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# 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 material<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 14 November 2020 and 01 January 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

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News app: HIV deportation to Zimbabwe blocked by UK court	29/04/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	28/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: What this crisis reveals about US – and its president	24/03/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Trump denies mocking US soldiers captured and killed in battle	04/09/2020	Impartiality	1

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<sup>1</sup> 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 14 November 2020 and 01 January 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 <sup>1</sup>	Category	Number of complaints
BBC Complaints	30/09/2020	Other	1
BBC News website	08/07/2020	Complaints handling	1
BBC News website	07/08/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	30/10/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	05/11/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	16/11/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	21/12/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: As it happened: Prime Minister's Questions	11/11/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Chelsea Manning case: Judge orders release from prison	13/03/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus tier 4 restrictions: Aerial footage shows queues and empty streets	20/12/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: US doctor's video simulates what dying patient sees	26/11/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Dominic Cummings's Durham cottage plans investigated	11/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: London protests: Demonstrators clash with police	13/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Men jailed over £1m fake bank accounts scam	16/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Not the end of the affair for Labour	19/11/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Strong possibility' of no trade deal with EU – PM	12/12/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: The winners: The 2020 Russell Prize for best writing	22/11/2020	Harm and Offence	164

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News website: Tigray crisis viewpoint: Why Ethiopia is spiralling out of control	16/11/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Trans teen in legal action over gender clinic wait	23/11/2020	Harm and Offence	5
BBC News website: Trans teen in legal action over gender clinic wait	23/11/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Trans teen in legal action over gender clinic wait	30/11/2020	Harm and Offence	4
BBC News website: Victoria Derbyshire sorry for Christmas rule-breaking comments	27/10/2020	Impartiality	1
Teletext	27/11/2020	Harm and Offence	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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC Persian website	28/12/2020	1

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.