

From The Chairman

Lord Pearson of Rannoch
Rannoch Barracks
Rannoch Station
Perthshire
PH17 2QE

5 November 2008

Our ref: 15930420



Thank you for your letter of 16 October, enclosing the latest Newswatch survey. I apologise from the delay in response as I have been away from the office.

I am referring the Newswatch survey to Fran O'Brien and Penny Young for their reference ahead of your meeting with them, but should clarify that they will not be in a position to discuss specific examples cited in the research as these could be the subject of complaints which the Trust might be required to consider in due course on appeal. To do so, would pre-empt any consideration by the Trust.

Please find enclosed an explanatory note which sets out the key changes to the BBC's complaints process following the Trust's review earlier this year. Regarding your concern that there is no external complaints ombudsman, the BBC's Royal Charter and the accompanying agreement between the Secretary of State and the BBC explains that all appeals that raise matters of substance are subject to a right of appeal to the Trust, with the Trust acting as the final arbiter. Ofcom also has jurisdiction to investigate complaints made directly to them relating to harm and offence, protection of children, incitement to crime, rules relating to religion and fairness and privacy; it does not, however, have power to investigate complaints relating to impartiality and accuracy.

I hope that this is helpful and that your forthcoming meeting with Fran O'Brien and Penny Young will prove fruitful.



Sir Michael Lyons
Chairman