

BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

ELECTION COMPLAINTS FAST-TRACK PROCESS 2020

In the period 16 June – 17 October 2020, leading up to polling day for the 2020 General Election and two referenda on Saturday 17 October 2020, the BSA is committed to working with complainants and broadcasters to address election and referenda related complaints swiftly, using the fast track process outlined below. Complaints that may be fast tracked are complaints about Election Programmes (generally advertisements for or by political parties or candidates broadcast on TV or Radio in the election period (13 September – midnight 16 October), or programmes that relate to election or referenda matters that may influence a vote.

The timelines set out here may be varied depending on the size and complexity of the complaint, and we will keep all parties informed of the Authority's intended timeline as the matter progresses.

We encourage all parties to work with us to enable the swift resolution of election-related complaints.

1. The BSA will request from the broadcaster a recording of the broadcast (or a link to view it online) and a response to the complaint within **1 working day** (usually 24 hours). At this time a response will also be invited from the political party/candidate involved (if the complaint relates to an Election Programme).
2. The broadcaster's/party's/candidate's responses will be sent to the complainant as soon as these are received, and the complainant will be given **1 working day** to make any final comments.
3. The complainant's response (if any) will be sent to the broadcaster and the party/candidate, with **1 working day** given to make any final comments.
4. The BSA Board will review the broadcast and submissions from the parties immediately once all submissions are received, and will prepare its written decision on the complaint.
5. The decision will be finalised and issued to the parties as quickly as possible. The Authority aims to issue its decision **within 3-5 working days of receipt of the complaint**.
6. The decision will be publicly released within 1-2 working days from release to the parties.
7. Any complaints deemed non-urgent will be treated under the usual complaints process and dealt with at the Authority's next board meeting. Such complaints include those received at the end of the Election Period, or a long time after the broadcast (complaints about Election Programmes may be made within 60 working days of the broadcast).