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# 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 material<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 7 July and 14 September 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](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf).

### Complaints about BBC online material

BBC online material	Date <sup>2</sup>	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Brexit boost for consumers short-lived, says IFS	20/03/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Donald Trump prefers unscripted Kim summit in Singapore to G7 ritual	12/06/2018	Harm and offence	1
BBC News website: Australian sunglasses firm apologises for Jasenovac ad campaign	25/07/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Did Corbyn's meeting with Jewish leaders help rebuild trust?	26/04/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: UK 'can't keep European Arrest Warrant after Brexit'	19/06/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	n/a	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Duke of Cambridge: Scale of Holocaust terrifying	26/06/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	n/a	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Viewsnight – 'It's time to overhaul the NHS'	24/07/2018	Impartiality	1

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<sup>2</sup> 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 7 July and 14 September 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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News website	04/03/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC India website	02/04/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Private hospitals warned over surgeons	11/04/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: MPs criticise government clean energy policies	16/05/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Jerusalem embassy: Why Trump's move was not about peace	18/05/2018	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Finsbury Park attack: Minute's silence held to mark anniversary	19/06/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Indian official transferred for 'humiliating' Hindu-Muslim couple	21/06/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Saddleworth fire: Moorland 'needed controlled burning'	28/06/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Is North Korea secretly continuing its nuclear programme?	02/07/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Australian sunglasses firm apologises for Jasenovac ad campaign	03/07/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: World Cup 2018: 'English hope turns to familiar despair'	11/07/2018	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Trump in UK: Pomp and protest as visit stokes culture war	12/07/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Tommy Robinson bailed after Court of Appeal win	01/08/2018	Impartiality	1

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News website: The early victims of Trump's trade war	05/08/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: US drink-drive suspect tells police she's 'clean, white girl'	08/08/2018	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Sex and the Sugar Daddy	29/08/2018	Nudity	1
BBC News website: Panasonic to move Europe headquarters from UK to Amsterdam	30/08/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Celebrity Big Brother: 11,000 complaints over 'punching' episode	31/08/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Faggots and groaty dick: Why some foods travel and others don't	02/09/2018	Harm and offence	1
BBC News website: Serena Williams and the trope of the 'angry black woman'	11/09/2018	Harm and offence	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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>
BBC Facebook page	26/07/2018	1
BBC World Service	15/08/2018	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>

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<sup>4</sup> This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material.