

B2. Ethical values

Free speech ensures the exchange of information and ideas without state interference. Freedom of expression is not, however, an absolute right but carries duties and responsibilities and is subject to legal restrictions and limits. Audiences have the right to receive creative material, information and ideas without interference but expect that we balance the right to freedom of expression with our responsibilities towards them (101).

All media activities should be guided by the ethical values of journalism. Some organizations express these values as detailed, specific guidelines and guidance; others, which may be independent or are on-line, may be less regulated and appreciate the values for first time.

- *Truth and accuracy.* All relevant facts and information are weighted, well sourced, based on sound evidence, thoroughly tested and presented in clear, precise language, with honest, open expression of what is unknown and avoidance of unfounded speculation.
- *Impartiality and diversity of opinion.* The media strive to be fair and open minded and reflect all significant opinions through the range and conflict of views. They do not promote their own or others' views, opinions or judgements. Impartiality does not, however, mean ignoring truth and accuracy; the media make clear what is opinion, what is mis- or dis-information and what are facts, so that audiences can form their own opinions.
- *Fairness, safeguarding and doing no harm.* The media have a duty to care for their contributors and sources and to treat contributors honestly and with respect. Outputs are based on openness and straight-dealing. Safeguarding contributors, sources or subjects of a media piece is essential: all media should avoid doing harm, which may mean protecting anonymity. It is the media's responsibility to ensure that all contributors understand how they will contribute and how their contribution will be used so that they can provide voluntary informed consent.
- *Privacy.* The media respect privacy and will not infringe on it without good reason, anywhere in the world. Private behaviour, correspondence and conversation will not be brought into the public domain unless there is a clear public interest. Safeguarding is part of privacy.
- *Editorial independence.* Editorial independence is vital to ensure that these values are upheld, that stories are issued without third-party influence or pressure. This may be difficult in some contexts, particularly for journalists who are paid to cover a story, event or issue by a third party.

Resources such as the BBC editorial guidelines (101) are publicly available for further information.

Participatory budgeting is still being developed. Health budget accountability consists not only of criticism but can be addressed creatively in various formats. The media can constructively shape new forms of participation and more transparent policy-making (102).