
Ofcom Bulletin for complaints about BBC online material

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Introduction

This Bulletin reports on complaints made to Ofcom about the BBC's online material. It gives the outcome of Ofcom's consideration on each complaint received and where relevant, provides Ofcom's opinion on whether the BBC met the required standards for its online material.

Under the BBC's Charter and Agreement, set by Government and Parliament, the BBC is responsible for the editorial standards of its online material. Ofcom has a responsibility to consider and give an opinion on, whether the BBC has observed relevant editorial guidelines in its online material¹. This came into effect with the Digital Economy Act on 27 April 2017.

Online material means content on the BBC's website and apps. This includes written text, images, video and sound content. It does not extend to social media, Bitesize, BBC material on third party websites and World Service content, among other things.

[Ofcom's published arrangements and procedures for handling complaints about BBC online material](#) can be found on the Ofcom website. These documents contain more information about the types of complaints we will consider and the process we will normally follow when handling complaints.

Complaints about BBC online material must follow the 'BBC First' approach, where they are made to the BBC in the first instance. If a complainant is not satisfied with the BBC's final response to a complaint about its online standards, they may seek an independent opinion on it from Ofcom.

Unlike our role regulating the standards of BBC broadcasting and on demand programme services (such as the BBC iPlayer), Ofcom has no enforcement powers for BBC online material.

¹ This does not include content on BBC on demand programme services (such as the BBC iPlayer), which must comply with relevant rules in Ofcom's [Broadcasting Code](#).

1. Complaints assessed, not accepted

Closed between 11 December 2021 and 28 January 2022

Below is an alphabetical list of complaints which, after careful assessment, Ofcom considered did not raise substantive issues under the relevant BBC editorial guidelines that warranted further consideration by Ofcom.

[More information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC online material.](#)

Complaints about BBC online material

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC Ideas website: The nuclear dilemma	15/08/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Conversion therapy delay frustrates campaigners	25/09/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Euro 2020: The ways Scotland has changed since France '98	13/06/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: French 17-year-old feared abducted while jogging	10/11/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Lars Vilks: Muhammad cartoonist killed in traffic collision	04/10/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Stealthing: California bans non-consensual condom removal	11/10/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Team GB swimmers 'trolled for our small bums and boobs'	12/07/2021	Harm and Offence	1

¹ This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material. In the event that the complainant does not specify a date, we use the date that the article was published.

2. BBC First

Complaints closed between 11 December 2021 and 28 January 2022

Complaints about BBC online material, made to Ofcom in the first instance

The table below is an alphabetical list of complaints about the BBC's online material which Ofcom has not assessed. This is because Ofcom only considers complaints about the BBC's online material if the complainant has already complained to the BBC and the BBC has reached its final view on the complaint. The complaints in this table were made to Ofcom before completing the BBC's process.

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News app: Who is Ghislaine Maxwell? The story of her downfall	02/01/2022	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News Twitter	15/01/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	04/12/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	14/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	05/01/2022	Language	1
BBC News website	19/01/2022	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	24/01/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: As it happened: We're in a better place to lift restrictions – Zahawi	17/01/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Booster at least 80% effective against severe Omicron	17/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: Addenbrooke's boss says 80% of virus patients are unvaccinated	17/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: Can UK avoid a Europe-style return to lockdown?	23/11/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: New social mixing guidelines likely in Scotland: Comments	14/12/2021	Other	1
BBC News website: Have Your Say	29/11/2021	Harm and Offence	1

¹ This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material. In the event that the complainant does not specify a date, we use the date that the article was published.

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: London congestion: Capital becomes world's most congested city	07/12/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Mandatory vaccinations: Three reasons for and against	08/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: New mothers who died of herpes could have been infected by one surgeon	22/11/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'The unvaccinated ask for jabs, but by then it's too late'	10/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Virat Kohli steps down as India Test captain	15/01/2022	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	26/10/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	02/11/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	06/11/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	16/11/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	16/11/2021	Impartiality	1

[More information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC online material.](#)

Out of remit complaints

The table below includes complaints which have not been assessed by Ofcom because they fall outside of Ofcom's remit under its arrangement with the BBC.

BBC online material	Date²	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Have Your Say	06/07/2021	1
BBC Sounds	05/01/2022	1

² This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material. In the event that the complainant does not specify a date, we use the date that the article was published.

Complaints accepted

Ofcom has considered and accepted a complaint about the following material and is now preparing an Opinion in this case.

BBC online material

BBC News website: Man jailed after blaming speeding ticket on fictional Frenchman
