



Age Ratings You Trust

## 199<sup>th</sup> BBFC Board of Classification Meeting

Wednesday 21 March 2018  
10:00am

### Present:

Patrick Swaffer	President
Alison Hastings	Vice President
Gerard Lemos	Vice President
David Austin	Chief Executive
Amelia Erratt	DEA Officer
Ian Mashiah (minutes)	Acting Compliance Manager
Joe Slatter	Deputy Operations Manager

### Minutes of the previous meeting

1. The minutes were agreed.

### Matters arising

2. There were no matters arising.

### Digital Economy Act

3. Miss Erratt updated the Board on the launch, on 26 March 2018, of the public consultation process on the BBFC's draft Guidance on Age-Verification Arrangements and its draft Guidance on Ancillary Service Providers.
4. Meetings with the Ancillary Service Providers continue to take place.

### Recent Decisions

5. Mr Mashiah updated the Board on the recent classifications of THE DAM BUSTERS and PETER RABBIT.

THE DAM BUSTERS will have a limited cinema re-release to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the events depicted in the film. THE DAM BUSTERS was originally classified U for cinema release in 1955, a decision that was upheld for an earlier re-release in 2007. The 2007 classification noted the historically accurate use of a racist term in the name given to a dog, which is also used as code word (in Morse Code)

during a military operation. The U was upheld in 2007 on the grounds that the racist term employed in the film occurs within a historical context and is not aggravated by other factors such as abusiveness or any specific intention to offend. Since then the BBFC's large scale public consultation exercises, undertaken in both 2009 and 2013, revealed increased public concern about discrimination which resulted in our Guidelines now including discrimination as an issue. The BBFC's current Guidelines, published in 2014, state that at U 'Discriminatory language or behaviour is unlikely to be accepted unless clearly disapproved of' whereas at PG 'Discriminatory language or behaviour is unlikely to be acceptable unless clearly disapproved of, or in an educational or historical context, or in a particularly dated work with no likely appeal to children'. Accordingly, the Board agreed that THE DAM BUSTERS is now most appropriately classified at PG rather than U, with BBFC Insight of 'racist terms, mild bad language'. The Board noted that the PG does not prevent children from seeing the film but does send a clearer warning to parents that the film contains discriminatory language of a nature that will be offensive to many, albeit that the language merely reflects the period in which the film was set and the time in which the film was made.

6. PETER RABBIT, an animated adaptation of the Beatrix Potter story in which a rabbit tries to outwit a farmer and save his supply of food, was classified PG for 'mild threat, comic violence' in February 2018. It contains a scene in which the farmer, who has been established as being allergic to blackberries, is pelted with the fruit during a comic battle with the rabbit and must use an EpiPen to counteract the allergic reaction. Prior to the UK release of the film, but as a result of the film being shown in US cinemas, the BBFC received complaints that this scene promoted 'allergy bullying' and would upset those, particularly children, who suffered allergic conditions. The Board agreed with the PG classification and that the presentation of the scene did not support these concerns, with its signalling in BBFC longform Insight being a sufficient warning of its content.

## **Public Feedback**

7. Mr Slatter informed the meeting that the total number of complaints received from the public in 2017 was 262 covering 136 films. This compared with the 2016 figure of 371 complaints covering 118 films.

To date in 2018, the films which have received the most complaints are PETER RABBIT (prior to its UK cinema release) and RED SPARROW.

## **International Co-operation**

8. Mr Austin briefed the meeting on his recent discussions with Netflix, the purpose of which is to ensure that trusted and well-understood BBFC ratings and content advice cover close to 100% of content on Netflix's UK platform, to the benefit of Netflix's UK customers. This would constitute a significant increase over the present 60-65% coverage and represents the joint goal of

both Netflix and the BBFC. Progress towards achieving this goal continues to be positive.

**AOB**

9. There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting:** 20 April 2018