

John Humphrys is biased - and even the BBC now say so

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In November 2011 John Humphrys made and BBC 2 broadcast a nasty programme on welfare in which John Humphrys displayed all the arrogant, ignorant and abusive nonsense so oft said by the supposedly 'self made person' of those who have not, in their opinion, emulated their success. He berated those on social security benefits. He claimed we had a welfare culture. And he did it in whilst exposing the worst of his manner. Many of us took deep offence at the same. The Child Poverty Action Group complained and yesterday the Guardian reported:

The [BBC](#) Trust has ruled that a controversial programme about [welfare](#) reforms, written and fronted by the Today presenter [John Humphrys](#), [breached its rules on impartiality and accuracy](#).

The programme [The Future of the Welfare State](#) was first broadcast in November 2011.

The trust, which governs the broadcaster and is chaired by Lord Patten, chided the documentary-makers saying that "judgments reached or observations made are still required to be based on the evidence and should not give the appearance of presenting a personal view on a controversial subject".

Significantly the committee found that the programme had not backed up its controversial views with statistics and that this, said the trust, had led to the programme being inaccurate.

In a blunt assessment, the trustees found "the absence of sufficient complementary statistical information to underpin contributors' accounts, viewers were left unable to reach an informed opinion and the accuracy guidelines had been breached".

Specifically the committee said viewers would have concluded that the government was targeting benefits that were responsible for leaving the "welfare state in crisis" and creating the impression that "despite the anecdotal testimonies of jobseekers heard in the programme that there was [a] healthy supply of jobs overall".

"Both issues are central to the viewers' understanding of the key issues discussed in

the programme, and because this was a controversial issue... the failure of accuracy had also led to a breach of impartiality."

Tellingly, it adds:

Before the programme was broadcast, Humphrys wrote [a personal opinion piece in the Daily Mail](#) to publicise his views and the programme. In it he wrote of "the predictable effect of a dependency culture that has grown steadily over the past years. A sense of entitlement. A sense that the state owes us a living. A sense that not only is it possible to get something for nothing but that we have a right to do so."

This is important for two reasons. First it confirms the bias within the BBC. If you pay presenters small fortunes this is what happens: they begin to feel themselves apart from and look down on the rest of society. We see and hear it far too often.

Second, it confirms Humphrys has little or no understanding of the ordinary. He is an exception and a fortunate one (some are exceptions in their misfortune). But most people have lives, unlike Humphrys, over which they have little control. They can't move. They do not have exceptional talent. They are therefore at the whim of fortune in the place where they are. Statistically that is where most people are, and will remain. Which is why government intervention on their behalf is essential. And Humphrys neither understood his own position or that of others or the needs of policy in making his comments, which after his exposure to politics is some indictment.

It makes me wonder when his retirement date should beckon. We can do without those with such attitudes and this lack of understanding on the Today programme.