

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: The work of ITV, HC 1441

Wednesday 14 June 2023

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Members present: Dame Caroline Dinenage (Chair); Kevin Brennan; Clive Efford; Julie Elliott; Damian Green; Dr Rupa Huq; Simon Jupp; John Nicolson; Jane Stevenson; Giles Watling.

Questions 1 - 113

Witnesses

I: Kevin Lygo, Managing Director, Media and Entertainment, ITV; Dame Carolyn McCall, Chief Executive, ITV; and Kyla Mullins, General Counsel and Company Secretary, ITV.



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Kevin Lygo, Dame Carolyn McCall and Kyla Mullins.

Chair: Today's meeting of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee is being held to discuss the working culture at ITV. Last week, we heard from ITV's director of strategy, policy and regulation, Magnus Brooke, as part of the evidence that we were taking on the draft Media Bill. Of course, at that stage we did not feel it was appropriate to discuss this issue, because it was really important that we had the opportunity to scrutinise that Bill in full.

But we did feel it was appropriate to have a separate session to talk about the working culture at ITV, and I am grateful to you all for offering us this opportunity for ITV to come in separately. Today, we are joined by Dame Carolyn McCall, ITV's chief executive, alongside Kevin Lygo, managing director for media and entertainment, and Kyla Mullins, general counsel and company secretary, at ITV. You are all very welcome.

Before we start our questions, I thought it might be helpful for me to set out our approach today. First, you will all appreciate that since we announced that we were going to do this session, both I and, I am sure, members across this Committee have been inundated with stories from people about their treatment when working in the media and their concerns. We clearly don't have the manpower or the resources to investigate every single one of these individual cases. But I just want to put on the record how grateful we are to everybody who has been in touch and to reassure them that the questions that we ask today will have been informed by quite a lot of what they told us.

Secondly, while it is inevitable that many of our questions today will link to Phillip Schofield and directly to the case that he has been involved in, we do fully intend to try to respect the privacy of the other individual involved. I know that ITV have been referring to him as Person X within your correspondence. The point of today's session is not a witch hunt against Phillip Schofield; it is to investigate the wider issues that are raised by this case.

And finally, shortly after we invited Dame Carolyn to appear before us, ITV announced an inquiry into the Schofield case. We received the terms of reference for that on Monday, and we published them on our Committee's website yesterday. We don't expect that that inquiry will be a barrier to ITV answering any questions today, because we are seeking information that should already be available to the panel.

Before we start the questions, I am going to ask members of the Committee whether they have any interest to declare. I should start: my father was a presenter on ITV for very many years.

Simon Jupp: I am a former ITV employee.

Giles Watling: I am a former ITV employee.



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Damian Green: I have accepted hospitality from ITV in the past.

John Nicolson: I have been to ITV events over the years, and I am a former news anchor for ITV.

Julie Elliott: I have accepted hospitality from ITV over the years as well.

Kevin Brennan: If we're doing that, I have as well.

Dr Huq: I went to a dinner once!

Jane Stevenson: I can't remember, but we probably all have.

Clive Efford: I don't know how far we're going back. I'm not sure whether I have or not, but I'll declare it.

Q1 **Chair:** We could be here all day, so we're just going to move on. Thank you very much.

Dame Carolyn, since the story emerged about the relationship between Mr Schofield and the junior employee on his programme, there has been a very common theme in response from figures in the entertainment world, including some current and some former presenters on ITV. For example, Piers Morgan said, "Everybody knew at ITV" what was happening. James Haskell said, "I knew about this...Everybody knows." Kevin Maguire said, "We had all heard the rumours."

Can I just ask you, from your vantage point as the chief executive at ITV: do you class yourself in the category of the vast majority of people, who seem to know what was going on, or are you telling us that everyone else knew what was going on but somehow you and perhaps Holly Willoughby were the only ones who did not know?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Chair, if you don't mind, I would just like to say thank you very much for inviting me and my colleagues here. We have taken these issues extremely seriously, as I hope you know. We are particularly glad that we are talking about duty of care in some detail—we look forward to that—and our culture.

In every company I have ever worked for, and this is my track record, I have put people at the centre. I have always treated people well. I have always wanted people to come into a place where they feel comfortable, where they can speak up, where they can speak out, where they can be themselves and where they are happy to come to work.

One of the reasons why we asked the KC to come in and look at this whole thing is that we will always want to learn, to listen and to act. Whatever emerges from the KC inquiry, we will learn from it, because there will be lessons; no organisation can do anything perfectly, and we certainly are not saying we have. The KC coming in demonstrates our commitment to improving and evolving everything we do at all times. A good example of that is duty of care. Since 2018—since I joined—we have reviewed it and we have strengthened it significantly, and we will talk about that in some detail today.



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Another reason—this goes to your point about who knew what—for welcoming this is that there are huge numbers of opinions, there is speculation, there are rumours and there is misinformation out there. We look forward to making clear the facts that we know, so thank you again.

I will go straight to your question about the common theme. The people who have said they knew would only have heard rumours about it. If any one of the individuals you have named or referenced had come to us and said, “There is evidence that there is a relationship between Phillip Schofield and Person X,” we would, with evidence, have been able to launch a formal investigation, because the imbalance of power—the imbalance of dynamics—in that relationship makes it deeply inappropriate, and we have policies that say that very clearly.

One of the things you, I hope, will see as we go through this is that we worked very, very hard for many, many months—in fact, until recently—to ask not just Phillip Schofield and Person X but people in production if they knew something was going on. It was repeatedly denied by both individuals, but also no one in the team ever said there was anything that they could say. In fact, most of them said, “We don’t know what’s going on.”

Q2 **Chair:** When did you personally first become aware of these rumours?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I really became aware of those rumours when Phillip came out in February 2020. That is the first time things got really febrile. Social media was awash with some extremely nasty comments about Phillip, as you would expect, but also just a whole swathe of things about him as a person. There was a lot of speculation and rumour out there. February 2020 is when Kevin and I spoke about it. We actually started looking at it in December 2019, but it ramped up considerably—the noise out there ramped up—in 2020.

Q3 **Chair:** What you are basically saying is that, like the vast majority of people within ITV, you were aware of the rumours about this relationship, but following the investigation that you carried out and the denials that you received from all parties, you were satisfied that the rumours were entirely false. Is that correct?

Dame Carolyn McCall: What I am saying is that I do not know if it is the vast majority of ITV. You have named three people—high-profile individuals—who say they knew. If they knew, why didn’t they say something to Kevin? Kevin has conversations with all of those people as talent all the time. No. 1, I don’t know if it is the vast majority of ITV people; I don’t accept that. It certainly doesn’t feel like that to me.

The second thing is that, in February 2020, it was hard to miss the amount of coverage about Phillip when he came out. I obviously knew in social media in particular that there was a huge amount of comment about him being gay—how long had he been gay? How long has he lived a lie? There were all sorts of aspersions that crossed over to his brother. There was a lot of very horrible stuff out there, and we said, “We need to just establish



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whether this is rumour and speculation and malicious or whether there is something we need to worry about here.”

Q4 **Chair:** And you were given reassurances by both parties that there was nothing to be concerned about.

Dame Carolyn McCall: If it is all right with you, Chair, I would like to bring Kyla in. Kyla is not just company secretary. She also is director; she runs compliance and also whistleblowing in ITV. She is responsible for those policies. I would like to just go through the sequence so you can see what we did to try and establish whether anything was going on.

Kyla Mullins: We first became aware of speculation and social media speculation triggered by a newspaper article on 6 December 2019. In that article there was a reference. It was an article with many allegations and a lot of commentary about “This Morning” and about the relationship between Phil and Holly and other presenters on that. There was also a reference to Phillip’s “PA and personal runner” moving to a different programme “despite a previous close friendship with him.” Those were the words. There was a huge amount of media speculation.

Our head of Daytime and our head of production on that day spoke to Person X because he was being inundated with press and journalists contacting him, he was aware of social media, and they asked the question at that stage: is there any truth in this? Is there anything that we need to know about a relationship with Phillip Schofield? And the answer was a categorical no. He was traumatised by the intrusion into his personal life and our focus at that point then moved swiftly to duty of care for him and trying to make sure that we could support him in whatever ways were appropriate to handle the social media intrusion into his life.

Conversations with him continued in January and again, the focus was on duty of care but also asking the question each time. So we had HR involvement by this stage. The head of production—who has continued having dialogue with Person X over the last three years at intervals—Person X and our head of HR for Daytime spoke to him on many occasions, focusing on his welfare, but also using the opportunity to ask the questions. I think he was asked the question 12 times and we have logs of the conversations that were had with him.

At each stage, he categorically denied it. When Phillip came out—I believe it was on 7 February in 2020—again, there was a spike in social media commentary. And again, there were meetings with Person X and questions with him. In parallel at that stage, there were serious conversations with Phillip Schofield and his agent—very direct conversations with his agent. That was Kevin who can talk to those, as well as our head of Daytime and our editor in Daytime.

At each stage, we had various levels of management asking questions of both individuals and also of Phillip’s agent. In addition, as Carolyn has mentioned, there were various conversations with people on the production floor. Our head of production asked people working on both



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"This Morning" and "Loose Women" who might have been closer to Person X to try and establish whether there were any facts. Were they aware of any truth in this matter? The answer at each stage was no.

We conducted all those conversations at that time. No one came forward with any evidence. Straightforward, categorical denials each time it was asked. And conversations continued also in May this year, right up to the day when Phillip finally admitted that he had been lying to us and, at each stage, denials. Kevin, I do not know if you want to touch on that.

Kevin Lygo: When did I first know? I think when Phillip decided he wanted to come out, the agents and Phillip, presumably, contacted the head of Daytime and the producer of the programme and he said, "I've been thinking about this for a long time. I want to come out on air." So that was discussed. Then I think when they had had that discussion, I was called about it, saying, "There's going to be a big thing tomorrow. What do you think?" I said, "Well, if that's what he wants to do, okay."

Phillip presents the programme from Monday to Thursday. He does not do it on Friday. So this was on the Thursday and he came out the next day when he did not have to then present the entire programme. He just did it on a show that he was not presenting that day. I went down the next morning to the studio to see Phillip, to see how he was and everything. There were various people around and we discussed.

Obviously, the show was really agitated and nervous, and I remember saying to Phillip, "Look, you don't have to do this now if you don't want to. You don't have to do it on TV if you don't want to." He said, "No, no, no. This is absolutely the way I want to do it. I've been thinking about this; this isn't a sudden decision. I've been talking about this to my family. This is just the moment now I want to do it." So I said, "Okay."

Then there was a moment when we were alone and I said, "Look, Phillip, don't worry about ITV supporting you through this. It's fine by us if you want to do this. Is there anything that you want to tell me now? Is there anything we should know that has prompted this or that you want to share with us now? It's fine, but we just don't want suddenly tomorrow or the next day to hear something we didn't know about and be blindsided by it." He absolutely, categorically, said: "No, there's nothing. This is a private matter. I want to get it out there because I've been thinking about it for so long." So that was it really.

Q5 **Chair:** From what you say, it sounds like you regard the efforts that you went to in chasing this up as adequate. But I will not put words in your mouth—do you think that they were adequate? Were they competent?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Just remember that there is another very important bit of the timeline, which was in March 2020. All ITV employees were sent home because lockdown started. This was all close on March 2020. That was important, because this then all stopped, because no one was at work and Person X was put on furlough for nine months. It is an important thing. Over that time, our head of production had duty of care



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conversations with him, but nothing else, so it is important to the process we went through that it stopped in March for reasons of lockdown.

We would say what we had done, we feel, was from not only a process but a human perspective. We asked both individuals multiple times, formally and informally. We felt that was proportionate to what we had, because we had no evidence. No one had brought us anything tangible, whether from the production floor or the outside; there was only hearsay, rumour and speculation.

The other thing we would say is that we were very concerned about the state of mind of both Phillip and Person X. As Kevin will tell you, Phillip was not in a good state when he came out—very anxious, very worried, very nervous, worried about the social media backlash, and all those things—and Person X could not really grasp the media intrusion that was so prevalent in his life now.

We had to balance how we asked questions. We asked the two of them formally—there were meetings and HR was present—and we did a balance with informal: “Is there anything we need to know?”; or to Person X, “How can we help you? What more do we need to know? You can do this confidentially or anonymously. You can talk to a counsellor.” That was because we wanted to make it easier for him. Someone in that position is not used to being in the press or social media as often. We were very mindful of our duty of care obligations, but just as a human being, not making worse what was a very difficult situation for Person X and actually also for Phillip.

Q6 **Chair:** It sounds to me as if you are saying that the investigation was thorough and that the decisions you made were well founded.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Chair, may I please just say that it was not an investigation? I would not qualify that as an investigation. I think it was a review, an ongoing review. Every time there were periods of intense speculation, we asked more questions, but it was an ongoing review.

Q7 **Chair:** Would the assertion leading from that be that, if you could go back in time to do it all again, you would do it in exactly the same way and would probably have reached the same conclusion?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think that if we had our time again—I am not hiding behind the KC, but let us see what the KC says, because that is one of the things we want to learn: is there anything that we could have done or spotted? At the moment, we cannot see what that is, because we did interview both individuals, as I have said, but also other people.

We have a very, very clear and loud speaking up policy—we really do. The vast majority of people, when they reply to surveys that we do on this, say they feel confident that we will act if they speak up. That comes from a tangible, quantitative survey. We can talk about our speak up policy—our whistleblowing policy—later. Anybody, at any time, could have confidentially gone to our helpline, Safecall. It is completely anonymous



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and run by an external company. They could, at any time, have said something about this. We had none of that.

Therefore, we feel, in the circumstances and with what we had, that we had no legal reasons to go any further with an investigation. If we had had any evidence, we would have done a formal investigation. We had no evidence. It is not in our interest in any way not to investigate something that we know has evidence to support it. To put it another way, had we gone, with no legal reason, into a formal investigation, we would have caused a huge amount of damage, with the mental health issues and the strain. Instead of mental health issues, let me say that the psychological strain on Person X and so on would have been quite intense, so we did not have any legal grounds to do that.

Q8 Chair: So as far as you are concerned there are no circumstances under which you could possibly have inadvertently or purposefully turned a blind eye to some serious shortcomings at “This Morning” because it was an incredibly commercially successful program.

Dame Carolyn McCall: It is nothing to do with it being commercially successful. It really, really isn't. I mean, all our shows are actually commercially successful—you could say that about every single one of our shows. There is not a show on ITV—because we are a commercial PSB—that is unsuccessful. You say that, but it is nothing to do with commercial success.

It is entirely to do with how we were trying to look after people, but we were also trying to ask—and we did ask—questions repeatedly and continuously, and we were repeatedly told there was nothing happening. I also said that as we see it today, our understanding and our information so far is that we could not have done this differently, but if the KC does say and recommend that in future we should do any aspects differently, we will listen, we will learn and we will act. Nobody would be turning a blind eye to something—it is not a blind eye. Nobody here or on the management board would ever turn a blind eye to something as serious as this.

Q9 Chair: The only thing I would say in response to that is that surely you are aware that the same imbalance of power that enabled Mr Schofield to enter into this—what he called—inappropriate relationship would also be in play if he was seeking to keep that relationship secret, so you need to ensure that you have in place the systems and processes that are somehow able to find a way around that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Let us tell you what our systems and processes are to ensure that that does not happen. Perhaps Kyla could talk about our speaking up and safeguarding policies.

Chair: We will come to that later on, actually. We have a few other questions we want to get to first, but thank you.

Q10 Clive Efford: I listened to those answers, and we as a Committee are very concerned about the welfare of the individuals involved here, in



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particular Phillip Schofield but, most of all, Person X. Could you tell us what support you are giving to them at this moment in time, and whether that will continue into the future?

Dame Carolyn McCall: We have remained in touch with Phillip, as you would expect, and he is receiving counselling. We were just saying that Phillip is receiving counselling, which ITV are funding. He asked for that, and we are very happy to do that. With Person X, there is a whole series of duty of care all the way through. Even though he left the company in 2021, we have constantly given him aspects of duty of care, as recently as last week. Do you want to outline some of that duty of care, Kyla?

Kyla Mullins: Certainly. As I said earlier, the head of production, who was involved in having the initial conversations with him, has been continuing those conversations with him throughout and is in contact with him not on a daily basis but on a regular basis. We have offered him an ongoing package of support, including counselling. We gave some support when there was physical media intrusion at his parents' home and his workplace. We offered support around that, and we have been offering support in trying to help him manage takedowns and social media. There is a package of support, and that is ongoing. We are in discussion with him—the last time was a couple of days ago.

Q11 **Clive Efford:** We have seen it reported—you have written to us saying this—that he doesn't want to speak. He doesn't want any publicity around this, and he really wants it to die and go away. I fully understand that, but if he wanted to speak out, are you aware of any impediments preventing him from doing so?

Kyla Mullins: There is no impediment. There are no NDAs or gagging orders. There is nothing in place, from our perspective, that would stop him speaking out. When he left ITV, he entered into a standard settlement agreement. There is a clear carve-out in it that makes it very clear that there is nothing that would prevent him from whistleblowing or speaking up.

Q12 **Chair:** Do you share concerns that Phillip Schofield is being hounded like Caroline Flack?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I don't want to make those comparisons, although I would say that I think he has been hounded. He has said himself that he has nothing, really. If it wasn't for his daughters, he wouldn't be alive. He said that publicly.

Q13 **Chair:** Are you personally, individually concerned for his welfare?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I am very concerned, yes. I spoke to him the day before because I knew that standing down from "This Morning" was a pretty major thing in his life. I phoned him and said, "Look, I know this is very difficult. You know Kevin has offered you further work, so please don't feel awful about it." He was really grateful that I called him. He said, "This means so much to me." I didn't know he was going to say on Friday that he had lied to us and had hidden this for so long. We have been



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concerned about Phillip, and we have been extremely concerned about Person X because the level of intrusion in his life is unbelievably awful.

Q14 **Chair:** Have you individually spoken to either of them since that day?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have never spoken to Person X—that wouldn't be something that I would do—but I have spoken to Phillip, as I just said.

Q15 **Chair:** But have you spoken to Phillip since he admitted that he lied about this relationship?

Dame Carolyn McCall: He just sent me a text saying how deeply, deeply sorry he is for lying to ITV and his family, and for how much, you know, has been caused by it.

Kevin Lygo: I did speak to him when he wanted to step down from "This Morning". I think the daily effort of doing a show for two hours live every day made him think, "There's too much noise. I don't want to do it any more, sorry." We said, "All right. If you want to step down, you can step down." We did talk about another show coming up a couple of weeks later—British soap awards—which he was booked to present. I said, "Are you still okay to do the British soap awards? Do you want to do that?" He said, "Yes, absolutely." "Dancing on Ice" is the only other show he does for us, which is in January. It is a once-a-week show. He asked about that, and we said, "Don't worry about that. It is so far away that we can deal with it later. Don't worry." On the record, I said that he would be continuing to work with us.

I can't remember if I asked him in that conversation, "But there isn't anything, is there, Phillip?" but he would have said, "No, there isn't." Just three or four days before he said "Actually, sorry, I've been lying all the time," he looked me in the eye and promised me that there was absolutely no truth whatever in the rumours of this relationship. Because it was corroborated by Person X, and through the whole of this there had been no complaints as such about it—certainly not from anybody in ITV, although obviously there were rumours and things—I believed him. I believed his agents and everyone, and then two days later, everybody comes out and says, "No, it is a lie."

Dame Carolyn McCall: It is important to talk about how many times you or the head of Daytime spoke to the agent. A lot of conversations were had with Phillip's agent about this whole issue.

Kevin Lygo: Yes, many more than with Phillip himself. You can obviously be a lot more direct with the agent. Because the agency handles quite a lot of ITV clients, we talk to them a lot. They were consistently adamant about the rumours. It was more, "What shall we do to make them go away? Can we take legal action? What can we do?" There were discussions like that, but there was absolute, categorical denial: "Of course it is not true. No, Phillip's definitely not—no, no, no." So we did not pursue that with them. Later, of course, they said he had been lying to them for 20 years or whatever it was.



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Q16 **Kevin Brennan:** Good morning, everybody. Dame Carolyn, do you ever find yourself asking yourself the existential question, “Why am I here?”?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I am not as deeply philosophical as that, Mr Brennan. I am not sure where that question is going. All I would say is that I am here because I believe in public service broadcasting. I believe in ITV, and I think what we do is an incredible public service. But it is also entertaining, and we do a massive amount of news. We do regional news better than anybody else, and we are very proud of what we do. That is why I am here.

Q17 **Kevin Brennan:** You left off that list the glory of our parliamentary democracy.

Dame Carolyn McCall: We support, through our news in particular, our democracy.

Q18 **Kevin Brennan:** I cannot remember, in the 22 years that I have been a Member of Parliament, ignoring more phone calls and messages from journalists on any subject. Why do you think that is?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Look, I think that we produce a huge range of programmes. We have a huge amount of talent. I think the BBC get the same as we do: whenever anything is going on at the BBC, it tends to dominate the news agenda. Whenever anything is happening at ITV—we are on the news pages for many reasons other than this, such as for our entertainment shows. We will do a big entertainment show like “I’m a Celebrity” and we will be on the front pages of the papers every day. I think that is—

Kevin Brennan: On that point—

Dame Carolyn McCall: Mr Brennan, I think that is because the BBC and ITV are part of British culture, society and life.

Q19 **Kevin Brennan:** And on that point, what I was going to say is that this is all very interesting. The whole thing is fascinating and of interest to the public, but I am struggling—or am I wrong in struggling?—to try to identify how it is in the public interest that we need to know all this. There are serious issues, obviously, underlying all this, so I do not want to trivialise it, but why is all this in the public interest?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Look, I feel that I am here—if we were not a PSB, I don’t think I would be sitting in front of you. I’m not sure I would be; I don’t know. You can answer that. But I think that, as a PSB, you will want to hear what we have done and how we have done it, and I understand that.

Kevin Brennan: Yes, and we have invited you and we thank you for coming.

Dame Carolyn McCall: As I said, I welcomed that, because I wanted very much to put some facts down clearly. I wanted you to understand how seriously we take things, but also how much we care about the people



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who work at ITV. This is a vibrant, creative and proud organisation, and what has been said from the outside, often, or from people who are no longer at ITV—people feel very deeply about ITV. The vast majority of people at ITV feel that they are looked after. We have many, many different ways that they can tell us their feedback and their input. It does not always have to be a complaint; it can just be, “I’m not getting flexibility at work and I need some help.” It could be a whole range of different things, but we do listen and we have so many different ways of listening. I cannot really answer why you have got me here; I can say why I am here.

Q20 Kevin Brennan: No, and I accept that that’s not your role, because we invited you, after all. What were the policies and procedures in place at ITV for incidents of this type at the time of the initial investigations into these rumours surrounding Phillip Schofield?

Dame Carolyn McCall: That’s where I was getting, so thank you. Kyla, would you just go through what we do?

Kyla Mullins: Our policies and procedures are obviously updated regularly to take account of new regulation or Ofcom guidance, but also best practice. Clearly, our policies and practices, as they stand today, will be slightly different from those that were in place in 2019, but not a lot.

Q21 Kevin Brennan: So how have they changed?

Kyla Mullins: Not a lot. For example, there was a new Ofcom code on protecting participants in shows, which came out post 2019. We will have incorporated that into our policies and practices. It’s that type of thing.

Fundamentally, the policies that we had in place in 2019—it would be helpful for me to give you the shape of those, and those that are important here—are very, very similar to what we have in place now. We have had at ITV a code of conduct. Our code of ethics and conduct is the policy that underpins everything—lots of policies flow from that. It’s a policy that is incorporated into the contracts of everyone who works for or with ITV—employees, freelancers and others—and it sets out very clearly what our expectations are of conduct at ITV: both the conduct that we expect and the conduct that we do not tolerate.

It is a very accessible policy document. It has a message from the CEO at the front, which explains why it’s so important and why it’s so important also to speak up if you see that there is anything going on that—

Q22 Kevin Brennan: That all sounds great, and we can take a look at that, I’m sure, but what I am interested in is this: you said there have been some minor changes; are any of the changes that have happened as a result of this matter?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No.

Kyla Mullins: No changes as a result of this matter. Some of the important points in our code of conduct, as well as absolutely setting out very, very clearly what our speaking up policy is, which I would like to



come on to, are that we do not accept any bullying or harassment and there is zero tolerance for abuse of position. And that was in place in 2016, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

Dame Carolyn McCall: And there is a workplace relationship form that you now have to fill in. That started at the start of 2022. It is not a new policy in response to this at all. It was something that we updated, because we update our policies every year, as Kyla said. We updated that and we actually said that everybody who works at ITV has to fill in a form where they have to disclose workplace relationships, whether they are romantic or family relationships. We have had that in place since then.

Kevin Brennan: I see. Thank you.

Q23 **Chair:** What do you say in response to the allegation that there is a “toxic” culture at “This Morning”?

Dame Carolyn McCall: What I would say is that it’s not something—look, we take that seriously. You have heard me talk about culture. It’s incredibly important to me personally, so it deeply disappoints me. But we do not recognise that in “This Morning”, and I think the reason for that is that we have tangible evidence to tell you, where the vast majority of people at Daytime, at “This Morning”, are extremely engaged and very motivated. It’s not to say that we don’t take complaints about it seriously. We have had two complaints in five years about that issue—two complaints. Both of them were taken very seriously. One of them was investigated internally. One of them publicly disclosed, so I can name the person, I think. Ranj Singh complained. I actually asked for an external investigation. That happened, and it was not able to be upheld.

If you don’t mind, I do want to give you some facts. The participation in our engagement survey, which is done by an external company called Culture Amp—nearly 80% of people in ITV participated in that survey. That’s high—a lot of companies have 60% participation—so that means people want to participate. It tells us how people are actually experiencing working at ITV, and it’s totally confidential. They can say whatever they want. They will never be traced or tracked—you can’t do it. It’s done externally—completely.

In Daytime specifically, 89% of people say they are proud to work at ITV. Eighty-six per cent. would recommend ITV Daytime as a place to work—as a great place to work. Eighty per cent. of people at Daytime are happy with how their manager motivates them, and 75% of them say that colleagues from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed at ITV. I am giving you those tangible points now. Everything was not glowing in an engagement survey, but these are strong scores about how people feel about working on Daytime. I actually brought the figures in for Daytime rather than for the whole of ITV. Of course, you can see, if you would like to, the ITV-wide stats, which are very similar to the Daytime stats, although the Daytime statistics are actually higher than ITV overall.



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So I think when you use those words about our culture, we do not recognise that culture. That does not mean we do not take those allegations seriously, and it does not mean we do not take complaints seriously—we do.

I want to build on what Kyla said, if you don't mind, in terms of policies. It is all very well having policies, but if people do not read the policies, or they just ignore them or say, "Oh, that's just, you know, corporate gobbledegook," there are so many other ways that people can make themselves heard.

We have an ambassador network at ITV, which is 80 strong. These are people who are elected by the people in our offices, of which we have about 24 around the country—they are the people's elected representatives. They have regular meetings, not just with members of the management board and listening circles. They actually have a non-exec director who they can go to at any time with any problem or any complaint, and they can do that anonymously with the non-exec director on our plc board, who is an independent director

We have unbelievably strong networks. We have five very strong networks that represent various communities in ITV. Three thousand people out of 5,000 belong to those networks in ITV. There are 4,000 people in the UK that work at ITV, and there are 1,000 freelancers. So 3,000 out of those 4,000 people belong to those networks. Those chairs are elected by the people. The chairs are very strong, and they are brilliant networks. I personally talk to them. I chair a committee where all of those chairs sit around the table and say the things that they are most worried about, the things that are going really, really well, and we have a discussion. We do it across all the networks.

Those are just examples of how you have a formal complaints procedure, which is all about HR and documenting and having the meetings with HR and your line manager and whatever. But if you do not want to do that, because you think that is worrying or you are concerned about that, or if you do not get on with your line manager, there are multiple other routes.

I have already mentioned Safecall, which is a number that we widely promote for whistleblowing. It is in the toilets, it is on lifts, it is in car parks—it is everywhere. It is on myITV. I talk about it in my vodcast—I do a vodcast every two to three weeks for the whole of ITV—and I say, "Don't forget. If there is anything you want to say, I've got an email box called 'Ask Carolyn'." They can just email that box and they will always get a reply, or they can go to Safecall.

What I am trying to describe is that it is all very well having policies, but actually policies are sometimes not read by people. You can do as much as you can on policy, but actually what we really, really foster is a culture where if anyone has a problem, if anyone is concerned about somebody else, they can tell us in multiple ways.

Q24 **Giles Watling:** I am finding this all very sad. Like Kevin Brennan, I really



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do not understand why there is such a media frenzy when we have war in Ukraine, starvation in Africa, Indian rail accidents, etc. Having said that, I do understand the power of personality.

You have very forcefully put your case for the way you manage things formally, and how there are ways of people being able to talk to the management of ITV. But we all know, or many of us know, that once you have a long-running programme or a theatrical production or any programme, they tend to develop their own culture within another culture. You have got ITV, then you have “Celebrity” doing this over here, and then you have “This Morning” doing that over there. Gradually, these can become toxic and poisonous, because they are close and febrile by their very nature.

There is another aspect to this. I will use the example of the BBC and when they started dismantling the BBC Club system that they used to have, which was a very useful cross-fertilisation tool where people talked to each other on a social level about issues. Once you take that away and people are not meeting across the different programmes that are being made, have we taken away some form of reference for people to actually air these views totally informally without going through the management system?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I will start and then hand over to Kevin because of productions. I think we have done the reverse. I think what we did over lockdown—you know, many people in the world found it very, very difficult, but people who were used to coming in every day and being in a buzzy culture with lots of team-mates found it particularly difficult—was a huge number of things virtually when we could not do them physically. We would do social gathering. The networks were brilliant. They did a lot of cross-collaboration—if you were in the EmBRACE network, which is people of colour, or if you were in the disability network, or if you were in the women’s network, the three of them would get together and do a big event. They would get someone to come in and talk about mental health, or they would come in and talk about adapting to different kinds of life, and everyone could ask questions—you could ask anonymous questions; you could follow up afterwards.

We did a whole series of things virtually—there was something most days through lockdown, believe it or not, so that people could connect. It was very important for us to make sure that people felt connected to ITV through lockdown, and the feedback on that has been very, very positive. I did a vodcast every single week; people could ask me questions directly, every single week, all the way through lockdown.

Post lockdown, I think we have done even more face to face, because we are all now in one building in White City—the whole of our London offices are now, for the first time ever I think, in one building in White City. We do things on a Friday, we do previews, and the networks do quite serious events—“Let’s talk about bullying. Let’s talk about this. What does bullying look like? If you’ve got a problem, who would you talk to? How would you talk?” We have got a balanced network.



Giles Watling: Importantly, it is less formal.

Dame Carolyn McCall: There are very informal ways that the networks, in particular, organise events, with our funding and with our support.

Kevin Lygo: In production, again, being in one building really helps this, but there is a lot of movement between people working on one show, and then going on and working on another, because the periods in which you might be engaged in making a show are not necessarily like “This Morning” or something, which is all year round.

For some programmes, people just come in for a few weeks to make it, then move on, but the people who come in to make those shows have often worked on other shows, so a lot of people know a lot of people at ITV. I think there is a culture, certainly that I’ve seen, of friendship across different departments. The entertainment department is obviously a huge group of people, and they all work together and move across from one show to another, so there is a lot of cross-fertilisation about things, and they’ll be talking socially. Management is not necessarily present for these conversations—which is a good thing, because I know exactly what you mean about the BBC Club system—so it’s more ad hoc and informal. But I think there is a lot of discussion amongst all members of staff with each other about, “What’s going on?”, and, “How are you finding it over there?”, and all that.

Q25 **Giles Watling:** So you felt informed—you felt like you had your finger on the pulse, not only formally, but socially as well. But did it come as a great surprise to you—because it came as a huge surprise to me—that there was such a vituperative outburst as a result of these disclosures? For instance, Eamonn Holmes said in a tweet: “Schofield has finally been caught out ... But he’s not the only guilty party. 4 high members of Itv management knew what sort of man he was ... and NEVER once took action to prevent him controlling or taking advantage of...young people.” That’s an extraordinary tweet to come out with, and I would imagine extremely damaging. You must have been surprised to receive that, Carolyn.

Dame Carolyn McCall: We didn’t receive it; it was on Twitter—I don’t look at Twitter.

Giles Watling: To see it, then.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think it’s actually defamatory, never mind anything else—but of course, we wouldn’t say that because it would just inflame the situation. But Kevin, you know Eamonn—I don’t know Eamonn.

Kevin Lygo: It’s worth making an observation here that there has been very vocal criticism, and mention of all this toxic culture and everything like this, and it’s quite a few people, who have got a platform now—with a show elsewhere or a newspaper column, or whatever it is, or just on Twitter—having a big go. It occurred to me just the other day that, actually, a lot of these people—there aren’t a lot of them, but the few that



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there are—worked as presenters on ITV for a very long time, some of them over 10 years. There was never any complaint from them while they were there. If they wanted anything, it was, “More work, please. We love it here. Can we do more?”

Where I have some sympathy for them is that presenters of programmes often have, sort of, a slight feeling of divine right to stay there forever. Obviously ITV is a company, and producers of programmes maybe have a different agenda, and want to change and refresh, and want to bring on new people and so forth. So it’s only really—this is why I do have sympathy for them—when you have to have the difficult conversation of, “Thank you very much. It’s been really good, but actually we’d like you to do less,” that it’s not very nice. I get that, because this is their life; they love it; they never complain; and they thoroughly enjoy it. Their response is always one of disappointment, “Oh, can’t I stay? Can’t I do anything?” That is why, honestly, I tend almost never to just cut but say, “Look, thank you very much for all the work you’ve been doing. You’ve been doing a great job, but we want to try other things. We are not jettisoning you. We would just like you to do a bit less, or maybe try to find something else for you, as well.” They have, generally speaking, been loyal servants to ITV, so they deserve to be treated properly like that.

It is not surprising, is it, that when they go, they are suddenly, “Urgh, I hate ITV. It’s awful,” when for a decade or more they were there reaping the rewards, enjoying the job, and everybody seemed to get on.

Q26 Giles Watling: You are saying that this is not indicative of a pressure cooker building up. This is more to do with resentment.

Kevin Lygo: No, I don’t see that. No.

Giles Watling: Thank you, I’ll leave it at that.

Chair: Can we keep the answers as pithy as possible? We have a lot to cover today. Jane.

Q27 Jane Stevenson: Thank you, Dame Caroline, and good morning, Dame Carolyn. In your letter to the Committee, you talk about there being no evidence of a relationship “beyond hearsay and rumour”. Where is that line between actual evidence, and hearsay and rumour? What would you have accepted as something more solid?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think if someone had seen something inappropriate, or if someone had heard something that they wanted investigated, because they had heard something said by one of those individuals that was inappropriate. Anything that would have been tangible rather than rumour.

Q28 Jane Stevenson: So, first-party witnessing?

Dame Carolyn McCall: The effect of an investigation internally for individuals is extremely serious, obviously, but it is also extremely straining. It is a big strain on the people. That is not a reason not to do it. I do think, legally, that employment law would say that you have to have



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evidence. You have to have something tangible that says you are going to do this.

- Q29 **Jane Stevenson:** You mentioned in your earlier evidence that Person X was asked 12 times if he was in a relationship. I started to get echoes of an old war film, with a floodlight over a face.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Over a long period of time. This was not in one go.

- Q30 **Jane Stevenson:** If someone asked me—whether it was over a period of time or not—the same thing 12 times, I would start to feel slightly victimised, if I obviously did not want to say anything about that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: It depends on the context and the tone of that question. If it was like this—face to face—asking for evidence in a very formal setting, that may well be true, but it was not like that. There were a couple of formal meetings with HR. There were multiple informal meetings. Remember also that the motive with the question was to help Person X if anything was worrying or troubling him, or if there was anything he wanted to say that was inappropriate, because the rumours were rife about the inappropriateness of this. That is why he was asked, at various different points of time, in many different ways, and by different people. There was one particular person—the head of production—he has a very good relationship with, and he trusts. She was the one. I think, who was very much saying, “If we can help, please say anything. We care about you.” That is where she would have been coming from on some of the questions.

- Q31 **Jane Stevenson:** I can’t decide where this line is. These are two consenting adults who both work for your company. Where is that line in terms of just a gross invasion of privacy? You mentioned your workplace relationship policy. If I, as an adult woman, entered a relationship with a man who was not vastly different in terms of rank or status to me, is it any of your business?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No, look, I think it is important—this thing about imbalance—and I feel that is what we have taken seriously. It is not about trying to invade people’s private lives, and who they see and what they do. It is about the workplace. Some relationships at work, I think we all know, are inevitable. I think the most important thing we can do is to maintain a professional attitude and boundaries, to make sure all of our people know that they have to have a professional attitude and they have to have boundaries to avoid inappropriate behaviour. That is why we have the code of conduct, the safeguarding policy, the speaking up policy, the workplace relationship policy, you know. The whole thing we are trying to do every day is to ensure that we have a safe and respectful place where people come to work.

If you cross that boundary, I think you would say that, with someone with that kind of different dynamic in power, that was inappropriate. I think if we had had any evidence or knowledge of that, if Phillip had said that to us, we would have acted swiftly, in that we would have investigated and



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we would have taken action. What that action would be, I cannot say, because it is hypothetical, and it would depend on when and where. But it was inappropriate to have a relationship with someone so junior in Daytime.

- Q32 **Jane Stevenson:** Many armchair commentators on social media would point out the irony of Parliament speaking to a company about appropriate relationships at work, but I would like to ask what action would have been appropriate. I know you have said it is hypothetical, but the circumstances are fairly clear and the individuals are known to you. So what would have been an appropriate reaction had one of the individuals admitted it and said, "We're in a relationship and it's all fine."

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think that that is where the context is very, very important. The context becomes all-important. Rather than going through all the scenarios, I think we have to say it would depend and that we would say that that is a deeply inappropriate workplace relationship, given the power imbalance, and is deeply inappropriate in any context.

- Q33 **Jane Stevenson:** Would you have covered that up, if one of the individuals had admitted a relationship?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No. Why? No, I do not think so. It is their private lives, but it is in the workplace. Once it is in the workplace, I think it becomes something that we wouldn't try to cover up in any way.

- Q34 **Jane Stevenson:** Would you have taken one of your biggest stars, someone who everyone was so fond of nationally, and removed him from the show?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Yes, if that was necessary. If the context gave us that and the investigation said it—you know, things have emerged that are deeply inappropriate in the workplace. I think if we had known that at the time, we would have acted very swiftly.

- Q35 **Julie Elliott:** Good morning. One thing I want to ask about is the fact that Phillip Schofield has said that he got Person X jobs on other ITV shows that he worked on. Were you or other members of ITV management aware that he had got this person jobs on other programmes that he worked on? Is that usual—that stars give that preferential treatment to people?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I will answer that, and Kevin can come in. I think the first thing to know is that when it has been reported that he's a PA and a personal runner, that does not exist at ITV. No runner is a personal runner for anyone. There is a pool of runners. There are three on Daytime on "This Morning" and they all share the work. Person X was working for Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford as well as Holly, as well as Phillip. That is the first fact that I think is very important. And we don't have PAs—we have PAs, but they're not runners. So that is important. Kevin, would you answer the question about how it works in terms of what people ask for and what they don't ask for?



Kevin Lygo: It is common for presenters, performers, to want a sort of familiar crew around them, certainly always with glam teams, as they are called—the dressers and make-up artists and things like that. Less so perhaps with runners, though I do not think that this is the only occasion. Certainly with researchers, writers that they trust and know, and things like that. So they do move around. Remember, as I mentioned before, “This Morning” is slightly unusual in that it never ends; it is just on forever. Other programmes, you know, can have a very short production period. It is not that unusual for producers to bring people over, for presenters to say, “Can we have that nice researcher who worked for us? He seemed very bright,” or whatever. It is not that unusual, no.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think, on what you are referring to, the agent requested Person X. It did not come direct from Phillip.

Kevin Lygo: It would nearly always be the agent who would contact not us but the producer or whoever was responsible on the show for hiring this level of person, to say, “Phillip would like this person to work on it. Is that all right? Can we do that?” And then it would be handled by the production team.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Didn’t we find out that Person X was asked for by other talent?

Kevin Lygo: Yes, I think he was asked for. Actually, Eamonn and Ruth asked for him, because everybody thought very well of him. I think Ruth was doing work for QVC or something, and she said, “Could he come and help out on that?” I think he did. It was things like that; there is a lot of movement.

Q36 **Julie Elliott:** Whereas I can understand it for make-up artists and things that are very personal—you have a rapport, somebody does your make-up very well or whatever—a runner is a different type of job. If this happens—clearly, you are saying that it does—do you think it is appropriate to do that? Is it appropriate for stars to have that level of input in those kinds of decisions?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have gone to a lot of live shows, and what I see is that a runner will get everything organised. They take people to the taxi, get the taxi in the right place, make sure there is food and water in the dressing room—whatever you want there, whatever you want here. That is what a runner does. A runner makes life easy for whoever they are working on for the show, and often they are working for an entire show. I have personally seen how runners help on “Dancing on Ice” or “The Voice”, for instance. Runners come to every show when they are being produced live. That is certainly my take on it. What do you think?

Kevin Lygo: Remember that runners are usually used for just a couple of days when the show is actually being recorded. If a production lasts weeks, they may be not around during those weeks. They are on set to help get everything done on the day.



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Dame Carolyn McCall: But, Julie, you could be right. As I say, we are not complacent about this. After the KC review, and in fact when we start looking through it again, there may be a way we can tighten up how runners register what they do or something. There may be something there. You are right: they are runners, and they want to do well. Most runners are actually very ambitious; they don't want to stay as runners.

Julie Elliott: They make things tick, if we are being honest.

Dame Carolyn McCall: They really make things tick, yes. There may be something there.

Q37 **Julie Elliott:** When Phillip Schofield announced his departure from "This Morning" on 20 May, he said, "I understand ITV has decided the current situation can't go on". Who made that decision?

Kevin Lygo: I did, I suppose, ultimately. These things are collective, and there are discussions between producers and the head of Daytime, and various other people are involved. There is constant dialogue with the agent.

Q38 **Julie Elliott:** To expand the question a bit, what do you think the situation was that couldn't go on?

Kevin Lygo: I think it was the media speculation. Among some of the staff, there was this sort of relentless, "Will it ever go away? How can we make this sort of programme with all this scrutiny?" I think everybody came to that opinion. Phillip didn't argue against it or anything; I think everyone felt that it had come to a natural point.

Dame Carolyn McCall: As you will remember, the whole court appearance of Phillip's brother—that whole thing—was playing out just before all this. There were lots of rumours about him as a result of his brother being in court, and all the very awful things that emerged there. I think the pressure on him was just enormous, actually.

Q39 **Julie Elliott:** You have sort of answered this, but on 20 May you said: "We look forward to continuing our relationship with Phillip". Did his resignation from ITV days later take you by surprise?

Kevin Lygo: Yes, because it was completely due to the fact that he had lied to us all this time, and he realised that it would be untenable to work with all these people he had been directly lying to us over years about. I didn't have to make the decision about removing him—the instant thing was the British soap awards, which I mentioned—because he chose to step down. He said, "I'm actually leaving media completely." Certainly, he felt that he couldn't really expect us to carry on employing him after he had lied over such an important issue.

Q40 **Chair:** Can I quickly take you back to the issue of runners? There are reports that this young man made his own showreel on the "This Morning" set at ITV's expense, using the production team who were in and around the set at that time after normal working hours. Is that sort of facility made available to all runners?



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Kevin Lygo: If requested, it would normally be granted. I think if suddenly there was a floodgate and 30 people were all in a line saying, "I want to do a showreel"—but I think if you are, as we now know, very friendly with the presenters. In effect, it is a minimum—I think it was one camera or something, I don't know—but it is about having Phillip and Holly prepared to stay on for 15 minutes afterwards to do your showreel. I think it is that. This wouldn't be the first time.

Q41 **Chair:** It was Phillip, it was Holly, there was a cookery section, wasn't there? Surely this must have been over and above the sort of support that ITV would have offered. Surely this shows some kind of preferential treatment.

Dame Carolyn McCall: None of us would have known that that showreel was being made. I have just said that I think runners are usually very ambitious. They will want to make their books. They will want to do their video reels. They will want that, because they want other jobs, and they want to show what they can do. So, I don't know of another instance, but I wouldn't know. I mean, it wouldn't occur to me that somebody else would do this.

Most of it, as far as I saw, was a cut and paste of some other programmes. But he did interview Phil and he did interview Holly and he did interview Ruth and Eamonn on this showreel. I am not sure that would have aroused, in Daytime, much—I mean, if the head of Daytime had been worried about that, she would have done something about it. She would have called him aside and said, "What were you doing? Why were you doing it? That's company resources."

I think generally people are very encouraging of runners. They want them to do well.

Q42 **Chair:** To be clear, this is a service that would be equally open to any other runners that were working on "This Morning".

Kevin Lygo: Yes, it would. It would be very informal, of course. You would need the producer to agree, and whatever members of the crew you needed, they would have to agree, and, in this case, Phillip and Holly and Eamonn and Ruth would have had to agree. You would have to be on pretty friendly terms, or good terms or whatever, to get everyone to say, "Yes, of course, we'll hang around for 20 minutes and help you out."

Dame Carolyn McCall: But your question is, would we do this for anybody else? As long as it was not getting in the way of the show and we could help people, whatever level they are, to get their next role, we would do that. We are very encouraging of that.

Q43 **Chair:** You are not aware of any other runners who have made their—

Dame Carolyn McCall: We haven't looked, to be honest. We haven't asked.

Chair: It might be worth adding to your inquiry.



Carolyn McCall: Sure.

Q44 **Dr Huq:** Hi, everyone. Sorry if I missed this, but did Phillip Schofield have any role in helping the young man secure employment at ITV in the first place?

Carolyn McCall: He introduced Person X into ITV. Kyla, do you want to do the date sequence of this, because it is quite important, and the age?

Kyla Mullins: Of course. Person X first got employment with ITV in 2016 when they were 20 years old. The previous year, they had done some work experience. We now understand, looking back into it and having seen the Phillip Schofield interview a couple of weeks ago, that Person X asked for some work experience. Phillip passed details of who to contact at ITV. The individual filled in a form in the normal way. To put this into context, we do about 250 work placements a year. There are about 50 to 60 in Daytime each year.

The individual filled in that the connection was a family friend—that he was a family friend of Phillip Schofield. No one thought anything of that. Many people put forward individuals who are family friends for work experience. We will have a lot of that at ITV.

He did his work experience aged 19 for roughly two weeks. He came back the following year and did some more work experience and impressed people. I think anyone who has known the individual who has commented over the last few weeks has said that he was an impressive individual and much liked, and did a good job.

He did well in his work placement, and as with all runners who do well in their work placement, they are put into what is called the runner pool—sort of a rota, where if there are gaps or vacancies, they can be called upon to work on programmes. He went into the runner pool, which is not managed by any of the talent. It is managed by our production team and HR team. He was offered a short contract when he was 20, in 2016. He did well in that, and that became a longer-term fixed contract with ITV.

Q45 **Dr Huq:** We all get emails all the time from people wanting work experience. I always say that I only take paid staff. It is not what you know, it is who you know, in the whole work experience field, isn't it?

Dame Carolyn McCall: That is a really good point. We do a number of different things on work experience. We do not really want to do—altruistically, we want to do a lot of work experience, but actually it is quite a hard thing to do, because you have to chaperone people who come in for work experience, so it is intense on resources, and you have to do a good work experience programme. That was 10 days and will have been done properly.

You are absolutely right—we all get those emails about work experience. Just so you know, we do work formally—we have a very formal way of doing this—with Creative Access, so that we can give work experience to people from very different backgrounds, so that we get social mobility and



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diversity, and a whole range of people who would not otherwise get opportunities, because they would not know someone able to do that.

We do that but, in addition, our policy states that someone who works at ITV can put people in touch with the right person. There is a line manager who deals with it and if they can do it, they do it, and if they cannot do it, they do not do it. Those are the two channels for work experience at ITV.

Q46 Dr Huq: Something else you said was that agents were involved. I am trying to understand—was that YMU, the management company, or something? What is their role in this? You told us when you were first aware of rumours swirling around, you started probing a bit. If they had been aware of concerns, would they have said anything, or are they a supplier that does not want to fall out with or affect their relationship with ITV?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No, they are not a supplier. Kevin can explain this.

Kevin Lygo: YMU is a large agency, mainly of presenters and so forth. We have had a long working relationship with them. Sorry, what is your question? If they knew—

Dr Huq: It is about their relationship with ITV—would they have raised alarm bells, or would they not want to because of their relationship with you?

Kevin Lygo: Yes, they would. They certainly would if they thought something surprising, untoward or whatever—

Q47 Dr Huq: Or even a production company, if there is such a thing. I do not know if there is on this show.

Kevin Lygo: First off, probably, they would go to the producer of whatever show was relevant, because that would be their contact. It would be the producer, in effect, that chose the hiring of whoever is on screen, so they would have regular contact with the producer. At a bigger level, they might go to the head of entertainment, the head of Daytime or me about what is going on. You would like to think that if they knew of something, they would have said it. We spoke to them a lot about this particular issue over the couple of years or whatever it was, and they just constantly denied that anything untoward was going on.

Dame Carolyn McCall: They made it very clear that they did not know anything. In fact, they had lawyers working on behalf of Phillip to defend him, because he had denied it to them so strenuously. Kevin was in a number of meetings with them, with the lawyers, because we were asking them questions about Phillip. Our relationship with them is: they represent our presenters, and therefore we negotiate contracts with them, but they do not supply us—

Kevin Lygo: They do not make programmes or anything.

Dame Carolyn McCall: They do not make programmes.



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Q48 **Dr Huq:** You have instructed a KC—obviously, you are taking it very seriously—to review the facts of the case. Will those results be published in full so we can all see?

Dame Carolyn McCall: The findings will be published.

Q49 **Dr Huq:** Is that normal for your normal complaints procedure? How independent is your complaints procedure? I know from watching both “The Morning Show”—which sometimes this saga feels like—and “Succession” that people joke about internal investigations. They can be used for many purposes, can’t they?

Dame Carolyn McCall: That is TV, I am afraid. That’s fiction. But anyway, we will get on to the facts.

Dr Huq: True, but fiction and reality are all merging here.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Let’s have some facts.

Kyla Mullins: We take all complaints very seriously, whether they are raised informally or formally. We have very clear grievance procedures, procedures for how things need to be handled and disciplinary procedures. If someone raises an issue internally, it will be assessed by HR—

Q50 **Dr Huq:** Your own HR department, or an independent—this is a KC now.

Kyla Mullins: In the first instance, just to ascertain the facts, if someone raises an issue and it is an HR-related issue, our HR team will assess the facts. They will then work out whether we need a formal investigation into it. If we have a formal investigation, then, depending on the facts—not in every case but in many cases—what we will do is ensure that the investigating manager, a senior manager within ITV, is brought in, but from outside the relevant department.

For example, in one of the cases that has been widely covered in the media recently, where the individual was not named but it has been widely covered that they raised issues about bullying and inappropriate behaviours in the workplace, the HR team called in a senior manager, who actually was one of our heads of news from elsewhere in the organisation, to be the independent investigating person. With HR support, they conducted a review of that particular case—looked at all the allegations, looked at the documentation and interviewed a raft of people. And on that case I can say—it hasn’t been said publicly, but none of the allegations were upheld in that particular case.

In that case, we did it internally, but with an external—outside the relevant department—senior manager as the investigating manager. In the case of Dr Ranj, as Carolyn has said, we instructed an external HR company called HR Clarity, who conducted an external investigation. We look at each situation and the facts as they stand and the severity of the allegations that are swirling and decide whether it is more appropriate to do something internally or externally. It is not one size fits all.

Q51 **Dr Huq:** You mentioned that Dr Ranj raised a complaint. Is it the same



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as with the GMC and the Law Society—that BAME people get complained about more than non-BAME people? I don't know if you have done these figures. It's just that Asian doctors—

Dame Carolyn McCall: What, that people of colour complain more, do you mean?

Q52 **Dr Huq:** Yes—about. I know he raised the complaint. I don't know if you know that.

Kyla Mullins: I don't know those statistics.

Dame Carolyn McCall: How many complaints have we had?

Kyla Mullins: Over the last five years—we have looked at the statistics; we thought you might be interested in them—there have been 128 complaints?

Q53 **Dr Huq:** Actually, I think we are going to come to this later. I was just interested in the BAME thing.

Kyla Mullins: Well, now that I have started, there have been 128 complaints, which have been investigated by our HR team, either formally or informally, across ITV across the last five years. Of those, five related to "This Morning"—five of the 128 complaints across the last five years. As we said earlier, two of those related to bullying or harassment, and both of those have been discussed so far today.

Q54 **Dr Huq:** One last one from me. Phillip Schofield's previous co-presenter, Fern Britton, apparently left because she was paid £225,000 less than him. Is there differential pay for the same role in your organisation?

Dame Carolyn McCall: What year was that? When was that?

Kevin Lygo: That was 12 or 15 years ago, I think.

Q55 **Dr Huq:** Right, so everything is all overhauled—

Kevin Lygo: Yes.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think you will find that everything has changed quite a lot on equal pay.

Kevin Lygo: Yes, Phillip and Holly are on the same—

Q56 **Dr Huq:** How much of it depends on the individual show?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Could you just repeat that, Kevin?

Kevin Lygo: Yes. I would say Phillip and Holly were on the same wage because they were doing the same job, but probably not—although it is a long time ago—when they started, because she would have been junior and he was already well established. But we have made it a policy, now, that when people are clearly doing the same job, like panellists on a show or something, they should be paid equally.

Q57 **Chair:** Can I quickly go back to the KC review? If there is anything that



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Ms Mulcahy finds that is outside the terms of reference that you have published, what will you do to ensure that those are appropriately treated?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I will start and I will hand over to Kyla. We have said, really clearly, there is a paragraph in the terms of reference that says if anything comes up that is not in scope, she will capture that and bring it to the attention of the board.

Q58 **Chair:** Once that review is concluded—and depending on the findings, clearly—will you be, potentially, reviewing the position of any ITV staff if—

Dame Carolyn McCall: Look, we are taking the review, as you can see, extremely seriously. We wouldn't have initiated it if it wasn't very serious. I would say that we will listen to everything that is said, but I do not want to get into hypotheticals or pre-empt the KC review or prejudice it.

Q59 **Chair:** How, potentially, might you hold people to account, depending on the findings?

Dame Carolyn McCall: As I said, depending on the findings, we will listen, learn and act, but I do not know what the findings will be, so I am not going to go into hypothetical situations that I do not know of yet.

Q60 **Chair:** What are the parameters? What is the worst-case scenario? Would somebody be fired?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I do not want to talk about scenarios that we don't know about yet, Chair. We would just be speculating as to what the findings are going to say. The reason we have a KC is to take away speculation, to look at the process, facts and our approach, and then come out with some findings. She will be able to interview anybody she wants to. She will be able to go anywhere she wants under the terms of reference, so there will be nothing to hide.

Q61 **Chair:** But if it was found that there was basically a cover-up at ITV and "This Morning" over this, people could be sacked.

Dame Carolyn McCall: As I said, I do not want to get into hypotheticals. That is hypothetical currently.

Q62 **John Nicolson:** Good morning, everybody. May I just say what I don't think this is about? I don't think this is about whether Holly now hates Phillip and whether Eamonn's in a huff with Holly and Kevin. That seems to me to be utterly irrelevant. It probably benefits ITV for the tabloids to chase that set of hares. This is about bullying and the protection of staff; that is the issue. That is why we are here, and that is why we want to talk to you. In that context, what did you feel, Dame Carolyn, when after weeks of bullying headlines, you saw the editor of "This Morning", Martin Frizell, tell a reporter in answer to her question that he did not like aubergines?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think you asked this of my colleague Magnus Brooke, and I think he said that it was ill advised. I could not agree with



him more. I think Martin has made a mistake. I think he knows he made a mistake. I don't think he intended to say that, but I do not know.

- Q63 **John Nicolson:** I bet he did. He was looking out the window. He saw that there was a crew there—by the way, an ITV pool crew. There has been some speculation that he said that because it was a Sky crew, but it was an ITV pool crew that he said that to. He knew that they were outside. He came out. He looked as if he thought that he was coming out with a clever line.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Kevin has actually spoken to him, and he can talk to that. I do not believe that anything that Martin said there in the heat of the moment was reflective of our culture.

- Q64 **John Nicolson:** It was a ridiculous, absurd and possibly vulgar thing to say, but it matters because he is the boss of that programme, which is now mired in allegations of bullying; he knew that. Before this whole stooshie began, if you were a young staffer, he was the person you would go to if you were worried about bullying. I know that you told us that you could respond anonymously, but he was the boss of that programme. It says a lot about the culture at that programme that he took such a mocking and dismissive attitude towards bullying.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think you are reading an awful lot into one comment, which was a foolish comment, I absolutely agree, and a very ill-advised comment. To read the entire culture of an organisation or programme from one comment from one person who probably was a bit under pressure—regardless of the crew on his doorstep, he probably was. He is used to handling pressure; he should be able to handle it. He made a mistake.

- Q65 **John Nicolson:** I am not. If he had a saintly reputation and there were no questions of bullying from anybody else, then you are right: that was just a single mistake. But like other members of the Committee, I have had so many messages from folk at ITV who talk about the bullying culture of ITV. It seems to me that this morning you have talked about loads of investigations, and they all seem to end up with ITV coming out smelling of roses. I want to give a voice to a couple of people who have written to me. I have done my very best to ascertain that these are real people, either current or ex-staffers. I will not identify them in any way.

Here is one: "I worked for a boss at Daytime—somebody senior. My boss was very difficult and would, as a matter of course, often shout and belittle staff. It went on for years with nobody doing anything about it. It was a toxic environment." Here is another person: "I'm very pleased to see your Committee address the culture of bullying and toxicity at ITV. It's a terrible place to work. Daytime in particular is absolutely toxic. Here is how it works: if someone complains about bullying or sexual impropriety, ITV pretends to investigate. They will do a bit of a cursory glance at the complaint; then they will answer and they will decide that there was no bullying. The person who complains is then ultimately forced to leave, often with a non-disclosure agreement, and it is made clear to them that they can't return to their work because they have



made false accusations.”

Dame Carolyn McCall: They are very disappointing to hear, and deeply distressing.

John Nicolson: I have dozens of them.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Can you hand them to us?

John Nicolson: I cannot promise to do that, because people are very concerned that the way they write or little clues in their messages might identify them.

Dame Carolyn McCall: You just said they no longer work there, so—

John Nicolson: I said some did and some did not.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Well, it is not something that I recognise characterises the whole culture at all. We have told you that we have had five complaints in five years on Daytime. We have taken all of them seriously. Only two of them were about bullying and any kind of question around discrimination of role. So what I would say—

John Nicolson: How come people are so unhappy—

Dame Carolyn McCall: Can I please say—

Q66 **John Nicolson:** I will let you come back in. How come so many people are unhappy, yet you keep doing investigations that end up showing that there wasn't a problem?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have said that we have had two official complaints. Both of them were investigated, one internally—Kyla has explained how we did that—and one was not investigated internally, deliberately. The person who did that had absolutely no involvement in ITV; they were an HR specialist. They were not able to uphold the allegations. So it is not loads of investigations. We have investigated whenever we have had a complaint, and we take it very seriously. It does not fill me with anything but sorrow and sadness. It is not something that we try and instil or foster. It is the antithesis of what we want. If you are getting many people calling you, I honestly feel there is a confidential way that you can let them speak to us, because that is the way we can actually look at this properly and do something about it. We will do something about it.

John Nicolson: All right, I'll ask them.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Yes, please. I can't do anything if they are telling you about it, because I run ITV.

John Nicolson: I will ask them, although I think there is a trust issue.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I genuinely think that if there is a trust issue in Daytime, as you are trying to describe—you have knowledge that I don't,



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because you've been talking to people—then there are other ways that they can talk to us that do not betray any trust issues with Daytime.

Kyla Mullins: We will happily give you the details of Safecall to pass on to them, if you feel comfortable doing that, Mr. Nicolson. That is the external, confidential—it can be anonymous—helpline. Also, as we look into these, if there's anything that needs to go into the KC review, we will pass it on.

Q67 **John Nicolson:** Right. Dame Carolyn, this morning you have talked about the ways in which ITV talked to Mr X about the situation at ITV. I wrote down that you called it a review twice and an investigation once.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have never called it an investigation. I said—

John Nicolson: You used the word “investigated”.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I might have said “investigated”. We did investigate, but I would not call it an investigation, because that gives it a kind of formal structure that, because of the rumours and the time period, it did not have.

Q68 **John Nicolson:** I have spoken to someone who is friendly with Mr X. He felt that the review and the investigations that took place made it quite difficult for him to talk, and he was under a lot of pressure not to talk. He quotes one particular conversation with a manager, and the words used were, “Is everything okay between you and Phillip?” He did not, I am told, feel that he could really answer that with any candour, for all the reasons that we understand. He also, I am told, did not want to. He left the programme. I have heard a number of people describe his move to “Loose Women” as a promotion that he applied for. Can you confirm that, of his own volition, he applied for this job, and that his job there was a promotion?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Let me go back to some of the things you have just outlined. It was difficult to talk because he was under pressure not to talk. We would need to understand from whom, because in every conversation he has had with the head of production, he actually not only felt less pressure when talking to her because she has been so supportive and helpful to him—

Q69 **John Nicolson:** Phillip Schofield did not want him to reveal to anybody the relationship.

Dame Carolyn McCall: That is a very different issue; it is a very different matter to say that Phillip did not want him to do so. I do not know whether that is true or not. I do not have that information. But if Phillip was putting him under pressure, ITV were not putting him under pressure on anything. We were actually asking. He was coming to us for counselling and for other things, and we were helping him to talk freely to us without anybody else in the organisation even knowing about it.

Q70 **John Nicolson:** Did he apply for a job at “Loose Women”?



Dame Carolyn McCall: I will come to that, but I want to be very clear that it was Phillip who was putting him under pressure and not ITV. They are two quite separate things, and it is very important we stick to facts here. The fact of the “Loose Women” issue is that he absolutely applied for that job, he got it and it was a promotion. But if we just track back, he actually applied for a job on “This Morning” as a researcher—Kyla will give you the dates—before he applied for “Loose Women”. He did not get the job on “This Morning”. He went through a recruitment process and did not get the job. He then applied for a job on “Loose Women” with 29 other applicants in the process and he got the job. I think we have to remember that we are talking about Person X. It is very hard to know. He was an extremely capable, very confident young person—he really was—and he impressed people he came across. So he was ambitious.

Q71 **John Nicolson:** You have said that about his ambition before, and I take that point. Anyway, I am just relaying to you that his friend has told me that he did not actually want to leave, and indeed that somebody was removed from “Loose Women” in order to get them a post.

Dame Carolyn McCall: There is no evidence for us. We have looked at the process. We have looked at the procedure. We have looked at the line manager who interviewed him, and we have looked at the other applicants.

Kyla Mullins: We have looked into this in real detail, because we are aware of the allegations out there. Our HR teams have absolutely confirmed, as Carolyn has outlined, that it was in—to get my dates right—2019 that he applied for a transfer. He was looking for a promotion. Kevin is obviously much closer to the world of production and runners, but people do not become a runner to be a runner for life. You are a runner and you look for a promotion.

John Nicolson: I understand that.

Kyla Mullins: This was a promotion.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Production secretary is a promotion.

Q72 **John Nicolson:** Let us whizz on a wee bit, because we have a lot to get through. I have spoken to a number of people at the programme, current and former employees. They say what was going on between him and Phillip Schofield was a bit of an open secret. People knew about it. The showreel that the Chair described obviously is not a normal thing to happen; we know that. I worked in TV, and it is most rare for a runner to be afforded that kind of time and privileged access. When he was hired, did anybody find out what his history was with Phillip Schofield? Did they check when Phillip Schofield first met him, which, as you know, was when he was very young? Did anybody discover that Phillip Schofield had followed him on social media when he was very young? Did anybody look into that or notice that, or has that all been a surprise to you?

Kyla Mullins: Why don't I take that? No, no one looked into the detail at the time. As I say, this was one of 50 to 60 work placements on Daytime.



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When he came for one and a half weeks' work experience, noting that Phillip Schofield was a family friend, there were no alarm bells. There was nothing to see in that. We will have many similar applications for work experience where someone lists "family friend" across ITV. So no, no one looked back into that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: We would not do that, Mr Nicolson, for any work experience person; we would not look into background. We would either give them work experience or we wouldn't be able to give them work experience because we could not do it.

Kyla Mullins: And he was 19 and fully supervised through his time there.

Q73 **John Nicolson:** Do you know who is paying for his lawyer at the moment? Press reports are that Phillip Schofield is paying for the lawyer.

Kyla Mullins: My understanding is that Phillip Schofield is paying for it; I think Phillip mentioned that in the BBC interview, but we don't get involved in that.

Q74 **John Nicolson:** My understanding is that that is not true; his lawyers are working at pro bono, because they are concerned about some of the issues in the case. You have been in touch with him recently?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Person X or Phillip Schofield?

John Nicolson: No, Person X.

Kyla Mullins: Yes.

Q75 **John Nicolson:** How many people approached senior management with concerns about presenters, editors or the culture at "This Morning"? Can I turn to you, Mr Lygo, on this?

Kevin Lygo: What, came to me directly with complaints about behaviours or something? I don't think any that I can recall, honestly.

Q76 **John Nicolson:** That is funny, because I have a copy of an email from ITV, referring to you. It says: "In our meeting on Monday 4 October 2021, you referred to your concerns about the conduct of Phillip Schofield and another colleague working on 'This Morning'. I am not able to share all the details, but I can find no evidence to suggest that Kevin Lygo failed to take action on the allegations that you have raised with him. It's not a question of him not being interested in the concerns. He is interested in the concerns and he does take the allegations that you have raised seriously." So there is an example of somebody who did contact you. I cannot tell you who it is without permission, but this is an email from ITV.

Kevin Lygo: Someone at ITV to me?

John Nicolson: Somebody senior at ITV to the person who made the complaint.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Oh—someone for you, Kevin, to the complainant?



John Nicolson: Yes.

Dame Carolyn McCall: We will need to see that.

Kevin Lygo: I'll need to check that. Sorry.

Q77 **John Nicolson:** Okay, because that seems quite significant. We have talked about non-disclosure agreements a number of times today, and you have confirmed that Mr X has not been asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement, though he was given a pay-off, wasn't he?

Kyla Mullins: I would not characterise it as a pay-off. His role was made redundant and he—

Q78 **John Nicolson:** Was he staff?

Kyla Mullins: He was a fixed-term contractor, so staff. We treat them in exactly the same way. He'd been on fixed-term contracts throughout his time at ITV.

Q79 **John Nicolson:** Is it normal to give pay-offs to folk who are non-staff?

Kyla Mullins: It is normal at ITV; it was an absolutely standard process. I have spoken to our chief people officer, who has confirmed that. His settlement/agreement that he entered into was completely standard. There is a very clear carve-out for whistleblowing/speaking up. The payment, I understand, was absolutely standard—formulaic. It is what we would have paid to anyone else at that level.

Dame Carolyn McCall: It was a redundancy, because his role was redundant post covid.

Q80 **John Nicolson:** Okay. Yesterday the BBC said to us that they were going to release people from non-disclosure agreements that they had signed in the past, unless it was specifically to do with commercial confidentiality. Are ITV prepared to do the same?

Kyla Mullins: To the extent that there are non-disclosure agreements that were entered into historically—I don't know where those would be or over what period of time—then yes.

Dame Carolyn McCall: At the moment, I would have no knowledge of an NDA, other than for commercial matters. If we have anything historically that we do not know about, we will look into that, but we would have no reason, I think, to sign NDAs.

Q81 **John Nicolson:** You are saying something a bit more cautious than Ms Mullins, because Ms Mullins a second ago said, "Yes, people would be released from those," and you're saying that you would look into it. Is it "look into it" or "release"?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Both. I mean, we need to find out if there are any.

Q82 **John Nicolson:** Right, but I phrased my question carefully. We're not talking about commercial NDAs with commercial sensitivity, just NDAs



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that, for example, might refer to pay-offs for bullying or other matters like that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Let's be clear about this: we do not have any contracts that would say that they could not speak up about bullying, sexual harassment or anything like that. Kyla already referred to this—there is a carve-out that is quite clear in any standard agreement that we would do.

Q83 **John Nicolson:** Just to go back to my previous question, Mr Lygo, I will ask for permission to send you that email. But just for the record, you are saying that, to the best of your recollection, you had no meetings with anybody where they talked about a bullying culture or inappropriate behaviour with regard to Phillip Schofield.

Kevin Lygo: I am pretty certain I would remember if they were talking about a presenter.

Q84 **John Nicolson:** I would have thought so. Can I just ask one final question? Can you confirm that the Daytime production staff at "This Morning" referred to their audience, in production meetings, as "Tower Block Traceys"?

Kevin Lygo: As what?

John Nicolson: "Tower Block Traceys".

Kevin Lygo: I have never heard that phrase.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have never heard that.

Q85 **John Nicolson:** A number of people have told me that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have never heard that. I don't even know what it means.

Q86 **John Nicolson:** It seems cruelly dismissive. If an idea is regarded as too highbrow, I am told people say, "Would that really appeal to the 'Tower Block Traceys'?"

Dame Carolyn McCall: I have never heard that.

Q87 **John Nicolson:** I agree: it is a horrible thing to say.

Dame Carolyn McCall: It's not what ITV would be looking at as a target audience. We would not describe our target audience in that way. I do know one thing, which is that the Daytime team on every show really cares about the audience, so that surprises me.

Q88 **Chair:** Can I just go back a little bit? Are your on-screen talent or presenters ever able to have staff move from roles or jobs?

Kevin Lygo: Do you mean removed?

Chair: Yes. Are staff ever moved on from roles within ITV at the request of presenters or other on-screen talent?



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Kevin Lygo: I don't know of an instance, but I suppose it is possible that if a producer or a presenter found somebody very difficult or awkward or something, they might say, "I'm finding it very difficult to work with that person," and then maybe an appropriate action will be taken, but I don't know of an example.

Q89 **Chair:** You don't know any examples. Would that ring any alarm bells?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No.

Q90 **Simon Jupp:** Good morning. I want to talk more generally—not about any specific case, because I think we have covered that ad nauseum this morning—about the training that ITV provides to its managers on safeguarding and managing complaints. As a former ITV manager, I remember, within weeks of being employed, being put on a safeguarding course. I cannot pretend that I remember all of the course now—it has been several years—but could you outline the training that is provided and how far that training is provided among managers? Obviously, I worked in news, but there is entertainment, there is factual—there are so many different departments. How widespread is that safeguarding trend?

Dame Carolyn McCall: It is widespread. The first thing to say is that training is important. We do it both online and offline, and we do it on the job. We see it as three different types of training, because sometimes on-the-job training is more valuable in some ways than filling in online forms and mandatory training. Do you want to talk a little bit about the process, Kyla?

Kyla Mullins: Yes. Our general process is that when anyone joins ITV, they do mandatory training. There is very specific training around our code of conduct, so we are very, very clear what the expectations of individuals are. That training then takes places annually. Every year, it is mandatory for everyone who is at ITV. It is not purely on the code of ethics and conduct; it is on other key policies that we have to try to make sure that people are up to date and are focused on it.

We also have a very extensive awareness programme—not just around our specific policies, but around speaking up—and we train our managers. We have specific training for our managers to make sure that they know how to handle complaints if they come into them directly. Obviously, our HR staff are continually trained in that, and my legal team are also trained on a regular basis in what to do if complaints come in. We brought in a director of corporate compliance and ethics two years ago to oversee this entire programme, to make sure that it is given the focus and that we get the training and the traction that we really need.

Q91 **Simon Jupp:** Did you say it was yearly? So there are yearly refreshers.

Kyla Mullins: Yes.

Q92 **Simon Jupp:** How long has that been the case?

Kyla Mullins: Oh gosh, I don't have that detail but certainly for the last five years, if not—



Dame Carolyn McCall: Five years.

Q93 **Simon Jupp:** To clarify then, if you join ITV, what level of management gets to do this training?

Kyla Mullins: All staff, and if anyone does not do it, that should be flagged and HR will follow up.

Q94 **Simon Jupp:** Because you have so many sites across the country, how much of that is virtual and how much is in person? I remember my training course being in person.

Kyla Mullins: A lot of it is virtual—we do both. As Carolyn said, it is a multi-pronged attack, but certainly the mandatory training is online. It can be tracked. People are notified. We used to do it in one fell swoop, and it would be several hours of mandatory training. We have decided this year that, actually, that is quite a lot for anyone to do and to really absorb and engage appropriately with, so we are now splitting the mandatory training modules across the year, so there are several to do every couple of months. It is tracked online. We track who is doing it and who has missed a deadline. They are reminded; there is follow-up. We make it clear that if people do not complete their mandatory training, it could end up being a disciplinary matter.

Q95 **Simon Jupp:** Has anyone not completed their mandatory training and ended up with a disciplinary issue?

Kyla Mullins: I don't have that detail. Certainly, what I do know—because my team works very closely with HR—is that for those offenders who have missed a deadline, there are very targeted and individual reminders, and we also get the line manager involved now. Apologies, I am not sure when you were involved at ITV, and whether there was in your day what we are doing now. As we said earlier, this is evolving. We are always looking for best practice, new ways to make sure that people really absorb it and this traction around our policies.

Dame Carolyn McCall: Just to build on that, Simon, there are also some things that are very specific to news that will be amplified in news, and very specific to dramas that have children working in them, or to disability, for instance. We have had a drama with two disabled stars in it. The safeguarding requirements on those would be amplified and bespoke. There is mandatory generalised training, but it also quite specific on production, depending on the type of production.

Q96 **Simon Jupp:** Without wanting to go back to the substance of the previous part of this session this morning—obviously, you have a KC reviewing all that; I don't want to go into it—do you think lessons could be learned to enhance the training you provide off the back of this review?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I hope we have been very open with you that we do not have any complacency. We do not think we do everything right. We have learned enormously on duty of care and how to refine, upgrade, enhance and develop, and we will continue to do that. I think this is a



similar situation, which is that we will listen and will absolutely learn and act if anything emerges from the findings. Undoubtedly, there will be things to learn.

- Q97 **Simon Jupp:** If there were findings, for example, that felt there were pitfalls and problems that you had not seen before, would you perhaps bring forward a refresher training course for people?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Yes, of course.

- Q98 **Chair:** Can I talk to you a bit more broadly about some of the other programmes that ITV is responsible for? How do you respond to the allegations made by Rebecca Ferguson regarding the treatment of contestants who appeared on “The X Factor”?

Dame Carolyn McCall: The first thing I want to say is we take her allegation, going back to 2010 or 2011—we obviously would take that seriously. We are the broadcaster of that, so a lot of what we have been talking about is about shows that we make, and a lot of our training and so on is all about shows that we make. There is another company involved in making “The X Factor”. I will hand over to Kevin and then maybe Kyla can come in on Rebecca.

Kevin Lygo: As a broadcaster, we commission shows from third parties as well as from our own production arm. We impose very tight restrictions—the same as we would on our own production companies—on things like duty of care and all that aspect of it. Here is our duty of care file in case anybody would like to see it—it is many pages long. That would have been, back then I assume, part of the contractual obligations.

On the ground, it is up to the producer on a day-to-day basis to check that everything that we have required them to do is being done. We would follow up with spot checks and we would have a debrief after the show. But while the show is in production, it has to be the preserve of the production company—whether that is ours or a third party. On Rebecca Ferguson, I was not there and do not have the details of that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: It is also fair to say that our duty of care requirements of third-party producers have increased significantly since 2019. We have a completely different way of dealing with third-party producers on duty of care now than we did before 2018-19.

Kyla Mullins: Rebecca Ferguson did raise some issues with us in 2021. She did refer to her time—bear in mind that this dated back to 2010—and she had various complaints about how she and other individuals, other participants, on “The X Factor” were treated and handled. My legal team immediately got in touch with Fremantle, Thames—the producer—because they are the people who will have entered into contracts with all of the participants. We—ITV—don’t. We enter into a contract with Fremantle for the show; we don’t enter into a contract with any of the participants, but we raised all of the issues with them. They responded to all of those.



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The key message was that, actually, on the issues where Rebecca Ferguson suggested that things needed to change, there needed to be a different approach to how the music industry deals with young people entering record contracts and how companies like Fremantle run things. There was confirmation on pretty much every point that she raised that things had moved on quite significantly, and that they took the duty of care very seriously and there had been changes in the industry.

That was passed back to Rebecca. When she then said, “Are we going to investigate this?”, our response—it has been quoted that we refused to launch an investigation. We believe genuinely that, having spoken to the production company and having been very clear that on all of the points where she felt there needed to be improvements, there genuinely were—and that was passed back—there was nothing really for us as the broadcaster to investigate.

One other point, which I have referred to, is that we did not enter into any contract—we have not at any stage entered into any contract—with Rebecca Ferguson or any of the other participants on that show. ITV would not do that. So when she talks about the releasing of NDAs or other contracts, we are not party to those.

Q99 Chair: When Sarah Clarke, the chief operations officer, responded to Rebecca Ferguson, she refused to meet her and refused to launch any kind of probe into how talent was treated at ITV when Rebecca was a contestant. Do you not think there is a kind of arrogance in dismissing her concerns and saying, “We have dealt with this. There is nothing to see here, and in fact it was one of our independent contractors anyway, so it wasn’t really our responsibility”? That to me seems unbelievably arrogant.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I do not think we have said that, Chair. I honestly do not think that is our attitude to this. We have worked with Fremantle—

Q100 Chair: No one even met Rebecca, did they?

Dame Carolyn McCall: We asked the producer to deal with it, just as we would deal with it as a producer on behalf of the broadcaster. The broadcaster is broadcasting the show, and as Kevin says, we now, particularly, have very strict requirements on duty of care. In 2010-11, Fremantle would have been dealing with that day to day. Sarah Clarke put that through to Fremantle, because they are the producer, and said, actually, if Rebecca was going to meet with anybody, it should have been Fremantle. It is still alive and well.

Kyla Mullins: I will also say that that was the response to the second letter from Rebecca Ferguson. The first letter, which raised various points, was responded to in detail, with input, obviously—as I said—from Fremantle. So it was responded to in detail. When Rebecca came back to say, “But should you not launch an investigation?” that is when Sarah responded to say, “I don’t think an investigation is appropriate here. We have responded to all of these issues and things have clearly moved on.”



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So I do not think it was in any way to be dismissive of Rebecca Ferguson or any of the issues that she has.

Q101 **Chair:** Without an investigation, how can you be 100% clear what the issues were and whether things have entirely moved on? You are just taking Fremantle's word for it, aren't you?

Kyla Mullins: We did not feel that there was something for ITV, as the broadcaster, to investigate.

Dame Carolyn McCall: She actually outlined, I understand, from her first email, all the issues that she had identified, so we could say, against every issue she identified, what had been done on duty of care in the industry—not just simply at ITV.

Q102 **Chair:** Does ITV monitor individual programmes and production sets as part of your compliance with the duty of care charter, regardless of whether they are independent or in-house productions?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Yes, we do—100%.

Q103 **Chair:** Okay, and is that something that has changed since "The X Factor"?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think that has changed quite a lot since 2018. I mean, we always did that—Kevin can talk better to that, but there would have always been spot checks and people on the ground—but what we do now is systematic, from selection to production to post production. It is systematic and it is written down. We have a duty of care charter. We have a mental health advisory group. We have two medical professionals who work for us, both retained. We have an external adviser. We have Dr Sandra Scott, who works on shows every day. We have a huge, comprehensive process of duty of care, and it is systematic.

Q104 **Chair:** Are you aware of any other potential safeguarding issues concerning any other current or recent ITV shows or presenters?

Dame Carolyn McCall: No, not to my knowledge.

Q105 **Chair:** What would you say to the family of Caroline Flack, who have stated that ITV used its talent like "commodities"?

Dame Carolyn McCall: The first thing we'd say is that we genuinely feel deeply, deeply sad about what happened to Caroline. People knew her well at ITV. I can actually talk about that, because I have spoken to a lot of people at ITV who worked with her and really liked working with her. They loved working with her on the show because she loved the show. That is the first thing that I would say.

The family are obviously grieving. I would say that we never feel that we would treat anybody like a commodity, whether that is a presenter, a member of staff or a junior person who is coming in for work experience. We would really not want to treat anyone like a commodity.



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Kevin Lygo: With Caroline in that instance, because of the things going on in her private life, she said, "I don't think I'm fit to do the next series of "Love Island."" We said, "Okay, we understand that," but made it very clear that it was her show—that we would get a stand-in, but then she could come back when she wanted to because she had not done anything wrong in our eyes. I think we were offering her work and all the rest of it. Nobody would agree that we treated her as a commodity.

Q106 **Chair:** Is ITV completely unique in the UK in that it has a show that is now linked to four suicides, let alone that that show is still running on your channel as we speak?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think that is a gross misrepresentation of the show. Let me break that down. Caroline was not on the show, and the reason that she very tragically took her life, I think, was that she was going through some extremely public things in her private life. I do not think you can just correlate and say, "Bang—this is because she's on a show."

I think that there were two others that I am aware of, which you might be referring to. These are deeply tragic things. No one wants to see anyone, whatever age, take their own life. We have thought about it a huge amount. As I said, I don't think any of you can even understand how deeply distressing something like that would be for people who work at ITV.

I have really looked at this in some detail—not just with Kevin, Kyla and others, but with people internally—and we have taken a lot of professional advice; we have talked to professional advisers. I think that the generally accepted professional opinion is that the causes of these types of tragedies are always complex and multiple. Both individuals you are referring to took their lives two years after they appeared on a show, and there will have been many, many other events that will have been part of multiple causes.

We work with CALM—the Campaign Against Living Miserably—as well as with Mind and YoungMinds, which are both on our mental health advisory group. They would say—I am quoting—that to isolate one event, albeit an important event in their lives, is to simplify a very complex sequence of events.

I feel that when you throw that at us, it is very difficult for us and it makes us sound unfeeling, and we are really, really not—we take it so seriously. As I've said, since 2018, the duty of care on every show—"Love Island" particularly—is extremely comprehensive. We are very happy to leave you the file of duty of care so that the Committee can see the lengths we go to to protect both participants and staff on the show.

Q107 **Chair:** I'm grateful for that, but I would not be doing my job properly if I were not questioning you about your duty of care to either contestants or employees.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I am happy to answer it.



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Q108 **Chair:** Finally, the share price has gone down by 60% since you started as the CEO, Dame Carolyn. Why do you think that is?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I think that is because we've had covid, where our share price went down dramatically because we were taking no income, advertising halved and no productions were taking place for quite a long time.

We then recovered from that, and invested £200 million into our streaming service, ITVX. The share price went down as a result of that—and it had double-whammied, because it also was the fifth day of the awful invasion of Ukraine.

We are not the only company in the UK to face this. It is not just in media—there's no comparable media organisation, but RTL's share price has gone down roughly the same and ProSieben in Europe has gone down roughly the same; the streamers have gone down even more. I think the relativity of your point is the most important thing, rather than trying not to see it in the context of the market that we're operating in, with the cost of living, which is also depressing advertising.

There is an advertising recession, even though there's not an economic recession. I think the Committee knows only too well that ITV gets no funding from anybody other than from advertising and content. Therefore, if there is an advertising recession, that will also be weighing heavily on our share price.

Q109 **Chair:** Yes, but despite that, you were reportedly paid more than £3.5 million last year. That's a 7% increase on your previous package. Are you being rewarded for failure?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I don't think we are failing—that is the first thing I would say. I don't see how you would sit there and say that ITV is a failing company. We've had two years of record profit, in 2022 and 2021. We made more advertising revenue in a really challenging market, when linear audiences are declining. We are not a failing company. We make a lot of profit. We want to return more money to shareholders, but we have invested in our future by launching ITVX. We have other plans to make ITV an even stronger company going forward. We have had to invest in technology, in data and in digital capability, which we have done.

I think most people that you would talk to in the advertising world and also in the business world would see ITV as a successful company that is navigating and transitioning to the digital world very effectively.

Q110 **Chair:** What is more important to you—commercial revenue or treating people fairly?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Treating people fairly.

Q111 **Chair:** Despite your increased pay, your staff received an average 3% increase in the face of inflation—

Dame Carolyn McCall: Okay, can I just—



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Chair: Do you think that is fair?

Dame Carolyn McCall: Chair, I really think you have to look at the facts. The £3.4 million includes a long-term incentive plan that has not been earned yet, so it is part of a package. My base salary is actually under £1 million. I get a short-term bonus and a long-term bonus if criteria are met. I would also like to ask you to look at the report and accounts, where the remuneration policy is completely outlined. I don't set my salary; the remuneration committee does. I ask you to look at that, and we are very happy to give you our report and accounts.

Q112 **Chair:** Do you think you should keep your job?

Dame Carolyn McCall: I do. And I think that most people— I do.

Q113 **Chair:** Thank you. That concludes today's questioning. I thank all of you for appearing in front of us today. I hope you all, and everybody who is watching this, go away with the very strong message that today has not been about Phillip Schofield or Person X; it has been very much about ITV as an employer and an institution.

I hope that some of the answers you have given today provide some form of reassurance to people working for ITV and those who, through no fault of their own, have left the organisation that the issues they have raised have been taken seriously, but I am slightly concerned that you are waiting for the results of the investigation before taking any action to improve the working environment. There is clearly some work for ITV to do to rebuild trust with us and, more importantly, with its staff and viewers, to show that it is a safe and welcoming workplace.

We want to be really confident that ITV has the processes and the people in place to meet its duty of care and deal appropriately with complaints. We want to be confident that ITV is not letting star power and favouritism damage the lives and careers of people working there. More importantly, we want to be confident that, where mistakes have been made, ITV will be making changes, rather than making jokes about aubergines. We will be watching very closely to see whether you achieve that.

Dame Carolyn McCall: I don't know whether I am allowed to say anything at the end of this in response to what you just said, but I think in every single thing we have said, we have told you that we have taken this seriously. It has been about Phillip Schofield and Person X. We have spent an awful lot of time talking about that, and that is absolutely fine.

We will take every allegation about our culture seriously, but I think it would be very wrong to depict ITV as having an issue on that. We have given you a whole load of tangible evidence that we take it very seriously, that we will listen and that we will act. We will not wait for the KC. We will be looking at everything we do and trying to improve it, as we always do. Thank you very much for listening to us and giving us the opportunity to put some facts straight.