

2016-2017 COMPLAINANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY

PREPARED FOR THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY



JUNE 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SATISFACTION WITH THE BSA'S OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS

Complainants' satisfaction with the BSA's overall management of the complaints process is consistent with previous years, with two in five (41%) indicating they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the BSA handled their part of the complaints process well (compared with 40% in 2015/16 and 38% in 2014/15).

This year, there is greater satisfaction with each aspect of the BSA's management of the complaints process. In particular, the proportion of complainants who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the time taken between submitting or referring a formal complaint to the BSA and the final decision was reasonable has increased (55% cf. 27% in 2015/16).

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INFORMATION SOURCES

BSA resources play an important role providing complainants with information about the complaints process and how to submit a complaint. Almost all complainants (98%) are aware of or used a BSA resource (the BSA website, BSA Complaints Guide, relevant code of broadcasting practice (downloaded from the BSA website), or contact with the BSA via email, letter, telephone or the 0800 number). The BSA website is the leading resource with more than four in five complainants (82%) indicating they used or are aware of the BSA website.

Although there was a higher proportion of repeat complainants responding to the survey (66% cf. 40% in 2015/16 and 28% in 2014/15), the same proportion of complainants relied on knowledge from previously submitting a complaint as in previous years (20% cf. 19% in 2015/16 and 13% in 2014/15). An increasing number of sources were used to find out how to make a complaint (3 sources used on average in 2016/17 cf. 2.5 sources in 2015/16) and to get advice on identifying the specific broadcasting standard(s) that complainants believed had been breached (2.6 sources cf. 1.7 sources in 2015/16).

There has been a decrease in the proportion of complainants who sought advice when deciding whether to make a complaint, or during the complaints process (18% cf. 25% in 2015/16). Legal advice from a solicitor/barrister/legal advisor was the most common source for those who sought advice (50%), followed by complainants' colleagues (25%).

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INTERACTION WITH THE BSA

Nine in ten complainants (89%) initially made their complaint to the broadcaster, and then referred it to the BSA. The primary reason for referring a complaint, as indicated by nine in ten complainants, is the broadcaster did not uphold the complaint and the complainant disagreed with the broadcaster's reasoning.

The primary method of referring a complaint is still by email (65%), followed by submitting the complaint via the BSA's website (28%) and by post (8%).

Satisfaction across all aspects of written correspondence has increased from previous years, with the exception of the BSA's letter or emails being impartial in the advice and assistance provided, where ratings have decreased slightly. There has been a large increase in the level of satisfaction with the BSA's letters or emails arriving within an acceptable timeframe (75% cf. 57% in 2015/16).

There are also higher levels of satisfaction across each of the aspects of telephone contact with the BSA, with positive ratings ranging from 82% to 92%. The aspect 'the BSA staff made me feel like I was being listened to' has seen the largest improvement from 78% in 2015/16 to 92% in 2016/17.

With the BSA website being the most utilised source of information and second most used method for referring a complaint to the BSA, there has been an increase in levels of satisfaction with the BSA website. All aspects of the BSA website have increased compared with previous years. In particular, 89% gave a rating of 'very good' or 'good' to the BSA website being a valuable resource, an increase from 68% in 2014/15 and 73% in 2015/16.

A quarter of complainants (25%) would have liked at least a little more contact from the BSA throughout the process. A third of these complainants (36%) would have liked more contact in the early stages or an earlier initial response. Two thirds (66%) of complainants have made a formal complaint to a broadcaster before, while just over a quarter (27%) of complainants have made a formal complaint to the BSA before.

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BSA DECISIONS

There has been a decline in the level of satisfaction with the aspects of the BSA's decision. Three in five complainants (59%) 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they found the BSA's decision clear and easy to understand. This continues to be the key strength of the BSA's decisions, although a lower proportion than in 2015/16 (64%). Half of complainants (51%) feel that the BSA adequately explained the reasons for its decision, while fewer than one in five 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the order (if any) that was made to the broadcaster was fair, and that the decision the BSA made in relation to their complaint was fair (17% and 14%, respectively).

When asked why they felt aspects of the BSA's decisions were unfair, the BSA ignoring the complaint or the main point of the complaint with no acknowledgement of their point of view was commented on by 44% of complainants. Fewer than a third (28%) commented on the perceived lack of impartiality or having broadcasters' best interests at heart.

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FUTURE INTENTIONS

Two in five complainants (43%) indicated they are very or quite likely to make a complaint in future if they are concerned a programme has breached broadcasting standards, a slight decrease on last year (48%). A third of complainants (36%) indicated they are very or quite unlikely to make a formal complaint in the future – a lower proportion than in 2015/16 (40%) and 2014/15 (47%).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

AGREE THE PROCESS WAS HANDLED WELL	n=	2016/17	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Total	44	41%	52	40%	60	38%
First-time complainants	14	29%	31	39%	43	40%
Repeat complainants	29	45%	21	43%	17	35%
Complaint upheld	7	71%	14	79%	5	60%
Complaint not upheld	37	35%	38	26%	54	37%
AWARENESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES	n=	2016/17	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Any BSA resource	44	98%	52	92%	60	93%
BSA website	44	82%	52	77%	60	78%
BSA Guidance Sheet	44	59%	52	58%	60	47%
Codes of broadcasting practice booklet	44	61%	52	37%	60	23%
Broadcaster	44	52%	52	60%	60	48%
INTERACTIONS WITH BSA	n=	2016/17	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Satisfaction with written correspondence (average of six attributes in 2016/17, five attributes in 2015/16 and 2014/15)	40	80%	43	74%	49	63%
Satisfaction with telephone correspondence (average of five attributes)	11	90%	9	85%	10	64%
Satisfaction with BSA website (average of three attributes)	35	86%	37	75%	42	69%
BSA DECISIONS	n=	2016/17	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
The BSA decision clear and easy to understand	44	59%	52	64%	60	53%
The decision the BSA made in relation to your complaint was fair	43	14%	52	22%	60	9%
The order (if any) made to the broadcaster was fair	6	17%	14	23%	26	4%
The BSA adequately explained the reasons for its decision*	43	51%	-	-	-	-
INTENTIONS	n=	2016/17	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Likely to make a future complaint	44	43%	52	48%	59	38%

* New aspect added to survey in 2016/17