

BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Wednesday 18 June 2020

(Meeting held remotely)

Present:

Patrick Swaffer	President
Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Dave Barrett	Deputy Chief Executive
Hege Kristoffersen	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Tom Cairns	Head of Business Services (for agenda item 3)
Faye Harcourt	Director of Marketing and Outreach (for agenda item 4)
Chris Davies	Compliance Manager (for agenda item 5)

Apologies

Matt Tindall	Policy Officer
--------------	----------------

Minutes of the previous meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters arising

2. There were no matters arising.

Protecting children online

3. Based on a paper from Tom, the Board discussed approaches to enabling greater use of self-generated BBFC ratings online, the better to protect children and guide families, with a particular focus on upcoming legislation and guidance around online harms.

Comms update

4. With 47% of children and teens reporting that they had been exposed to content online during lockdown that they wish they had not seen, Faye presented the work the BBFC has been doing during lockdown, to help guide families, with a particular focus on how we are supporting parents. The board endorsed this important work.

Recent Classification Decisions

5. Chris presented a clip from *THE MESSENGER: THE STORY OF JOAN OF ARC*, recently submitted for video classification. The film was originally classified for cinema release in 1999, and on video in 2000. On both occasions the film was rated 15 uncut. The Board considered whether in 2020 the 15 classification was reasonable and defensible or whether 18 was more appropriate on the basis of a sequence in which a woman is raped and murdered. The Board agreed that under the 2019 Classification Guidelines, which acknowledge heightened public concerns about the issue of sexual violence, the film was no longer reasonable or defensible at 15. The BBFC's Guidelines state that 'any depiction of the stronger forms of sexual violence, including rape, must not be detailed or prolonged' and that 'a strong and sustained focus on sexual threat is unacceptable.' The Board noted that the scene features an emphasis on the victim's distress and powerlessness in anticipation of the rape, and that the act itself is aggravated by a gang dynamic, sadistic violence as the woman is impaled on a door, and the presence of a child observing the violence. The Board unanimously agreed that the film requires an 18 classification under current guidelines. It now carries the Ratings Info 'strong bloody violence, sexual violence'.

AOB

6. Dave updated the Board on the office refurbishment, which is due to be completed by the end of June, and the risk assessment for reopening the office later in the year, highlighting the need for staff safety above all else before we return to Soho Square.

Date of next meeting: 22 July 2020