
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 10 December 2022 and 10 February 2023

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	Date ²	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Anti-vax groups use carrot emojis to hide Facebook posts	16/09/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: BBC sets out plans for TV news channel merger in 2023	19/07/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coffee prices jump as food inflation hits new high	30/11/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Decisions on spending cuts and tax rises are sober, officials say	28/10/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: I live rent free in Rishi Sunak's head, says Jeremy Corbyn	03/11/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Inquiry call over Westminster leader's hedge fund	04/05/2010	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Shireen Abu Aqla: Violence at Al Jazeera reporter's funeral in Jerusalem	13/05/2022	Impartiality	1
"BBC News website: Tangshan: Chinese police deputy dismissed over attack on female diners BBC News website: Tangshan and Xuzhou: Fury and questions over China's treatment of women"	21/06/2022	Accuracy	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.

BBC News website: YouTube joins Facebook in banning Andrew Tate	16/09/2022	Accuracy	1
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2. BBC First

Complaints closed between 10 December 2022 and 10 February 2023

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	Date³	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC Health website: Doctors 'covered up birth advice'	09/01/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC Mediacentre website: Shamima Begum Story podcast to launch on BBC Sounds	15/12/2022	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News	27/05/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News	15/11/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	17/02/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	08/01/2023	Complaints handling	1
BBC News website	28/01/2023	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News Website: A guide to Labour Party anti-Semitism claims	27/07/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Are you in business?, Rishi Sunak asks homeless man during shelter visit	25/12/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Australia election 2022: Are Australia's refugee releases an election ploy?	16/05/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: BBC Local Live: Northamptonshire	02/04/2016	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Blind man and guide dog refused taxis over 30 times	29/12/2022	Accuracy	1

³ 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	Date³	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: British Gas owner Centrica and Shell see profits soar as bills rise	19/08/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Conversion therapy: UK government to fund helpline	12/05/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Waning immunity and rising cases - time to worry?	26/08/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid in schools: Inquiry launched to find 100,000 pupils absent in England	19/01/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Covid vaccine hesitancy: Misinformation 'spreads faster than virus'	28/06/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: Mum urges vaccination take-up after baby loss	06/08/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: DJ Tim Westwood accused of sex with a 14-year-old	18/07/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: DNA helps trap 1989 sex attacker	01/01/2003	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Does the UK have highest Covid death toll in Europe?	30/05/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: European Central Bank doubles interest rates to most in over a decade	27/10/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Fears missing couple and baby are sleeping in tent in icy temperatures	24/01/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Gambia's Jammeh pact bombshell: Treachery or reconciliation?	26/05/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: How to own a home by the age of 25	21/02/2017	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Is India seeing a decline in violence?	19/01/2023	Impartiality	1

BBC online material	Date³	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: Jeremy Clarkson says he apologised to Harry and Meghan for Sun column	16/01/2023	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Jerusalem violence: Deadly air strikes hit Gaza after rocket attacks	05/10/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Lakeview Hospital: Trust 'failed to ensure safe care' says report	29/05/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Nuclear fusion plant to be built at West Burton A power station	22/11/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Royal Mail strikes: Shops say don't risk buying Christmas gifts online	16/12/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Soledar: Russia claims victory in battle for Ukraine salt mine town	13/01/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: The dead professor and the vast pro-India disinformation campaign	10/12/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Transgender rapist Isla Bryson moved to men's prison	26/01/2023	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Soundbites	26/02/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC Sounds	26/12/2022	Other	1
Freddie Figgers: The millionaire tech inventor who was 'thrown away' as a baby	06/06/2021	Accuracy	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	Date⁴	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: Diana report: Should this be the end?	12/12/2022	1
BBC Remote Control website: Is the great digital-nomad workforce actually coming?	17/07/2021	1
Twitter	16/10/2022	1
World Economic Forum	01/01/2023	1

⁴ 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.