

Audience attitudes towards violent content on television

Research Report
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Foreword from Ofcom

The Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to draw up a Broadcasting Code (“the Code”) which sets out standards for the content of television and radio services. The rules in the Code seek to ensure that members of the public, and in particular children, are protected from inappropriate violent material. Violence shown before the 9pm watershed must be appropriately limited and justified by the context, while violence included in a television programme broadcast at any time must comply with generally accepted standards.

Ofcom’s research about parents and pre-watershed television in 2011 indicated that violence broadcast before the watershed is a key concern for parents who expressed some concern about what their children had seen on TV before 9pm in the previous 12 months. Among all parents surveyed, violence was the concern most frequently mentioned (20 per cent), followed by sexually explicit content (17 per cent)¹. These results were broadly confirmed by similar 2012 research. In Ofcom’s latest research (published in October 2013) one in five parents of children aged 5-15 (19%) said they were concerned about what their child had seen on pre-watershed television². The key concerns mentioned by parents included offensive language, sex and sexually explicit content and violence. The types of programme most frequently mentioned by parents were soaps, reality programmes and films. In 2013 and 2014, Ofcom also investigated some high profile cases involving material which featured violent scenes broadcast before the 9pm watershed or in the transition period immediately after 21:00.

In applying the rules in the Code which relate to violent material, Ofcom must keep itself informed about viewers’ attitudes to violent content. We also need to understand the contextual factors which shape viewers’ opinions on the extent to which children need to be protected from violent material on television, and on how generally accepted standards should be applied in relation to this sort of content.

For these reasons Ofcom commissioned for the first time a programme of qualitative research among UK audiences to provide an up to date understanding of public attitudes towards violence in pre-watershed and transition programming. Jigsaw Research carried out this study. A brief summary of the research and its main findings are set out in the Executive Summary. Further detail is contained in the main report.

The main aim of this research is to understand current public attitudes towards programmes containing violence on television. The research is qualitative. It explores the views of a range of participants across the UK, including parents and young people, on a variety of examples of violent material that had already been broadcast pre-watershed or immediately after the watershed. The material includes depictions of individual acts of violence, both real and fictional, and content which has a threatening or malevolent tone. Because this research is not a quantitative study its results do not seek to provide a definitive measure of the proportion of the UK population who hold specific opinions.

Overall we expect that this research report will in particular:

- assist Ofcom in updating its Code guidance to broadcasters about violence on TV (Sections One and Two of the Code);
- inform Ofcom’s application of the Code rules when investigating broadcast material containing violence, particularly when this is shown before or soon after the watershed; and
- update viewers and other stakeholders about current attitudes to and perceptions of violence on TV.

The opinions expressed in this report are the personal responses of the participants who took part in the research and do not reflect the views of Jigsaw Research or Ofcom.

¹ <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/guidance/831193/watershed-on-tv.pdf>

² <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf>

1. Executive summary

1.1. Key findings

- Time of broadcast is the single most important factor in the acceptability of violent content on television.
- Differing demographic groups show only subtle differences in their approach to violent content, but all agree children should not be exposed to sexual violence on television under any circumstances.
- Viewers have a sophisticated ability to analyse contextual factors when assessing the acceptability of violent content on television, and many confirm that violent content contributes to their experience of television.
- Viewers suggested five key questions to be asked when judging the acceptability of a violent scene on television:
 - What time is the violent scene shown?
 - Who is the victim of the violence?
 - What is the act of violence?
 - How is the violence presented?
 - What is the purpose of the violent scene?

1.2. Aims

This research provides evidence to:

- establish a contextual understanding of public attitudes towards television programmes containing violence;
- investigate attitudes and opinions towards individual acts of violence, violent scenes or material which is threatening or menacing in tone;
- gain an understanding of generally accepted standards of violence during these pre- and the post-watershed transition periods; and
- understand how reactions or levels of offence vary amongst audiences and establish what factors influence acceptability.

1.3. Methodology

Jigsaw Research designed an approach with each component designed to reveal different types of responses and findings. Participants were recruited to represent a range of different ages and socio-economic groups across a number of different locations in the UK. In summary:

- first, participants began by viewing at home 15 varied clips of violent content selected by Ofcom and recording their spontaneous responses;

- second, they were interviewed at home on their reactions, or they took part in lengthy group discussions to discover the main factors viewers take into consideration when assessing the acceptability of violence on television.

1.4. The importance of scheduling

The time of broadcast is a consistent key indicator of the appropriateness of content on television, for parents and non-parents alike. As a general rule, the earlier a programme is shown the greater the expectation of family-appropriate content. Within this broader principle, the watershed, at 9pm, is understood by most to be the specific dividing line between family and more adult-focused material.

The watershed is a familiar concept, and a commonly-used term among audiences. Participants were less aware of the transition period, between 21:00 and 22:00, but when asked, they did expect a difference between what was shown at 21:00 and what was shown at 22:00.

The watershed had strong support among the participants as a principle. It was seen to have the practical benefit of enabling parents to adopt a 'light touch' monitoring regime (if viewing is monitored at all) and allows them fully to enjoy their television experience without worrying about exposure of children to inappropriate violent content.

However, after watching some of the pre-watershed clips in this research, some participants felt that the watershed is not always consistently observed by broadcasters. In the context of modern viewing habits, with children staying up later, and a move away from linear viewing, some participants questioned the relevance of a watershed in its current form.

1.5. Violence in programming

A key challenge for participants in the research was working out where the line should be drawn between acceptable violence and violence perceived as 'gratuitous', and the extent to which violence before, or immediately after, the watershed could be made more acceptable through appropriate scheduling. The research found that, although participants were able to discern differences in suitability according to time of screening and the nature of the violent scene, this line was very blurred and subjective.

All participants were clear that children should not be exposed to sexual violence on television, under any circumstances. This is the sort of material parents find most personally disturbing. It is considered to be particularly harmful for children and younger teenagers because it sends ambiguous and negative messages about acceptable sexual behaviour, at a time when young people's attitudes are still being formed.

1.6. Demographic differences in assessing violent content between groups of participants

Although some subtle differences in the expectation of how violence should be treated in programming, in the main the **similarity** of the reaction between participants is more marked than any divergence in attitude, for example non-parents agree with parents that the focus of regulation of violent material should be on protecting children. Non-parents are at least as vociferous as parents in asserting the importance of protecting children from violent content. In some cases they adopt a tougher line on what is appropriate before the 9pm watershed.

However, they are also more likely to champion the freedom of adults to choose to view more challenging content after 21:00, and even between 21:00 and 22:00.

The report does draw some general conclusions regarding the relative attitudes of parents, men and women, older viewers, and soap versus non-soap viewers.

Parents

For the parents of primary school-age children, a core parental role is to 'protect' their children from the world. In the short term, parents of primary school age children consider that the danger is that the child will be upset and/or have nightmares. In the longer term, the concern is that such content may provide distorted views of the world that child viewers may be too young to place in its proper perspective. However, parents feel that they have more control over the content viewed by children of this age and hence can mitigate the risk.

When children reach secondary school age, parents' primary focus shifts towards preparing them for the world, and their increasingly independent lives within it. Therefore, exposure to more challenging content becomes more acceptable. Secondary school children are seen to be mature enough to distinguish violent content on television from real life and to process it appropriately. Parents of secondary school children, particularly those over the age of 14, do not regard violent television content as such a pressing issue compared to other 'non-television' content concerns such as internet pornography and violent video games.

As noted above, a key exception however is content involving sexual violence. This remains as much an issue among parents of older children as it is for those with younger children. Parents of daughters place greater priority on protecting their daughters, especially from scenes of sexual violence, than parents of sons of an equivalent age.

Men and women

Men are more likely to value 'action' in TV programming and to distinguish this from violent content, although some acknowledge an overlap/continuum. 'Action' is deemed more likely to have a lighter, more playful tone and be characterised by less explicit detail.

Women are more likely to articulate concern about content which includes a sense of threat or an unsettling atmosphere. They appear to be more sensitive to implied violent content, or perhaps are more comfortable voicing concerns about it.

Age of viewers

Older people are generally more vocal about what they see as a decline in moral standards on television. They tend to express greater sensitivity to violent content, and are more likely to be concerned by it. By contrast, television content, including violent content, does not appear to be a major source of anxiety for younger teenagers. The over-14 age group in this study seemed generally relaxed about violent television content and there were few significant differences between the teenagers' and the adults' responses.

Soap viewers and non-soap viewers

A number of the participants were surprised, after watching the clips, at the quantity and nature of the violent content in soaps. This response was more marked among non-soap viewers. Regular soap viewers are more likely to accept scenes featuring violence in soaps, but even they feel that some pre-watershed scenes are inappropriate, especially in view of the family audiences that soaps attract.

1.7. How viewers assess violence on TV – contextual factors

Research participants discussed the importance of material containing violence, or violent scenes, as part of their TV viewing. They saw violent content as contributing fundamentally to their enjoyment of television. Violent content can be exciting. It adds drama, stimulates the production of adrenalin and “keeps you watching”. It also allows passive involvement, and an escape from everyday life, with the tension providing a degree of catharsis. Violent content was regarded as exploring adult or real-world themes, and “offers something to the grown-ups”.

Participants’ responses to violent scenes varied depending on context. Variables included the transmission time (pre- or post-watershed); channel or platform (with a focus on the main five channels); programme genre (e.g. soaps, factual entertainment, dramas, films); the context of violence (e.g. crime or police action, domestic), the type of scene and the level to which the violence, or threat of violence, escalates.

As part of the focus group discussions, the research participants considered how they should take account of the context of a violent scene when assessing it. Their discussion resulted in the identification of key contextual factors that viewers focus on when considering the suitability of violent scenes for the time they are scheduled on TV. These include:

Balance of power/empathy

The degree to which the ‘victim’ is considered to be vulnerable, or how far the viewer feels some emotional connection with them, has a bearing on acceptability.

Channel

The channel on which the violent content is broadcast plays a role in forming expectations. In general terms, the more mainstream the channel, the greater the expectation of family-appropriate content. Viewers expect for example BBC Two and Channel 4 to show content more suitable for adults.

Closeness/proximity of the violent scene to the viewer

Violent content that feels ‘closer to home’ is more likely to offend or disturb than that which seems more distant. This ‘closeness’ had a number of aspects, including the degree to which viewers can personally relate to a scene and the extent to which the scene is realistic and serious, rather than fantastic or comedic.

Cumulative/overall impact

Evaluating the impact of violent content is not just about the nature of the physical interaction shown on screen. The existence of a number of different factors, taken together, can have a cumulative impact on the viewer. These factors might include music or an ‘atmosphere of unease’ which can add to a viewer’s discomfort by creating a sense of threat and menace.

Degree of preparation

Unexpected exposure to violent content is more likely to offend or disturb viewers. Their level of preparation is influenced by the scheduled time a scene is shown, the genre, and to a lesser extent the channel.

Dramatic context

A scene that appears gratuitous when viewed in isolation is often more acceptable when viewed in the context of the full programme or series. Violent scenes can be given relevance by the surrounding dramatic context, whether this is the storyline or character-related.

Genre

Genre can play a role in determining the acceptability of violence. Reactions differ where the violence features fantasy characters, or where it is included in comedic or cartoon-style scenes. On the other hand, violence can cause greater concern when it features in dramatic reconstructions of real-life crime.

Length of scene and level of detail

The impact of violence increases with the length of the scene and the level of detail shown, and whether the violence is shown on screen or implied.

Message/social good

Whether there is a moral or social point to the violence can also affect the perception of acceptability. This is true both of scenarios where the message or moral point is shown immediately, and where it becomes apparent over time, during the course of a continuing storyline.

1.8. Conclusions: 5 core questions broadcasters should consider when scheduling violent content

The research study culminated in the development of a set of questions which can be used to assess the acceptability of violent content.

The core five questions are:

What time is the violent scene shown?

The time of broadcast of violent content was a consistent factor that influenced and informed participants' responses. The watershed represented a clear boundary underpinning decisions about the suitability of violent content. Participants agreed that no sexual violence, and no severe infliction of pain or visible physical harm, should be broadcast before 9pm. The scheduling of violent content is a key issue (see comments on scheduling above).

Who is the victim of the violence?

Participants regarded violence against more vulnerable individuals - such children, the elderly or women - as less acceptable than violence featuring a man against another man, when viewed early in the schedule.

What is the act of violence?

Non-physical violence like shouting or threatening behaviour was considered more acceptable than more extreme acts of violence like murder, torture or violence against vulnerable victims, when viewed early in the schedule.

How is the violence presented?

Showing the effects of violence after the act of violence (e.g. scars, or a character recounting a violent act) was considered more acceptable than showing someone inflicting physical harm, when viewed early in the schedule. The length of the violent scene was also considered important.

What is the purpose of the violent scene?

The judgement about whether a violent scene is justifiable, or gratuitous, is influenced by its purpose and place in the programme and any storyline, and by whether it has any underlying social or moral point.

2. Background, Objectives & Methodology

2.1. Background

2.1.1. The Broadcasting Code

Ofcom is required under the Communications Act 2003 and the Broadcasting Act 1996 to draw up, and from time to time revise, a code for television and radio, covering standards in programmes, sponsorship, fairness and privacy. This Code is known as the Ofcom Broadcasting Code (“the Code”) and it came into effect in July 2005 following extensive public consultation.

2.1.2. How the Code regulates violent content

The Code requires all Ofcom licensees, and the BBC, to protect children under the age of fifteen by appropriate scheduling of material that is unsuitable for them. Appropriate scheduling is judged according to: the nature of the content; the likely number and age range of children in the audience (taking into account school time, weekends and holidays); the start time and finish time of the programme; the nature of the channel and the particular programme; and the likely expectations for a particular channel at a particular time and on a particular day.

The specific rules in the Code that concern violent content, broadcast pre-watershed or in the post-watershed transition period (i.e. between 21:00 and 22:00), are found in Section One (Protecting the Under Eighteens). The protection of young people under eighteen is one of the fundamental principles upon which the Code is based. These rules are:

- Rule 1.3: “Children must also be protected by appropriate scheduling from material that is unsuitable for them”;
- Rule 1.6: “The transition to more adult material must not be unduly abrupt at the watershed. For television the strongest material should appear later in the schedule”; and
- Rule 1.11: “Violence, its after-effects and descriptions of violence, whether verbal or physical, must be appropriately limited in programmes broadcast before the watershed (in the case of television) or when children are particularly likely to be listening (in the case of radio) and must also be justified by the context”.

2.2. Research Objectives

This qualitative research was designed to investigate attitudes towards violence on television, broadcast both pre-watershed and in the post watershed transition period and aims to provide evidence:

- to ensure the Code continues to reflect current public opinion;
- to inform Ofcom’s application of these rules when investigating broadcast material;
- to assist Ofcom in updating its guidance to broadcasters to support compliance of material; and
- to update wider stakeholders and viewers about current attitudes and perceptions.

The four key research objectives were to:

- establish a contextual understanding of public attitudes towards programmes containing violence on television, establishing how views differ by for example type of content or genre, channel, transmission time, and platform;
- investigate attitudes and opinions towards violent scenes, particularly those featuring interpersonal intentional violence shown on television both before and in the post watershed transition period between 21:00 and 22:00;

- gain an understanding of how generally accepted standards should be applied to violent content during the pre- and the post- watershed transition periods; and
- understand how reactions or level of offence vary amongst audiences across a variety of variables including:
 - transmission time (pre- and post- watershed);
 - channel or platform (with a focus on the main 5 public service channels);
 - programme genre (soaps, factual entertainment, dramas, films, etc.);
 - context of violence (crime or police action, domestic etc.); and
 - type of scene and level to which the violence or threat of violence escalates.

For the purposes of the research an act of violence was defined as: a single act of violence; an act of violence and a result of that violence; a result of the violence only; verbal threats; physical threats; and implied violence created by prolonged menace through for example threats but where there was not necessarily a physical interaction.

2.3. Methodology

2.3.1. Description and rationale

The research was designed to have a mixed methodology approach, with each component designed to reveal different areas of responses and enable different types of discussion (e.g. spontaneous/instinctive versus considered/rationalised). Participants were recruited to represent a range of different ages and social-economic groups across a number of different locations in the UK, including at least one location in each Nation.

All participants completed Part 1 (as set out below) and then conducted either Part 2 or Part 3 (as set out below)³.

Part 1: Online TV journals:

These were completed by all participants in the research in their own home over a two week period prior to participation in the depth interviews or focus groups. The core purpose was to capture participants' spontaneous/instinctive reactions to both general television viewing and to more specific content provided as part of the research programme.

Participants produced a daily record of their own TV viewing. This noted what, when and with whom they were watching, and described their feelings about any violent or disturbing content. In addition, participants were asked to view a series of pre-determined clips and record their views on each and rate them on a number of variables before attending a focus group discussion or in depth interview. These journals were the core method of stimulus distribution. As well as enabling instinctive/spontaneous responses to be captured as part of the journal task, they also provided a range of examples of violent scenes shown on television for further discussion and exploration in the focus groups. These clips are detailed in the next section.

Further details of the online journal can be found in Appendix A.

³ Analysis of the three parts of the research has been conducted in a necessarily holistic manner. It is not generally possible, or indeed helpful, to attempt to allocate certain findings or insights to a particular part of the research. However, as was intended at the project design stage, certain types of finding are more likely to have resulted from certain methodologies. For example, the online diary was more likely to generate the majority of the specific and detailed responses to individual clips. The focus groups generated the majority of the more considered discussion that resulted in the generation of the five core questions to assess violent content. However, many of the insights drawn from the research were based on the results of all three parts of the research.

Part 2: In-depth in-home interviews

Fourteen in-depth one-to-one interviews lasting one and a half to two hours were held with people in their own homes. These interviews enabled researchers to explore the issues in the broader context of the family home environment. The in-home setting allowed for franker conversations, enabling the exploration of the positive side of violent content ('exciting', 'dramatic', 'realistic') in addition to any more negative views. The sessions gave researchers a broader sense of values, attitudes to family life and the role of TV within it.

Other family members (partners, teens and children) were also included to broaden the discussion and take account of family dynamics.

The discussion guide used in this phase of the research can be found in Appendix D.

Part 3: Group discussions

Fourteen group discussions of 6-8 participants were conducted, lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes. These sessions allowed researchers to explore some of the contradictions and competing priorities in more detail, and assess how these might be reconciled in terms of principles to determine the acceptability of violent content on television. This part of the research enabled an in-depth discussion of the contextual issues and the factors which determine the acceptability of violence. By these means researchers were able to encourage more considered and rational responses to the subject matter, compared with more emotional reactions captured elsewhere.

The discussion guide used in this phase of the research can be found in Appendix E.

Mini friendship groups among teenagers

In addition to the three part methodology, mini friendship groups among teenagers were also included as part of the study: five friendship group interviews (each of three friends) with pre-teen and teenage children were conducted in order to ensure the perspective of this age group was represented fully in the research findings. These 'friendship triads' provide a secure environment in which teens feel comfortable and are able to open up, yet also allow the observation of social norms and the influence of peers.

2.3.2. Sample composition

The general criteria for inclusion as a research participant were as follows:

- all were regular TV viewers with 5 or more viewing occasions per week; and
- all were watching a range of genres such as crime drama, news/current affairs, historical drama, sitcoms, natural history, sport, and soaps.

In-depth/in-home interviews

Figure 1 shows the detailed composition of the 14 in-home interviews.

Figure 1: Sample structure of in-home interviews

Group	SEG	Ages/sex of child recruited on	Age of Participant	Location
Depth 1	AB	10- 11 boy	No fixed age quotas	Richmond/Twickenham /Kingston
Depth 2	AB	12 - 14 girl	No fixed age quotas	Glasgow
Depth 3	AB	15 - 16 - boy	No fixed age quotas	Exeter
Depth 4	C1/C2	15 - 16 - boy	No fixed age quotas	Belfast
Depth 5	C1/C2	10 - 11 - girl	No fixed age quotas	Notts/Coventry
Depth 6	DE	12 - 14 - boy	No fixed age quotas	Belfast
Depth 7	DE	15 - 16- girl	No fixed age quotas	Cardiff/Bridgend
Depth 8	AB	No kids at home Male/couple	56+ years +	Richmond/Twickenham /Kingston
Depth 9	C2DE	10- 11 - girl	No fixed age quotas	London suburb
Depth10	C2DE	No kids at home Female/couple	56+ years	Cardiff/Bridgend
Depth 11	C1/C2	No Kids - male	18-39 years	Exeter
Depth 12	DE	No kids- female	18-39 years	Notts/Coventry
Depth 13	C1/C2	Kids 6 or under -mum	18-39 years	Glasgow
Depth 14	C1/C2	12-14 - boy	No fixed age quotas	London suburb

Mini friendship groups

The sample structure of these interviews is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Sample structure of friendship triads

Group	SEG	Participant Ages/Sex	Location
Triad 1	ABC1	11-12 years Boys	Richmond/Twickenham/ Kingston
Triad 2	C1/C2	11-12 years Girls	Glasgow
Triad 3	ABC1	13-14 years Girls	Exeter
Triad 4	C1/C2	13-14 years Boys	Richmond/Twickenham/ Kingston
Triad 5	C1C2	15-16 years Girls	Nottingham /Coventry

Group discussions

Half of the groups comprised individuals, half were comprised of parental pairs. All were split by age, gender and SEG. Figure 3 shows the detailed composition of the group discussions.

Figure 3: Sample structure of group discussions

Group	SEG	Individual versus parent	Children	Age Participant	Location
Group 1	C2DE	Individuals -Males	No Kids	18-29 years	London viewed pilot
Group 2	ABC1	Individuals -Females	No Kids	18-29 years	Nottingham/Coventry
Group 3	B/C1/C2	Individuals - Males	Mix no kids & kids under 6	30-55 years	Cardiff/Bridgend
Group 4	B/C1/C2	Individuals - Females	Mix no kids & kids 6 or younger	30-55 years	Richmond/Twickenham/Kingston
Group 5	ABC1	Individuals -Females	No Kids/left home	56+yrs	Glasgow
Group 6	C1/C2	Individuals -Males	No Kids/left home	56+yrs	Belfast
Group 7	ABC1	Parents as couples	Kids - 8-10 yrs	No set age quotas	Exeter (& Surrounds)
Group 8	C2DE	Mix separate dads/mums	Kids 8-10 yrs	No set age quotas	Glasgow
Group 9	ABC1	Mix separate dads/mums	Kids 11-12 yrs	No set age quotas	Richmond/Twickenham/Kingston
Group 10	C2DE	Parents as couples	Kids 11-12 yrs	No set age quotas	Cardiff/Bridgend
Group 11	ABC1	Parents as couples	Kids 13-14 yrs	No set age quotas	London viewed pilot
Group 12	C2DE	Mix separate dads/mums	Kids 13-14 yrs	No set age quotas	Belfast
Group 13	C1/C2	Mix separate dads/mums	Kids 15-16 yrs	No set age quotas	Exeter (& surrounds)
Group 14	C2DE	Parents as couples	Kids 15-16 yrs	No set age quotas	Nottingham/Coventry

3. The clips used in the research

3.1. Rationale for use and selection approach

All participants in the research were asked to view a series of pre-selected clips containing violent scenes in their own homes, prior to participation in a focus group or depth. These clips played a key role in the study because they:

- enabled participants to record their spontaneous reactions in their online journals prior to attendance to a focus group or depth; and
- provided a broad range of examples of different types of violence for a more considered evaluative discussion in the focus groups and in depth interviews.

The clips chosen for the research were sufficiently short (averaging 1-2 minutes in length) to enable participants to view a sufficient number without the task becoming too onerous. The violent scenes selected were therefore not viewed in the context of the whole programme.

The clips were selected by Ofcom and featured material that Ofcom had investigated following viewer complaints. They included material that Ofcom had, and had not, found in breach of the Code. Due to limitations on the number of clips that could be viewed, however, the clips could not be representative of all types of content containing violence shown pre-21:00 or in the transition period between 21:00-22:00.

The clips selected were chosen to ensure an illustrative range of potential issues arising from the different types of violent material were covered in the research, for example:

- genre (drama vs. soap vs. reality);
- actual violence vs. threat of violence; and
- types of violence (e.g. fantasy violence vs. bullying vs. threatening behaviour vs. sexual violence).

Of the 15 clips selected, six were pre-watershed soaps (*Eastenders*, *Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks*). Ofcom selected a number of 'soap' clips because it is a genre broadcast pre-watershed that regularly attracts significant audiences of both adults and children, yet its 'real life' themes and content are often of a more adult nature. It is also a genre which regularly generates complaints to Ofcom from viewers concerned about levels of violence. It is therefore an area of programming Ofcom was particularly interested in better understanding viewers' perspectives.

The participants were not made aware of the selection criteria for the clips (i.e that Ofcom had investigated the clips following viewer complaints) or the outcome of the investigations. However, for completeness of information, the outcomes of the various Ofcom investigations are noted in Appendix C.

Showing a range of clips to participants allowed a detailed exploration of a number of issues, related to both the violent content itself as well as the context in which it was shown. It was important that the research explored, but was not limited to: issues that went beyond the actual content of the scene itself to include storylines that highlighted the adverse consequences of violence or placed it in some form of moral context; the impact of 'unexpected' violent content; the impact of violence on familiar characters (where the viewer may have a 'relationship' with the character); how a sense of menace or 'threat' (which may build up during a programme) affected viewers' perceptions. The use of a wide range of clips across a variety of genres facilitated this discussion.

3.2. Detailed description of clips

3.2.1. Group One: Pre-watershed soaps

Clip 1: Emmerdale through the forest (19:00)



Description of scene

The scenes show a bloodied man being chased through a forest and, as he rests briefly panting for breath, the man chasing him comes from behind and pulls down to the ground. The dazed man is then dragged through the forest and is next seen in the back of a truck. During the final sequence 'Silent Night' is played in the background as the attacker lowers the shutter on the back of the van. The scenes are briefly interspersed twice with a female character sitting at a kitchen table using her mobile phone.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 1 minute 8 seconds

Clip 2: Emmerdale kidnapping (19:00)



Description of scene

A distressed woman is shown blindfolded tied to a post with her hands behind her in a barn. A second woman is being threatened by another woman with a shotgun. Two other participants also feature in the scenes (a male and a female) attempting to dissuade the woman from using the shotgun. The male character then attempts to goad the woman with the shotgun into using it. The scene ends with the woman with the shotgun lowering the gun and the male character removes the blindfold from the captive woman.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 3 minutes 17 seconds

Clip 3: Eastenders bar scene (19:30)



Description of scene

The scene shows a gang of men armed with baseball bats and truncheons entering the Queen Vic pub, during evening opening hours, and then smashing the pub up, threatening and physically abusing the male and female customers and staff. The locals in the pub put up some resistance and even try to escape but they are held back by the gang and continue to be threatened and assaulted throughout the scene.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 34 seconds

Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)



Description of scene

This 'live' scene opens with a man aggressively threatening a woman and pinning her against a wall. The woman temporarily breaks free and slaps the man. The man reacts by grabbing the woman by the hair and wrestling her to the ground where he holds her down forcefully and covers her mouth with his hand. He calls her "a stupid bitch". The man is then seen from the back with his hand in a position which would suggest he was appearing to undo his trousers. The woman reaches her arm to the side and picks up a brick and strikes him over the head with it. The next shot is the same man being confronted by another man holding a brick in his hand. After an exchange of dialogue the man holding the brick goes to strike the other man on the back of the head.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 3 minutes and 21 seconds

Clip 5: Eastenders gang scene (19:30)



Description of scene

Two scenes are shown. The first scene depicts the central character being surrounded and menaced by a gang of hooded youths. The central character is then forced to fight one of the gang members as the others look on, and the viewer sees the central character hit in the face. In the meantime two other characters, a young male and older female, are walking nearby. They see what is happening and run over to intervene. The gang run away and the scene closes on the central character being attended to on the ground with cuts and wounds to his head and face.

The next scene is the following day where the central character is again forced to fight one of the gang members while the others look on. This time two further characters are walking nearby, witness the scene and run to intervene. As they are approaching the gang, the gang runs away and one of them is seen making a stabbing motion towards the central character as they do so. The scene ends with the two witnesses running to help the central character and seeing that he has been stabbed, shown by blood stains on his clothing.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 4 minutes and 50 seconds

Clip 6: Hollyoaks (18:30)



Description of scene

The scene shows two men confronting each other on a railway viaduct. After some brief dialogue the two men fight one another hand to hand. After a series of intense fight scenes, one of the characters, who is bloodied, is pushed to the edge of the railway viaduct, then onto the rail line and then pinned to the side railing again. He struggles free and with his legs pushes the other man onto the rail track and into the path of an oncoming train. As he falls backwards the train passes at high speed and kills him.

Length of programme: 30 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 5 seconds

3.2.2. Group Two: Pre-watershed movies

Clip 7: Man about Town (17:00)



Description of scene

The scene shows the central character drive up to a house and creep in with a baseball bat in his hand. He sees another man at home watching TV. He surprises the other man and proceeds to hit him on his torso with a baseball bat a number of times as the man lies curled up in a ball on the ground. The victim appears only mildly injured and both characters then have a confrontational dialogue following the initial assault.

Length of programme: 100 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 54 seconds

Clip 8: Wolverine (18:55)



Description of scene

The scene begins with the central character receiving injections while lying in a tank filled with liquid. The character is shown under some stress and considerable pain while memory flash-backs are shown. The character manages to get out of the tank and breaks free from his constraints, is shot several times but appears not to be hurt, and escapes from the building where he has been held. In the next scene the central character confronts an opponent in a number of fight scenes involving swords and knives, which end with the central character beheading the opponent.

Length of programme: 126 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and fifty seconds

3.2.3. Group Three: Pre-watershed reality television

Clip 9: Sketchbook Killer (20:00)



Description of scene

The scene involves a female victim describing how she was (in real life) abused and violently assaulted twice by a former partner. Throughout the clip dramatic reconstructions are shown. The first showed the victim being constrained and threatened with a knife and a gun. The second reconstruction, which featured the victim relaying the details of the further attack by her violent partner, showed her being assaulted with a knife and axe and nearly killed outside her house. Additional narration is provided by a journalist who referred to the second attack as “truly savage”.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 3 minutes

3.2.4. Group Four: Post-watershed reality television

Clip 10: Thelma's Gypsy Girls (21:00)



Description of scene

The scene opens with two young women talking about confronting another woman. The next scene shows the same two women and a larger group of women standing outside a minivan taxi having a heated argument. One of the women appears to be acting aggressively towards another woman who is inside the van. The scene shows the woman inside the van being clearly distressed by the incident. A woman, also at the scene, is heard attempting to calm the situation down.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 1 minute and 57 seconds

Clip 11: Big Brother (21:40)



Description of scene

The scene shows the residents of the Big Brother House gathered in the dining area. During the scene a male Housemate sings a song, which includes the most offensive language, about sexually assaulting another female Housemate using a hair removal device. The next scene shows the male Housemate being admonished by Big Brother in the Diary Room.

Length of programme: Various

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 23 seconds

3.2.5. Group Five: Post-watershed drama

Clip 12: The Fall (2) (21:00)



Description of scene

The clip is at the start of the programme and cuts between two separate scenes. One scene is where the central male character is having sexual intercourse with another character. The other scene shows another man, who appears to be a murderer, washing and drying the dead naked body of his female victim and then carefully arranging the victim's body on a bed.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 4 minutes and 59 seconds

Clip 13: Inside Men (21:00)



Description of scene

The scene shows an armed robbery by a gang of masked men at a vault. Throughout the armed men act aggressively and threateningly towards the staff at the facility. One of the security staff is punched to the ground and told to divulge the code to open the secure door. An armed robber threatens to shoot a security guard in the knee if his colleague does not reveal the code to the security gate. The staff member hesitates and as a result the security guard is blasted in the knee.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 1 minute and 52 seconds

Clip 14: Silent Witness (21:00)



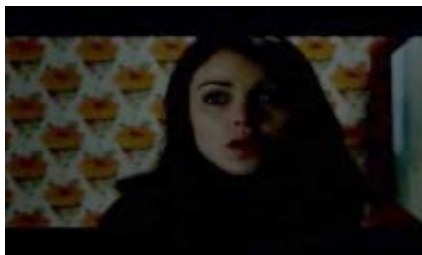
Description of scene

The scene shows someone witnessing an assault in a toilet in a prison. The scene does not directly show the assault. Instead it shows the witness entering the room and hearing the assault taking place behind a toilet cubicle door. The door to a cubicle is then opened and the perpetrator of the assault emerges with a large truncheon and revealing the victim lying prostrate on the floor with blood around his body. The suggestion from the scene and photographs shown at the start of the sequence prior to the witness entering the toilet is that the victim was anally raped with the truncheon.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 37 seconds

Clip 15: The Fall (1) (21:00)



Description of scene

The scene shows a woman at home sitting on the toilet when she is surprised by an intruder. The intruder violently assaults her and ties her up, with his actions suggesting he is intent on ultimately killing the woman. The scene cuts between this assault and a prior victim of the intruder describing in detail her experience of being assaulted by another character.

Length of programme: 60 minutes

Length of scene: 2 minutes and 58 seconds

4. Spontaneous reactions to individual clips

This section summarises some of the spontaneous reactions to the individual clips when they were viewed at home (Part 1 of the research) and prior to participation in the moderated sessions (Part 2 and 3 of the research).

When considering responses to individual clips, it is important to note that these were spontaneous reactions to edited scenes of content that were not, with some very limited exceptions, viewed in the context of the full programme. This may have resulted in the ‘heightening’ of the instinctive, spontaneous responses of the participants and should be taken into consideration when reviewing the participants’ opinions in this section. The individuals who participated in the in-home depth interviews also watched the full programme relating to just one of the clips as part of the interview. This provided some insight into the effect of watching a violent scene when viewed within the context of an entire episode, and often resulted in a more muted response from participants to a violent scene.

The verbatim responses below are illustrative of the range of online responses made by participants immediately following the viewing of a clip. They are not necessarily representative of all participants’ views. Responses to specific questions asked about the clips are summarised in Annex B.

For the purposes of the research, the clips were grouped into five genres: soaps, pre-watershed movies, pre-watershed reality television, post-watershed reality television and post-watershed drama. Within each genre, clips were discussed in order of the perceived level of violence, starting with the least violent and moving to the clip regarded as most violent.

The first group of clips (groups one to three) included only material broadcast pre-watershed.

4.1.1. Group One: Pre-Watershed Soaps

Six clips were shown to represent the soap genre: three from *Emmerdale*, two from *Eastenders* and one from *Hollyoaks*.

In the case of the clips of *Hollyoaks* and *Emmerdale Live*, some responses suggested that the content warranted a later screening time than the original time of broadcast at 18:30 and 19:00 respectively.

“Very violent. Found it very disturbing. Wouldn’t want to watch Hollyoaks based on this and certainly wouldn’t allow my teenage children to watch it.” (Female, 45-54, B, parent, London) – Clip 6: Hollyoaks (18:30)

“Extremely violent for what appears to be Hollyoaks, and if I’m not mistaken a daytime / early evening viewing? Which is highly popular with a younger audience.” (Male, 18-24, E, non-parent, London) – Clip 6: Hollyoaks (18:30)

“I love Hollyoaks and watch it all the time but never at half past 6 when it is on. I would never watch this in front of my kids as over the past year or so it has become even more violent and graphic. I liked that there were no weapons (guns or knives) in this but it was still very graphic and quite disturbing.” (Female, 25-34, D, parent, Glasgow) - Clip 6: Hollyoaks (18:30)

For some of the other soap clips, opinion was divided on suitability of screening time:

“This clip comes across as a little violent but not too much - given that it is a soap you’d assume it would not get any more serious. I assume it was shown after 21:00 but it didn’t bother me too much the level of violence: it didn’t make me uncomfortable or with a need to turn over or switch it off.” (Female, 25-34, C1, non-parent, Coventry) – Clip 2: Emmerdale kidnapping (19:00)

“The threat of violence is definitely prevalent in this clip, but actual violence is not shown, which makes this far more acceptable, however, I still would not be happy with my daughter viewing this as I feel it is something she does not have to be exposed to at such a young age.” (Female, 25-34, B, parent, Watford) – Clip 2: Emmerdale kidnapping (19:00)

In some of the clips, the low level of perceived realism mitigated the perceived level of violence (e.g., Clip 3: Eastenders bar scene. 19:30) or exacerbated it (e.g., Clip 5: Eastenders gang scene 19:30). Even with relatively low perceived levels of actual violence, participants considered that a disturbing atmosphere could in itself lead to unease, as demonstrated with Clip 1: Emmerdale through the forest (19:00).

"The violence in this scene is more about what the viewer can interpret, rather than being out and out gory. It's uncomfortable to watch" (Male, 25-34, C2, pre-family, London) – Clip 1: Emmerdale through the forest (19:00).

"In this clip it is the suggestion of violence rather than the actual violence which is chilling." (Male, 55-64, C2, Belfast) – Clip 1: Emmerdale through the forest (19:00)

"My first reaction was to laugh because the way everyone was fighting, smashing bottles especially the women all getting involved and Peggy shouting as well. It reminded me of maybe a programme/film from the past 1960s, 1970s when maybe violence was shown on TV but not to the degree it is shown these days." (Female, 35-44, C1, parent, London) – Clip 3: Eastenders bar scene (19:30)

"Cartoon style bar brawl, completely ridiculous and unrealistic." (Male, 24-34, D, non-parent, London) – Clip 3: Eastenders bar scene (19:30)

"I really did not like watching this clip of Eastenders today. The reason for this is I can imagine this happening in real life. Teenagers getting together and having no regard for anything or anyone. I worry for my own sons living out and about!" (Female, 35-44, D, parent, Belfast) – Clip 5 Eastenders gang scene (19:30)

"The programme shows the bully in control and how he is the winner, not a good influence for younger viewers." (Male, 55-64, C1, empty-nester, Belfast) – Clip 5: Eastenders gang scene (19:30)

"I remember watching this the first time round and feeling really troubled watching it as it does happen so often in today's society. I think it is good that Eastenders highlight it and make more people aware as to what is happening, but I also think a lot of young people watch Eastenders so this may be seen as glorifying gang culture and immature, young people may see it as a good thing." (Female, 25-34, B, non-parent, Coventry) – Clip 5: Eastenders gang scene (19:30)

Emmerdale Live was the most controversial of all of the soap clips, with many participants expressing strong concern about watching this scene with under-17s. The threat of sexual violence in this clip was the most likely reason for this perception.

"I don't watch soaps and I'm completely shocked at the violence that is shown well before the watershed! The aggression of the male against the female, then looking as if he is forcing himself upon her." (Female, 35-44, C1, parent, Glasgow) – Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)

"I find scenes of physical violence towards women particularly difficult to watch, especially when it's at the hands of man. This scene could have a deep emotional impact on a number of younger viewers, especially as Emmerdale is targeted as a family show." (Male, 25-34, B, non-parent, Bridgend) – Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)

"Shown before the watershed, pretty violent, no need for this but typical writers trying to get viewers to watch, I just feel it is over the top and what is more alarming is that with it being pre-watershed viewing kids could watch/see it for example while doing their homework. Poor show." (Male, 35-44, C2, parent, Glasgow) – Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)

"Although there was a warning at the start of the clip saying some viewers may find this upsetting, I think it should have been more forceful. Perhaps saying there was a violent scene from the outset. I didn't like the fact that the woman was being pushed about and degraded by the man." (Female, 55-64, B, empty-nester, Glasgow) – Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)

4.1.2. Group Two: Pre-watershed movies

Participants were shown clips from two films shown pre-watershed: *Man about Town* and *Wolverine*.

Some initial responses to *Wolverine* were quite strong and those less familiar with the full context of the movie and its style were confused or concerned at the graphic nature and/or levels of violence present in the film which offered obvious appeal to younger audiences:

"I thought it was a sci-fi / fantasy film aimed at teenagers - clearly I was very wrong. This appears to be a very violent film if the clip is anything to go by and I would be concerned about teens watching it. I would expect it to have an 18 rating based on what I have seen here." (Female, 35-44, C1, parent, Watford) - Clip 8: *Wolverine* (18:55)

However, familiarity with the full context of these films (*Man about Town* and *Wolverine*) mitigated initial concern about the violent content. For some, the "cartoony" (*Man about Town*) or "fantasy" (*Wolverine*) nature of the movie modified participants' potential criticism:

"This clip did not turn out to be as violent as I had expected it to be. I thought that the man would have been more seriously hurt by the baseball bat." (Female, 25-34, C2, non-parent, Watford) – Clip 7: *Man About Town* (17:00)

"This clip is aggressive and violent but the background music makes it seem very cartoony and makes it seem less serious. Although he is hitting him a lot with the bat, it didn't look like it was real so the impact wasn't as extreme as other clips watched. Again when he brings out the gun, there is music playing in the background which makes me think he isn't going to do anything so the aggression seems irrelevant." (Female, 25-34, B, non-parent, Coventry) - Clip 7: *Man About Town* (17:00)

"While the actual stabbing and slashing is quite squeamish its impact is less as it is fictional/fantasy violence" (Male, 37, D, parent, Belfast) - Clip 8 *Wolverine* (18:55)

"This clip does have some violent scenes however in my opinion because it is a fictional character it doesn't make me feel uncomfortable" (Male, 25-34, C2, parent, Glasgow) - Clip 8: *Wolverine* (18:55)

"I think younger children would find the needle scene upsetting, but the rest we know is pure fantasy- this type of film is all about super human people, and even young children I think would know the difference between fantasy and truth." (Female, 35-44, C2, parent, Exeter) - Clip 8: *Wolverine* (18:55)

4.1.3. Group Three: Pre-watershed reality television

Sketchbook Killer represented this genre. Some participants criticised its pre-watershed violent and disturbing content (involving sexual violence):

This is too graphic. I know it doesn't show you it for real but you can see from the shadow exactly what it is. There is no need for this unless it is a reconstruction for purposes of catching someone, not just for a documentary." (Female, 25-34, D, parent, Glasgow) - Clip 9: *Sketchbook Killer* (20:00)

"Incredibly graphic, detailed depictions of events. I would personally note the over use of re-enacted scenes while having the audio description read out too disturbing. The re-enactment alone was very unsettling." (Male, 18-24, E, non-parent, London)) - Clip 9: *Sketchbook Killer* (20:00)

"The voice over describing the torture, especially about her tongue being pulled out is very shocking and horrifying." (Male, 25-34, C2, non-parent, London) - Clip 9: *Sketchbook Killer* (20:00)

Groups four and five included material broadcast during the transition period - post- watershed.

4.1.4. Group Four: Post-watershed reality television

Thelma's Gypsy Girls and *Big Brother* represented this genre.

For most participants the violence in the clip from *Thelma's Gypsy Girls*, like the *Eastenders* bar scene, lacked realism. This perceived artificiality mitigated concerns regarding the violent content. Violent or foul language was more likely than the violence in these clips to influence the divide in opinion over whether this should be pre- or post- watershed content.

"Not a very violent clip, some descriptions of violence and a bit of an argument at the end but nothing major." (Female, 44, C1, parent, Coventry) – Clip 10: *Thelma's Gypsy Girls* (21:00)

"The gypsy culture is different from what we class as normal. Blood lines are very strong and feuds can last for long times. This clip shows bullying at its worst. I found this made me annoyed with the gypsy culture although I understand it." (Male, 25-34, C1, parent, Glasgow) – Clip 10: *Thelma's Gypsy Girls* (21:00)

"I recognised them as being on the gypsy TV programme and they live in a different world which seems unreal. I'm not sure if they were playing to the cameras or if it was real." (Male, 35-44, C2, parent, Kingston) – Clip 10: *Thelma's Gypsy Girls* (21:00)

The *Big Brother* clip was not considered particularly violent. However its aggressive tone and the repeated use of offensive language was clearly uncomfortable to many and impacted upon their levels of concern about watching with under-eighteens and a preference for post-watershed screening.

"I remember this show. Conor was reprimanded for his comments as they were inappropriate, racist, and aggressive and downright unacceptable. It made me angry towards Conor and his racist attitude towards Dina." (Male, 35-44, C1, parent, Glasgow) – Clip 11: *Big Brother* (21:40)

"This kind of obscene language and utter disrespect for another person is horrible and absolutely unacceptable. He should have been removed immediately from the Big Brother House and arrested. I also believe some of the words used should have been muted." (Male, 25-34, B, non-parent, Bridgend) – Clip 11: *Big Brother* (21:40)

4.1.5. Group Five: Post-watershed drama

Four clips were shown to represent this genre: two from *The Fall*, one from *Silent Witness* and one from *Inside Men*. All four of these clips generated the strongest responses from Groups Four and Five.

"It was violent and very threatening, the masks particularly. The actual shooting was gruesome and very graphic." (Male, 35-44, C2, parent, Kingston) – Clip 13: *Inside Men* (21:00)

"A very violent and aggressive scene. Threatening the lives of others and scaring others to fear for their lives. One man was shot for information which I find terribly violent and frightening." (Female, 18-24, D, Coventry) – Clip 13: *Inside Men* (21:00)

"Quite a fast paced graphic few scenes...it was initially building the tension and setting the scene of the show. Although the shot scene was reasonably graphic I think it was justified, to add weight to the "badness" of the offenders." (Male, 35-44, B, parent, Exeter) – Clip 13: *Inside Men* (21:00)

"High intensity, heart racing stuff. It's not so much the violence for me but the aggression. I find it quite exciting but could see why parents would not want their children seeing it. The use of shot guns in a direct threatening way is very different to firing from a distance like in police chases or cowboy films. On the other hand this is the true reality of guns and for me, I would rather this type and ban the cartoon style shoot-em-outs as they don't show the reality." (Male, 25-34, D, non-parent, London) – Clip 13: *Inside Men* (21:00)

"I think the music does a lot to give off the imposing and seriousness of this scene. Pretty gory implied and viewed violence." (Male, 25-34, C2, non-parent, London) – Clip 14: *Silent Witness* (21:00)

"I found this whole part of the clip sickening due to its grotesque violence." (Female, 35-44, E, non-parent, Bridgend) – Clip 14: *Silent Witness* (21:00)

"This is an extremely disturbing clip that made me uncomfortable. Again you did not see too much but coupled together with the bits you did see and the fact that you had a good idea of what was going on it

made it extremely disturbing and graphic.” (Female, 25-34, B, parent, Watford) – Clip 14: Silent Witness (21:00)

“Really quite graphic, the dark lighting increases the feeling of fear and anticipation of what is going to happen.” (Male, 35-44, B, parent, Exeter) – Clip 15: The Fall 1 (21:00)

“I found the whole clip disturbing from start to finish. The fact that the scene was so dark with the voice over but hearing the crying, whimpering and extreme fear of the victim was powerful and left you cold. The content was explicit along with the language used.” (Female, 35-44, C2, non-parent, Bridgend) – Clip 15: The Fall 1 (21:00)

“I found this the most disturbing scene so far. The sexual attack was frightening and due to the dark way in which it was filmed, the noises of the girl’s screams made me exceptionally uncomfortable and upset. I didn’t enjoy watching this at all.” (Female, 35-44, B, parent, Watford) – Clip 15: The Fall 1 (21:00)

Clip 12: *The Fall 2* (21:00) was different to the others in this category, having relatively low levels of actual violence in the scene, but again demonstrating the power of ambiguity to distress the viewer, and the inclusion of anticipated sexual violence to exacerbate the impact of violent content.

“Awfully disturbing scene. Very eerie and chilling.” (Male, 18-24, C2, non-parent, London) – Clip 12: *The Fall 2* (21:00)

“Quite disturbing scenes of a murder mixed with scenes of a sexual nature definitely not to be watched with the children.” (Male, 35-44, C1, parent, Glasgow) – Clip 12: *The Fall 2* (21:00)

5. Main Findings

5.1. Overall attitudes to violent content

Participants emphasised the importance that violent content plays in their overall TV viewing experience. It contributes fundamentally to what many viewers enjoy about TV and what engages them. Violent content can be exciting. It adds drama, produces adrenalin and “keeps you watching.”

“I suppose what’s going on, and what keeps you gripped, is the tension. There’s part of you, people enjoy...to get a bit of a thrill out of a horror story, or whatever it is that makes you a bit fearful, and maybe in that underlying way, you’re sitting there, thinking, ‘Oh, my God! What’s coming next?’” (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

“It [violent content] is part of the fun...takes away the mundanity of everyday life” (Non-parent, in-home, Exeter)

“I like violence (on TV) It makes you want more of it...has anyone seen Django?” (Males, non-parents, London)

Violent content can be an emotionally valuable commodity, allowing passive involvement and escape from everyday life with the element of tension providing a sense of catharsis.

“You accept it in your mind because it’s not real. You know it’s not real. You know it’s not happening”. (Parents as couples, Bridgend)

“If you took away all the violence on TV it would be very bland and boring. I don’t like violence when it seems pointless but sometimes it adds to the story and makes it more exciting. If you don’t like that sort of show simply don’t watch them.” (Female, no children, Watford)

Violent content is clearly seen as “adult”. It explores adult or real-world themes which are seen as appropriate for television to resonate with reality and offer something to the “grown-ups”.

“The thing is people do behave in aggressive ways in real life. It’s not going to be wiped out”. (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

“During the Troubles we all got very used to violence; although that was of a different kind. The sort of crime you see on the mainland is only coming over here more now. Wherever you live you cannot totally get away from it.” (Male no children, Belfast)

A key challenge for viewers was establishing where the line ought to be drawn between acceptable violence and perceived “gratuitous” content, and the weight to be given to different factors which affected viewers’ assessment of suitable or unsuitable violent content. The research found that although research participants were able to discern differences in suitability according to the time of screening and the nature of the content, this line was very much a blurred one overall and very subjective.

Responses to violent content were very subjective, with any primary emotional response often driven by the degree to which a scene is connected with a viewer on some personal level. The post 21:00 transition period is a challenging one for schedulers to navigate.

“9pm is early, 10pm is late!” (Parent, London)

As a further challenge for broadcasting schedulers, ambiguity in the depiction of violence can be itself disturbing. A violent act may not even be seen yet a viewer can be made uncomfortable through uncertainty and/or an atmospheric mood. Not knowing exactly what is going on can actually increase discomfort:

“You don’t know exactly what he is doing [murderer in The Fall] but it seems sinister” (Parents, Exeter)

Despite this essential subjectivity, two clear areas of consensus did emerge: an intolerance for violence for which the viewer was not prepared, and sexual violence.

5.2. The importance of scheduling

Scheduling, or the time at which the violent content was broadcast, was the key consideration around which the questions relating to the acceptability of violent content revolved.

The watershed was both a familiar concept to and commonly used term amongst the participants. Most were aware that 21:00 was a clear line for determining the acceptability of programming content in general (for adults and children). Participants were less aware of a 'transition' period after 21:00 but did, when questioned, expect a difference between what was shown immediately after 21:00 and what was shown at 22:00.

The watershed was understood to be a symbolic time signalling the need for parents to become more vigilant, rather than an absolute demarcation between family friendly and adult only content.

The common presence of school age children (most likely to be of secondary school age) watching television after 21:00 underlined the importance of a gradual transition of content change between 21:00 and 22:00 for some parents:

"That's how I'd see it because everybody knows there's a nine o'clock cut-off. Nine o'clock is the cut-off point, whether you want your children to carry on watching telly or not." (Parents as couples, Bridgend)

Participants who were parents generally considered that they were the best judge of their own children's maturity and sensitivities, and decisions could vary depending on the individual child and the programme in question. This was regardless of their child's actual age when it came to the suitability of content on television.

There was a general view amongst participants that the earlier the programme is broadcast, the less strong the content would be, with 21:00 having a special significance. The concept of a boundary at 21:00 played a vital role in reassuring parents and enabling them to make decisions about the appropriateness of content for family viewing. In effect, this boundary monitored viewing for them: enabling parents to 'switch off and relax' and allowing their children to watch television in their rooms or without parents present before the watershed (without parents feeling guilty or anxious). Equally, it simply allowed all of the family to watch TV together, without concerns about what may be seen.

"Yes, it's classic now, it's school holidays, you know. The children don't go to bed. Their bedtime is nine o'clock and I think that is based on the fact that we don't want them watching with us - it's our time to watch TV and we know that we want to watch things we want." (Parents, Bridgend)

Non-parents also supported the idea of a time sensitive time boundary but ultimately felt that the prime responsibility lay with parents.

Although there was clearly strong support for the watershed as a scheduling boundary, taking part in this research process did encourage some people to question the efficacy of the watershed and to take a more considered view. Deeper reflection stimulated by the discussion and clip exposure led some participants to think more critically about the watershed.

In particular, some thought a boundary at 21:00 might be incompatible with the busier lifestyles of today's children. Some parents felt children were too busy with homework and/or after school activities to be in bed by 21:00:

"I would like to say all my kids are in bed by nine o'clock but kids stay up later now, so 9pm is not necessarily late for an 11 year old, especially in the holidays." (Female, with children, Watford)

Others considered that the new 'online' television landscape (catch up TV, live streaming, multiple digital sources of content) actually rendered a hard time boundary somewhat academic.

"But really the watershed doesn't count because of all these things you can download." (Empty nester, females, Glasgow)

"They've got tellies everywhere, all over the place. So Laura had slipped off to another room, and was watching something that she shouldn't be watching." (empty nester, female, Glasgow)

Finally, exposure to the clips of violent content during the research clearly demonstrated to the participants that some material could be broadcast pre-watershed that night be unsuitable for children to view:

“Seriously, 6:30pm? You know, you’re ten, you’re six year old will be up at 6:30pm and if they’ve a TV in their room they could just pop that on innocently, they may not even be a watcher of Hollyoaks, they could just pop that on.” (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

In the context of scheduling, participants were asked about the level and type of monitoring of television viewing in their homes.

Parents said they employed ‘light touch’ monitoring at most, and any monitoring activity was focussed on primary school age children. For many it was the presence of the 21:00 watershed that enabled and justified this ‘light touch’ monitoring regime before that boundary was reached.

There was some informal and ad hoc checking of what children are watching.

“I will poke my head in from time to time...”. (Parent, London)

Some parents would make a decision to record programmes and watch them later if necessary - either on the spur of the moment or planned in advance. Others used improvisational strategies such as “talking over” inappropriate scenes, hoping these were not noticed by children. Some parents of older children checked that they are in bed before 11pm and not watching TV in their bedrooms.

“If I don’t want her to watch it I record it and watch it later.” (Parent, group, London)

“You can catch the kids sometimes looking at it, and you’re thinking, ‘Ooh,’ and it goes over the top of their heads, but you’re sitting there thinking, ‘Oh’”. (Parents, Bridgend)

Exposure of children to violent television content was unlikely to lead to any particular action by the parent or carer. The idea of making a complaint to the broadcaster or regulator for example seemed remote to research participants.

Viewers were most likely to grumble and change channels in disgust or promise they would “never watch again”, and very few participants could even remember a specific example of undertaking even this low level of action. It would seem that most incidents are met with inaction.

“If you are watching something as a family and it gets a bit too violent or there are sex scenes we would only turn it off if it got really bad or send the kids upstairs to watch TV. It might make us think twice about watching it together again.” (Male, with children, Belfast)

“I would not think of complaining, you can always switch it off or go out of the room.” (Female, no children, Watford)

5.3. Differences in attitudes to violence among different demographic groups

Although there were some subtle differences in the expectation of how violence should be treated in programming, in the main the similarity of the reaction between participants was more marked than any divergence in attitude. For example, non-parents agreed with parents that the focus of regulation of violent material should be on protecting children and, notably, non-parents were at least as vociferous as parents in asserting the importance of protecting children from violent content. Indeed, in some cases non-parents adopted a tougher line on what was appropriate before the watershed. However, they were also more likely to champion the freedom of adults to choose to view more challenging content after 21:00, and between 21:00 and 22:00.

The research analysis does draw some general conclusions regarding the relative attitudes to violent content among various demographic groups, and among soap versus non-soap viewers.

5.3.1. Parents

Parents distinguished between primary and secondary school-age children and this affected their attitudes towards their children’s television viewing. For the parents of primary school age children, the core parental role was to ‘protect’ their children from the world. However, once a child was of secondary school-age, the primary

focus shifted to preparing children for the world and their more independent life within it. Therefore, allowing exposure to more challenging content, particularly as children become older, became more acceptable.

“You don’t want children to be scared of life.” (Parent couple, in-home, London)

“I think it changes when they go to secondary school...you let go of the reins a bit...they are going to learn how to swear, to talk about sex and violence.” (Parent couple, Exeter)

“Kids are exposed to a lot of things and they have got to learn that it is not right and, you know, it’s the wrong way to behave.” (Parents as couples, Bridgend)

With this distinction in mind, the research found that violent content could certainly be an issue for the parents of younger, primary school children, but it was less of a concern for the parents of secondary school children. Secondary school children were seen to be mature enough to distinguish violent content from real life and to process it appropriately.

“Depends on the age...my 14 year old nephew ...he watches a few things he shouldn’t but he can distinguish between real violence and fantasy violence...whereas someone who is 7 or 8 can’t.” (Parents, London)

“You can only protect them for so long, once they go to secondary school you know they are going to come across all sorts of stuff and you cannot keep them young forever even if you would like to.” (Parent as a couple, Coventry)

A key exception however was content involving sexual violence. For example, *The Fall* (Clips 12 and 15 from the research clips) were as problematic for parents of older children as it was for those with younger children. Even though parents considered older children could process other forms of violent content, they did not consider sexual violence was as easily dealt with.

“Although it’s more acceptable these days that children are exposed to more, at the same time as a personal view of myself, I’d rather not expose them to absolutely anything and everything.” (Parents, Bridgend)

The parents who participated in the research also expressed much stronger levels of concern regarding watching violent content with children, when compared to watching it alone, or with other adults.

5.3.2. Non-parents

Some non-parents were more likely to emphasise the dangers for children of exposure to violent content than the parents.

“When they watch it too young...that is when they get psychological problems.” (Male non-parent, London)

Considering pre-watershed material, non-parents could be more concerned than parents.

“Can’t believe this sort of stuff is being shown when children will be watching.” (Male non-parent, London)

Non-parents were, however, also the most protective of the viewing rights of adults after 21:00 and more resistant to the concept of a post-21:00 transition period. While all research participants valued the availability of more challenging television content aimed at an adult audience, non-parents were least tolerant of compromising this after 21:00. They were likely to assert more vociferously the adult audience’s right to be challenged and engaged by TV programming after 21:00.

“I am an adult and after 21:00 I’d rather they didn’t beat around the bush” (Male, non-parent, London)

5.3.3. Gender of children

Some parents of daughters placed greater priority on protecting them, especially from scenes of sexual violence, than parents of sons of the equivalent age.

"I don't want my daughter to worry about something like that (scenes of sexual violence) happening to her, I always switch over when there is sex on TV, let alone violence." (Couple, depth, Coventry)

Conversely, there was a greater propensity to see television content as potentially playing a positive role in preparing sons "for the real world" – and this was more likely to be something articulated by fathers.

"You can't have him showing up at secondary totally wet behind the ears...would be eaten alive." (Parents as couples, Bridgend)

5.3.4. Older people

Older people were more vocal about the general decline in moral standards on TV, but the main focus of this concern related to bad language rather than violent content. They shared a greater nostalgia for old style TV and viewing behaviour, with older participants being more 'shockable' and inclined to decry today's culture of 'sex and violence'.

Older participants were also often most critical in their responses to the clips and were more inclined to see making a complaint about the material as a possible response, although none had actually done so.

5.3.5. Men and women

Men were more likely to place greater value on 'action' in TV programmes (and in films). They often made a distinction between 'action' and 'violence' although the line was a blurred one. 'Action' tended to include some of the following hallmarks: a light touch, not explicit, consenting, and equally matched participants in the violence.

"It is not about me liking violence – it is action ...not watching people get stabbed but watching James Bond ...there is cleverness to it." (Male, non-parent, London)

"Two men having a fight? Nothing wrong with that?" (Male, non-parent, London)

Some men did acknowledge that violence could be enjoyable as entertainment – although not in an extreme form.

"I love violence...but not in real life." (Male non-parent London)

"You (her husband) like all that sort of stuff don't you, but you tend to watch it on catch up or when I am out and I cannot stand it." (Woman as part of a parent couple, Coventry)

Women were more likely to articulate concern about content which included a sense of threat or an unsettling atmosphere. They appeared to be more sensitive to implied violent content, or perhaps more comfortable voicing concerns about it.

5.3.6. Teenage perspectives

Five friendship groups, consisting of three teenagers in each, were interviewed in five locations. The sample included boys and girls who were aged between 11 and 16. The exact specifications of the demographics can be found in the appendices to this report.

With these teen research participants, discussion was restricted to the less controversial clips. They were not shown programmes scheduled after 21:00 and the researchers used their discretion in deciding what pre-watershed content was shared with them.

Teenage television viewing behaviour

The younger teens and pre-teens continued to watch a lot of television with their families, although some had already started watching television alone. Those at the older end of the spectrum usually had televisions in their bedrooms. However, there was still a role for family viewing:

"It is a Saturday night thing...we often get a couple of pizzas in." (Teens triad, Notts/Coventry)

Television programmes were watched across a range of different channels and formats: online downloads, catch-up satellite and cable and DVD box formats. There appeared to be less reliance on linear TV. In general, and perhaps not surprisingly, there was greater level of sophistication amongst teens than their parents in this respect.

"My dad can't get on with catch up at all...but he has to have the remote...frustrating!" (Teens triad, Exeter)

In terms of programmes viewed, there was a wide range. The boys were more likely to name science fiction and science and factual programmes. The girls were more likely to name soaps and reality/structured reality shows.

"I love Made in Chelsea...although they all complete freaks." (Teen triad, London)

Waterloo Road and *Hollyoaks* were mentioned by both genders but especially girls. There was some feeling that these programmes were aimed at their age group.

"All the girls at school watch Waterloo Road." (Teen triad, Exeter)

"My Mother likes Corrie but I'd rather see Hollyoaks." (Teen triad, Notts/Coventry)

Overall attitudes to violent content amongst teenagers

From the brief introductory conversation, key concerns for this age group seemed to focus on life at school and their friends. Some girls expressed discomfort about teenage boys' attitudes towards sex but this was perceived to be largely driven by boys' use of the internet.

"They watch it (porn) a lot and they were even watching it at school. It's a boy thing." (Teens triad, Exeter)

Generally speaking, violent television content was not a major source of anxiety amongst this age group. This was consistent with previous findings that violent content was far less of an issue for the parents of older (secondary school) children than it was for primary school children.

Pre-teens and younger teens (11-14) tended to accept parental monitoring and were not actively pressing for more freedom. It emerged that some children in this age bracket had accidentally walked in on parents watching a violent scene in *Hollyoaks* (Clip 6) and had been disturbed by it:

"It was scary." (Teens triad, Glasgow)

Over 14s seemed generally relaxed about TV content and most in this age group found it difficult to recall a scene which they had been disturbed by. They generally reported none or very little monitoring of TV viewing by parents. They did, however, acknowledge the potential harm that exposure to this material can inflict on younger children and were often as keen as parents to protect younger siblings.

Differences in attitudes to violent content

The research observed few significant differences overall in teen compared to adult responses. The teenagers articulated some of the same sort of factors as the adults that determine the acceptability of violent content, for example implicit versus explicit content. As with parents, teenagers were less concerned to some extent with violence in fantasy content (for example, Clip 8 *Wolverine*), and teens were clearly able to distinguish this sort of material from other violent content.

Teens seemed even less concerned by what was clearly ‘fantasy’ violence than adults. The inclusion of *Wolverine* for example puzzled teenagers:

“But it is not meant to be real is it? It is just entertainment.” (Teen Triad London Suburb)

Older teens perceived that soaps were often message-laden and enabled issues to be ‘dealt with’. However they were more sensitive to the dangers that such portrayals risked. The danger was that ‘bad behaviours’ depicted were likely to seem ‘cool’. This was transferable to the ‘bad’ characters:

“I don’t think he looks cool (gang leader in Eastenders) but some people I know would.” (Teens triad, Exeter)

5.3.7. Soap viewers’ and non-soap viewers’ perspectives

Several of the clips shown in the research came from soaps (*Emmerdale*, *Eastenders* and *Hollyoaks*). Soaps were considered by participants as the staple of family viewing. They were a week-night ritual for some families, especially mothers and daughters. It was not just about watching the programme together but also talking about and discussing the characters and storylines.

It is important to note here that research participants were a mixture of regular soap viewers and non-soap viewers. Familiarity with a full length programme and with soaps’ often complex longitudinal plot and character developments had a huge impact on participants’ interpretation of violent content in its intended dramatic context. Regular soap viewers tended to be more accepting of violent content in their favourite soaps. The use of short video clips as the basis for this research therefore represents a somewhat artificial if necessary method of asking participants to evaluate violence in long-running soaps.

Soaps were seen as very much a part of the teen/older child television diet in terms of characters, storylines and scheduling. *Hollyoaks* and *Waterloo Road* were both seen, in particular, as both appealing to, and aimed at, younger teens.

“Extremely violent for what appears to be Hollyoaks, and if I’m not mistaken a daytime / early evening viewing? Which is highly popular with a younger audience.” (Male, 21, E, non-parent, London)

“I think, yes, Eastenders is a family show and it’s on during the day and it appeals to quite a lot of different age groups. So, I think that sort of storyline shouldn’t be shown, really. On that programme. I think if it was a different storyline on a different programme it probably would be more acceptable.” (Male group, mixed children/no children, Bridgend)

The fact that soaps were viewed by older children and teens, as well as adults, was seen to place additional responsibility on programme makers, broadcasters and schedulers to monitor content. Consequently, soap clips generated a good deal of debate during the research. With soaps, the combination of the target audience (families, teens, children) and a degree of unpreparedness for the violent content had the potential to create maximum controversy. In this respect, soaps could catch parents by surprise, especially when children are likely to be present.

“I would hate to be watching Coronation Street now and Emmerdale with children about. I mean, it was okay when our kids are older, but when they’re young, they’re sitting playing about at your feet. They’re maybe not watching the television, they’re playing about, but they hear what’s happening.” (Empty nest, females, Glasgow)

Even allowing for the artificial concentration of violent content by only viewing clips, the degree of violence contained in these clips was surprising for non-soap viewers. This was in terms of the seriousness of the violence (leading to death in some cases), the use of weapons, and the intensity of the atmosphere and its duration.

“I didn’t realise how violent Emmerdale is.” (Non-parent, in-home, non-soap watcher, London)

“I was surprised that was in Hollyoaks.” (Parents in depth, Cardiff)

“Like Coronation Street and Eastenders, things like that, they address a lot more sensitive issues than they ever used to.” (Parents as couples, Bridgend)

Non-soap viewers had a greater tendency to consider the soap clips were suited to broadcast at a slightly later time, to have a little more concern about watching clips with children, or to feel the clips were suited to older children.

A majority of participants considered that of the six soap clips shown, two of them (*Hollyoaks* and *Emmerdale* Live) warranted a post-watershed screening time. For the other four clips, opinion was divided or the majority thought they were suitable to be shown before 21:00. However, significant proportions of participants considered that 20:00 was a more suitable screening time, even though these programmes were originally scheduled at 19:00 or 19:30pm.

The level of perceived realism or lack of it in a particular scene in a soap played a role in mitigating the perceived level of violence (*Eastenders* bar scene) or exacerbating it (*Eastenders* gang scene). Even with relatively low perceived levels of actual violence, a disturbing atmosphere could lead to some viewers feeling very uneasy, as demonstrated with the *Emmerdale* clip (through the forest).

It is important to note that for participants to view a soap clip in isolation from the full episode (or indeed with soaps, a number of preceding episodes over a much longer term) did not reflect actual viewing behaviour or experience of audiences in real life - and indeed regular soap viewers were less critical of the original scheduling of some clips. The amount of violent content was still surprising to some, but this was likely to have been driven by the exposure to a number of clips of violent content over a short time period.

For participants who were regular soap viewers, a number had either viewed the scenes including the clips previously or scenes of a similar type.

"I quite like the soaps. I'm an Emmerdale fan, although it's going down the road of all the others. I used to watch EastEnders, but it got so bad, I thought, no. I suddenly thought, 'Why am I watching all this?' Murders, violence, you know, the whole thing. They're all doing it. Coronation Street, they're all doing the same kind of story line." (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

"Yes, I think the storylines are quite aggressive - going to a pub smashing it up I think is one of the things that we can talk about from the EastEnders scenes, and you think that is before eight o'clock. We wouldn't have seen that 20 years, 30 years ago. I doubt very much that type of storyline would have been on television." (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

Dramatic context clearly played a mitigating role in determining the acceptability of violent content. Regular viewers were more familiar with the characters and their backstories and this seemed to lessen any sense that some of the violence in the clips was gratuitous. There was also greater understanding amongst regular soap viewers of the tradition of social or moral messaging in soaps. However, some concern was expressed that there is a danger of messages of this nature getting lost in long story arcs, or the wrong messages being communicated (for example, some teenagers thinking the gang leader in *Eastenders* was "cool").

"The trouble is that in shows like Emmerdale it can take ages for someone to get found out, so in the meantime you have this killer walking around looking like he has got away with it. I particularly don't like that when it comes to the kids." (Female, with children, Watford)

5.4. Contextual factors informing audiences' assessment of violent content

As part of the focus group discussions, the research participants considered how they should take account of the context of a violent scene when assessing its acceptability. Their discussion resulted in the identification of key contextual factors that viewers focus on when considering the suitability of violent scenes on television.

Variables included: the single most important factor of transmission time (pre- or post-watershed, already discussed above under the heading of scheduling); but others emerged as well – such as the viewer's degree of preparedness, the resonance a particular clip had for an individual viewer; the extent to which participants in screen violence were evenly matched; the channel or platform (with a focus on the main five public service channels); the programme genre (e.g. soaps, factual entertainment, dramas, films); the context of the violence

(for example, crime or police action, domestic); and, the type of scene, and the level to which the violence, or threat of violence, escalates.

5.4.1. The viewer's degree of preparation

Given the importance attached to scheduling when certain violent content was broadcast pre-watershed and the widespread understanding of the watershed, some participants had been surprised and unprepared for it when it had been shown pre- or soon after the watershed.

Violent content, when shown "too early", was considered a betrayal of the widely recognised informal 'rules' of appropriate scheduling, which were in place to mitigate the risk of accidental exposure to children in particular:

"As a parent...it is being caught out that really gets you angry" (Mixed children/no children, Bridgend)

While the participants understood cues about the programming genre, programme titles, or the expected audience, which informed them of the likely content of a programme, at times these could also mislead.

"When you put them against each other but you watch The Sopranos, you're expecting it, you watch Big Brother, you don't really expect any human being to really behave like that. Then it gets shown on TV".
(Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

"I think, yes, EastEnders is a family show and it's on during the day and it appeals to quite a lot of different age groups. So, I think that sort of storyline shouldn't be shown really on that programme. I think if it was a different storyline on a different programme it probably would be more acceptable"
(Kids/no kids, males, Bridgend)

Some participants urged more warnings for viewers and programme information.

"Every programme should have a certificate showing in the corner of the screen" (Parents as couples, Bridgend).

This suggestion was repeated several times during the research and suggested that participants wanted to feel better informed and prepared before viewing violent content. This was summed up by one participant:

"No surprises please" (Parent, Glasgow).

"As a parent...it is being caught out that really gets you angry." (Kids/no kids, Bridgend)

Participants clearly understood the importance of challenging content and that it should be available to view, but considered it should be scheduled appropriately and with relevant programme information to enable informed viewing choices to be made.

"So I found the violence vivid and disconcerting. Yet if the violence is fit for entertainment, it needn't be censored - a warning may be in order to warn viewers of the extreme violence ahead." (Parents, Coventry)

5.4.2. Closeness/proximity of the violent scene to the viewer

Violent content was considered less acceptable where it included an act of violence or threat which was relevant or 'closer to home' to a personal experience of the participant or their family member.

"My daughter was car-jacked recently...this Emmerdale episode brought it all back". (Empty nester, in-depth, London)

This issue of proximity to the violent content was related to the supposed distance from reality or real life. For example fantasy content such as *Wolverine* was viewed differently to the examples of violent content including real life dramatic reconstructions, such as *Sketchbook Killer*.

"...worse if you know it actually happened". (Empty Nester, Glasgow).

"That (Clip 8: Wolverine) is fine ...more like a computer game (than real life)". (Mixed children, no children, Male, Bridgend)

The tone of the content also had an impact, with comedic presentation providing a distancing effect (for example, *Man About Town*), lessening the impact of the violence.

5.4.3. Balance of power/empathy

The acceptability of violent content depended to some extent on the perceived balance of power between the people involved in the violence (i.e. the degree to which a victim was considered vulnerable).

Where participants identified that the violent content was a 'fair fight' or where there was clear mutual consent to violent acts, this formed a contextual factor for justifying the violence. Other violent content, which featured a manifest imbalance of power (for example, an adult attacking a child, a male acting violently against a female, or an armed person attacking someone who was unarmed) had a lower level of acceptability, particularly when scheduled pre-watershed. Further, where participants had an emotional connection with a character, for example in soaps, the acceptability of the violence perpetrated against them was lowered.

5.4.4. Level of detail and length of scene

Considerable discussion was generated around whether violent content was more or less justified if it visually showed or simply implied the act of violence. Pre-watershed most participants preferred that violence and its consequences should be implied rather than shown in detail, because they considered children should be protected from it.

"There is no need to actually show the knife going in". (Mixed children, no children, Male, Bridgend).

However, a minority dissented and argued for the importance of showing the real life consequences of violence to combat the dangers of copycat behaviour and avoid the trivialisation of violence.

"I also think making things less graphic can be quite dangerous as well. If pre-watershed it's somebody, say, going hell for leather with a baseball bat and the next scene they've got up and they're walking about. That would suggest to somebody that there's no real consequence to giving somebody a mass beating with a baseball bat. Sort of, wraps it up in cotton wool somehow" (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

"(Inside Men) ...shows the truth about guns not a cowboy shoot out!" (Male non parents London)

Others were equally disturbed by implied violence.

"If you imagine it, it is more likely to stick in your brain." (Parent in-depth Exeter)

"I find suggested violence quite, quite bad, you know when you hear peoples' screams and you don't necessarily see what's going on". (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

"Not being able to see what is going on almost makes it more menacing, the music and sounds just fuel your imagination." (Parent, in-depth, Coventry)

Related to the issue of how graphic a violent scene was, was its duration and whether it dwelt on the violence longer than was necessary.

"Well, I don't think it's necessary to show gratuitous violence for the sake of it". (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

5.4.5. Dramatic context

In most cases, the research participants reacted spontaneously to short clips of violent content which were seen without the context of the full programme.

However, to try to compensate for this factor, all the participants in the extended, in-home interviews were also asked to watch the whole programme or film and therefore experience the clips of violent content in the context intended by programme makers and schedulers.

"Then I realised what it was from, and I don't remember being as shocked when I watched in the whole series," (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

"Well, I enjoyed them, but seeing the clips, taking them out of context, of the whole story, through ten episodes, when I recognise-, and I thought, 'Oh, my God, that's dreadful!' I don't remember feeling that watching through the whole episodes of the storyline. Do you know what I mean?" (Empty nest, female, Glasgow)

"But when you see the whole programme (Clip 13: Inside Men) it doesn't come across like it does when you just see the clip". (Parents as couples, Exeter)

Participants found that the full dramatic context imbued a particular violent scene or act with more meaning. It assisted in understanding for example: the motives of those involved, the build-up of tensions and events, the balance of power between those involved (such as whether a person involved in the violence is a villain or hero, or victim as compared to perpetrator), and any morality or 'social good' issues (such as whether an assault might be a 'comeuppance' for a character if a storyline is understood in a certain way).

"I am not saying he deserved it...but if the guy (Clip 14: Silent Witness) was a (bad person)..." (Parent, London)

"In the context of a whole programme...you've got a guy you hate and you want him to be punished ...whole different ball game". (Non-parent, male, London)

5.4.6. Cumulative/overall impact

Participants found it was not always possible to assess the degree of concern by reference to one factor, or a single act or scene of violence. There was a need to consider the cumulative impact of scenes taken together. The research found that some of the more disturbing scenes were ones where no one factor could be identified.

"There is just something about that one (Clip 12: The Fall 2) that stays with me...you don't actually see anything that is bad in its own right". (Parents, Exeter)

More unorthodox or creative approaches to violent material could create or increase the degree of unease and discomfort for participants, for example through the use of music (Clip 1 *Emmerdale through the forest*) or uncertainty as to events or situations (Clip 12: *The Fall 2*.)

5.4.7. Message/social good

Violent content as a means to convey a moral or public information message was considered as having a valid role but participants were of the view that this required careful handling by programme makers and schedulers.

Participants considered that the importance of this factor helping to justify violence depended to some extent on the age of children viewing. Younger children required shorter stories with immediate clarity over the actions being right or wrong, while participants were less concerned about older children watching longer stories with a more discursive, and less 'black and white' approach.

Crimewatch was regarded as having a degree of permission to be graphic as its purpose was clear and tangible (*"It helps catch criminals"*).

5.4.8. Channel

The channel on which the violent content was broadcast played a role in forming expectations. In general terms, the more 'mainstream' the channel, the greater the expectation of family-appropriate content. Viewers expected BBC Two and Channel 4 to show more content more suitable for adults.

5.4.9. Genre

Genre could play a role in determining the acceptability of violence. In general participants gave more latitude to violence which featured fantasy characters, or where it was included in comedic or cartoon-style scenes. On the other hand, violence could cause greater concern when it featured in dramatic reconstructions of real-life crime.

5.4.10. Nature of Content

Of all the types of violent content, sexual violence caused the greatest level of controversy and offence amongst viewers. It was a category of content that caused both personal and parental discomfort. This was witnessed in the research during viewings of clips from both *The Fall* and *Silent Witness*.

This violent content created unease amongst both men and women. They found these scenes difficult viewing and there was an assumption that children would struggle even more. Unlike other violent content the response seems to be more personal across the spectrum of participants in the sample. Even those who seemed most open to violent content could be affected:

"I didn't enjoy that". (London, non-parent, men)

"I absolutely disagree that rape/violence should ever be shown on TV. It is not required and not good viewing in my opinion". (Female, pre-family, Coventry)

"I found this clip extremely disturbing and upsetting. I hate to see depictions of rape whether it is in a movie or as part of a documentary". (Female, no children, Watford)

5.5. Principles which determine the acceptability of violent content

The research concluded that the suitability of violent content, when scheduled pre-watershed or immediately after the watershed, could be evaluated by asking five key questions. The scheduling or time of broadcast of the material is the single most important question, and is discussed in more detail below.

The five questions are:

1. What time is it broadcast?
2. Who is the victim?
3. What is the violent act/type of harm?
4. How is it shown?
5. What is its purpose?

These questions are interrelated and the combined answer to all of them needs to inform any judgement of content.

Figure 4: Core questions determining the acceptability of violent content

Time of broadcast				
	Who is the victim (How vulnerable are they?)	What is the act of violence (How harmful is it?)	How is it shown? (How much detail is shown?)	What is its purpose? (Is it justified?)
Later				
	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual abuse of a minor Child murder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible physical harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwell time
	Elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape/sexual violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear infliction of pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose and place in the story
	Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torture Murder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with weapons (hierarchy of weapons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underlying social/moral point
	Out numbered male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempted murder/strangling Beating with weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post hoc blood Emotional response Pain response 	
	Male on male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beating with limbs Slapping Pushing/wrestling Threatening Shouting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post hoc scars Post hoc narrated trauma 	
Earlier				

5.5.1. Question 1: What time is it broadcast?

The 21:00 watershed still represents a clear boundary for many that should not be crossed. Prior to 21:00, participants shared a general consensus that there should be no sexual violence. For some participants, no severe infliction of pain or visible physical harm should be shown pre-watershed.

“Sexual violence, rape, cutting off of body parts, that’s not acceptable before 21:00”. (Mixed children/no children, male, Bridgend)

Participants were clear that pre-watershed broadcasters and programmers should take all reasonable steps to mitigate the potential for harm if a broadcaster wishes to show this sort of violent content before the watershed. This is particularly important where a genre does not generally prompt expectations of violence, for example soaps.

Participants suggested such steps might include age-based certification or a parental guidance symbol (as is common in the film industry), or warnings in TV listings or at the start of programmes.

“At least they’re telling you, and you can make a decision then, and say, ‘No, I don’t really want this violence.” (Empty nest, females, Glasgow)

“If, before the programme came on, they said, ‘This is only for those aged over age such-and-such.’ Like you do in the cinema. You then know, if you’ve got kids, ‘Well, maybe we should switch over,’ the option then”. (Empty nest, females, Glasgow)

5.5.2. Question 2: Who is the victim?

When discussing which types of violence are more or less acceptable for broadcast pre-watershed or immediately after the watershed, the participants took account of who was the subject of the violence: in particular, the ‘victim’s’ vulnerability and the balance of power between the victim and the perpetrator of violence.

Figure 5 shows that there is a clear correlation between the subject of the violence and scheduling time. For example where the victim is a child, an elderly person or woman this was considered less acceptable when scheduled at an earlier time than where the violence is a man against men.

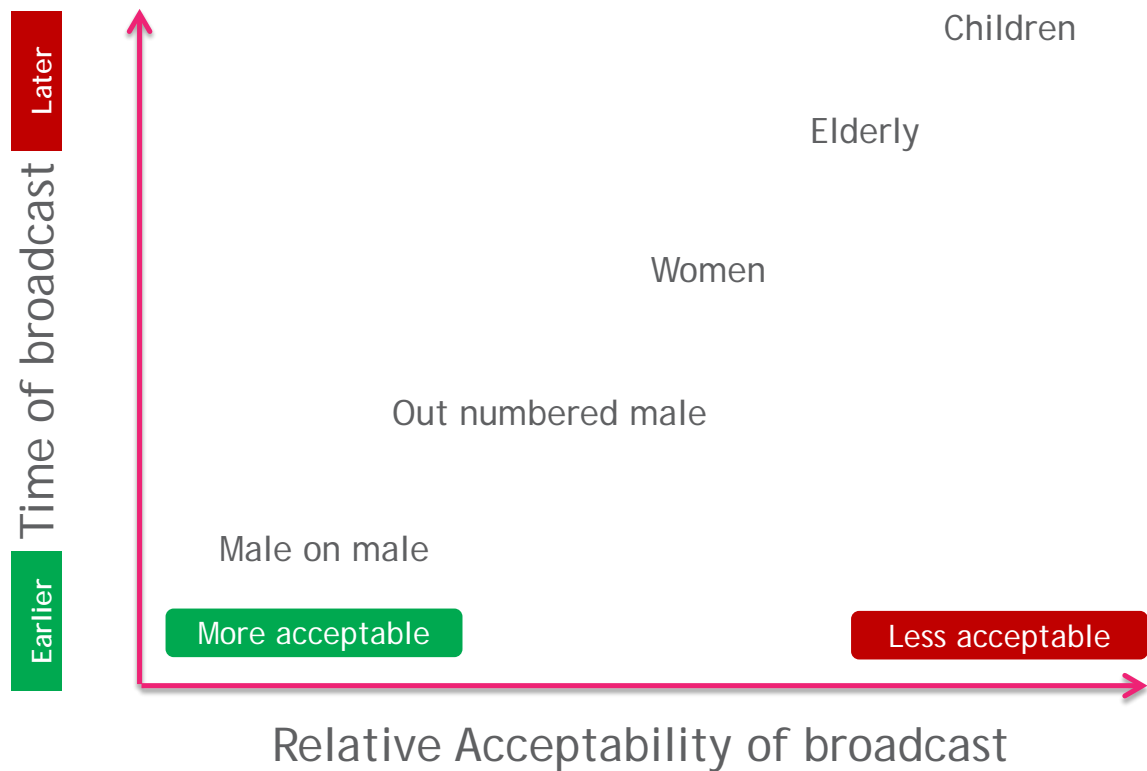
“Violence towards women and children. Anything that’s got a lot of blood. Any kind of group attack, group violence, when’s there more than one perpetrator”. (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

Participants also had regard to the victim’s vulnerability and relative weakness compared to the person inflicting the violence. In some cases victim and perpetrator may be relatively evenly matched, for example if the scene was regarded as a “fair fight” between two equally matched males. In other cases, the victim is at a disadvantage, for example where a stronger man is attacking a weaker one, a victim being outnumbered, or a man attacking a woman or a child.

“Rape scenes always really disturb me, particularly if you feel they are getting a kick out of it and you can feel the woman’s fear and vulnerability.” (Female, no children, Watford)

Figure 5: Vulnerability Index

Who is the victim? (The vulnerability index)



5.5.3. Question 3: What is the act of violence or type of harm portrayed?

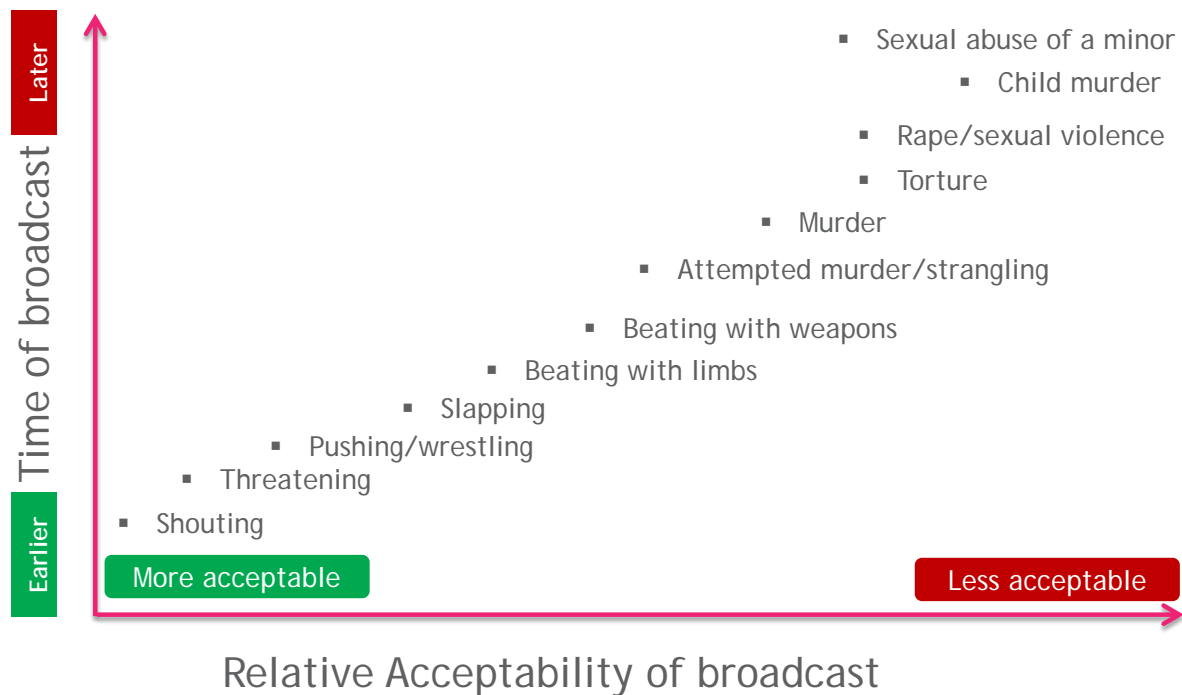
Research participants discussed a wide range of potential types of harm or acts of violence which might be seen on television and they ranked them in a rough order of severity and acceptability.

Figure 6 shows that again, as with vulnerability (and linked to it), the types of violence correlate clearly with an acceptable time of broadcast. Relatively low level acts of violence like shouting or threatening behaviour are considered more suitable for earlier scheduling compared with more extreme acts like murder, torture or violence affecting the most vulnerable of victims, for example children.

"[N]o blood, gore, violence towards women or children, scenes of rape and swearing. That's unacceptable. (Empty nest, females, Glasgow)

Figure 6: Type of Harm Index

What is the act? (type of harm)



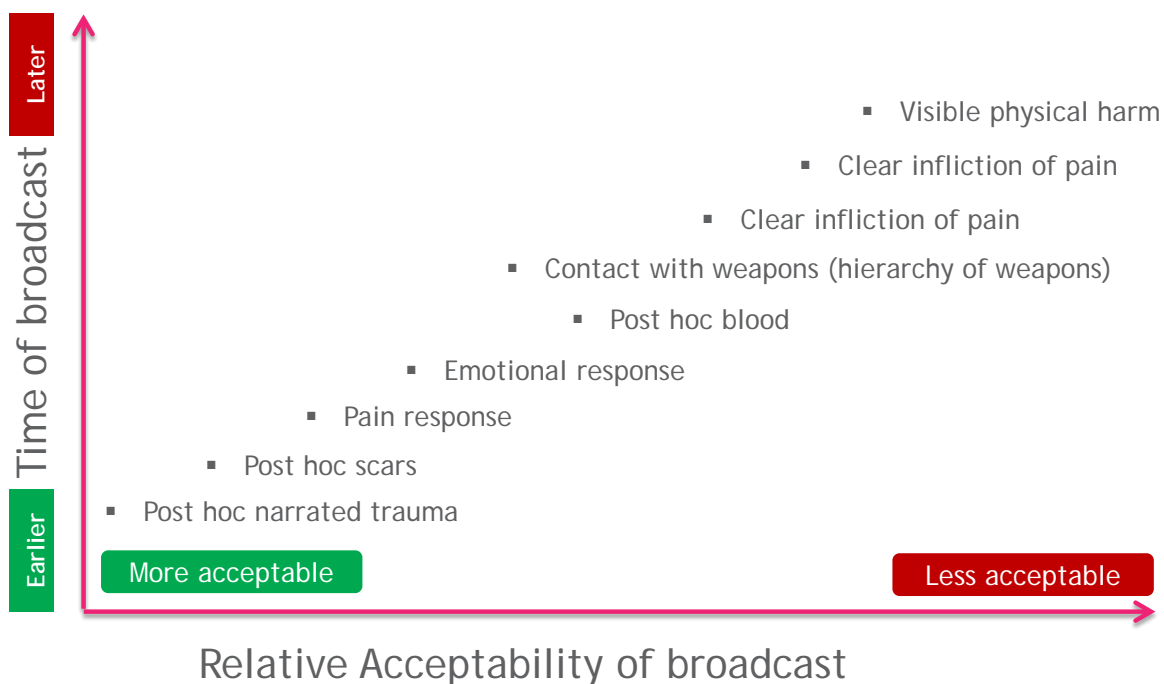
5.5.4. Question 4: How is it shown?

Participants considered that the more graphic the representation of the violent content, for example actual harm or infliction of pain, the greater the requirement for later scheduling. Implied violence such as the representation of scars after an injury, narrated trauma or the emotional response to a violent act is better suited to an earlier scheduling time.

“Also, if it’s actually visible, if it’s something going into the stomach, or anywhere on the body, if you can actually see it as opposed to just giving the impression and then seeing the aftermath” (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

Figure 7: Graphic Representation Index

How was it shown?
(graphic representation – grades of severity)



5.5.5. Question 5: What is its purpose?

This final question deals with the perceived purpose of the violent content and judgements about the extent to which it is justifiable or gratuitous. Research participants broke this question down into three elements.

Duration of scene

They first had regard to the duration of a violent scene and/or the repetition of violent action, for example whether there was a single stab or punch or a sustained attack. The duration of the scene can also affect whether the violence is perceived as gratuitous – for example if a shot lingers longer on the violent act longer than is perceived to be editorially necessary.

“How frenzied an attack is. Whether it’s one stab wound or a frenzied knife attack”. (Mixed children/no children, males, Bridgend)

Purpose and place in the story

Participants considered that violent content should always be assessed in the context of the wider plot or storyline. The extent to which the violent content fits within the context or the storyline has an impact on perceptions of whether violent content is gratuitous or justified. The participants considered it was important to make judgements about the extent to which violent scenes had a purpose in telling the story or development a character, or fitted into a particular storyline.

“If you can see that someone has done something that means they have it coming, it somehow does not seem as bad, other times you feel it is totally unrealistic and is just being added in to get the ratings up.” (Male, no children, Belfast.)

Underlying social or moral point

Finally, participants considered that another contextual factor which influences the acceptability of the violent content is any underlying social or moral point. This is quite a common feature of soaps but sometimes only becomes clear over a number of episodes.

Violent content, when included in the context of getting across a moral message, is seen as more acceptable than violent content seen as added with no purpose other than to shock or titillate. Participants considered that as a result if some violent content is intended to offer some social or moral learning to viewers this might help justify an earlier time of broadcast.

Appendices

A. Online journal

Diary Task

Welcome to the Jigsaw Research Online TV Journal and thank you for agreeing to take part in this part of the research – we hope you enjoy it!

What we would like you to do, for a period of two weeks, is to complete the questions below on a daily basis. So, every day, please think about the following questions and post responses and thoughts as appropriate for each particular question on each particular day.

It would be great if you could take a few pictures to include in your diary, these might be things like watching TV as a family, a picture of you watching TV and a picture of the room/TV where you normally would sit and watch TV and so forth.

We will talk to you about your diary entries when we speak with you face-to-face in a couple of weeks' time.

Task 1: Daily Record of TV Viewing.

The first thing we'd like you to do is keep a daily record of the TV you watch in the evenings both as a family (if relevant) and on your own/as a couple. We'd like you include all the TV programmes you watch after 5.30pm although you can exclude the news. And we'd like you to include programmes you watched online via a computer or tablet as well as actually on a television set.

There may be days when you don't watch any TV – this is fine – just enter 'NO TV WATCHED' for that day in the diary.

Day/Date _____

Please record the total number of hours of television you watched after 5.30pm today (to the nearest half hour)

We have included a couple of examples to show you the type of responses we are looking for.

Name of program	Time started & channel	Who were you watching with? Please list in terms of their relation to you – for children also include ages e.g. daughter (8), son (12)	Please tell us about anything that stuck in your mind about that show – including anything you did not like
Coronation Street	7pm on ITV1	Watching with my two daughters – aged 15 and 11years	I do not like Tina as she is trying to take the baby away from the natural parents. This makes me feel uncomfortable and angers my daughter.
The Fall	9pm on BBC2	Watching with my wife and both daughters (ages as above)	No one nice in it – I did not like any of the characters. Extended murder scene where it

			<i>took ages to kill the victim. It was distressing viewing because you could sense her pain</i>
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Were any scenes or elements of the television you watched this evening showing physical conflict (or its aftermath) OR verbal conflict OR threatening behaviour between people?

Please indicate below.

<i>Yes, there were violent/menacing scenes</i>	
<i>No, there were no violent/ menacing scenes</i>	

IF there violent scenes in any of the shows you watched this evening, please record below: (*again we have included an example to show you the types of responses we are looking for*)

Which show?	Briefly describe the violent scene	How did this make you feel? & Why did it make you feel like that?	IF RELEVANT; How did you feel about your children watching this with you?
The Fall	A slow murder by strangulation of a woman – who was obviously in a lot of pain	It felt uncomfortable as she was clearly in pain and it took ages to kill her – realistic is one thing but this was too much	<i>I was worried about my children watching this although also felt guilty as I should not have let them stay up and watch it.</i>

REPEAT DIARY FOR EACH DAY OVER THE TWO WEEK PERIOD – I.E. ROOM FOR 14 ENTRIES.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this exercise. Jigsaw Research.

TASK 2: Review of TV Clips

The second thing we'd like you to do is give us your views around a number of different TV clips from popular shows. We will be uploading 2 new clips every second day and we need you to watch these and complete the task below within a day or so of receiving the new clips.

A) Before watching each clip please read the brief introduction to the show to place the clip in context.

B) Watch the short clip once through without pausing

C) Play the clip again; this time pause the clip at any points you would class as violent (by violent we mean violence between people, either actual or the threat of violence/menace, or showing its after-effects). You will then be asked to type in a comment on why you think it is violent and how watching this makes you feel.

Please rate each clip by completing the four questions below.

Q1) Taken together and in the context of what you were told about the show, how violent do you feel this clip is on a scale of 1-10 where 10 is extremely violent and 1 is not at all violent.

Please code one option

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q2.

Tick one option that best applies

<i>Anytime of day</i>	
<i>Any time after 7pm</i>	
<i>Any time after 8pm</i>	
<i>Anytime after 9pm</i>	
<i>Anytime after 10pm</i>	
<i>Anytime after 11pm</i>	
<i>It should never be shown</i>	
<i>Don't know</i>	

Q2. Based on what we have told you about the show, on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned how concerned would you be about watching this scene within the show in each of the following situations....

Please code one option

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
On own/with other adults										
With your own children aged 17 or younger (if relevant)										

Q3. And what is the youngest age of children that you think this show would be suitable for...

Tick one option that best applies

<i>Children aged 5-7 years old</i>	
<i>Children 8-11 years old</i>	
<i>12-15 years</i>	
<i>16-17 years</i>	
<i>18 years or over years</i>	
<i>Don't know</i>	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this exercise. Jigsaw Research.

TASK 3: Watching New Shows

The last thing we'd like you to do is watch 2-3 shows which you would not normally **choose to** watch and comment on them over the course of the two week period.

Try to pick shows from styles or genres of programmes that you don't often watch, e.g. if you don't watch soaps pick one or two soaps, whereas if you rarely watch crime dramas pick at least one of these within your options.

Please select two to three shows from the list below to watch, making sure these are ones you would not normally try to watch as a family. We are looking to challenge people's usual TV viewing so that you are able to comment on different styles of programmes in the face-to-face research, rather than this being an opportunity to catch up on things you have not had a chance to watch.

Which shows did you watch:

Please fill in the few short questions about each of these shows you have watched below.

Which show did you watch?	What time was the show on?	Who did you watch it with?	Briefly describe any scenes in the show, if any, which you were concerned about or made you feel uncomfortable. If none write in.	Why did this make you feel uncomfortable? What were your concerns?
Eastenders	7.30pm	My family – daughters aged 11 & 15	There was one scene where there was a big argument going on between a couple in the pub and they got quite nasty with each other	I don't like my daughters seeing a man behave in that way towards a woman as I don't want them to think it is normal or acceptable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this exercise. Jigsaw Research.

B. Responses to individual clips

This section details the responses to the individual clips from the online journals when they were viewed at home prior to participation in the moderated sessions. There were 127 participants who completed the journals. When considering responses to individual clips, it is important to note that these were spontaneous reactions to edited scenes of content that were, for the most part, viewed outside the context of the full programme. This may have resulted in the 'heightening' of the instinctive, spontaneous responses of the participants. This needs to be taken into consideration when reviewing the findings in this section.

The numeric responses summarised below should be treated with caution due to small sample. The research was qualitative in nature and not intended to provide robust quantitative responses.

In line with the analysis contained within the main body of the report, the clips have been grouped by genre: soaps, pre-watershed movies, pre-watershed reality television, post-watershed reality television and post-watershed drama. Within each genre, clips are discussed in order of the least perceived level of violence (proportion rating the clip 8-10) to the most as measured in the online journal.

Note: for the questions regarding violence and concern, participants were asked to respond using a scale of 1-10 where 10 represented extreme violence/extreme concern and 1 represented not at all violent/not at all concerned. For simplicity the responses have been grouped into bands (1-3, 4-7, 8-10). It is responses i.e. the number of people in that band that are shown on the graphs not the percentage of people in that band.

5.5.6. Group One: Soaps

Clip 1: Emmerdale through the forest (19:00)



Two-thirds rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 4.80); only 8% rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10). Almost a quarter expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s (one of the lowest ratings recorded across the clips).

The majority (70%) thought this content suitable pre-watershed, although 1 in 3 felt it was most suitable after 20:00 (an hour later than the actual broadcast time)

Half felt this content to be suitable for young teens (12-15), a third for older teens, and around 1 in 10 for younger children.

Clip 2: Emmerdale kidnapping (19:00)



54% rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 5.07); only 15% rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10). More than a quarter expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s (one of the lowest ratings recorded across the clips).

More than half (57%) thought this content suitable pre-watershed, although a quarter felt it was most suitable post 20:00 (an hour later than the actual broadcast time). 42% felt the content was only suitable post 21:00.

Around two-fifths felt this content to be suitable for young teens (12-15), or older teens (16-17).

Clip 3: Eastenders bar scene (19:30)

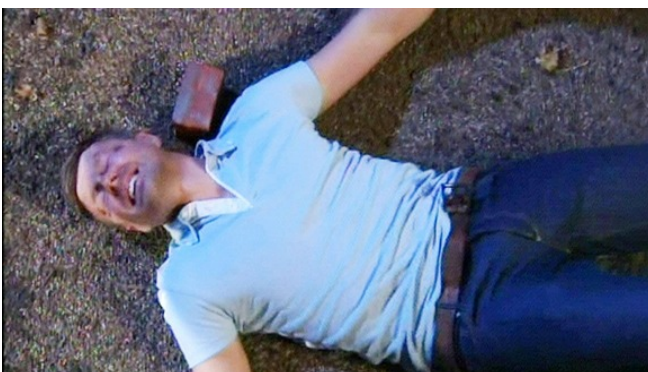


More than half (56%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 5.87); but a quarter rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10). One in three expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s (one of the lowest ratings recorded across the clips).

The majority (61%) thought this content suitable pre-watershed, although more than 1 in 3 felt it was most suitable post 20:00 (half an hour later than the actual broadcast time)

46% felt this content to be suitable for young teens (12-15), 38% for older teens, and around 1 in 10 for younger children.

Clip 4: Emmerdale Live (19:00)



The majority (57%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 6.37); but 1 in 3 rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10) and around half expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

The majority (61%) thought this content only suitable post-watershed, and a further 29% only suitable after 20:00 (an hour later than the actual broadcast time).

More than half felt this content was most suitable for older teens (16 plus), two-fifths for young teens (12-15) and very few for younger children.

Clip 5: Eastenders gang scene (19:30)



Around half (51%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 6.66); but more than 1 in 3 rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10) or expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

Opinion was divided over whether content was suitable pre (50%) or post (44%) watershed, but more than 1 in 3 felt post 20:00 was most suitable (half an hour later than the actual broadcast time)

Two-fifths felt this content was suitable for young teens (12-15) or older teens (16+), and 1 in 10 for younger children.

Clip 6: Hollyoaks (18:30)



More than half (57%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 6.87); but around two-fifths rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10) or expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

The majority (63%) felt this content was only suitable post-watershed, and a further 21% post-8pm (half an hour later than the actual broadcast time)

51% felt this was most suitable for older teens (16+), and 40% for younger teens (12-15).

5.5.7. Group Two: Pre-watershed movies

Clip 7: Man about Town (17:00)



More than half (58%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 5.63); although only 19% rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10) more than a third expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

More than half (57%) felt this content was only suitable post-watershed, and only 4% "anytime" (which would cover its actual broadcast time of 17:00)

49% felt this was most suitable for older teens (16+), and 40% for younger teens (12-15).

Clip 8: Wolverine (18:55)



More than half (56%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 6.37); but a third rated it as having a high level of violence (8-10) or expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

The majority (63%) felt this content was only suitable post-watershed, and a further 22% post-8pm (an hour later than the actual broadcast time)

49% felt this was most suitable for older teens (16+), and 36% for younger teens (12-15).

5.5.8. Group Three: Pre-watershed reality television

Clip 9: Sketchbook Killer (20:00)



Around half (51%) rated this as having a high level of violence (8-10) (mean 7.44); and almost three-quarters (72%) expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

The vast majority (87%) felt this content was only suitable post-watershed (45% felt it should be restricted until after 10pm).

74% felt this was most suitable for older teens (16+).

5.5.9. Group Four: Post-watershed reality television

Clip 10: Thelma's Gypsy Girls (21:00)



Around half (52%) rated the level of violence between 4-7 out of 10 (mean 4.28 – the lowest of all clips) but although only 8% rated it 8-10 in this respect, more than a quarter expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

Opinion was divided as to whether this was suitable pre or post watershed.

Participants were also quite balanced in their opinion of a suitable age range; most feeling 12-15 or 16-17 was the youngest age for viewing.

Clip 11: Big Brother (21:40)



Although relatively low in perceived level of violence (47% rating 1-3 and mean of 4.29), 70% expressed high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

Almost all (92%) felt this content was only suitable post-watershed (a fifth that it shouldn't be screened at all).

84% felt this was most suitable for older teens (16+).

5.5.10. Group Five: Post-watershed drama

Four clips were shown to represent this genre; two from “The Fall”, one from “Silent Witness” and one from “Inside Men”.

In addition to Sketchbook Killer, all four of these clips had the highest levels of concern amongst participants if they were watching with under 17s. The Fall 1, Silent Witness and Inside Men also had the highest perceived ratings of actual violence. The Fall (2) was different in this latter respect, being relatively low in actual violence of scene, but again demonstrating the power of ambiguity to distress the viewer, and the inclusion of anticipated sexual violence to exacerbate the impact of violent content.

All of these clips were post-watershed, and very few felt an earlier screening time would have been appropriate. In fact, significant proportions felt that 22:00 was the most suitable screening time. More than half felt that The Fall (1) and Silent Witness should be restricted to over 18s.

Clip 12: The Fall (2) (21:00)



Despite relatively low levels of perceived violence and a majority rating 4-7 or 1-3 out of 10 (mean 5.09), almost two-thirds expressed high levels of concern about watching with under 17s.

Almost all (91%) felt that this should be post-watershed viewing, and more than half that it should be post-22:00 (an hour later than the actual screening time).

Almost half felt 18+ was the most suitable age for viewers and two-fifths thought 16-17 years old was about right.

Clip 13: Inside Men (21:00)



One of the highest levels of perceived violence amongst participants, with 64% rating it 8-10 (mean 8.02) and 68% expressing high levels of concern if watching with under 17s.

Almost all (94%) felt this should be post-watershed viewing, with 53% saying it was only suitable post-22:00 (an hour later than actual screened time).

Around two-fifths each felt it was most suitable for 18+ or 16-17 year olds.

Clip 14: Silent Witness (21:00)



Two thirds (67%) rated this 8-10 for level of violence (8.09) and almost three-quarters (74%) expressed a high level of concern if watching with under 17s.

9 in 10 felt it should have a post-watershed slot – most of these (64%) that it should be screened later than 22:00 (an hour later than actual screen time) and 1 in 10 saying it should never be shown.

More than half (56%) felt that 18 was the youngest suitable age for viewing, with a further quarter finding it acceptable for older teens (16-17 years).

Clip 15: The Fall (1) (21:00)



The highest level of perceived violence across all the clips, with 83% rating it 8-10 (mean 8.64) and 87% expressing high levels of concern if watching with under 17s. More than a third (37%) rated this clip as 10/10 for violence and 62% rated 10/10 for concern if watching with under 17s.

Almost all (97%) felt it should have a post-watershed slot – most of these (71%) that it should be screened later than 22:00 (an hour later than actual screen time) and 1 in 10 saying it should never be shown.

Two-thirds (64%) felt that 18 was the youngest suitable age for viewing, with a further quarter finding it acceptable for older teens (16-17 years).

C. Clips investigation outcomes

Not in breach of the Code	In breach of the Code
<p>Group One: Pre-watershed soaps</p> <p>Emmerdale through the forest (19:00)</p> <p>Emmerdale kidnapping (19:00)</p> <p>Eastenders Gang (19:30)</p>	<p>Eastenders bar (19:30)</p> <p>Hollyoaks (18:30)</p>
<p>Group Two: Pre-watershed movies</p>	<p>Man about Town (17:00)</p> <p>Wolverine (18:55)</p>
<p>Group Three: Pre-watershed reality television</p>	<p>Sketchbook Killer (20:00)</p>
<p>Group Four: Post-watershed reality television</p> <p>Thelma's Gypsy Girls (21:00)</p> <p>Big Brother (21:40)</p>	
<p>Group Five: Post-watershed drama</p> <p>The Fall (2) (21:00)</p> <p>Inside Men (21:00)</p> <p>Silent Witness (21:00)</p> <p>The Fall (1) (21:00)</p>	

D. In-home interview discussion guide

In home interviews Discussion Guide

90 -120 minute session comprising:

- Introduction to family/TV watching areas
- Interview with parent(s) - main focus of session
- 'Whole family' discussion:
 - General discussion PLUS
 - Some sessions will include watching TV shorter program 'live' with researcher present
 - Others families will have been asked to watch entire film or program prior to interview – for specific discussion in the interview
- Alternatively some sessions will include Teen interviews (7 of the 14 depths) will reduce length of 'whole family discussion'))
 - In home teens will **not** have completed the journal
- Differences in responses between parents (and indeed other family members) will be explored throughout
- Researcher will use projective techniques from toolbox (at end of document) if, as and when appropriate

Online journals will be used as stimulus/source of probes in relevant interviews

Whole family Introduction/warm up	Introductions and warm-up (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce Jigsaw and research process: independent research agency, not judging, views confidential, taping etc • We are here to talk about your attitudes to violent content – we tell you a little more about the sponsor shortly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We want to explore your responses to violent content in general – as well as responses to specific examples ○ We want to get to know the family a bit too – so we can better understand where these responses are coming from – especially in regards TV viewing, preferences and habits ○ Thank you for filling in journal - we have read these and will want to refer to them during the conversation ○ We will also be talking/reviewing some of the clips we sent you in a little more detail • Can you introduce the family and tell us a little bit about things you like to do as a family? • Where does TV viewing fit into the picture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family viewing times and programs ○ Where do tastes converge and differ between different family members? • Explore patterns and habits around viewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number/location of TV's plus pay/non pay services/subscriptions/related
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	<p>devised e.g. DVR's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Live vs. non live viewing ○ Use of DVDs/ catch up/recorded programs etc ○ Weekly viewing patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Times of viewing ○ Primetime ○ Week vs. weekend
<p>Interview with both parent (or individually in single parent households) 45 -60 Mins</p>	<p>Context: Parental attitudes and styles (10 mins)</p> <p><i>Researcher to explain that we will be talking about their own personal views/responses to violence on TV shortly but first we want a quick chat about their overall attitudes and approaches to parenting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us a little about what it is like to be a parent in 2013! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do the challenges compare to those your parent's faced? • How would they describe their parenting style and approach? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has this evolved over the years and why? ○ (In 2 parent families) probe for any differences in approach between the parents and impact of age/gender of children • As a parent what do they see as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Priorities in parenting ○ Main sources of anxiety and concern as parents ○ Concern about their children's media consumption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probe if necessary for mention of TV content • To what extent is TV viewing in general regarded as a parental issue? • To what extent is what their children are exposed to on TV regarded as a parental issue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Probe for specific concerns ○ Where does concern about violence fit in (compared to bad language, sexual content et cetera) • Do they monitor/intervene/have rules? • How much control do they have/place on the TV watched by their children? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do they exert this? ○ Proxys used – time of day, style of program ○ Does this vary by child's age and gender? <p><i>Researcher to explain that we will return to the parental aspects in a while – but we now want to focus on their personal attitudes TV in general</i></p> <p>Personal viewing preferences and behaviours (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have changing technology (time shifted/greater choice) changed TV viewing

	<p>habits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has viewing changed for them personally/for 'family viewing'? ○ How does viewing compare to when they were children? ○ Explore positives and negatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal viewing preferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Favourite programs/genres ○ Probe for any conflicts, disagreements, compromises between spouses • It is often said that men and women have different tastes in TV – how true is in your case? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the stereotypical preferences? ○ Do these stereotypes contain any truth?
	<p>Personal attitudes to Violent content (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking generally about completing the journal , how did you find the experience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did it make you think or reassess your attitudes to TV? <p><i>Researcher to inform respondents that we will start with a general conversation about TV content and move on the clips shortly</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the journal keeping period (excluding the clips we sent you) did you see anything which you found disturbing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was it and why did it disturb you? ○ Can you provide examples of things in the past that have disturbed or unsettled you? ○ How do you tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If not taken 'action' – why not? • Does it make a difference if scenes like this are on 'live' TV – as opposed to DVD's, Netflix, viewed on laptop et cetera • We are here to talk specifically about violent content. How would you define violent content? <p><i>Researcher to explain what we mean in this study by the term violent content – "Interpersonal physical or verbal conflict or menacing sense of threat"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the journal keeping period did they record any examples of this? • Thinking about things they may have seen over a longer period - can you provide examples of violent content that you still remember? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is it about these scenes that made an impact? ○ How do they tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) • How do you assess the acceptability of these scenes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If unacceptable, what makes them unacceptable – what is wrong with it/why does it matter/what are the issues it creates? • Many people across the UK clearly watch and enjoy this sort of content and program makers clearly use them for a reason. In what sense do you think they can play a positive role?

- Probe for positive role these sort of scenes can play?
 - If necessary researcher to prompt suggesting these scenes can add excitement, involvement, realism etc
- Do you ever use likelihood of the presence of these sort of scenes in your viewing choices?
 - For example avoiding certain sort of genres (e.g. crime dramas)
- When you express concern about scenes of this nature – is it the way it makes you feel – or the impact it might have on others? (Ask this probe throughout)

Parental perspective (15 mins)

We touched earlier how feelings about your children watching TV and the issues this might raise. We now want you to talk about this sort of content specifically in relation to your children.

- When we talked earlier about the most pressing parental issues you mentioned (Researcher to fill in as necessary) - how does your child's access to violent content on TV compare in terms of seriousness/concern?
 - Why/why not/relative importance to other issues?
- What rules/strategies do they have in place if any?
- What tools (if any) do they use to help them determine suitability?
- How does it compare to other monitoring they do – e.g. for TV sexual content – or monitoring internet activity?
 - What are the comparative consequences?
- What are the risks/harm that this sort of content creates for children viewing?
 - Probe for different degrees of harm/overt consequences etc - discomfort, nightmares vs. lasting impact etc
 - How does this 'risk' compare to exposure to other forms of content such as online content and gaming?
- How does your sensitivity to violent content change if watching with your children?
- We have encountered a range of different parental approaches and attitudes to violent content on TV - How would you describe your parental approach to the issue of violent content?
 - Researcher to probe for different approaches
 - From protecting/screening/monitoring through to 'reactive' through to laissez faire
- Does it this approach vary by the age or gender of the children?
- Can you think of any things that they have seen that has upset or disturbed them?
- Can you think of occasions when you have felt uncomfortable watching something with them?
 - If and how did you respond?

Response to Journal clips (spontaneous) (10 mins)

- Thinking about the clips you saw, which ones stick in your mind and why?
 - Can you think of positive and negative examples?
 - Which ones were more/ less disturbing and why?

- What variables impact levels of disturbance?
- What variables impact acceptability?
 - Genre (probe on learnings from behaviour change)
 - Channel/platform
 - Transmission times
 - Warnings and labels
 - Context of violence (domestic, crime, sexual violence etc)
 - Realism/showing consequences vs. 'soft focused'/unreal
 - Familiarity with characters etc
 - Actual violence vs. menace/threat
 - Other material factors
- When you express concern about these scenes – is it the way it makes you feel – or the impact it might have on others?
- We have spoken to lots of good and committed parents who are quite likely to have different attitudes to their children watching this sort of content – how do you feel about your child viewing the clips we are discussing:
 - Which if any would you feel comfortable about them viewing – or feel it was appropriate for them to do so?
 - Which might have a neutral or even positive effect
 - Explore rationale
- Do you think any of these clips would prompt action e.g. turning off/over/complaint etc

Response to specific clips (15 mins)

Based on response in interview and journal, researcher to select 2 or 3 of more violent scenes to replay and discuss – Overall objective here is to explore both immediate impact and then try to define what constitutes 'acceptable' violence in different contexts. Researcher to select both examples of disturbing and non-disturbing, positive and negative to interrogate differences. Researcher also to ensure that soaps are included for discussion.

- How do you personally feel whilst you were watching this?
- What words would you use to describe this scene?
- When you express concern about this scene– is it the way it makes you feel – or the impact it might have on others?
- Does it make a difference if scenes like this are on 'live' TV – as opposed to DVD's, Netflix, viewed on laptop et cetera
- Thinking about this in the context of your children viewing these clips:
 - Which if any would you feel comfortable about them viewing – or feel it was appropriate for them to do so?
- Some people have argued this scene is justified – what arguments do you think they would use?
 - What arguments would provider put forward to justify inclusion?

	<p>(or)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people object to this scene – what arguments might they use and how might you respond? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might the programme maker respond? This scene was shown at XXXpm – how does this impact your opinion on its suitability? For those who found the scene disturbing, what action if any would they take if they viewed this content before 9pm? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Or between 9 -10pm `? Are you familiar with the concept of the Watershed (before 9pm)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IF NOT COVERED: What impact, if any, does this have on your/your family viewing? <p><i>Researcher to introduce OFCOM as project sponsors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofcom are the body who regulate broadcasters need to issue guidance to program makers about the acceptability of this sort of content. Thinking about the clips we have discussed – and the general conversation – we want to seek your help drafting that guidance. There will already up-to-date guidelines on sexual content and bad language. We want to focus on the sort of content we have been discussing today. Thinking about the clips we have discussed – and our general discussion – how should appropriateness for pre Watershed (before 9pm) be assessed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What variables impact levels of harm and offence? What variables impact acceptability? Probe for potential variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre (probe on learnings from behaviour change) Channel/platform Context of violence (domestic, crime, sexual violence etc) Realism/showing consequences vs. 'soft focused'/unreal Familiarity with characters etc Actual violence vs. menace/threat Other material factors How might these standards change of if the program is shown between 9 – 10 pm?
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Family discussion 15 – 45 mins	<p>Structure and duration will vary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 mins if subsequent Teen interview 30 - 45 mins if no teen interview/ discussion of family viewed 'film' or program or if 'live viewing' of content <p><i>Researcher reminds the children of the aims of the study. Questions will be</i></p>
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	<p><i>addressed primarily to children/parents as appropriate and asked in age appropriate manner</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you enjoy watching on TV? Do you tend to does 'live' TV feature against other ways of watching (catch up, DVD's, online etc) • Are there things on TV that you see that you find hard to watch, disturbing or that worry you? • Have you ever discussed any of these sort of scenes with your friends – what has worried them in the past? • Do you ever see things on TV that involve fighting, shouting or aggression? • Can you think of any examples? • What sort of programs do these scenes tend to occur in? • Have you ever been surprised by a scene like this? • Some young people we have spoken to find these scenes can have a positive aspect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think they might mean? ○ What positive impact could these sort of scenes have? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prompt excitement, suspense, realism if necessary ○ Where is the line between the disturbing and exciting? • As a family do you think different member of the family react to these scenes in different ways? <p><i>For those families where they have been asked to watch film or program prior to interview</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you find the film/program? • Were there scenes in it like the ones we have discussed? • Which scenes were they? • How did you feel whilst watching them? • Did you feel they were necessary element to the overall experience? • As parents how did you feel about your children watching these scenes? • How did the scenes compare watched in the context of the whole program as compared to an isolated clip? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore how this sort of context can impact perceptions • This would be screened at XXX o'clock – elicit reactions <p><i>For those families live viewing with researcher in attendance. Researcher to explain that we'll be watching an entire episode of XXXX and to just watch as you normally as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher to observe watching and listen out of comments but wait for end of program for questioning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you find the film/program? • Were there scenes in it like the ones we have discussed?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which scenes were they? • How did you feel whilst watching them? • Did you feel they were necessary element to the overall experience? • As parents how did you feel about your children watching these scenes? • How did the scenes compare watched in the context of the whole program as compared to an isolated clip? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore how this sort of context can impact perceptions • This would be screened at XXX o'clock – elicit reactions
<p>Optional teen interview 15 -30 minutes (These interviews will take place in 7 of the 14 sessions)</p>	<p>Teen interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that Ofcom are interested in how teenagers feel about this sort of content • What sort of programs do they tend to watch? • What do you enjoy watching on TV? Do you tend to does 'live' TV feature against other ways of watching (catch up, DVD's, online etc) • What sort of times do they tend to watch? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With family? ○ Alone ○ With friends • To what extent do their parents/monitor their TV viewing? • Have they noticed differences in this sort of content depending on time of viewing • Do they see things on TV which they find disturbing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can they provide examples of things in the past that have disturbed or unsettled them? • Have you ever discussed any of these sort of scenes with your friends – what has worried them in the past? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do they tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) • Some young people we have spoken to find these scenes can have a positive aspect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think they might mean? ○ What positive impact could these sort of scenes have? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prompt excitement, suspense, realism if necessary • Where is the line between the disturbing and exciting? • We are here to talk specifically about violent content. How would you define violent content? <p><i>Researcher to explain what we mean in this study by the term violent content – “Interpersonal physical or verbal conflict or menacing sense of threat”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think you and your parents would agree about what is offensive and what is acceptable?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think your parent may not like you watching violence on TV? What might their concerns be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent do you agree with these concerns? For you, for others you know? • Can you provide examples of violent content that have stayed with you over the years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is it about these that disturbed you? • Are there other examples you can remember, perhaps more recent ones? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do they tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) • How do you assess the acceptability of these scenes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If unacceptable, what makes them unacceptable – what is wrong with it/why does it matter/what are the issues it creates? • Some people argue that these sort of scenes can play a positive role? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you agree? ○ In what way can they be positive? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If necessary suggest adding excitement, involvement, realism etc • Are you familiar with the concept of the Watershed (before 9pm)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IF NOT COVERED: What impact, if any, does this have on your/your family viewing? ○ What are your expectations of the difference between pre and post watershed programmes? • (Time allowing and with specific parental approval) consider showing a couple a less extreme clips to teenagers and comparing response to those of their parents
Close	<p>THANK AND CLOSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank for all input and hard work!
<p>Projective technique toolbox</p> <p>These can be used if, when and as appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Hierarchy of offence' – respondents would compile spectrum of violent content– firstly based on impact, then again on gratuity/acceptability • Watershed mapping exercise: Participants would generate inclusive list of 'violent content'(defined by context e.g. Scenes of domestic abuse with raising awareness function) and chart it in terms of appropriateness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior watershed ○ Transition (9-10 pm) ○ Post watershed ○ Never acceptable • 'Mental scars' – what content has stayed with them and why? • 'Sanitised TV': What TV be like completely free of disturbing imagery?

	<p>What will be gained/lost?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'A child's eye view': getting into the heads of children - How do children view and process violent content? • Devil's advocate: Groups would be divided with half arguing for acceptability of certain content/the other half arguing against
CLOSE	<p>THANK AND CLOSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank for all input and hard work!

E. Group discussion guide

Group discussion guide

1 hour 45 minute sessions:

- The objective of these sessions is to understand the role that context plays in determining acceptability of 'violent content'.
- The focus will be practical – especially in the second half of the sessions. Participants will be charged with compiling practical guidelines for content acceptability prior to the 9pm watershed and during transitional watershed (9-10pm).
- The first half of the group will be a standard discussion group, giving way to a more co-creational output focus in latter half/stages
- Some of the groups will comprise actual couples, and others individuals (mix of parents and non-parent groups)
- Researchers will use projective techniques from toolbox (at end of document) if, as and when appropriate

Online journals will be used as stimulus/source of probes in relevant interviews

More traditional group discussion element 1 hour duration

Introductions and warm-up (10 mins)

- Moderator introduction
 - Introduce Jigsaw and research process: independent research agency, not judging, views confidential, taping etc
- We are here to talk about your attitudes to different kinds of content on TV. The project is sponsored by Ofcom – and we talk more about them a little later.
 - We want to explore your responses to different types of content in general – as well as responses to specific examples
 - Thank you for filling in journal - we have read these and will want to refer to them during the conversation
 - We will also be talking/reviewing some of the clips we sent you in a little more detail
- Respondent introduction:
 - Favourite TV programs/genres
 - Family viewing times and programs
 - Where do tastes converge and differ between different family members?
- How have changing technology (time shifted/greater choice) changed TV viewing habits?
 - How has viewing changed for them personally/for 'family viewing'?
 - How does viewing compare to when they were children?
 - Explore pros and cons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is often said that men and women have different tastes in TV – how true is in your case? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the stereotypical preferences? Do these stereotypes contain any truth?
	<p>General attitudes to Violent content (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking generally about completing the journal , how did you find the experience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you learn anything from it? Did it make you think or reassess your attitudes to TV? <p><i>Researcher to inform respondents that we will start with a general conversation about TV content and move on to the clips shortly</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the journal keeping period (excluding the clips we sent you) did you see anything which you that sticks in the mind particularly – for positive or negative reasons? Did you see anything you found disturbing ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was it and why did it disturb them? Can they provide examples of things in the past that have disturbed or unsettled them? How do they tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) We are here to talk specifically about violent content. How would you define violent content? <p><i>Researcher to explain what we mean in this study by the term violent content – – “Interpersonal physical or verbal conflict or menacing sense of threat”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the journal keeping period did they record any instances of this, whether you found it disturbing or not? Are these sort of scenes a regular element of what you view? Thinking about things they may have seen over a longer period - can you provide examples of violent content that they still remember? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is it about these that disturbed you? How do they tend to respond in these situations? (watch anyway, turn over, intend to complain/actually complain?) How do you assess the acceptability of these scenes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If unacceptable, what makes them unacceptable – what is wrong with it/why does it matter/what are the issues it creates? Many people across the UK clearly watch and enjoy this sort of content and program makers clearly use them for a reason. In what sense do you think they can play a positive role? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree? In what way can they be positive? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If necessary suggest adding excitement, involvement, reality

	<p>etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever use likelihood of the presence of these sort of scenes in your viewing choices? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example avoiding certain sort of genres (e.g. crime dramas) We have encountered a range of responses to some of the examples we have shown – what do you think drive these different responses? Probe for role of gender, age, education, personality, parent, political beliefs etc <p>Parental perspective (relevant groups only) (20 mins)</p> <p><i>We now want you to talk about this sort of content specifically in relation to your children.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is it like being a parent in 2013? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is it different from the experience/challenges your parent's faced? How do the issue of your child's access to violent content on TV fit with other parental priorities and concerns? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why/why not/relative importance to other issues? What rules/strategies do they have in place if any? What tools (if any) do they use to help them determine suitability? How does it compare to other monitoring they do – e.g. for TV sexual content – or monitoring internet activity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the comparative consequences? What are the risks/harm that this sort of content creates for children viewing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for different degrees of harm/overt consequences etc - discomfort, nightmares vs. lasting impact etc How does this 'risk' compare to exposure to other forms of content such as online content and gaming? How does your sensitivity to violent content change if watching with your children? We have encountered a range of different parental approaches and attitudes to violent content on TV - How would you describe your parental approach to the issue of violent content? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher to probe for different approaches From protecting/screening/monitoring through to 'reactive' through to laissez faire Does it this approach vary by the age or gender of the children? Can you think of any things that they have seen that has upset or disturbed them? Can you think of occasions when you have felt uncomfortable watching something with them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If and how did you respond?
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Non parent groups only: Violent content and children

- What is your view of this sort of content in regards potential exposure to children?
- Do you think parents will have a different perspective on the issue?
- How big of an issue is this, compared to other issues things that children may be exposed to? (Sexual content, bad language et cetera)
 - What are the potential risks?
- What do you think responsible parents should do in this context?

Response to Journal clips (spontaneous)

- Thinking about the clips you saw, which ones stick in your mind and why?
 - Can you think of positive and negative examples?
 - Which ones were more/ less disturbing and why?
 - What variables impact levels of disturbance?
 - What variables impact acceptability?
 - Genre (probe on learnings from behaviour change)
 - Channel/platform
 - Transmission time
 - Warnings and labels
 - Context of violence (domestic, crime, sexual violence etc)
 - Realism/showing consequences vs. 'soft focused'/unreal
 - Familiarity with characters etc
 - Actual violence vs. menace/threat
 - Other material factors
- We have spoken to lots of good and committed parents who are quite likely to have different attitudes to their children watching this sort of content – how do you feel about your child viewing the clips we are discussing:
 - Which if any would you feel comfortable about them viewing – or feel it was appropriate for them to do so?
 - Which might have a neutral or even positive effect
 - Explore rationale
- Would any of these clips prompt actions e.g. turning off/over/complaint etc ?

Response to specific clips

A range of clips will be selected to be viewed in each of the groups. Initial responses will be private written responses initially and then they will be discussed as group. Overall objective here is to explore both immediate impact and try to define what constitutes 'acceptable' violence in different contexts. Researcher to select both examples of disturbing and non-disturbing, positive and negative. Researcher also to include soap clips.

- Putting your own views/feelings aside for a moment, how do you think other

	<p>people will react to these scenes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you personally feel whilst you were watching this • What words would you use to describe this scene? • Have your views on the scene changed from your initial response? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How? ○ What is impact of repeat viewings? • Projective questioning for each clip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What sort of person might be offended by this and why? ○ What sort of person may enjoy this and why? ○ We have met with different kinds of responses to this clip, from different types of people – what sort of things might drive these differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probe for role of gender, age, education, personality, parent, political beliefs etc • Thinking of the different elements of the clip – what is acceptable and what isn't? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable actually lie? • Some people have argued this scene is justified – what arguments do you think they would use? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What arguments would provider put forward to justify inclusion? <p>(or)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people object to this scene – what arguments might they use and how might you respond? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How might the programme maker respond? • This scene was shown at XXXpm – how does this impact your opinion on its suitability? • For those who found the scene disturbing, what action if any would they take if they viewed this content before 9pm? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Or between 9 -10pm `? • Are you familiar with the concept of the Watershed (before 9pm)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IF NOT COVERED: What impact, if any, does this have on your/your family viewing?
<p>Co-creation</p> <p>45 – 50 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofcom are the body who regulate broadcasters need to issue guidance to program makers about the acceptability of this sort of content. Thinking about the clips we have discussed – and the general conversation – we want to seek your active involvement in drafting that guidance. • There will already up-to-date guidelines on sexual content and bad language. We want to focus on the sort of content we have been discussing today. • For the remaining part of the session we want you get involved in a much

	<p>more direct way – to work together to provide detailed and practical feedback that OFCOM can use to advise program makers of what is defines suitable and non-suitable content before the 9pm watershed and in the transition period immediately after it (9pm -10pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First as a larger group can we brainstorm all the factors that need to be considered when making considering acceptability of the sort of content we have been discussing (All factors to be flip boarded and put on wall for reference) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Probe for potential variables – ensure list is exhaustive and complete (researcher to prompt with factors that may have come up earlier in the sessions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transmission time (pre 9pm, 9-10 pm, just after 9pm vs. just before 10pm) ▪ Genre (probe on learnings from behaviour change) ▪ Channel/platform ▪ Context of violence (domestic, crime, sexual violence etc) ▪ Realism/showing consequences vs. ‘soft focused’/unreal ▪ Familiarity with characters etc ▪ Actual violence vs. menace/threat ▪ All other material factors <p>Co-creational exercises (20 mins)</p> <p>Participants would then be split into pairs/2 groups of 3 and each given specific task. Pens and paper will be provided. The pilot would be used to ascertain what is the most effective and engaging of these. Researcher will emphasize that the more detailed the guidance the better.</p> <p>Researcher will listen in to the sessions to ensure thought processes/negotiation is captured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Watershed Violent content: A practical guide for decision makers • Transition Watershed Violent content: A practical guide for decision makers • A guide to acceptability of violent content by genre (soaps, crime etc) • Violent content pre-watershed; A parents charter <p>Participants will be given 15 minutes to complete the exercise. The researcher will circulate to ensure the nature of the task is fully understood and guidance is sufficiently detailed/action oriented.</p> <p>The winning team will be given a trophy (selected by votes of entire group)</p> <p>Presentations to group (15 mins)</p> <p>Each ‘team will present’ their guides back to the group -and the group will be charged with ‘playing the program maker’ who will rely on the guide as the sole source of direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking clarification • Working with the presenting group to make it clearer/more appropriate • Wanting to balance limitations with creative freedom <p>Researcher to take votes and award prize!</p>
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Close	THANK AND CLOSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank for all input and hard work!
Projective technique toolbox These can be used if, when and as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Hierarchy of offence' – respondents would compile spectrum of violent content– firstly based on impact, then again on gratuity/acceptability • Watershed mapping exercise: Participants would generate inclusive list of 'violent content'(defined by context e.g. Scenes of domestic abuse with raising awareness function) and chart it in terms of appropriateness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior watershed ○ Transition (9-10 pm) ○ Post watershed ○ Never acceptable • 'Mental scars' – what content has stayed with them and why? • 'Sanitised TV': What TV be like completely free of disturbing imagery? What will be gained/lost? • 'A child's eye view': getting into the heads of children - How do children view and process violent content? • Devil's advocate: Groups would be divided with half arguing for acceptability of certain content/the other half arguing against
CLOSE	THANK AND CLOSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank for all input and hard work!