

Reference: 519593

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13 March 2018

### **Freedom of Information: Right to know request**

Thank you for your request for information where you asked about Ofcom's review of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB).

This was received by Ofcom on 13 February and it has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Please see our responses to your questions below:

- 1. What review and/or report has Ofcom conducted under section 264(1) of the Communications Act of the extent to which public service broadcasting has fulfilled its purposes in a manner compatible with subsections (6)(f) and (g) and subsection (13) of that section insofar as they pertain to broadcasting about 'other beliefs'?*

We have a duty under section 264 of the Communications Act to review and report on the extent to which the public service broadcasters have provided relevant television services which fulfil the purposes of public service television broadcasting in the United Kingdom. In doing so, we must have regard to the desirability of them doing so in a manner which ensures the matters set out in subsection (6). These PSB reviews take place around every five years.

We carry out our reviews in a proportionate manner, whereby some issues are explored in more depth than others. Our reviews include a period of public consultation to allow stakeholders to provide input and comment on our initial findings.

To provide an on-going evidence base on public service broadcasting, including for these reviews, we publish Annual PSB Reports looking at the availability, consumption and impact of different types of PSB programming and services, with one such genre being 'religion and ethics'. These annual PSB reports are not a statutory requirement but were instituted by Ofcom following the first PSB Review<sup>1</sup>

We publish information on 'religion and ethics' in our annual PSB reports. Please see, for example, Annex C (PSB output and spend) of our 2017 PSB Annual Research Report which shows output and spend data for 'religion and ethics' programming across the PSB

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<sup>1</sup> See para 6.29 of [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/15911/psb3.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/15911/psb3.pdf).

channels.<sup>2</sup> Annex D (methodologies) provides detail on the data we gather and publish under the heading 'Religious & Ethics'<sup>3</sup>.

Our PSB Reviews and Annual PSB Reports are available here: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/public-service-broadcasting>.

2. *What view has Ofcom formed as to whether what the Act calls 'the relevant television services (taken together)' have fulfilled the purposes of public service television broadcasting in relation to 'programmes dealing with ... religion and other beliefs'?*

Unfortunately, views or opinions fall outside the scope of the Act in terms of making an information request. We have provided above a website link to our PSB Reviews which constitute the discharging of our duties under section 264 of the Communications Act.

If you have any queries, then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Jerin John

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

#### Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for undertaking internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact:

Steve Gettings  
The Secretary to the Corporation  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

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<sup>2</sup> See p.30 of [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/103921/annex-c-output-spend.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/103921/annex-c-output-spend.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See p.9 of [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/103922/annex-d-background-methodology.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/103922/annex-d-background-methodology.pdf).

