

## **LEAVING IT TO THE PARENTS**

From 1989, the United Kingdom had a *mandatory* '12' (or equivalent) rating for cinema films.

Since September 2002, that has been replaced by an *advisory* '12A' – as in most other European countries. For the first time, children under 12 can see the film – subject to certain provisions.

What did the BBFC have to do to effect this change?

### **RESEARCH**

- (i) a two month pilot of the new rating in a British city, followed by
- (ii) a nationwide poll of 4000 people.

### **INDUSTRY NEGOTIATION**

Meetings with exhibitors and distributors to guarantee they would:

- (i) include BBFC-generated consumer advice in all their film publicity;
- (ii) ensure that any child under 12 was accompanied in the cinema by a responsible adult.

### **OUTCOMES**

- (i) 70% of parents welcomed the new arrangements
- (ii) general public acceptance
- (iii) consumer advice now near-universally provided on 'U', 'PG' and '12A' rated film publicity (posters, TV advertising, newspaper listings)
- (iv) consumer advice becoming widespread also on '15' and '18' film publicity

### **BUT...**

- (v) a higher level of criticism of individual BBFC '12A' ratings decisions
- (vi) cinema management problems with disruptive children

### **THE FUTURE**

A public consultation in 2003-4 reviewing (amongst other issues) the new '12A' arrangements. Should they continue? Should they be modified?