

2016-2018 COMPLAINANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY

PREPARED FOR THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY



JUNE 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SATISFACTION WITH THE BSA'S OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS

Overall, complainants' satisfaction with the BSA's management of the process between 2016 and 2018 is consistent with previous years (38% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the BSA handled their part of the complaints process well compared with 40% in 2015/16 and 38% in 2014/15).

Satisfaction with the aspects of the BSA's management of the complaints process has improved. 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 (51% cf. 27% in 2015/16).

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INFORMATION SOURCES

Almost all complainants (97%) are aware of or have 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 most prevalent source of information is the BSA website. Close to nine in ten complainants (87%) are aware of the BSA website as a source of information about the complaints process.

Complainants are using more sources for information about the complaints process and identification of standards compared with previous surveys (6.9 sources between 2016-2018 cf. 5.4 in 2015/16 and 4.7 in 2014/15). This is a result of a significant increase in the proportion of complainants who are aware of: *the BSA Complaints Guide* (73% cf. 54%); *the BSA's guidance sheet 'Tips for Complainants'* (65% cf. 44%); *the relevant code of broadcasting practice (from the BSA website or the broadcaster's website)* (64% cf. 37% and 42% cf. 23%, respectively); *contact with BSA staff by telephone* (42% cf. 23%); and *the BSA 0800 number* (31% cf. 13%).

Two in five complainants (37%) had made a complaint to the broadcaster before, while three in ten (31%) had previously made a formal complaint to the BSA about a broadcast. Compared with 2015/16, fewer complainants between 2016-2018 sought advice when deciding whether to make a complaint or during the complaints process (19% cf. 25% in 2015/16). Although sample sizes are small, legal advice from a solicitor/barrister/legal advisor was the most common source for those who sought advice (41% cf. 31%), followed by complainants' colleagues (24% cf. 8%).

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INTERACTION WITH THE BSA

Nine in ten complainants (88%) referred their complaint to the BSA due to the broadcaster not upholding the complaint and disagreeing with the decision. The primary method for submitting a complaint remains email (62%), followed by the BSA website (25%) and post (12%).

There is an increase in satisfaction with the BSA's written and phone correspondence across all aspects. The greatest improvement is in the level of satisfaction with the BSA's letters or emails arriving within an acceptable timeframe (80% cf. 57% in 2015/16) and in terms of telephone contact, the aspect 'the BSA staff made me feel like I was being listened to' (91% cf. 78% in 2015/16).

The BSA website is the most utilised source of information and second most used method for referring a complaint to the BSA and there has been an increase in levels of satisfaction with the BSA website compared with 2015/16. Four in five (82%) 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). There has been a smaller increase in satisfaction with *the clarity and ease of understanding of the website content* (77% cf. 73% in 2015/16 and 69% in 2014/15).

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Conversely, satisfaction has declined in relation to the BSA website *being easy to use (i.e. you can find what you need)* (76% cf. 78% in 2015/16 and 71% in 2014/15).

The level of contact complainants have with the BSA remains 'about right'. More than a quarter of complainants (27%) would have liked at least a little more contact from the BSA throughout the process. Among those who would have wanted *a little* or *a lot more contact*, more than a third (36%) would have liked more contact in the early stages or an earlier initial response.

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BSA DECISIONS

There has been a decline in the level of satisfaction with the BSA's decisions. Eighty-five percent of respondents' complaints were not upheld by the BSA (15% upheld).

The BSA's relative strength is that their decisions are clear and easy to understand (58% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' cf. 64% in 2015/16). Close to half of complainants (45%) 'strongly disagree' that the BSA's decision was fair.

Half of complainants (45%) 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 (15% and 14%, respectively).

When asked why they felt aspects of the BSA's decisions were unfair, complainants mostly commented on the BSA ignoring the complaint or the main point of the complaint with no acknowledgement of their point of view (35%). However, complainants have an increased perception that the BSA has prescribed guidelines they must follow and are weak with regard to enforcing standards in relation to the broadcaster (17%, all of which were commented on in 2017/18).

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FUTURE INTENTIONS

While there has been an increase in the proportion who are dissatisfied with BSA's decisions, the same proportion of complainants (48%) are still 'very likely' or 'quite likely' to make a complaint in the future should they feel a broadcasting standard(s) has been breached. A third of complainants (35%) are 'very unlikely' 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=	2016-2018	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Total	91	38%	52	40%	60	38%
First-time complainants [^]	56	43%	31	39%	43	40%
Repeat complainants	34	29%	21	43%	17	35%
Complaint upheld	14	71%	14	79%	5	60%
Complaint not upheld	77	32%	38	26%	54	37%
AWARENESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES	n=	2016-2018	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Any BSA resource	91	97%	52	92%	60	93%
BSA website	91	87%	52	77%	60	78%
BSA Guidance Sheet	91	70%	52	58%	60	47%
Codes of broadcasting practice booklet	91	68%	52	37%	60	23%
Broadcaster	91	60%	52	60%	60	48%
INTERACTIONS WITH BSA	n=	2016-2018	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) – excl. NA	68-81	84%	43	74%	49	63%
Satisfaction with telephone correspondence (average of five attributes) – excl. NA	20-23	91%	9	85%	10	64%
Satisfaction with BSA website (average of three attributes) – excl. NA	74	78%	37	75%	42	69%
BSA DECISIONS	n=	2016-2018	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
The BSA decision was clear and easy to understand	89	58%	52	64%	60	53%
The decision the BSA made in relation to your complaint was fair	88	14%	52	22%	60	9%
The order (if any) made to the broadcaster was fair	13	15%	14	23%	26	4%
The BSA adequately explained the reasons for its decision	88	45%	-	-	-	-
INTENTIONS	n=	2016-2018	n=	2015/16	n=	2014/15
Likely to make a future complaint	91	48%	52	48%	59	38%

[^] Note change in language 2015/16 measure. "Prior to this most recent complaint, had you ever made a formal complaint to a broadcaster about a broadcast before?" replaced "Was this the first formal complaint you have ever made about a broadcast?"