
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 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 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 01 August and 18 September 2020

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 News app	24/06/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 1968 – the year that haunts hundreds of women	09/06/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Analysis: Van-Tam refused to duck on Cummings	30/05/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Israel-Palestinian conflict: The family with its own checkpoint	14/02/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Surge' in illegal bird of prey killings since lockdown	15/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC Scotland Sport website	10/12/2019	Accuracy	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 First

Complaints closed between 01 August and 18 September 2020

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 ¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC complaint	28/03/2020	Complaints handling	1
BBC Future website: Can nuclear war be morally justified?	05/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News app	13/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	08/08/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	07/12/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	03/04/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	26/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	16/07/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	03/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	10/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	22/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Boris Johnson 'cannot believe' BBC Proms decision	25/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: A ticking time-bomb for the Middle East	31/03/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'David de Gea slump requires action' after Manchester United loss to Chelsea	19/07/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Esther Salas case: 'Feminazi' rants of lawyer who shot judge's family	21/07/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'I fear losing rugby as a community': Trans player on World Rugby proposal	08/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Is black entertainment having its #MeToo moment?	06/07/2020	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: Jane Fonda: 'Climate activism saved me from depression'	10/09/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Jeremy Corbyn and Labour's anti-Semitism row explained	08/12/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Our sales have been extraordinary'	09/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: The British role in America's tainted past	01/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: UK Biobank: DNA to unlock coronavirus secrets	14/04/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC Sport website	14/09/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Sport website	28/08/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC website: Information and Support: Gender Identity	26/07/2020	Content Information	1
BBC website: Pink snow on Italian Alps linked to climate change	07/07/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC website: RSE KS2: Identity – Understanding sexual and gender identities	15/08/2020	Accuracy	1

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 Facebook page	10/12/2019	1
BBC News Facebook page	30/05/2020	1
BBC News website: BBC commits £100m to increasing diversity on TV	22/06/2020	1
BBC Sports website	27/08/2020	1

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

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.