



21 October 2021

Dear Tim,

I am writing to you following the report contained in the Daily Mail last weekend that you intervened to block the appointment of Marcus Ryder to the position of Executive Editor for Newsbeat and Asian Network news because of his prominent role as a media diversity champion. The report suggested that you were concerned that campaigning on racism and diversity had the potential to breach the BBC's editorial guidelines. Whether or not these reports are true, Bectu members will feel that they are incredibly damaging to the morale of your black and minority ethnic workforce and will negatively impact your ability to attract talent to the BBC in the future.

These reports will undermine the BBC and your publicly stated commitment to making the workforce more diverse. I raised with you previously our concerns about the revised editorial guidelines and conflating the issue of impartiality with attending pride events or being involved in Black Lives Matter. Campaigning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is wholly consistent with the values that the BBC represents. Being politically impartial and campaigning for media diversity are perfectly compatible, and in our view necessary, and to suggest otherwise will seriously undermine confidence amongst staff.

Your aim to improve the diversity of the workforce and to set targets to achieve that is laudable and I've committed Bectu to supporting those objectives. However, it is equally important that the culture within the BBC is inclusive and that black and minority ethnic employees feel valued, supported and that they can develop and progress. This has historically been a problem and I fear that the Daily Mail report will have seriously undermined that ambition. You will know that a number of prominent black journalists and creatives have written an open letter to the BBC Chairman expressing these concerns and I know that many of your employees and freelance staff agree with them but will fear speaking out in support.

The Daily Mail report, and others like it, are damaging to the BBC reputationally and to existing employees and those who may want to work at the BBC in the future. It is also potentially career limiting for Marcus himself. If the report is true, it suggests that the BBC Executive has a problem with being internally challenged, even where that challenge is extremely measured and thoughtful, as Marcus always is. Whether true or not, it is has now been suggested in the public domain that the BBC has doubts about Marcus's impartiality, even though this question was covered extensively in his third interview. Given the seriousness of this, I don't believe that it is a tenable position to continue to say that the BBC doesn't comment on appointments, and you must instead clarify that you do not have any concerns relating to Marcus's impartiality.

Bectu
373-377 Clapham Road
London

SW9 9RT

020 7346 0900
info@bectu.org.uk

[bectu.org.uk](https://www.bectu.org.uk)

Finally, I am extremely concerned that stories like this and the scrutiny of the BBC's relationship with Stonewall will continue to be a problem unless you clarify the BBC's position on impartiality. That position being that the editorial guidelines relate to political impartiality and that you do not expect employees or prospective employees to abstain from campaigning on issues that are in line with the BBC's values as an employer.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Childs
Head of Bectu