



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

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Mr E Goodman
Chair
Campaign Against Censorship
P O BOX 570
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Dear Mr Goodman,

Thank you for your further letter to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), received on the 13 March, about the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). I am replying on behalf of the Ministerial Support Team.

I am sorry that you were unhappy with our previous reply. However, I must reiterate what was said in that response. The Government sets the legal framework for film classification in the Video Recordings Act 1984 and the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) carries out its film classifications work independently of Government, including the development of its classification guidelines. The BBFC is, however, required to ensure its classification policies reflect public opinion.

The BBFC's Guidelines consultations are very wide ranging, with around 10,000 members of the public canvassed for their opinions during each of the last two consultations, with focus groups, interviews and a website survey across all parts of the UK, in order to ensure that the BBFC's classification decisions are in line with public opinion. You may find more information on this research on their website:
<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/2014%20Guidelines%20Research.pdf>

The Government appreciates that people do not always agree with the BBFC's classification of particular films, but research suggests that generally the BBFC is perceived as awarding the appropriate classification. They also provide consumer advice for every work passed and this includes the level of sex, violence and bad language. For cinema films, this appears on marketing materials such as posters, print and television advertisements.

The BBFC rates films with due regard for the law. They will not classify material which is in conflict with the criminal law, or which has been created through the commission of a criminal offence. You may find the many legal considerations in the Annexes of their



Classification Guidelines, from page 34: <http://www.bbfc.co.uk/what-classification/guidelines>. This section notes the legislation by which they abide, including the Video Recordings Act and The Obscene Publications Act, in addition to child protection legislation such as the Protection Of Children Act 1978 (POCA).

I hope that this is helpful.


Ministerial Support Team