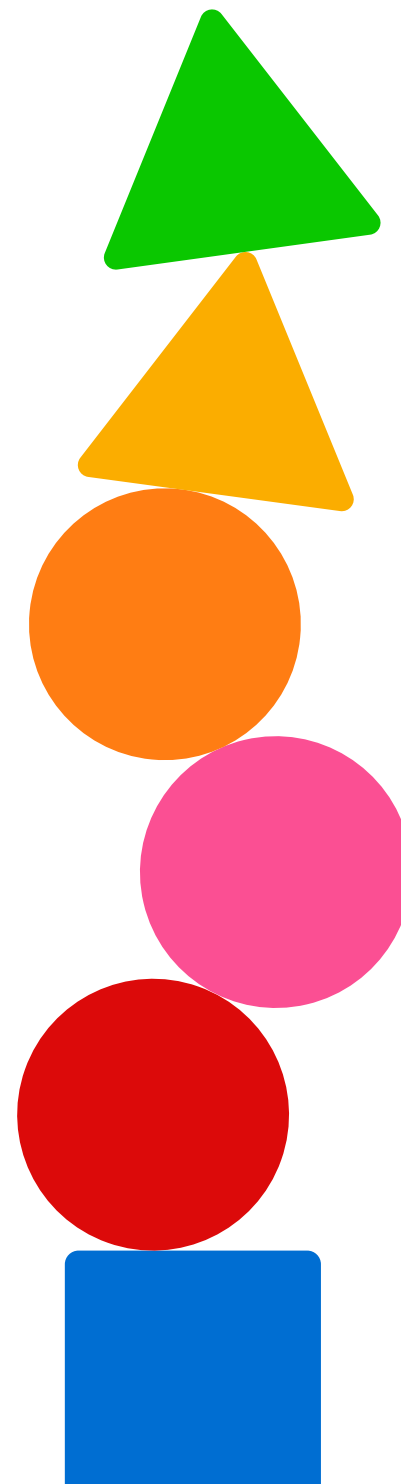


VOD User Guidelines

Age labelling content on VOD services for UK audiences

October 2019



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How to use this guide

This guide provides practical advice on implementing the Best Practice Age Labelling Guidelines (2019) produced by the BBFC and the Video Standards Council Ratings Board.

The Best Practice Age Labelling Guidelines are supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as part of the Government's strategy to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

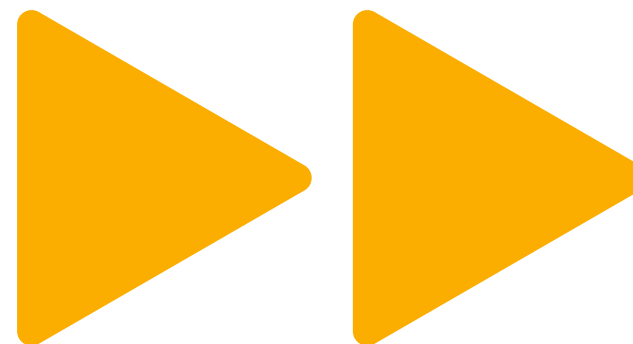
Age labelling is also supported by UK audiences, with 92% of UK parents wanting VOD platforms to show the same age ratings that they expect at the cinema or on DVD/BluRay. 94% of parents also think it is important to have consistent ratings across all VOD platforms, rather than a variety of different ratings systems.*

The following best practice is strongly recommended so that UK audiences can choose content safely using consistent age labelling and ratings information regardless of where they view content.

While primarily intended for services offering film and TV content for sale, rental or subscription by UK customers (i.e. not catch-up TV services), these recommendations are designed to work wherever this content is made available online.

This document was created with feedback from UK services with the support of Government. It is intended to be a live document which will be updated as the requirements of services change over time.

Feedback and suggestions are always welcome.



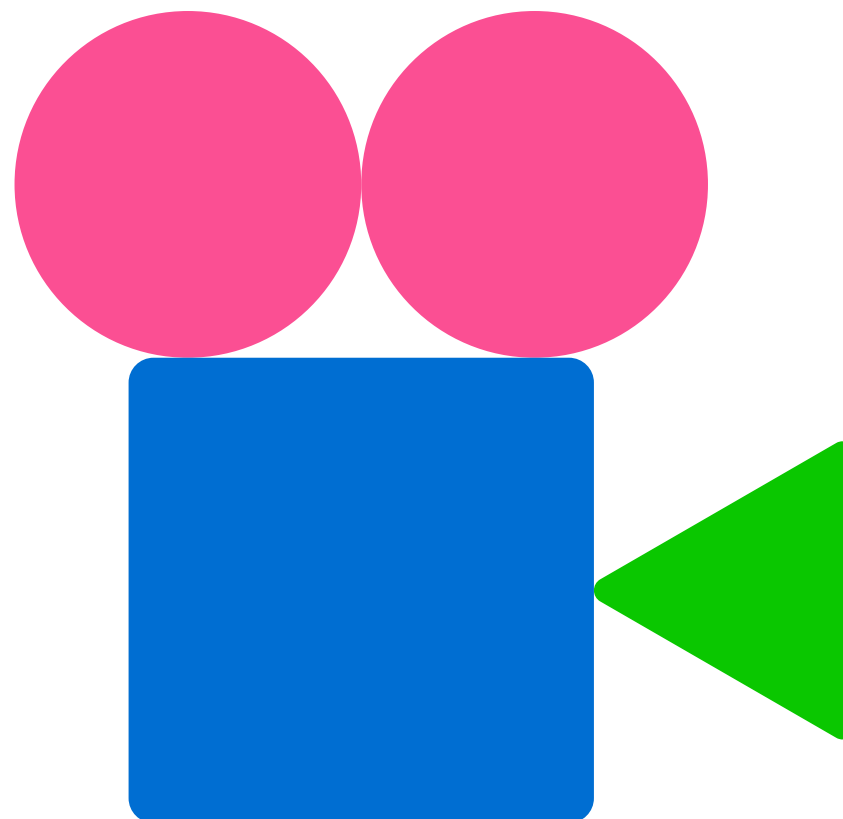
*Public Perceptions of VOD Classification (2018) – Ashworth Research.
bbfc.co.uk/2019datapack

Overview of best practice recommendations

VOD services (those offering video content by rental, purchase, subscription or advertising to UK audiences) should consider the following when age labelling video content:

1. A consistent set of BBFC age labelling should be used across all VOD services.
2. Ratings should always be represented by the formal BBFC classification symbols.
3. Services should work towards full coverage with BBFC age ratings across VOD content.
4. Although all titles should carry a BBFC age rating, any that don't should be clearly labelled 'Not Rated', with a policy of restricting such content to over 18s (unless the content is clearly children's programming).
5. Age labels must be easily understandable for the public and reflect the expectations of UK audiences.
6. Additional ratings info (for example, 'drug misuse, discrimination') should be used alongside the age rating wherever available.
7. Age ratings should always be displayed and accredited at least once before the call to action (the prompt to transact, download, stream, play or view). They should be easily found.
8. Services should have arrangements in place so that content has UK age labelling before it is made available to the public.
9. Services should detail in FAQs, across all platforms on which their service operates, how they age label content.
10. Parental controls should be linked to BBFC ratings categories. Users should be able to search or filter by BBFC ratings categories.

Any services displaying BBFC age ratings must enter into a licence with the BBFC. See [Getting permission to use BBFC age ratings](#) on page 30 for more information.



The BBFC age rating symbols

The BBFC's age rating symbols support safe, informed viewing choices for UK audiences. They are seen in cinemas, on DVD packaging and online where they are understood and trusted.



The BBFC's new symbols retain the colour, shape and text labelling of the previous symbols so that they remain instantly recognisable.

The new symbols will be seen on VOD services, film listing services, and on the black card before films in UK cinemas. They will also be used on packaging for physical media such as DVD and Blu-ray from spring 2020.

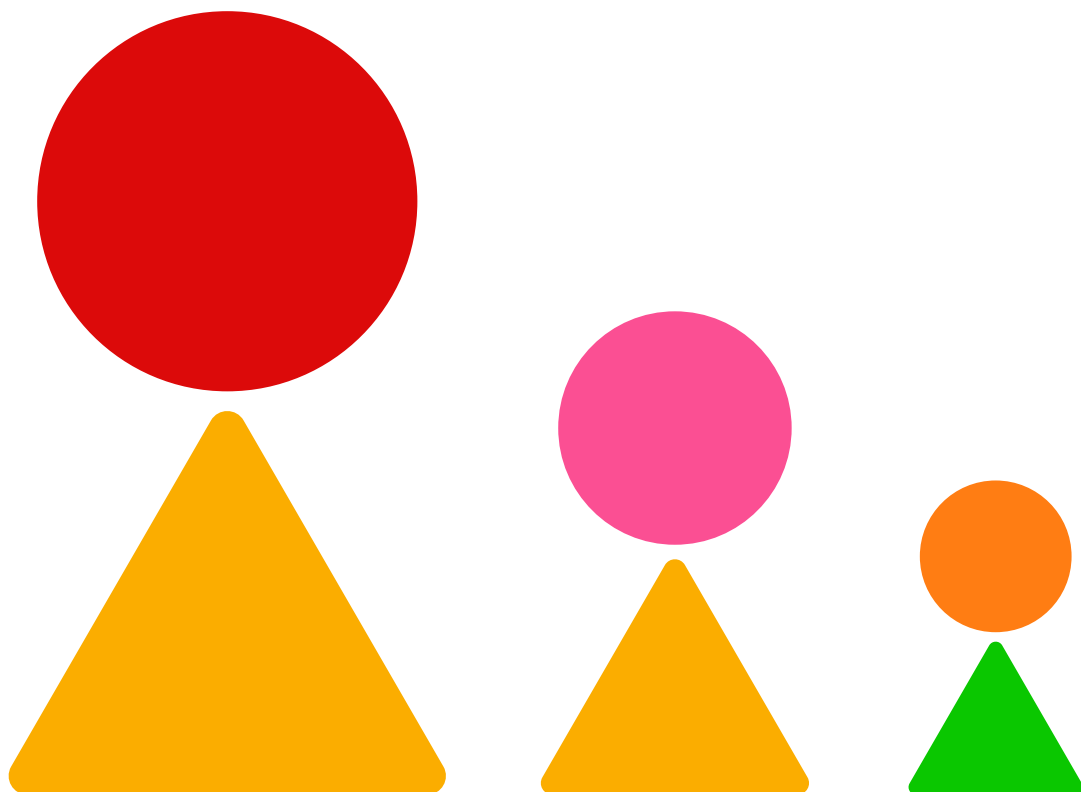
The symbols should be used to represent BBFC age ratings on VOD services wherever possible. This guide explains how to best display these symbols from 31 October 2019.

Note: 12A is a cinema classification only and is not for use on VOD services. The R18 symbol is available for use by licensed services carrying BBFC R18 rated adult content.

Key principles for displaying age ratings on your service

There are two important points about age labelling that VOD user interface design should consider:

- Is the age rating easy to find?
- Is the age rating understandable to UK audiences?



This leads to two key principles for age labelling on services:

1. The user should always be able to see an age rating which is attributed to its source and additional ratings info at least once before the call to action.*

- 1.1 The user should not have to scroll up or down a page (or navigate to additional pages) to see age labelling and ratings info.

2. Age labels must be applied consistently, attributed to the provider of the label and understood by UK audiences.

- 2.1 Services should work towards displaying BBFC age ratings across all content. This includes asking content distributors to attain BBFC age ratings for content they supply.
- 2.2 BBFC ratings should have an official BBFC symbol or, where that is not possible, be labelled as 'BBFC' in plain text using a format consistent across UK services.
- 2.3 Any unrated titles should be labelled using a format consistent across UK services (e.g. 'Not Rated').
- 2.4 Services should work towards displaying BBFC age ratings across all content. This includes asking distributors to ensure supplied content is classified by the BBFC for use in the home.
- 2.5 Content not rated by the BBFC should be kept to a minimum and be clearly and consistently labelled as 'Not Rated' across the platform, or employ a consistent single 'advisory' system that makes clear the ratings in question are not from the BBFC, in order to avoid confusion.
- 2.6 Additional content advice such as BBFC Ratings Info should be used alongside the BBFC rating before the call to action wherever it is available.
- 2.7 Age ratings should be integrated with parental controls by category.
- 2.8 Age ratings, and how they link to parental controls, should be explained within service FAQs.
- 2.9 All these principles should be implemented across all platforms with UK customer/audiences.

*'Call to action' is the first time the user is prompted to perform one of the following actions:

- View, stream or download the content.
- Buy or rent the content.

More best practice principles

Services should use age labelling systems familiar to local audiences and ratings that reflect their expectations. Services should use BBFC age labels for film content, and for TV content wherever possible.

Do's

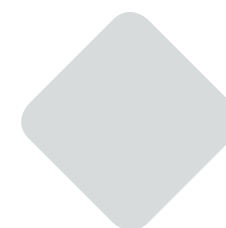
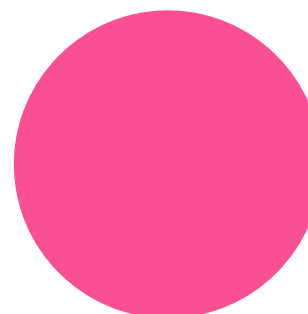
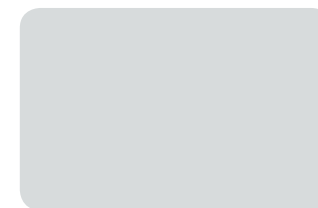
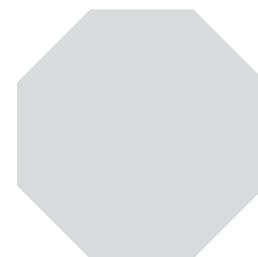
- Services should work towards consistent use of BBFC age ratings across all content.
- Content rated by other methods should be clearly labelled and explained using the principles within this document. It should be clear to the user where content is not BBFC age rated.
- Any unrated titles should be clearly and consistently labelled as such (e.g. 'Not Rated').
- Services should establish and enforce policies on age labelling and parental controls that support best practice for UK audiences.
- Where third party content is licensed for VOD services, new and existing distributors should supply the content with a BBFC rating.
- Services that carry their own original content should have that content rated by the BBFC.
- Services should have a process to enable content to display BBFC age ratings from the moment it goes live on a service – including episodic content.

Our promise

The BBFC is committed to providing efficient, affordable, world leading classification services so that UK age ratings and trusted advice are available for all content on VOD platforms which are accessible to UK consumers.

Don'ts

- Carrying non-UK age ratings (e.g. MPAA, US TV ratings), converting age ratings from other territories, offering ratings systems not understood by your audience is not advised.
- Binary age labels such as 'CAUTION' or 'GUIDANCE' are not recommended, but if used should be accompanied by definitions of each term so audiences know how to use the label effectively.



Obtaining BBFC age rating symbols

Best practice guidelines recommend the use of BBFC age rating symbols wherever possible.



Services should ensure that their User Interfaces (UIs) are optimised across all devices to **display these symbols at least once before the call to action** (the prompt to transact or view/download the content).

Facsimiles of BBFC symbols **must not** be used.

Obtaining the symbols

The assets for our new symbols are available on request from digital@bbfc.co.uk. These assets should not be used on services until 31 October 2019. Contact the BBFC if you need earlier access to the symbols.

What sizes should BBFC age rating symbols be displayed?

The BBFC symbols are recommended for use on UIs at around 30px height or larger.

The symbols can also be used as small as 24px height. For all other uses the BBFC offers alternative labelling solutions.

Recommended size:	30px height
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Minimum permitted size:	24px height
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Below 24px height:	See Alternative age rating labelling options section
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Where should the age rating be positioned?

Age ratings should appear alongside, or underneath, the title of the work.

Example

Ghostbumps 2

Implementation notes:

- An age rating, attributed to its source (e.g. BBFC), should always be displayed before the call to action. The call to action is the option to transact, download, stream, view or play.
- Alternatively, if after the call to action, the rating must clearly be visible to the user without scrolling.
- Using the BBFC symbols as illustrated here is sufficient to attribute the rating to the BBFC.

Some UIs, and some pages/sections on services, may not be optimised to display BBFC age rating symbols. In this case alternative methods for attributing age ratings are available. See [Alternative age rating labelling options](#) on page 17 for more information.

VoD247

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TV

Family

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My account

Subscriptions

Favourites

Parent guide

Movies > Action & Adventure

PG

Frequent scary scenes

Released 2019
1 hour 31 mins
★★★★☆

Add to Favourites

Watch now for £10

PG

Frequent scary scenes

Late one evening after school, April's dog, Luna, runs away from their sleepy family home. Desperate to find her, April calls on her best friends May and Jude to search the abandoned theme park for her beloved pooch. The three must work together because behind every door lurks a mysterious fright. You must be this 'scared' to ride this rollercoaster.

PG

Frequent scary scenes

Starring	Directed by	Written by
Annie Appleby	Janice Godfrey	Janice Godfrey
Bella Brighton		
Charlie Cannock		
Dennis Dillon		

PG

Frequent scary scenes

IMDb	Rotten Tomatoes	Language	Subtitles
5.9	62%	English	English [CC]
Runtime	Rating		
1 hour 31 mins	<div>PG</div> Frequent scary scenes		

Reviews

★★★★★

Garth Newson

I don't really enjoy scary films, but my kids begged me to play it, I'm glad I did! We didn't stop laughing, I hadn't thought it was going to be so funny. Would recommend to anyone who needs cheering up with chuckle!

Juliet London

We all loved the first Ghostbusters, and the sequel didn't disappoint. Children's films don't always suit us because of the silly immature jokes, but this one was different. Really enjoyable, even for Granny. Five stars.

You may also like

£3

★★★★★

£10

★★★★★

£2

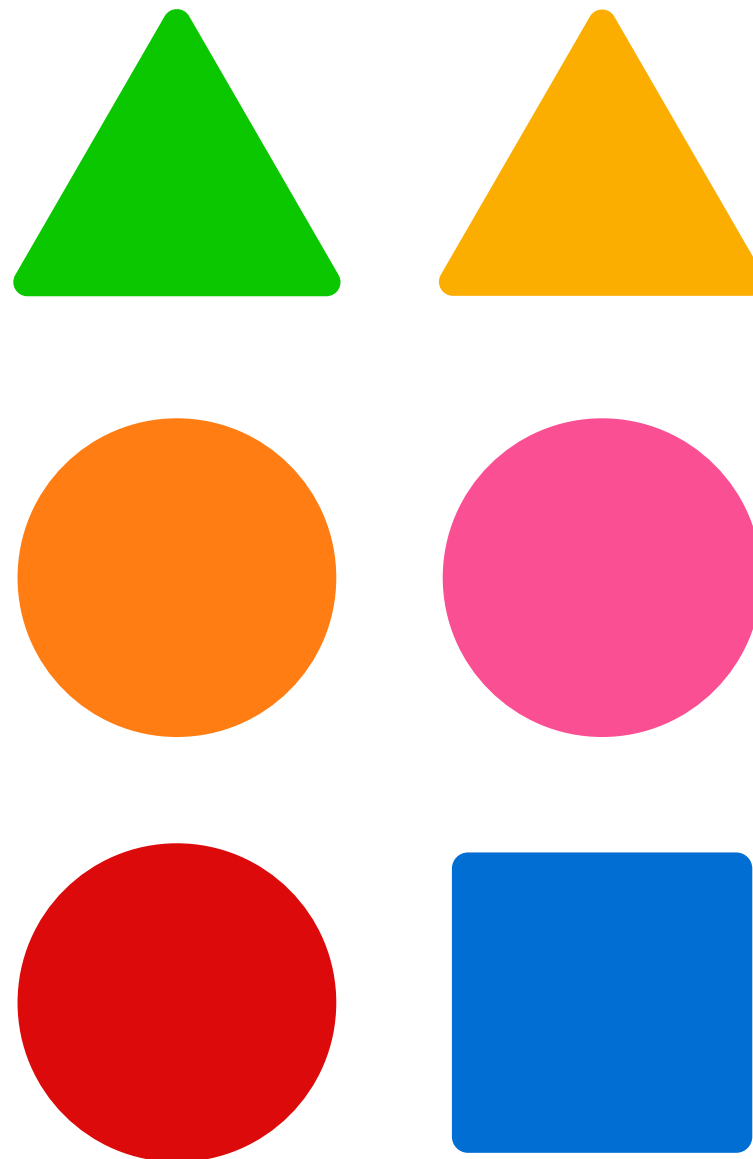
★★★★★

Which BBFC age ratings may be used on VOD services?

The BBFC's age ratings take into account where the content is made available (e.g. in cinemas, in the home). Services should consider the following information when choosing which BBFC age rating to display on VOD:

1. BBFC symbols (or alternative BBFC age labelling methods) may only be used alongside BBFC classified films or episodes.
2. BBFC ratings issued for use on packaged media (i.e. DVD/Blu-ray), or for digital-only use can be used.
3. BBFC ratings issued for use in cinema cannot be used, except in the following circumstances:
 - BBFC cinema ratings may be used where theatrical versions of works are made available on In Flight Entertainment services on airlines. When the work is then rated for home entertainment use by the BBFC the rating displayed should be updated to reflect this as soon as possible (e.g. when a work classified 12A for cinema is then classified 12 for home entertainment).
 - Where a work is being made available for pre-order the theatrical rating may be displayed under the conditions stated in the 'Labelling pre-order content' section of this document.

VOD services must have a licence with the BBFC to use its ratings. See [Getting permission to use BBFC age ratings](#) on page 30 for more information.



Additional guidelines around displaying BBFC age rating symbols

Misuse of symbols

Services should only use the BBFC age rating symbols as supplied.

They must not create their own facsimile versions of BBFC age rating symbols.

Services using our symbols should not alter the assets provided, including changing the colours, angle, dimensions or relationship between elements.

The symbols have been designed to work on both light and dark backgrounds.

See [What sizes should BBFC age rating symbols be displayed?](#) on page 8 for more information.



...edit the symbols in any way



...add additional outlines



...add effects such as drop shadows



...stretch or skew the symbols

PG



...isolate the lettering

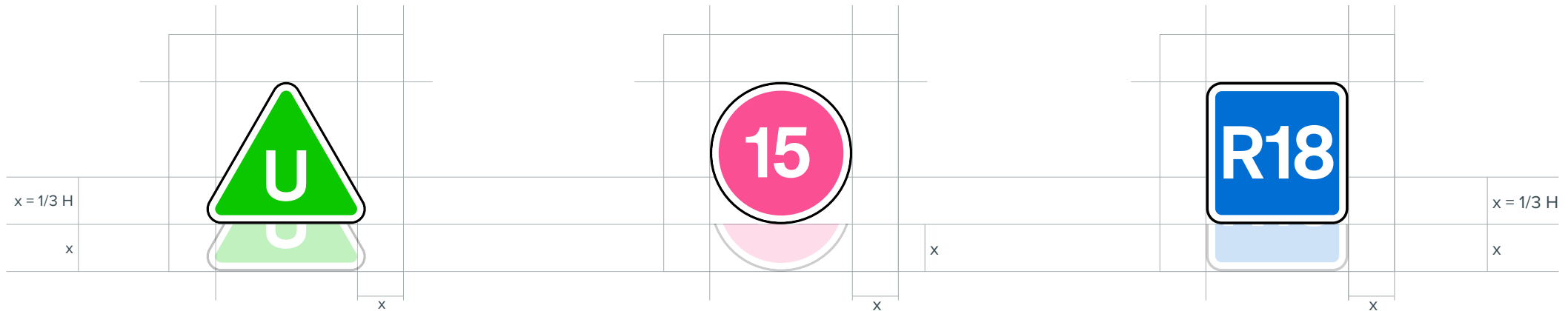


...rotate the symbols

Additional guidelines around displaying BBFC age rating symbols

Exclusion zone

Where possible please leave a clear area of at least half the width of the symbol around it for clarity and legibility.



Labelling pre-order content

Services may display a BBFC cinema classification for a title on pre-order under the following circumstances:

- When content has not yet been classified by the BBFC for home entertainment use, but the identical version has a BBFC cinema classification.
- The label 'TBC*' should be alongside all uses of an age label for the pre-order. This should link to the following disclaimer, ideally on the page, or hot-linked to a section in your FAQs that says the following:

'A version of this work was classified by the BBFC for use in UK cinemas. This work is not yet rated for home entertainment use.'
- If content is released with a higher age rating than during the pre-order period, services should have processes in place to notify customers of the ratings change – or cancel and refund orders where appropriate.
- Services should ensure access to pre-orders is restricted based on the expected classification for the work (or based on the equivalent cinema classification).

Examples

Ghostbumps 2 

Ghostbumps 2

 PG (TBC)

*A version of this work was classified by the BBFC for use in UK cinemas. This work is not yet rated for home entertainment use.

VOD services should remove, or not use a BBFC theatrical classification and 'TBC' on pre-order under the following circumstances:

- When content is not rated by the BBFC for use in cinemas.
- When the home entertainment release is known to be different to the version released in cinemas.
- When the work has a BBFC home entertainment rating.
- When the work is released (ie. it is no longer a pre-order). If no BBFC age rating is available at this stage the rating label should be changed to 'Not Rated'.
- If the content has been refused a BBFC home entertainment rating.

Other uses of TBC age labels

Services can use the following generic 'TBC' age labelling for pre-order content if they are unable to give an indication of the age suitability of the content.

TBC

It is recommended any pre-orders for this content is restricted to those 18 years old or over.

Example

Ghostbumps 2 **TBC**

See [Alternative age rating labelling options](#) on page 18 to 21 for more information on using TBC labelling where this symbol cannot be displayed.



TV – age labelling for episodic content

It is important that UK consumers understand all the content that they are about to view – including episodic TV-like content.

Episodic content includes new TV episode length works that premiere online in season or show box sets, or as weekly or daily episodes. TV back catalogue content is also considered 'episodic content'.

The BBFC provides age ratings for this content at episodic, season and show level.

The strength of some episodic content may change during the course of a season or over multiple seasons. The strength of other shows may change very little.

Services using BBFC age ratings for episodic content should work towards the following best practice advice:

- Wherever a show (a collection of seasons or episodes) is made available the overall show rating should be displayed wherever the show is accessible on your service. This allows the audience to understand the strength of the entire show.
- Wherever a season is made available in isolation the overall season rating should be displayed. For example, if you are promoting a specific new season of a show.
- If no overall rating has been supplied by the BBFC, the season should carry the rating of the highest rated episode or rated element. If not all episodes are classified this should be made clear too.
- Per episode classifications should be shown wherever episodes are available individually (as opposed to as a season or show). Either before the call to action or as an in-picture 'bug'/'DOG' for the first 3 seconds when the episode is first played.



TV – age labelling for season passes

Some services allow users to buy season passes for entire TV seasons before all episodes are rated and released.

Services should make best endeavours to restrict the purchase of these passes to appropriate audiences only, and to ensure that the customer understands the strength of the content before they buy.

The following guidance should be implemented:

- If the season has some BBFC rated elements the season pass may use the BBFC age rating for the highest rated element. This should be marked as a '(TBC*)' rating – as per the guidance for pre-orders. Sales of/access to these titles should be restricted accordingly.
- If a pre-order has no rated elements, the season pass may carry the rating for the highest rated previous season of that show and again mark this as a '(TBC*)' rating – as per the guidance for pre-orders. Sales of/access to these specific titles should be restricted accordingly.
- The displayed 'TBC' rating should be updated whenever a higher rated element is added to the season. Sales of/access to these specific titles should be restricted accordingly.
- Where a pre-order contains no BBFC classified material, services may display a Not Rated label.
- FAQs should explain how the 'TBC' ratings on pre-orders work.



Electronic Black Cards

The BBFC supports the use of pre-rolling electronic versions of our cinema black cards before VOD content.

The BBFC can supply an Electronic Black Card (EBC) upon request. These retain the familiar elements of this iconic design, but are optimised for use on screens in the home and on personal devices.

ECBs come in two formats



1. Generic category EBCs

This is one card for each age rating category. It does not refer to the work specifically but indicates that a work is rated at the stated category.

A service would store the 5 assets (U, PG, 12, 15, 18), and dynamically pre-roll the correct card depending on the rating of the work it proceeds



2. Bespoke per title EBCs

We can supply bespoke cards for specific works. These contain the title of the work and the specific ratings info, as well as generic information about the specific category.

Usage rules

- EBCs should be displayed for between 3 and 5 seconds immediately before the main content plays – this is to be clear that only the following content (and no pre-rolled adverts or extras) are classified.
- EBCs should not be used in isolation as the only form of age labelling supplied. They should be used in conjunction with other attributed pre-call to action age labelling set out in this guidance.
- Use of EBCs must be under agreement with the BBFC and arranged directly via digital@bbfc.co.uk

Alternative age rating labelling options

Services should make commercially reasonable efforts to display BBFC age ratings as set out in the [How to position and display age ratings on your service](#) on page 8.

Where BBFC age ratings cannot be displayed as recommended, the following alternative labelling options are provided so that UK customers understand that the content has the same trusted age ratings.

Provisions for effective age labelling of content set out in this guidance should be implemented across all devices and platforms, and include streaming and downloaded content.



Alternative age rating labelling options

General usage where a graphic cannot be used

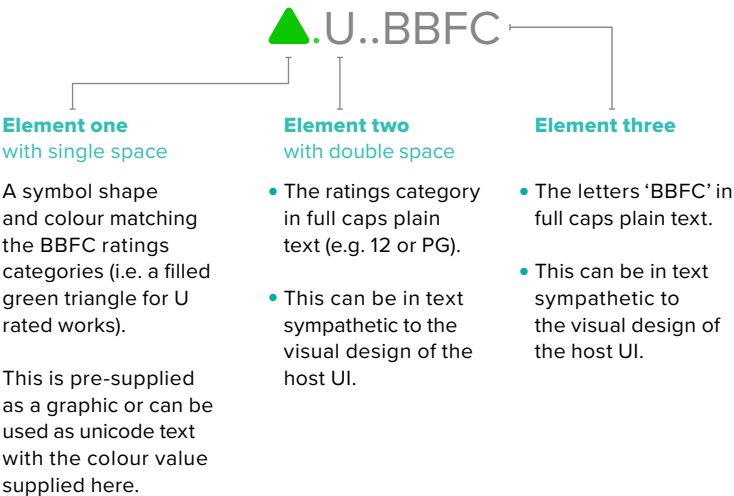
Option 1 – Use of small symbols

Where the UI cannot reasonably accommodate a classification symbol at 24px height or higher this is the default alternative labelling option:

▲ U BBFC ▲ PG BBFC ● 12 BBFC ● 15 BBFC ● 18 BBFC

Here the age label consists of three elements to be used in combination.

This is to be presented as follows:



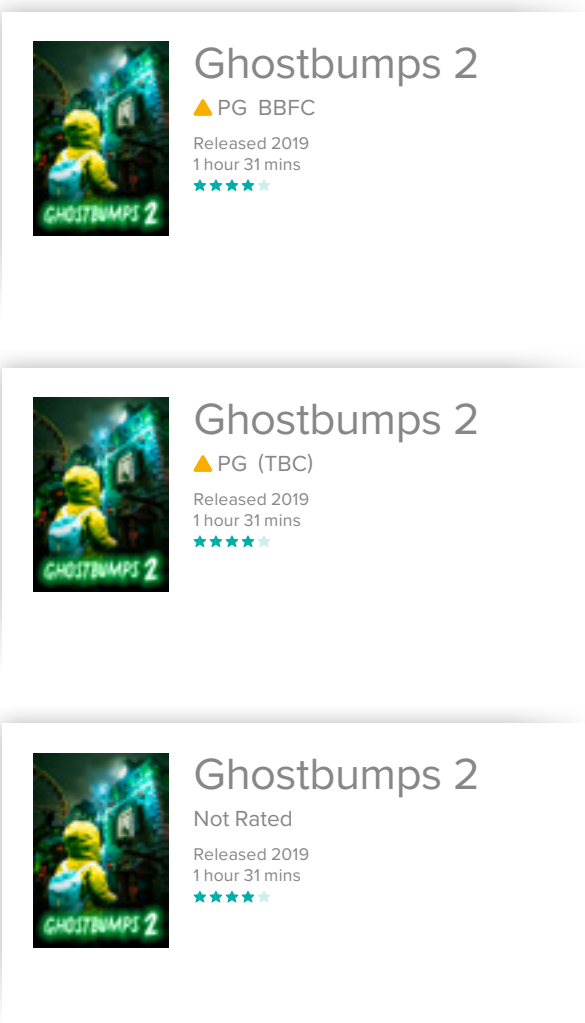
Alternative 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labelling – Option 1

▲ U (TBC) ▲ PG (TBC) ● 12 (TBC) ● 15 (TBC) ● 18 (TBC)

In plain text 'TBC' classifications should be displayed as here.

Works that won't carry an age rating at all should display 'Not Rated' in plain text wherever the rating would usually be.

The [Labelling pre-order content](#) section on page 13 provides information on when 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labels should be used.



Sizes

Maximum permitted height: 23px height

Values

The unicode character and colour values are below:

U	(U+25B2)	#0ac700
PG	(U+25B2)	#fbad00
12	(U+25CF)	#f7d133
15	(U+25CF)	#fb4f93
18	(U+25CF)	#dc0a0a
R18	(U+25A0)	#006ed2

- ▲ (U+25B2) HTML entity: ▲
- (U+25CF) HTML entity: ●
- (U+25A0) HTML entity: ■

Usage rules

UIs should always be configured to display the full BBFC age rating symbol at least once before the call to action. This alternative labelling option is for other uses.

Alternative age rating labelling options

General usage where a graphic cannot be used

Option 2 – Small plain text only

Where a UI cannot be configured to handle graphic images or the unicode text formulation in Option 1 BBFC age ratings should be labelled using the following plain text formulation:

U BBFC

PG BBFC

12 BBFC

15 BBFC

18 BBFC

R18 BBFC

Note: The double-space between the rating and the BBFC text

Alternative 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labelling – Option 2

U (TBC)

PG (TBC)

12 (TBC)

15 (TBC)

18 (TBC)

R18 (TBC)

Not Rated

In plain text 'TBC' classifications should be displayed as here.

Works that won't carry an age rating at all should display 'Not Rated' in plain text wherever the rating would usually be.

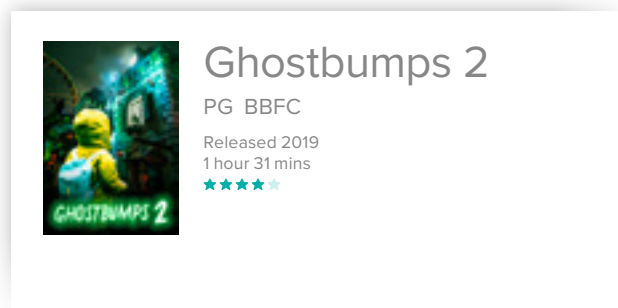
The [Labelling pre-order content](#) section on page 13 provides information on when 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labels should be used.

Sizes

Maximum permitted height: 23px height

Example 1

Ghostbumps 2
PG BBFC



Example 2

Ghostbumps 2 (PG BBFC)



Example 3

Ghostbumps 2
PG (TBC)



Example 4

Ghostbumps 2
Not Rated



Alternative age rating labelling options

General usage where a graphic cannot be used

Option 3 – Small plain text only

Where the requirements of Alternative Age Labelling Options 1 and 2 cannot be met, age ratings should be labelled using the following plain text formulation:

Film title (U)

Film title (PG)

Film title (12)

Film title (U)

Alternative 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labelling

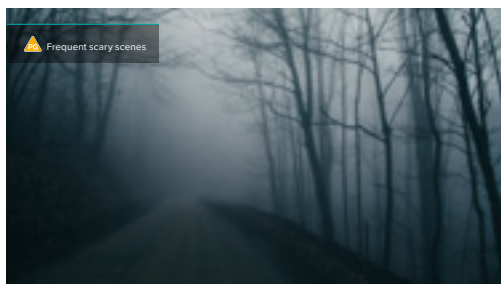
Use the Alternate 'TBC' or 'Not Rated' labelling – Option 2 formulation on page 19.

Sizes

Maximum permitted height: 23px height

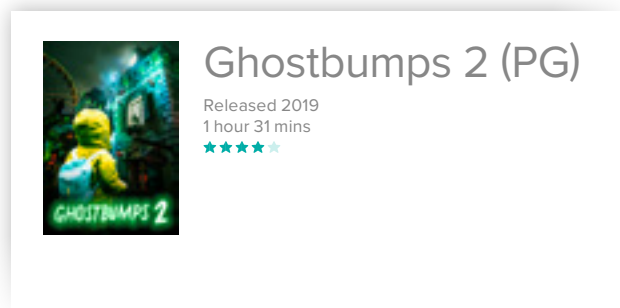
Usage conditions

This option should only be used where a BBFC symbol or a rating with attribution to the BBFC (see below) is displayed elsewhere **before** the call to action, or as an in picture 'bug'/'DOG' for the first 3 seconds of playback.



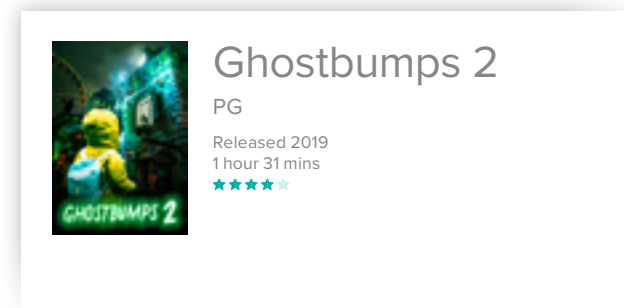
Example 1

Ghostbumps 2 (PG)



Example 2

Ghostbumps 2
PG



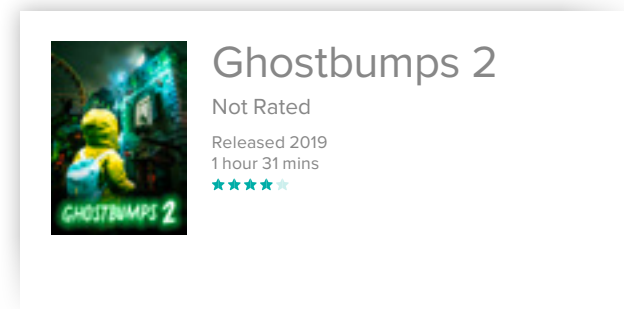
Example 3

Ghostbumps 2
PG (TBC)



Example 4

Ghostbumps 2
Not Rated



Alternative age rating labelling options

Displaying ratings in search results, browsing pages and where a graphic cannot be used.

Where a service has pages that contain multiple films, shows, seasons or episodes on a single page (such as a home page, genre page or search results page) the BBFC recommends that age labels are used whenever possible.

Where the UI design does not permit the use of BBFC symbols, the following options should be used in this order of suitability:

Option 1

▲ U BBFC ▲ PG BBFC ● 12 BBFC ● 15 BBFC ● 18 BBFC

Option 2

U BBFC PG BBFC 12 BBFC 15 BBFC 18 BBFC

Note: The double-space between the rating and the BBFC text.

Option 3

Film title (U) Film title (PG) Film title (12) Film title (15) Film title (18)

Note: This unattributed age labelling format is only for use where an attributed rating BBFC (see image below) is displayed elsewhere on the service before the call to action.

For example. If a service features multiple films and ratings on the homepage, this format may be used as long as an attributed rating is before the prompt to view, buy, download, rent or stream.

Option 1



Ghostbusters 2
▲ PG BBFC
Action & Adventure

£10 ★★★★★



Mary Poppins Returns
▲ U BBFC
Family

£10 ★★★★★



Aquaman
● 12 BBFC
Sci-Fi & Fantasy

£5 ★★★★★

Option 2



Ghostbusters 2
PG BBFC
Action & Adventure

£10 ★★★★★



Mary Poppins Returns
U BBFC
Family

£10 ★★★★★



Aquaman
12 BBFC
Sci-Fi & Fantasy

£5 ★★★★★

Option 3



Ghostbusters 2 (PG)
Action & Adventure

£10 ★★★★★



Mary Poppins Returns (U)
Family

£10 ★★★★★



Aquaman (12)
Sci-Fi & Fantasy

£5 ★★★★★

Supplementing age ratings with additional 'ratings info'

Ratings info is short content advice produced for each feature length or episodic work rated by the BBFC.

This information supplements the age rating and allows consumers to make better informed viewing choices.

Best practice guidelines on age labelling promote the use of BBFC Ratings Info and other advisories to supplement age ratings wherever possible.

Services displaying BBFC age ratings should make best efforts to display and attribute ratings info alongside the age rating wherever possible.

Examples

Destroyer

(15 – Very strong language, strong violence, sex)

Ghostbumps 2

(PG – Frequent scary scenes)

How to display ratings info:

Ratings info should be displayed before the call to action (before the viewer is given the option to transact, download, stream or view), or as an in-picture 'bug'/'DOG' for the first 3 seconds whenever the work is played.

The rating info does not need to be attributed or listed as 'ratings info' if used alongside BBFC symbols, or an age rating otherwise attributed to the BBFC.

Examples

Ghostbumps 2

Frequent scary scenes

or

Ghostbumps 2 (PG – BBFC)

Frequent scary scenes

Otherwise the info should be formatted as follows:

BBFC ratings info: [insert ratings info here]

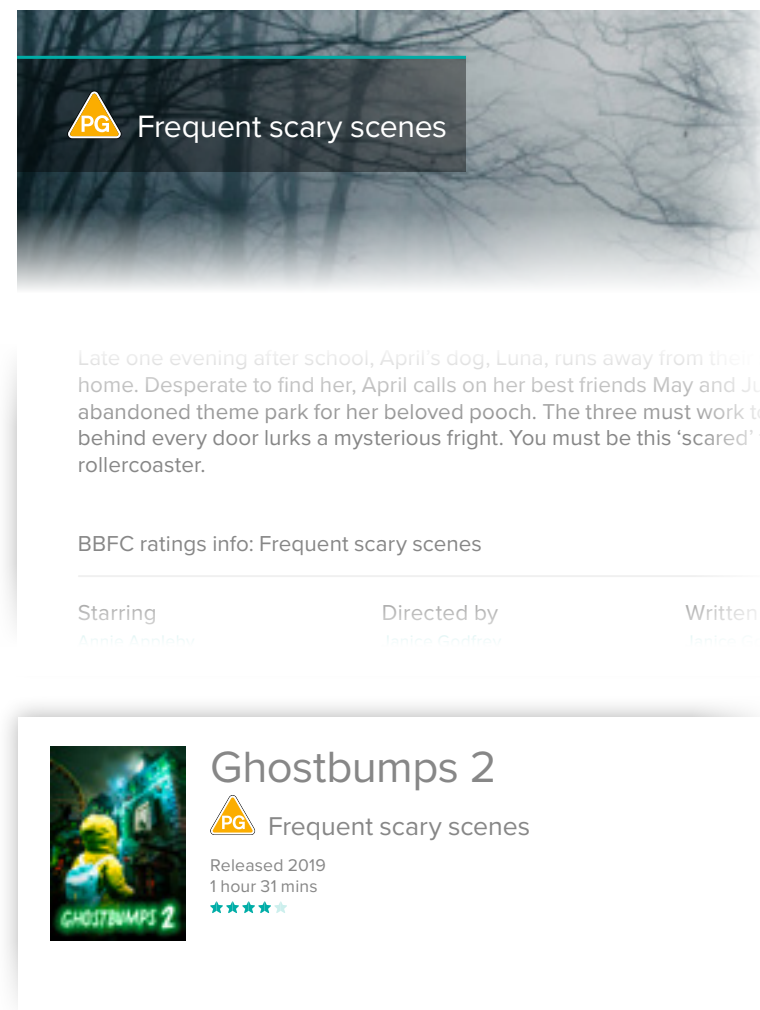
Example

Ghostbumps 2 (PG)

BBFC ratings info: Frequent scary scenes

How to obtain ratings info

Ratings info is usually delivered to services alongside the content and age rating by distributors. It is also available on our website, app and other ratings feeds. For more information about establishing a feed of our ratings info please contact digital@bbfc.co.uk



Supplementing age ratings with additional 'ratings info'


Recommended lock-up

With title, rating and info

1. BBFC symbol and info used together locked to title:



Ghostbumps 2

 Frequent scary scenes

Alternative lock-ups

1. BBFC symbol and info used together locked to title:



Ghostbumps 2 

Frequent scary scenes

2. BBFC symbol and info used together locked to title:



Ghostbumps 2  Frequent scary scenes

3. Attributed plain text rating used alongside ratings info:



Ghostbumps 2

PG BBFC Frequent scary scenes

4. Attributed plain text rating used alongside ratings info:



Ghostbumps 2

 PG BBFC Frequent scary scenes

5. Attributed plain text rating with ratings info locked into title:



Ghostbumps 2 (PG BBFC)

Frequent scary scenes

6. Unattributed plain text rating with ratings info locked into title (only correct if a BBFC symbol or attribution is made before the call to action or as the work plays):



Ghostbumps 2 (PG)

Frequent scary scenes

7. Attributed small symbol rating used below 24px height with ratings info locked into title:



Ghostbumps 2 

PG BBFC Frequent scary scenes

8. Attributed ratings info (correctly implemented at the foot of a synopsis when a rating has already been displayed locked to the title of the work).



Late one evening after school, April's dog, Luna, runs away from their sleepy family home. Desperate to find her, April calls on her best friends May and Jude to search the abandoned theme park for her beloved pooch.

BBFC ratings info: Frequent scary scenes

Supplementing age ratings with additional 'ratings info'

Not recommended

1. Unattributed ratings info used where an BBFC attributed rating has not been used:

✗ Ghostbumps 2 Frequent scary scenes

2. Duplicate attribution to the BBFC (plain text attributed age rating and BBFC symbol):

✗ Ghostbumps 2 (PG BBFC)
 Frequent scary scenes

3. Duplicate attribution to the BBFC (BBFC symbol and attributed ratings info):

✗ Ghostbumps 2 
BBFC ratings info: Frequent scary scenes

4. Small symbols used at above the 24px minimum height requirement:

✗ Ghostbumps 2  PG BBFC
Frequent scary scenes

5. Unattributed ratings info not locked into a BBFC rating. (Incorrectly implemented at the top of a synopsis when a rating has already been displayed locked to the title of the work).

✗ Frequent scary scenes

Late one evening after school, April's dog, Luna, runs away from their sleepy family home. Desperate to find her, April calls on her best friends May and Jude to search the abandoned theme park for her beloved pooch.

Labelling content without an age rating

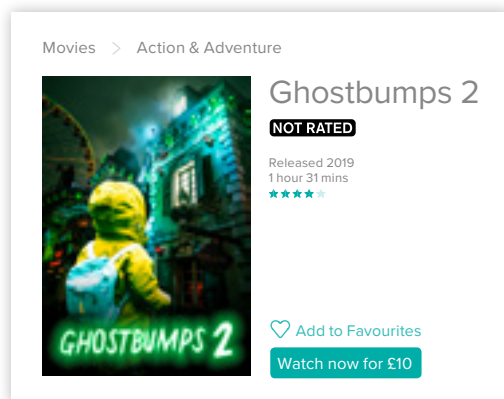
Labelling unrated content

Best practice guidelines promote the consistent labelling of content – be it rated or unrated.

Films or episodes without a BBFC age rating should be consistently displayed with a 'Not Rated' label.

This can be in plain text, or using the lozenge symbol provided by the BBFC.

This symbol should be reproduced at the same height as other age labelling symbols. The lines and text can be recoloured either white or black and made up to 75% opaque.



'Not Rated' labels should always be placed on the UI where an age rating symbol (or alternative) would usually be placed.

Services **should not** use any of the following to indicate a work is not classified by the BBFC:

- The plain label 'Unrated'.
- Design a label that states 'not rated' or anything similar that looks like any existing or previous BBFC age category or symbol (including 'X').
- Leave the ratings space on the UI blank.

Recommended

How unrated works should be labelled

✓ Ghostbusters 2 (Not Rated)

✓ Ghostbusters 2 **NOT RATED**

Not recommended

How unrated works should not be labelled

✗ Ghostbusters 2 (Unrated)

✗ Ghostbusters 2
Unrated

✗ Ghostbusters 2 (UN)

✗ Ghostbusters 2
NR

Any bespoke symbols used to label unrated content must not resemble BBFC classification symbols:

✗ Ghostbusters 2 

✗ Ghostbusters 2 

Labelling content with non-BBFC age labels

Best Practice Guidelines recommend that services work towards having 100% of content carrying BBFC age ratings.

Services that carry content with age ratings not produced by the BBFC, should clearly label that content as such. We recommend that services also take account of the following:

- Ratings must not be displayed using BBFC age rating symbols or other symbols that mimic the colours and shapes of BBFC symbols – as these might imply that a work is BBFC rated (i.e. using a green or yellow triangle, or a red, pink or orange circle).
- Age categories traditionally associated with BBFC age ratings (e.g. U, PG, 12, 15, 18 or R18) should be avoided wherever possible.
- Where the letters or numbers above are used, their non-BBFC source must be clearly attributed at all times. The ratings process for these works should be explained in FAQs so that users understand where the ratings come from and what they mean.

The following format for plain text labelling provides the required clarity:

[Ratings Category] [Provider Name]

Examples

Recommended

13 BT
15 BFI
G Amazon

Not recommended

12
PG
15

Unrated content and parental controls

See [Integrating parental controls and searching with age ratings](#) on page 28 for information on how unrated content should be handled within parental controls.



Ensuring age appropriateness of promotional assets on services

Services should choose promotional assets including artwork, trailers, promos and auto-playing video, on the understanding that they may be seen by a wider audience than intended (even when parental controls/user profile are enabled).

Where content is accessible on a shared screen, services should consider whether each promotional asset is suitable for younger viewers.

The BBFC recommends the following:

- Promotional assets (trailers, bonus content and other auto-playing video) should be BBFC rated where possible.
- These assets do not need to display an age label, but should be restricted to audiences according to the appropriate rating, as above, and the current setting of the parental controls/user profile.
- Where promotional assets are not BBFC rated, they should be restricted to audiences according to the age rating of the content being promoted (e.g. Only 12s and over should see a trailer for a 12 rated film).
- Services should be conscious that promotional assets play unbidden and that if such content contains the strongest material from the episodic content or features it promotes, there is a higher risk of offence. Particular care should be taken with promotional assets dealing with horror or more difficult and upsetting themes (including but not limited to suicide, self-harm and sexual violence). In such cases a warning should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of static imagery (pack shots, posters, banners) which may be seen by the widest possible audience.
- Where services provide feeds of content outside their app, to link users to content within their app (i.e. a feed of content accessible on a host smart TV UI), all promotional assets (imagery, text and video) should be appropriate for the youngest audiences. These feeds should always direct the user to more information about the video (including the age rating and additional ratings info), and not just autoplay the content.



Integrating parental controls and searching with age ratings

Parental controls

Age labelling should be consistently integrated into the host services' parental controls.

Best Practice Guidelines recommend a consistent application of parental controls across services accessible by UK customers.

This means the following:

- All services should offer parental controls that allow adults to restrict the viewing of children they are responsible for.
- Parental controls should be powered by BBFC age rating data where available.
- Parental controls should allow access to content to be restricted based on individual age categories (BBFC age ratings, and any non-BBFC ratings you carry).
- Age categories should not be grouped together – e.g. 15 and 18 together as 'Adults'.
- Unrated works should be handled as 18 rated works by parental controls, unless the content is clearly children's programming.
- Unrated works aimed exclusively at children, or works designed solely to educate and which would not be expected to get a BBFC classification higher than PG, should be handled as PG-level content when parental controls are activated.*
- Services should make sure it is clear to users how any unrated content is handled by parental controls. E.g. Unrated content is handled as 18-level content when parental controls are enabled.

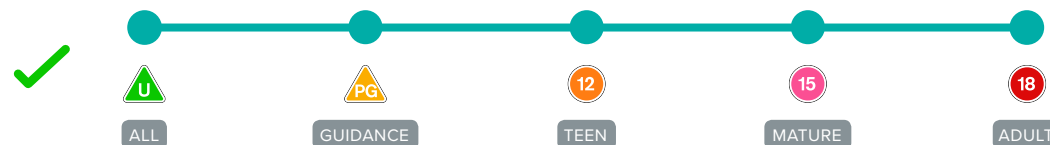
Examples of how parental control should and should not restrict access by BBFC age rating categories.

Recommended

User can restrict content based on individual BBFC age categories:

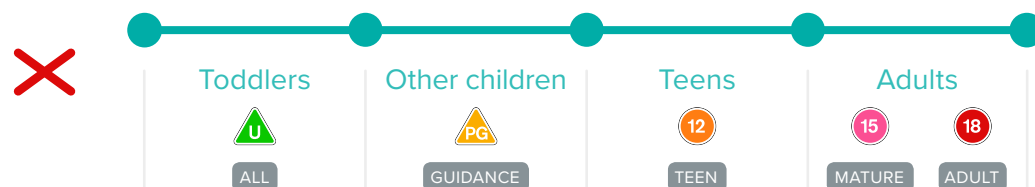


User can restrict content based on individual BBFC age categories and non-BBFC age ratings are positioned within those categories:



Not recommended

BBFC categories are grouped together at adult level:



*This content should be labelled accordingly (not with a BBFC PG), the label should be explained in FAQs and be a selectable additional category within parental controls.

Browsing and searching

Services should allow users to browse and search by BBFC age rating categories.

This could include the following:

- Allow searches to be filtered/refined based on BBFC age ratings categories.
- Offer browsing by BBFC age ratings categories.
- Offer the filtering of genre categories and other pages via BBFC age ratings categories.

Telling users about age ratings on your service

Help/FAQ sections should provide the following information under the heading ‘Age ratings and content suitability’:

- Explain that BBFC age rated content is available, and how this content is identified/labelled.
- Explain what the classification categories mean.
- Explain how any works not rated by the BBFC are labelled and make clear that these ratings are not provided by the BBFC.
- It should carry BBFC trademark and copyright information.

The description of our categories (which should be illustrated using the symbols), and trademark/copyright information is provided in the [Additional information](#) section on page 30 of this document.

Displaying this information

Best practice guidelines advise that users on any device or platform on which a service operates should be given information about the age ratings being provided.

For example, a service which is mostly accessed via mobile app or smart TV should ensure that Help/FAQs are available on those platforms – and not just on accompanying websites.



Additional information

Accessibility and age ratings

Services should ensure that age ratings, the source of age ratings, and ratings info are accessible to all users – including those with sight and/or hearing impairments.

Getting permission to use BBFC age ratings

VOD services making video content available via transactional, subscription or via ad-funded models, require a Digital Video Service Licence to display BBFC age ratings. Please contact digital@bbfc.co.uk to ask for more information about licensing the use of BBFC age ratings and symbols.

Trademark/copyright info

Services using BBFC symbols must provide the following trademark information.

We recommend this is placed alongside the copy about BBFC age ratings in the Help/FAQ section of the service.

© BBFC 2019

® The BBFC symbols are registered trademarks.

Explaining age labelling in Help/FAQ

Services displaying BBFC age rating symbols should provide information about what the age ratings mean alongside other required information set out below, in a section called 'Age ratings and content suitability'.

This should do all of the following:

- Explain that the service carries BBFC age rated content, and how this content is identified/labelled.
- What the classification categories mean.
- How any works that are not rated by the BBFC are labelled – it should also be clear that any such age ratings are not provided by the BBFC.
- How a customer can contact you to complain or feed back about an age rating for content on your service.

Below is some copy that you may wish to use to explain each of our classifications. It should be illustrated with each symbol. See pre-order content and season passes for more information about TBC age rating symbols. **This copy may only be edited with prior approval from the BBFC.**

Age ratings on this service are provided by the BBFC unless stated otherwise.

In the UK, the BBFC gives an age rating to almost all films shown in UK cinemas or sold on DVD/ Blu-ray, and for many films and series available to watch online.

The BBFC's ratings are based on its Classification Guidelines which are informed by large scale research, involving more than 10,000 members of the UK public. The Classification Guidelines are updated every 4-5 years.

BBFC age ratings reflect the age of the audience that the material is appropriate for and allow you to make informed decisions about what you and your family watch, helping to protect younger audiences from inappropriate – even harmful – material.

More information about the BBFC and their age ratings can be found at bbfc.co.uk

The BBFC age rating categories are explained below.



Universal – Suitable for all

A U film should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over. There may be infrequent use only of very mild bad language and no overt focus on sexual behaviour or innuendo. U level content may include scary scenes or intense moments where characters are placed in danger, but these scenes will be brief and counterbalanced by reassuring elements such as comedy, and have positive narrative outcomes.



Uc

Some older titles on this service were classified 'Uc' by the BBFC. This classification indicates a title that is particularly suitable for pre-school children. The Uc was retired in 2009 and is no longer used.



Parental Guidance

A PG film should not unsettle a child aged around eight or older. In a PG work, language should be mild, as should any depiction of sexual activity; references to sex may be permissible but only if they are undetailed. Antisocial behaviour, such as bullying, or scenes of discriminatory behaviour must be clearly criticised and not condoned. There should be no detail of potentially dangerous behaviour (eg. playing with electricity) if that behaviour is seen as fun. Smoking and drinking will not be promoted or glamorised. There may be innocuous or passing references to illegal drugs or drugs misuse, but references or depictions should be quite undetailed. Violence will generally be mild but may include occasional and undetailed sight of injury detail; fantasy or historical settings may mitigate. Threatening or scary scenes should not be prolonged or intense.

Classification explanations continue on the following page.

Explaining age labelling in Help/FAQ

12 TBC

Video release suitable for 12 years and over

No one younger than 12 may rent or buy a 12 rated video. There may be moderate language. Strong language may be permitted, depending on context and frequency. Sex may be briefly and discreetly portrayed and there may be nudity, but nudity in a sexual context should only be brief and discreet. Dangerous behaviour may be present, but should not dwell on detail, and there should be no promotion of any dangerous activity that children are likely to copy. Violence will be moderate but there may be occasional gory moments. Sexual violence may only be implied and any depictions of sexual threat must be brief. Horror sequences may be permitted but they should not be frequent or sustained. Discriminatory behaviour should not be condoned and any aggressive discriminatory behaviour is unlikely to be acceptable.

15 TBC

Suitable only for 15 years and over

No one younger than 15 may see a 15 film in a cinema. No one younger than 15 may rent or buy a 15 rated video. There may be strong violence, portrayals of sexual activity and strong verbal references to sex, nudity in a sexual context, brief scenes of sexual violence or verbal references to sexual violence, discriminatory language or behaviour and scenes of drug taking as long as these are not glamorised. There may be frequent strong language, and very strong language may be permitted depending on context.

18 TBC

Suitable only for adults

No one younger than 18 may see an 18 film in a cinema. No one younger than 18 may rent or buy an 18 rated video. The 18 rating is for adults only and can contain strong issues such as very strong violence, very strong language, strong portrayals of sexual activity, scenes of sexual violence, strong horror, strong bloody violence and gore, real sex (in some circumstances) and strong discriminatory language and behaviour.

R18

Adult Works

To be shown only in specially licensed cinemas, or supplied only in licensed sex shops, to adults only. Primarily for explicit works of consenting sex or strong fetish material involving adults. R18 rated content is only available online via BBFC-licensed VOD services with pin-protected parental controls. R18 content may not be supplied by mail order.

Note to services: Services not carrying R18 adult works do not need to make the R18 description available.

Pre-order content and season passes.

Some content on this service displays BBFC age labels as guidance only. Where you see (TBC*) next to an age label it means that this version of a work is not yet rated or that all episodes may not be rated by the BBFC. The ratings should be used by customers as a guide only.

The following are always indicated by '(TBC*)' being displayed after the rating.

Pre-order film content

To allow customers to pre-order content with some expectation of its age appropriateness, the UK cinema rating for the same work may be displayed temporarily.

This means that a version of this work was classified by the BBFC for use in UK cinemas. This work is not yet rated for home entertainment, but may be by the time the pre-ordered content becomes available. Customers will be notified if the pre-ordered work obtains a higher classification before release.

Season passes for TV

Customers ordering season passes of shows not yet rated should be aware that the BBFC age label displayed is a guide to the expected suitability of the content. This is based on the highest rated element of the show so far, or the highest rated previous season of a show.

More information about the BBFC and their age ratings can be found at bbfc.co.uk

**For advice, any further information or questions
arising from the BBFC VOD User Guidelines,
please contact digital@bbfc.co.uk**

Get the latest age ratings and ratings info on our app
bbfc.co.uk/app

British Board of Film Classification

3 Soho Square,
London,
W1D 3HD

T 020 7440 1570

bbfc.co.uk

bbfc View what's
right for you