

## Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information on complaints the most complained about programmes received by Ofcom.

Your request was received on 10 August 2017 and I am dealing with it under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested the following information:

- a list of the 10 television show/episode/movie/broadcast item(s) that have received the most complaints within the last year (or most recent year available on record); and
- a brief summary of what most viewers complained about per item.

Before responding to your question, I would like to provide some background information on Ofcom's complaints procedures and reporting.

Complaints about content standards are handled under *Ofcom's Procedures for investigating breaches of content standards for television and radio*<sup>1</sup>.

Individual complaints received by Ofcom are assigned to cases. A case is opened when Ofcom is assessing a specific programme or issue and may consist of one or more complaints.

Ofcom assesses every complaint it receives. Based on an initial assessment of the complaint and a consideration of the related content, Ofcom will consider whether there may have been a breach of the Broadcasting Code (or other Ofcom codes or licence conditions). In cases where Ofcom considers there may have been a breach, it will launch an investigation. The possible outcomes of an investigation are that we judge an issue is in breach, resolved or not in breach of our rules.

Ofcom's Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin, published every fortnight on our website, includes decisions about the complaints we have considered. The Bulletin covers a range of cases, including those which Ofcom has escalated for full investigation, and those which, after careful assessment, Ofcom has decided not to pursue because they did not raise issues warranting investigation. The Bulletins can be accessed via the following link to our website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/broadcast-bulletins>

You can therefore find details of complaints we have considered about the programmes you listed in the Bulletins. However, for ease of reference I have compiled a list of relevant cases, below, for complaints between 11 August 2016 and 10 August 2017.

Programme	Broadcaster	Transmission Date	Number of complaints	Most complained about issue
Britain's Got Talent	ITV	1 Jun 2017	663	Amanda Holden's dress.

<sup>1</sup> Available at:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/guidance/procedures>

Coronation Street	ITV	29 Aug 2016	473	Racial offence, see page 95 of Bulletin Issue 317.
Emmerdale	ITV	26 Sep 2016	448	Dognapping
Comic Relief	BBC 1	24 Mar 2017	340	Crude language / sexual references.
Coronation Street	ITV	5 Sep 2016	303	Homosexual themes.
Emmerdale	ITV	6 Mar 2017	275	Violence / intimidation towards Aaron in prison.
Good Morning Britain	ITV	20 Jun 2017	181	Interview with Tommy Robinson.
Sky News	Sky News	7 Aug 2016	190	Due accuracy, see page 39 of Bulletin Issue 322.
Celebrity Island with Bear Grylls	Channel 4	9 Oct 2016	153	Animal welfare.
Benidorm	ITV	3 May 2017	137	Perceived derogatory reference to a person with a cleft lip.

Ofcom's consideration of *Press Preview* on 20 June 2017 is still in progress, and will be published in due course.

The complaints about *Coronation Street* on 29 August 2016 and *Sky News* on 7 August 2016 were referred for investigation by Ofcom and then judged not to be in breach of the Broadcasting Code, and full details are available in the respective bulletins as noted in the table above.

For all other cases, after careful assessment of the complaints and the broadcast material, Ofcom did not identify any issues which warranted further investigation under its rules.

#### 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

