

William Campbell

From: Complaints [complaints@rte.ie]
Sent: Thursday 28 March 2019 12:44
To: William Campbell
Subject: Re: Complaint

Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Mr Campbell,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of 22.03.19 to the RTÉ Complaints Department.

I am aware that colleagues in our Communications department have already engaged extensively with you in respect to questions concerning AA Roadwatch.

As Head of Compliance I was consulted on the preparation of replies to you. I also note you recorded a phone conversation with a colleague without his knowledge.

Further, it is a matter of public record that in the past your complaints regarding the status of AA Roadwatch and its relationship with RTÉ were rejected by the then BCC and were also unsuccessful in the courts.

With regard to your first point, RTÉ's commercial relationship with AA Roadwatch is not in breach of our sponsorship Guidelines. RTÉ is rigorous in implementing these Guidelines and this is not sponsorship.

Rather, it is a commercial agreement to provide a service – travel and traffic updates.

RTÉ like other broadcasters is accountable to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. RTÉ's Guidelines are fully compliant with those of the BAI and are implemented to ensure compliance. The BAI is a statutory body and its Codes have statutory force.

In respect of points 2-5 I also reject your assertion that RTÉ's editorial independence and impartiality is compromised in any manner by its commercial relationship with AA Roadwatch.

RTÉ's editorial independence in respect of issues that may arise concerning the motoring industry is beyond reproach and demonstrably so across our output. Your letter does not cite one single example of a broadcast item that is alleged to be breach of our editorial independence and impartiality.

In summary, I am satisfied there is no basis for the assertions in your email. RTÉ's commercial arrangement with AA Roadwatch is fully compliant with our own Guidelines and is also fully compliant with the relevant legislative and regulatory Codes.

If any member of the public is of the opinion that a programme or segment of a programme broadcast on RTÉ has breached a provision of Section 39(1)(a), (b), (d) or (e) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 or failed to comply with a provision of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Codes and is not satisfied with RTÉ's response they are entitled to make a complaint to the BAI. Submissions to the BAI should be made within 14 days of receipt of the reply from RTÉ. Information on codes and on the complaints procedure can be found on the BAI website at <http://www.bai.ie/en/viewers-listeners/complaints/>.