
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 02 January and 26 February 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	02/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	26/11/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Trump warns US death toll could hit 100,000 BBC News website: Coronavirus: Vaccine 'could be ready by end of year'	04/05/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: 'Why I want to prosecute Dominic Cummings'	30/06/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: 2020 saw most excess deaths since World War Two	12/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Electrosensitivity: 'I didn't believe people had it, then it happened to me'	07/02/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Erdington murder probe after man 'deliberately' driven at by car	26/12/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Not the end of the affair for Labour	18/11/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Puberty blockers: Parents' warning as ruling challenged	22/12/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	21/12/2020	Harm and Offence	9
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	22/12/2020	Harm and Offence	2
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	23/12/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Scotland website: This year's harvest was 'too hard' for UK workers	29/09/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC website: Lockdown Learning	Various	Sex	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 02 January and 26 February 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	Date ¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website	19/12/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	05/01/2021	Other	1
BBC News website	07/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	08/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	12/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	12/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	21/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	24/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	25/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	27/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	03/02/2021	Other	1
BBC News website	12/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party: 'Difficult to see the benefit of devolution'	10/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Archbishop of Glasgow Philip Tartaglia dies with Covid aged 70	13/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Biden election: Mike Pence 'welcomes' senators' bid to derail result	03/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Bill Gates: Solving Covid easy compared with climate	22/02/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Black bosses 'shut out' by 'vanilla boys' club'	03/02/2021	Harm and Offence	4
BBC News website: Boris Johnson urged to apologise for Srebrenica comments	10/07/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Brexit parcel price shock: 'I had to pay £30 for a gift'	26/01/2021	Impartiality	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: Brexit: UK sausage makers face EU export ban	29/12/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Capitol riots: Black Americans decry police double standards	12/01/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Home abortions approved during outbreak	31/03/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Covid-19: Joelinton an idiot for sharing haircut photo, barber says	30/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Covid-19: UK records more than 1,000 daily virus deaths	07/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Ex-MP jailed for sex assaults on women	02/02/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: First Minneapolis police death since George Floyd captured on bodycam	01/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Francis Brennan 'kidnapped by bogus police in Spain'	29/01/2021	Privacy	1
BBC News website: George Floyd: London anti-racism protests leave 27 officers hurt	07/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: How UK museums are responding to Black Lives Matter	29/06/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Man jailed after blaming speeding ticket on fictional Frenchman	09/05/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	21/12/2020	Harm and Offence	14
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	22/12/2020	Harm and Offence	3
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	23/12/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	24/12/2020	Harm and Offence	3
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	29/12/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	07/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Trump tells police to get 'much tougher' on protests	01/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Universal credit: MPs urge PM to keep £20 benefit 'lifeline'	18/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Who is Richard Sharp, the BBC's new chairman?	06/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC Sport website	26/11/2020	Other	1
BBC Sport website	26/12/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Sport website	26/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Sport website: Catch-up: Man City come from behind to beat Cheltenham in FA Cup fourth round	23/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC website	22/01/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC website	Various	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 Arabic website	02/02/2021	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.