

BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Thursday 15 June 2023

Present

Natasha Kaplinsky	President
Murphy Cobbing	Vice President
Kamlesh Patel	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Dave Barrett	Deputy Chief Executive
Matt Blakemore	Head of Product (for item 3)
Ceri Proffitt	Data Delivery Manager (for item 3)
Anshita Bhatia	Data Scientist (for item 3)
Jonny Goodman	Compliance 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.

AI update

3. Matt B, Ceri and Anshita joined the meeting to update the Board on one of the BBFC's two AI projects, the 'International Tagging Product' (ICP). The tool is capable of generating a number of international age ratings based on a single compliance viewing, and is being developed to make it easier for VoD services to voluntarily adopt trusted BBFC age ratings in the UK, in line with the Government's best-practice recommendation.
4. Matt and the team provided a demo of the prototype tool, explaining how developments during phase 2 of the project have improved its accuracy and enabled the tool to produce content advisories in certain territories.

MPA ratings

5. Further to the discussion of the ICP, Matt T gave a presentation on the differences between ratings granted by the US Motion Picture Association (MPA) and those issued for UK releases by the BBFC. For example, the presentation included clips from the horror films *M3GAN* and *Old*, both rated PG-13 by the MPA, but 15 (rather than the 'equivalent' 12A) under BBFC guidelines.

Animal cruelty

6. Jonny provided a refresher session on the BBFC's approach to classifying scenes of animal cruelty. The Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937 makes it an offence to show any scene 'organised or directed' for the purposes of the film that involves actual cruelty to animals, specifically the cruel infliction of pain or terror or the cruel goading of any animal to fury. This Act applies to the exhibition of films in cinemas, but the BBFC also applies the same test to video and online releases. Cuts made under this legislation most commonly include head-over-heels horse falls, which may break the horse's neck, and cock-fights orchestrated by the filmmakers. The Act does not, however, prohibit documentary footage of cruelty, or scenes, even if organised or directed for the film, depicting swift humane killings – for example, the ritual slaughter of a bullock in *Apocalypse Now*.

AOB

7. The Board discussed the agenda for the next meeting of the Advisory Panel on Children's Viewing on 5 July.

Date of next meeting: 5 July 2023