
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 observed the relevant 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 here on the Ofcom website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/ofcom-and-the-bbc/bbc-online-material>. 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 material, 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](#).

Complaints assessed, not accepted

Closed between 10 March and 11 May 2018

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.

For more information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC online material go to:

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf.

Complaints about BBC online material

BBC online material	Date ²	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Belgrade's 'tiny head' Gagarin statue causes dismay	n/a	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Boris Johnson insists he is 'all behind' May over Brexit	16/09/2017	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 100 Women	22/10/2017	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	03/11/2017	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Girl says cycle helmets should be compulsory	16/12/2017	Impartiality	1

² This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material.

BBC First

Complaints closed between 10 March and 11 May 2018

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	Date ³	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Algeria military plane crash: 257 dead near Algiers	19/03/18	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Scotland website: Time for Love – the extraordinary news film exploring whether pressures of convention turn us against one another	various	Religion	3
BBC Reporting Scotland	n/a	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	26/04/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: A grenade lobbed into the customs union debate	02/05/2018	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Ostracised and fetishised: The perils of travelling as a young black woman	30/04/2018	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Markets, Brexit and bitcoin: 2018's themes	02/02/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	03/07/2016	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	24/03/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Russian spy poisoning: Nerve agent inspectors back UK	12/04/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Have voters changed their minds about Brexit?	12/03/2018	Accuracy	1

³ This is the date the complainant first became aware of the 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	Date⁴	Number of complaints
BBC website: Football Predictor	30/04/2018	1
BBC Twitter account	26/02/2018	1

For information about how Ofcom deals with different types of BBC complaints, go to:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/how-to-report-a-complaint/how-ofcom-deals-with-bbc-complaints>

⁴ This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material.