

BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Thursday 29 September 2022

Present

Patrick Swaffer	President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Dave Barrett	Deputy Chief Executive
David Hyman	Compliance Officer (for item 3)
George Timms	Compliance Officer (for item 3)
Edward Lamberti	Policy Manager (for item 5)
Matt Tindall	Senior Policy Officer (minutes)

Minutes of the previous meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters arising

2. There were no matters arising.

Recent classification decisions

3. David H presented a clip from *A Night To Remember - London 2012*, a documentary featuring extracts from the 2012 London Olympics opening ceremony. The film contains a staged performance by paralympians and musicians with disabilities of the Ian Dury song 'Spasticus Autisticus', which contains reclaimed use of discriminatory terms. David explained that the viewing team had considered a U classification given the positive and empowering context in which the term 'spastic' is used during the performance, and there was some sympathy from the Board for this argument. However, there was also concern that the term could still be seen as derogatory, even in this context, especially if repeated by those who are able-bodied and therefore not using it in a reclaimed manner. The work was ultimately passed PG for 'discriminatory language'. The Board supported this decision.
4. George shared three clips from *Our Father*, a Netflix true crime documentary about the case of Donald Cline, a fertility doctor who fathered over 50 children by replacing donor sperm with his own. The film was viewed by the BBFC as part of its monthly audit of Netflix's self-rating decisions.

The clips presented by George featured reconstructions in which it is implied that the actor playing Cline is masturbating below frame before inseminating his patients using a syringe containing his own semen. The Board agreed that the reconstruction sequences constituted strong scenes of sexual violence, but that they were neither detailed nor protracted enough to require an 18 classification. The Board concurred with the 15 self-applied by Netflix, which was confirmed by the BBFC during the audit.

AI Ethics Committee

5. Dave updated the Board on the formation of the AI Ethics Committee, which will support the BBFC's development of new AI tools to improve its classification processes. The Committee's role is to ensure that the BBFC is able to mitigate any biases that may occur in the project training data or developing algorithms, and to provide thought leadership on broader matters related to AI ethics.

Policy update

6. Edward and Matt briefed on the Policy team's recent engagement with Ofcom, both in relation to their regulation of VOD services and in relation to the Online Safety Bill.

AOB

7. This being Patrick's final Board of Classification meeting, he commended the organisation for its work throughout his time as BBFC President and expressed his gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve in the role. The rest of the Board, as well as all others in attendance, thanked Patrick for his invaluable leadership and long-lasting contributions across his ten years as President. Patrick will be succeeded as President by Natasha Kaplinsky, whose term begins on 17 October 2022.

Date of next meeting: 7 November 2022