,919	11,351,919
<b>Comprehensive income for the year</b>		
Surplus for the year	1836,229	836,229
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	836,229	836,229
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total transactions with owners</b>	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>At 31 December 2014</b>	12,188,148	12,188,148
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The notes on pages 59 to 67 form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Profit for the financial year	1,247,453	836,229
	<u>1,247,453</u>	<u>836,229</u>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation of tangibles	263,377	98,024
Interest paid	43,993	57,812
Interest received	(146,460)	(126,668)
Taxation	244,505	88,377
Increase in debtors	(158,196)	194,705
Increase in creditors	25,131	36,018
Corporation tax	(159,916)	(143,107)
	<u>1,359,887</u>	<u>1,041,390</u>
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>		
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(210,532)	(117,890)
Purchase of listed investments	(3,920,000)	(2,705,824)
Sale of listed investments	2,804,450	632,063
Interest received	8,572	6,060
Dividends received	137,888	120,408
	<u>(1,179,622)</u>	<u>(2,065,183)</u>
<b>Net cash from investing activities</b>		
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Repayment of loans	(255,886)	(242,029)
Interest paid	(43,993)	(57,812)
	<u>(299,879)</u>	<u>(299,841)</u>
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		
<b>Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(119,614)</b>	<b>(1,323,634)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	2,276,326	3,599,960
	<u>2,156,712</u>	<u>2,276,326</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	2,156,712	2,276,326
	<u>2,156,712</u>	<u>2,276,326</u>

The notes on pages 59 to 67 form part of these financial statements.



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

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### 1 Accounting policies

#### 1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgment in applying the company's accounting policies (see note 2).

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

#### 1.2 Revenue

Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the company and the revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured as the fair value of the consideration received or receivable, excluding discounts, rebates, value added tax and other sales taxes.

#### 1.3 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at original cost. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value of each asset on a straight line basis over its estimated useful life, as follows:

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Moveable furniture and equipment	25% per annum
Computer equipment	33.33% per annum

#### 1.4 Investment property

Investment property is carried at fair value and derived from the current market rents and investment property yields for comparable real estate, adjusted if necessary for any difference in the nature, location or condition of the specific asset. No depreciation is provided. Changes in fair value are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

#### 1.5 Valuation of investments

Investments in listed company shares are remeasured to market value at each Statement of Financial Position date. Gains and losses on remeasurement are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income for the period.

#### 1.6 Debtors

Short-term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment.

#### 1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

#### 1.8 Creditors

Short-term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### 1.9 Pensions

##### **Defined contribution pension plan**

The company operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the company pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the company has no further payments obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Statement of Financial Position. The assets of the plan are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

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### **1.10 Holiday pay accrual**

A liability is recognised to the extent of any unused holiday pay entitlement which is accrued at the Statement of Financial Position date and carried forward to future periods. This is measured at the undiscounted salary cost of the future holiday entitlement so accrued at the Statement of Financial Position date.

### **1.11 Interest income**

Interest income is recognised in the Income Statement using the effective interest method.

### **1.12 Provisions for Liabilities**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the company a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefit, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the Income Statement in the year that the company becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Statement of Financial Position date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Statement of Financial Position.

### **1.13 Current and deferred taxation**

The tax expense for the year comprises current and deferred tax. Tax is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, except that a change attributable to an item of income and expense recognised as other comprehensive income or to an item recognised directly in equity is also recognised in other comprehensive income or directly in equity respectively.

The current income tax charge is calculated on the basis of tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting date in the countries where the company operates and generates income.

Deferred balances are recognised in respect of all timing differences that have originated but not reversed by the Statement of Financial Position date, except that:

- The recognition of deferred tax assets is limited to the extent that it is probable that they will be recovered against the reversal of deferred tax liabilities or other future taxable profits; and
- Any deferred tax balances are reversed if and when all conditions for retaining associated tax allowances have been met.

## **2 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

Management consider the only key judgement to be in relation to the market value of property.

## **3 Turnover**

The turnover and operating surplus are attributable to the principal activity of the company. The entire turnover in both periods is attributable to geographical areas within the United Kingdom.

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>4 Other operating income</b>		
Net rents receivable	107,813	87,298
	<u>107,813</u>	<u>87,298</u>
<b>5 Interest receivable and similar income</b>		
Income from fixed asset investments	137,888	120,408
Bank deposit interest	8,572	6,260
	<u>146,460</u>	<u>126,668</u>
<b>6 Interest payable and similar charges</b>		
Interest on loan repayable	43,993	57,812
	<u>43,993</u>	<u>57,812</u>
<b>7 Employees</b>		
Staff costs, including directors' remuneration, were as follows:		
Wages and salaries	2,470,545	2,682,581
Social security costs	282,697	285,052
Cost of defined contribution scheme	175,034	197,365
	<u>2,928,276</u>	<u>3,164,998</u>

The average monthly number of employees, including the directors, during the year was as follows:

	2015	2014
	No.	No.
Non-executive directors	5	6
Presidential team	3	3
Management	5	5
Administration	9	6
Operations	33	36
	<u>55</u>	<u>56</u>



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>8 Directors' remuneration</b>		
Directors' emoluments	355,382	293,279
Company contributions to defined contribution pension schemes	11,092	34,460
	<u>366,474</u>	<u>327,739</u>

During the year retirement benefits were accruing to 5 directors (2014 – 5) in respect of defined contribution pension schemes.

The highest paid director received remuneration of £183,495 (2014: £210,142).

## 9 Operating profit

The operating surplus is stated after charging:

Directors' remuneration	366,474	327,739
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	263,376	114,371
Impairment of tangible fixed assets	-	6,008
Audit remuneration – audit	16,000	18,000
Audit remuneration – non audit	14,500	15,000
Taxation compliance services	3,500	-
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

## 10 Taxation

### Corporation tax

Current tax on surplus for the year	246,290	162,000
Adjustments in respect of previous periods	755	-
	<u>247,045</u>	<u>162,000</u>
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Total current tax</b>	<b>247,045</b>	162,000

### Deferred tax

Origination and reversal of timing differences	1,240	(47,482)
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	-	(29,921)
Adjustments in respect of FRS 102	(3,780)	3,780

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>10 Taxation (continued)</b>		
<b>Total deferred tax</b>	<b>(2,540)</b>	(73,623)
<b>Taxation on profit on ordinary activities</b>	<b>244,505</b>	88,377
<b>Factors affecting tax charge for the year</b>		
The tax assessed for the year is lower than (2014: lower than) the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK of 20.25% (2014: 21.5%). The differences are explained below:		
Profit on ordinary activities before tax	<b>1,491,958</b>	924,606
Profit on ordinary activities multiplied by standard rate of corporation tax in the UK of 20.25% (2014: 21.5%)	<b>302,070</b>	198,727
<b>Effects of:</b>		
Expenses not deductible for tax purposes	<b>32,905</b>	11,404
Marginal relief	<b>(174)</b>	(2,764)
Adjustments to tax charge in respect of previous periods	<b>755</b>	(29,921)
Non-taxable dividend income	<b>(27,917)</b>	(25,422)
Non-taxable income	<b>(63,478)</b>	(19,397)
Other timing differences	<b>15,090</b>	(38,423)
Differences in tax rates	<b>(14,746)</b>	(5,827)
Total tax charge for the year	<b>244,505</b>	88,377

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

### 11 Tangible fixed assets

	Long leasehold property	Long leasehold property expenditure	Fixtures and fittings	Total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 January 2015	3,137,264	158,209	4,186,563	7,482,036
Additions	-	141,613	68,919	210,532
Disposals	-	-	(485,831)	(485,831)
At 31 December 2015	3,137,264	299,822	3,769,651	7,206,737
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 January 2015	292,812	158,209	3,944,610	4,395,631
Charge for the year	25,097	141,613	96,666	263,376
On disposals	-	-	(485,831)	(485,831)
At 31 December 2015	317,909	299,822	3,555,445	4,173,176
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 December 2015	2,819,355	-	214,206	3,033,561
At 31 December 2014	2,844,452	-	241,953	3,086,405

### 12 Investment property

	Long-term leasehold investment property £
<b>Valuation</b>	
At 1 January 2015	3,589,335
At 31 December 2015	3,589,335

The 2015 valuations were made by Reid Rose Gregory, a firm of chartered surveyors, on an open market value for existing use basis.

### 13 Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>	
<b>At 1 January 2015</b>	5,065,851
Additions	3,920,000
Disposals	(2,804,451)
<b>Revaluations</b>	(72,513)
At 31 December 2015	6,108,887
<b>At 31 December 2015</b>	6,108,887
At 31 December 2014	5,065,851



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>14 Debtors</b>		
Trade debtors	373,996	279,301
Other debtors	194,144	84,209
Prepayments and accrued income	118,444	92,363
Deferred taxation	62,970	87,737
	<u>749,554</u>	<u>543,610</u>
<b>15 Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	2,156,712	2,276,326
	<u>2,156,712</u>	<u>2,276,326</u>
<b>16 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Bank loans	255,855	255,855
Trade creditors	32,745	16,831
Corporation tax	256,059	168,930
Taxation and social security	225,550	197,520
Other creditors and accruals	830,119	848,929
	<u>1,600,328</u>	<u>1,488,065</u>
<b>17 Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year</b>		
Bank loans	407,773	663,659
	<u>407,773</u>	<u>663,659</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>18 Bank loans</b>		
Analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:		
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Bank loans	255,855	255,855
	<u>255,855</u>	<u>255,855</u>
Amounts falling due 1-2 years		
Bank loans	255,855	255,885
	<u>255,855</u>	<u>255,885</u>
Amounts falling due 2-5 years		
Bank loans	151,919	407,774
	<u>151,919</u>	<u>407,774</u>

The bank loan, which is secured by a fixed legal charge over the long leasehold property, bears an annual fixed rate of interest of 5.64% and is repayable in quarterly instalments. The final instalment is due for payment on 6th May 2018.

## 19 Deferred taxation

	Deferred tax
	£
At 1 January 2015	(133,916)
Charged to the profit or loss	2,540
<b>At 31 December 2015</b>	<u>(131,376)</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
The provision for deferred taxation is made up as follows:		
Prior year deferred tax adjustment	-	(29,922)
Current year charge at 18% (PY: 20%)	(2,540)	(43,702)
	<b>(2,540)</b>	(73,624)
Comprising:		
Asset	62,970	87,737
Liability	(194,346)	(221,655)
	<b>(131,376)</b>	(133,918)

### 20 Pension commitments

The company operates a defined contribution scheme to provide retirement benefits for staff. The total pension charge for the year was £175,034 (2014: £197,365).

### 21 Operating lease commitments

At 31 December 2015 the company had future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2015	2014
	£	£
<b>Operating leases which expire:</b>		
Not later than 1 year	2,793	2,946
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	1,382	1,382
Later than 5 years	37,500	37,500
	<b>41,675</b>	41,828

### 22 Company status

The company is limited by guarantee and is under the control of its members. The liability of the members is limited to £1 each, in the event of the company being wound up.

### 23 Related party transactions

There were no transactions with related parties during the year (2014: £nil)



## Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015

### 24 First time adoption of FRS 102

		As previously stated 1 January 2014	Effect of transition 1 January 2014	FRS 102 (as restated) 1 January 2014	As previously stated 31 December 2014	Effect of transition 31 December 2014	FRS 102 (as restated) 31 December 2014
	Note	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	1,2	4,935,602	4,589,570	9,525,172	4,939,120	6,802,472	11,741,592
Current assets	1,2	6,513,759	(2,384,393)	4,129,366	7,286,602	(4,466,666)	2,819,936
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	1	(1,264,636)	–	(1,264,636)	(1,457,587)	(30,480)	(1,488,067)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>5,249,123</b>	<b>(2,384,393)</b>	<b>2,864,730</b>	<b>5,829,015</b>	<b>(4,497,146)</b>	<b>1,331,869</b>
<b>Total assets</b>							
<b>less current liabilities</b>		<b>10,184,725</b>	<b>2,205,177</b>	<b>12,389,902</b>	<b>10,768,135</b>	<b>2,305,326</b>	<b>13,073,461</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		(919,514)	–	(919,514)	(663,659)	–	(663,659)
Deferred tax liability	4	–	(307,656)	(307,656)	–	(221,655)	(221,655)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>9,265,211</b>	<b>1,897,521</b>	<b>11,162,732</b>	<b>10,104,476</b>	<b>2,083,671</b>	<b>12,188,147</b>
Capital and reserves		9,265,211	1,897,521	11,162,732	–	12,188,147	12,188,147
Turnover					5,370,318	–	5,370,318
Operating costs	1,2				(4,521,140)	(14,332)	(4,535,472)
					849,178	(14,332)	834,846
Other operating income					87,298	–	87,298
Operating profit					936,476	(14,332)	922,144
Gain on financial assets at fair value	3				21,151	(87,545)	(66,394)
Interest receivable and similar income					126,668	–	126,668
Interest payable and similar charges					(57,812)	–	(57,812)
Taxation	4				(187,018)	98,641	(88,377)
Profit on ordinary activities after taxation and for the financial year					839,465	(3,236)	836,229

## **Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2015**

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### **Explanation of changes to previously reported profit and equity:**

#### **1 Holiday Pay Accrual**

As a result of the requirement to accrue for holiday that was earned but not taken at the date of the statement of financial position, there is a charge of £30,480 to the income statement for the year ended 31 December 2014, recognising the increase in the holiday pay accrual over the year.

#### **2 Investment Property**

Under FRS 102, investment property has to be recognised at fair value with all changes recorded in the profit and loss account. Under previous UK GAAP, these changes were recorded in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses or property was held at cost. As at 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2014 the fair value was £3,598,335.

#### **3 Listed Investments**

Under FRS 102, listed investments have to be held at fair value with all movements recorded in the profit and loss account. Under previous treatment, this balance was held at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The fair value as at 1st January 2014 was £3,058,484 and at 31 December 2014 was £5,065,851.

#### **4 Deferred Tax**

Under FRS 102, deferred tax is recognised on a timing difference plus approach, whereas previous UK GAAP required a timing difference approach. Consequently deferred tax has been recognised on all fair value remeasurements and on all fair value adjustments arising on business combinations (other than goodwill).

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