

Ofcom ref: 00496016

Alistair Hall  
Information Requests  
Direct line: 020 77834445  
Email: [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

8 December 2017

## Ref: 00496016 Freedom of Information: Right to Know Request

Thank you for your request for information on complaints received by Ofcom about programmes related to religion. Your request was received on 18 November 2017 and I am dealing with it under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested the following information:

- I would like to request data on complaints made about programmes on or coverage of a person, group or faction connected to a specific religion, from 2014 till the present day which is the maximum timeframe of the current searchable database currently being used by OFCOM.  
I would like details of the programme name, broadcaster, date, number of complaints, the type of complaint, and the religion which the complaint relates to e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism.*

We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to the rules in our codes). There is no specific category (or rule) used exclusively to identify the individual subject of a complaint such as the specific religion referred to.

In terms of identifying any specific religions referred to in complaints from 2014 to date, we would only be able to identify this information by manually searching individual cases.

The information is therefore not readily accessible as a considerable amount of time would be needed to manually locate, retrieve, identify and extract any relevant information. Section 12 of the Act provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the "appropriate limit". The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

Ofcom estimates that it would take more than 18 hours to identify, locate and extract the information you require and as such the cost of complying with your request will exceed the appropriate limit.

Although we are unable to provide information in terms of your broad request related to “programmes on or coverage of a person, group or faction connected to a specific religion”, as mentioned above, we log complaints by category of the complaint issue, and can therefore search for any complaints logged with the category “Religious/Beliefs discrimination/offence”. In addition, we can also search for key words in complaints.

We have searched our records of cases from 1 January 2014 to 18 November 2017 to identify any complaints logged with the category “Religious/Beliefs discrimination/offence”.

In this period Ofcom received over 74,000 complaints across the approximately 2,300 television and radio services we licence and regulate. There were 2,648 complaints logged with the category “Religious/Beliefs discrimination/offence”. A list of these cases is attached in Annex A.

We searched those complaints for the specific key words “Islam”, “Judaism”, “Christian”, to identify that:

- 802 complaints (highlighted in blue) referred to “Christian”,
- 1,328 complaints (highlighted in red) referred to “Islam”,
- 3 complaints (highlighted in yellow) related to “Judaism”,
- 46 Complaints (highlighted in orange) referred to “Islam” and “Christian”
- 2 Complaints (highlighted in green) referred to “Judaism” and “Christian”

I hope this information is of assistance. If you have any queries then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Hall

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

#### 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 exception 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