



Editorial Complaints Unit

Debbie Kennett
Via email: debbiekennett@aol.com

16 July 2014

Our ref: RH/1400182

Dear Ms Kennett

The Mark Forrest Show, BBC Radio Leeds, 6 March 2014

I am writing, as promised in Richard Hutt's email of 1 May, to let you know the results of our investigation into your complaint. I am sorry that you have been unhappy with the responses you have received, and I hope I can address some of your concerns here – though I'm conscious that, as already explained by Mr Hutt, your overarching concerns lie beyond the ECU's remit.

Your complaint has been considered in the light of the BBC's guidelines on Accuracy and Product Prominence. To deal first with the question of prominence, it should be noted that the relevant BBC guidelines don't prohibit coverage of the work of commercial enterprises:

We need to be able to reflect the real world and this will involve referring to commercial products, organisations and services in our output. However, we must avoid any undue prominence which gives the impression that we are promoting or endorsing products, organisations or services.

I don't believe that BritainsDNA featured in the programme in a way which amounted to "undue prominence" in the sense of giving the impression of promotion or endorsement. You have said that, in every case involving BritainsDNA, its commercial nature has been disguised by referring to it as a "project" which is conducting "research", and I can see that, in some contexts, presenting a commercial organisation in terms which gave it the cachet of a disinterested research project might foster an impression of promotion or endorsement. In this instance, however, I think Mr Moffat's reference to "customers", who paid for their tests, guarded against the impression that BritainsDNA wasn't a commercial operation.

In relation to your concerns about accuracy, I would accept that the item gave the impression that greater certainty attached to the results of genetic ancestry testing than is in fact the case. However, I note that Husain Husaini, the Executive Producer, has already accepted this point in correspondence with you. In the light of that, I think the appropriate finding for me to reach is that this aspect of the complaint has been resolved. Because a "resolved" finding means that we recognise that there has been a breach of editorial standards (even though we think it was appropriately addressed or acknowledged before

the complaint reached the ECU), a summary of the matter will in due course be put on record, in the complaints pages of bbc.co.uk.

As Mr Hutt explained in his initial email, this is a provisional finding. If you wish to make any comments on it I'll be happy to consider them before I finalise it, provided that you let me have them by 30 July.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fraser Steel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Fraser Steel
Head of Editorial Complaints