

Tim Davie
Director-General, BBC
Broadcasting House
Portland Place
London
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19 November 2020

Dear Tim

BBC Panorama interview with Princess Diana, 20 November 1995

I am writing about the recent publicity surrounding the BBC Panorama interview with Princess Diana.

Ofcom received a complaint from David Hooper asking us to launch an investigation into Earl Spencer's allegations that Princess Diana was induced to participate in the interview as a result of deceptive practices on the part of Martin Bashir.

We have replied to Mr Hooper explaining that, as Ofcom does not have regulatory remit to investigate these issues under the Charter, we will not be launching our own investigation. I enclose copies of this correspondence for your information.

However, we think it is essential that the BBC ensures that the concerns raised about this programme are investigated thoroughly.

As you know, under the BBC Charter and Agreement, the BBC Board has responsibility for BBC internal governance, staffing and management issues. The BBC Board is also responsible for ensuring the BBC fulfils its Mission and Public Purposes and complies with its obligations under the Charter, Agreement, Operating Framework and general law. These responsibilities include ensuring good corporate governance is observed when responding to allegations about misconduct by current or past employees of the BBC. They also include ensuring that, in any response to such allegations, the BBC complies with its general duties under the Charter to observe high standards of openness and seek to maximise transparency and accountability.

One of the BBC's Public Purposes is to ensure that its news and factual content is provided to the "highest editorial standards". It is important that the BBC holds itself to account, openly and transparently, in relation to historic allegations of failing to achieve those standards. This is necessary to maintain trust and confidence in the BBC's journalism and editorial practices. As we

found in our BBC News Review¹, historic events can have a long-term effect on the way the BBC's content is perceived today.

Therefore, we welcome your announcement yesterday of a fully independent inquiry, to be led by Lord Dyson into the events surrounding the making of the original programme, as well as the BBC's investigation of it in 1995 and 1996. We are also pleased that the findings of this inquiry will be published.

We will follow the inquiry and its conclusions closely.

In the interests of transparency, we will be publishing this letter, the Hooper complaint, and our reply on Ofcom's website later today.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Dawes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Dawes

¹ Ofcom BBC News Review 2019 <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/bbc-operating-framework/performance/review-bbc-news-current-affairs>