



British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

From the Director-General

11 July 2025

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP
Chair, Culture, Media & Sport Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Dame Caroline,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 1 July.

I want the Committee to be left in no doubt of the seriousness with which I am treating what happened at Glastonbury and the need for swift action to minimise the risk of something similar occurring again. The BBC exists because of the trust placed in us by our audiences to bring content to them that meets with the standards and values they rightly expect. As I said in our statement, we are also unequivocal that there can be no place for antisemitism at, or on, the BBC.

Given the mistakes that have been acknowledged, we are taking action immediately, including ensuring proper accountability for those found to be responsible for those failings in the live broadcast. For reasons I am sure the Committee will understand, to assure fair treatment of our staff, we are not currently in a position to comment further on those processes, which are under way. While this limits our ability to give a complete answer to some of your questions, I have answered as fully as we can at this stage, and I will of course keep the Committee updated.

Here are further details of the immediate changes we are making to the way we livestream music events:

- any music performances deemed high risk will now not be broadcast live or streamed live;
- Editorial Policy support will always be available on site at major music festivals and events, to improve compliance processes and the speed of available advice;
- and we will provide more detailed, practical guidance on the threshold for withdrawing a livestream to our teams.

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I turn now to your specific questions:

Broadcast delays

*Before the festival started, did the BBC consider streaming all or part of its Glastonbury coverage with a short time delay, to allow room to respond to events if necessary?
Are there any technical reasons why that would not be possible?*

The BBC has broadcast Glastonbury live for many years – and our live and extensive coverage of the festival has been popular with audiences. Based on that previous experience our approach was to provide audiences with live coverage where possible. A risk assessment was undertaken before the festival of the acts that were performing and how we should cover them. The risk assessment undertaken led to the BBC deciding that Kneecap's performance should be recorded from the livestream, put through a compliance process and uploaded to iPlayer to be available on demand, but not streamed live. No other risk assessment resulted in a similar decision being made for any other act. Other mitigations were considered and were put in place, particularly for high risk acts, of which Bob Vylan was one of seven such acts.

Staffing and decision-making

How many BBC staff and contractors were working at Glastonbury or on coverage of the festival, and what roles were they performing?

There were 550 personnel working for the BBC at Glastonbury. Of these 328 were working for BBC Studios (camera crew, rigging, technical and production roles), 35 providing coverage for BBC News, and 187 other BBC public service, working across a wide range of roles, including technical crew, producers, presenters, engineers, runners, commissioners and compliance staff.

Were staff with the authority to cut the live stream present during the performance of Bob Vylan?

Yes, there were individuals present at Glastonbury who had the authority to cut the livestream after appropriate consideration. Those individuals had access to advice and support offsite should they have considered it necessary. As stated above, in future, Editorial Policy support will always be available on site at major music festivals and events, to improve compliance processes and the speed of available advice.

Was cutting the live stream of Bob Vylan discussed during the performance?

You will appreciate that the answer to this question is currently being considered through the appropriate internal processes. What we can say is that cutting the livestream was an option open to those on the ground on the day.

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If it was, did that discussion include members of the Editorial Policy and Legal teams?

As above, this forms part of the internal process. Support from our Editorial Policy team, in Salford, was available to the on-site team on the day. They also had access to legal support.

At what level were the decisions made to not stream Kneecap live and to stream Bob Vylan live, but with a warning on screen?

Bob Vylan was assessed as one of seven category A acts (the highest acceptable risk for live broadcast in a stream) to be shown over the course of the festival. Kneecap, which was not streamed live, were placed in a higher category of risk.

Subject to findings from the ongoing internal process, our current understanding is that the assessment was put in place and agreed in an overall compliance meeting and briefing which was held on Tuesday 10 June, two weeks ahead of the festival. The meeting was attended by senior figures in Commissioning and Editorial Policy. The outcomes of the risk assessment were briefed to the senior commissioner and a senior editorial figure. It was agreed that all acts in category A could be shown live, with appropriate controls, warnings and mitigations in place as needed.

Contingency plans

In making those decisions, did the BBC have a contingency plan?

Yes, contingency plans are discussed regularly for these events, with scenario planning across a wide range of potential issues. Those contingency plans cover a range of eventualities including but not limited to persistent harmful and offensive language.

If so, who was responsible for creating and actioning the plan?

The risk assessments and plans in this regard were agreed, as set out above, in the meeting of 10 June. The meeting was attended by senior figures in Commissioning, production teams from BBC Studios, the commissioning teams across TV, iPlayer and Radio coverage and senior figures from editorial standards, Editorial Policy and compliance. The outcomes of the risk assessment were then briefed to the senior commissioner and a senior editorial figure as the individuals with overall responsibility for overseeing the BBC's music output.

Is it standard practice to have a contingency plan in place for similar broadcasts, such as live sporting events?

Yes, this would always be the case for major events and is a standard part of our risk assessment processes and business continuity planning.

Next Steps

In light of the events at Glastonbury, will you be reviewing the Editorial Guidelines, and BBC guidance for live output, to ensure they are fit for live streaming?

We have already acted and high risk acts are now no longer to be broadcast live at our music events; we will be making the Live Output Guidance about mitigating live music performances clearer including on when to delay or cut a feed; and, as referenced above, we will be ensuring the presence of senior editorial compliance figures on-site at the moment of decision.

A new edition of the Editorial Guidelines will take effect on 1 September, and, in addition, a version of the Live Output Guidance has also been updated. This guidance, however, will be reviewed further in light of these events and any changes will be put into practice alongside the new Guidelines.

In summary, what is your personal assessment of what went wrong and what key lessons that the BBC will take away from the experience of live streaming Glastonbury 2025?

As I said at the start of this letter, there were failures in our coverage which led to offensive content being broadcast live. I deeply regret that such deplorable behaviour appeared on the BBC and want to apologise to our viewers and listeners and in particular the Jewish community. In considering what to learn from this, my immediate priority was to take swift actions, as detailed above, to mitigate against anything similar happening in the future. At the same time we are taking actions to ensure there is proper accountability for those found to be responsible for the failings in the live broadcast; and we are urgently reviewing our guidelines to see if any further measures are needed.

I hope the above provides some reassurance to the Committee that we have taken decisive and fast measures to address the serious errors that were made.

Best wishes,



Tim Davie
Director-General