
Ofcom Bulletin for complaints about BBC online material

Issue number: 27

Date: 25 October 2021

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](#).

Complaints assessed, not accepted

Closed between 21 August and 15 October 2021

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 ¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Brexit: Stormont Parties divided on UK call to amend NI Protocol	21/07/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Centrica boss 'was posted excrement' in pay row	02/02/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Israel-Gaza violence: Calls to protect civilians as conflict endures	17/05/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Numbers look tricky for government in aid vote	07/06/2021	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 First

Complaints closed between 21 August and 15 October 2021

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	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News App notification	29/09/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News style guide	11/08/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	16/07/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	23/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	23/09/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	25/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	08/10/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Afghanistan war: UK's lowest payout for civilian death was £104.17	23/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Bristol University: Professor David Miller sacked over Israel comments	01/10/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Chip shortage: Toyota to cut global production by 40%	19/08/2021	Other	1
BBC News website: Claudia Webbe: MP made threat to send nudes of woman, court hears	27/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid vaccine: How are young people responding to the jab?	17/07/2021	Accuracy	2

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: Early baby therapy could reduce autism diagnoses	22/09/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Foreign aid: Gates and others to partially cover UK aid cuts	11/07/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News Website: Greta Thunberg: Scotland not a world leader on climate change	01/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Lorry driver shortage: Temporary visa scheme to run until Christmas Eve.	26/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Love and money: Why breaking-up is so hard to do	20/08/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Prince Philip: Sir David Attenborough praises his conservation work	17/04/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Shortage problem: What's the UK running low on and why?	28/09/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Stamford Hill attack: Man punched in alleged anti-Semitic incident	26/08/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Steve Coogan to play Jimmy Savile in BBC One drama	27/09/2021	Other	1
BBC News website: The foreigners in China's disinformation drive	09/10/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC Sport website: Brighton & Hove Albion 0-0 Arsenal	02/10/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Sport website: Emma Raducanu wins US Open by beating Leylah Fernandez for maiden Grand Slam	12/09/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Sport website: Tokyo Olympics: Laurel Hubbard out of weightlifting after failing to register successful lift.	02/08/2021	Impartiality	2
BBC Weather	13/06/2021	Other	1

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC website: Scotland Politics	16/08/2021	Impartiality	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	Date¹	Number of complaints
BBC News website	04/09/2021	1

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

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.