Talent as Executive Producer policy

On-screen/on-air talent is playing an increasingly significant role in some BBC productions. Whilst this role is creatively valuable, it has the potential to give rise to editorial or compliance conflicts, in particular where the programme is produced by a company where the on-screen/on-air talent is a director or shareholder of the company, or holds a senior management role within the company or in-house department.

The BBC has therefore reviewed its compliance processes for dealing with such productions, in particular looking at the role of executive producer.

The new policy guidelines are set out below and apply across Television and Radio. They apply immediately to all BBC commissions.

1. In all programmes, whether in-house or independent (or a joint production between the two), on-screen and on-air talent must not be the executive producer of the programme in which they appear, or be credited as such. The only exception to this position is as outlined in paragraph (3) below.

2. The executive producer role on any production cannot be undertaken by an agent/agency employee if the talent that the agent/agency represents is appearing in the programme. Exceptionally, where the BBC agrees that it is essential for the on-screen/on-air talent's agent to carry out the executive producer role, the production will be required to appoint an additional executive producer (to be approved by the BBC) as part of their team, and that additional executive producer must be clearly established in the Editorial Specification as the executive producer responsible for all editorial standards and compliance matters on the programme. Where the production is an in-house/independent joint production, the executive producer responsible for editorial standards and compliance should be the nominated executive producer from BBC production.

3. For productions which have a scripted narrative or are scripted sketch shows, the BBC may accept in exceptional circumstances that it is essential for the on-screen talent to be given an executive producer credit. In these cases, the production will be required to appoint an additional executive producer (to be approved by the BBC commissioning executive) as part of their team, and that additional executive producer should be clearly established in the Editorial Specification as the executive producer responsible for all editorial standards and compliance matters on the programme. As above, where the production is an in-house/independent joint production, the executive producer responsible for editorial standards and compliance should be the nominated executive producer from BBC production.
4. As with all BBC commissions, an acceptable executive producer with adequate experience must be agreed in advance by the BBC commissioning executive and named in the editorial specification. Any proposed change in the executive producer must be notified to the BBC immediately and an acceptable alternative agreed and recorded in the editorial specification.

**NB:** In radio, not all independent productions require an executive producer from the independent - this remains at the discretion of the commissioning network. The requirements for the executive producer above shall apply to the producer in these circumstances. Separately there will be a named individual in the editorial specification listed as responsible for compliance.

5. In the compliance conversation at the point of commission for every independent production, it is the responsibility of the independent producer to ensure that it is established and recorded in the Editorial Specification if the on-screen/on-air talent (or their agent) has an ownership or management relationship with the independent production company.

6. Where it is established under paragraph (5) that the on-screen/on-air talent (or their agent) does have an ownership or management relationship with the independent production company, then any specific editorial issues or potential conflicts of interest that may arise as a result, shall be raised by both the BBC and the independent production company in the compliance conversation and any agreed steps to mitigate these risks, in particular where the talent's agent is being proposed as the executive producer on the programme, shall be agreed and recorded in the Editorial Specification.

7. For long running radio strands, the independent producer will be required to notify the BBC’s editorial representative of any material changes to the programme prior to broadcast so any additional compliance issues can be addressed.

8. The BBC’s agreement to any exceptions under paragraphs (2) and (3) can only be given by the relevant Genre Controller, Radio Controller or Head of Programmes (for the Nations), as appropriate.

9. **TALENT PRODUCTION CREDITS** - This policy means on-screen and on-air talent cannot be credited as the Executive Producer of the programme. The only potential exceptions to this are productions which have a scripted narrative or are scripted sketch shows, and the Executive Producer role has been agreed by the BBC as appropriate. In these circumstances, the production will also need to have a second executive producer with specific responsibility for editorial standards and compliance, who will also need to be credited.

10. **TALENT AGENCY CREDITS** - This policy means an Executive Producer credit cannot be given to an agent/agency employee if the talent that agent/agency represents is appearing in the programme. In exceptional circumstances if the BBC did agree that it was
necessary for the on-screen talent's agent to carry out the Executive Producer role, the production would also need to appoint a second executive producer with specific responsibility for editorial standards and compliance, who would also need to be credited.

Any questions about the application of these guidelines should be directed through your usual commissioning contact in the first instance.