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# Ofcom Bulletin for complaints about BBC online material

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**Issue number: 9**

**Date: 11 March 2019**

## 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 here on the Ofcom website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/ofcom-and-the-bbc/bbc-online-material>. 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 19 January 2019 and 1 March 2019**

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.

For more information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC online material go to:

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf).

### Complaints about BBC online material

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News website: May the moderate looks beyond Brexit	03/10/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Trump Kim summit: Rhetoric versus reality Trump Kim summit: What did it actually achieve?	Various	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: UKIP leader Gerard Batten survives no-confidence vote	03/12/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC Website: After 70 Years, Who Are the Palestinian Refugees?	08/10/2018	Impartiality	1

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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.

## BBC First

### Complaints closed between 19 January 2019 and 1 March 2019

#### 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>3</sup>	Category	Number of complaints
BBC 3	27/01/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	24/01/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	27/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	03/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	05/02/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	17/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Aya Maasarwe: Murdered student's body flown home from Australia	22/01/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Bangor University: Solar panels next to Grade I building	28/12/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Brexit: Third of UK businesses considering move abroad – survey	01/02/2019	Accuracy	2
BBC News website: Brexit: Third of UK businesses considering move abroad – survey	01/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Chanda Kochhar: The rise and fall of India's celebrated CEO	02/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Donald Tusk: Special place in hell for Brexiteers without a plan	06/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Eck, Stevie G & jobbygate – the A to Z of Scottish football in 2018	01/01/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: How ancient DNA may rewrite prehistory in India	30/12/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Is Brexit-voting Llanelli changing its mind?	14/01/2019	Impartiality	1

<sup>3</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 News website: Knife crime: Fatal stabbings at highest level since records began in 1946	07/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Older drivers: Is age a factor behind the wheel?	18/01/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: People's Vote march: Hundreds of thousands attend London protest	20/10/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Ramblers demand coastal path in Somerset reopens	28/11/2017	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Reality Check	21/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Sausage museum on site of Nazi death camp annex put on hold	02/02/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Taiwan's political earthquake: Does China gain from Tsai Ing-wen's losses?	28/11/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: US teen denies mocking Native American	21/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Video of US teenagers taunting Native American draws fire	20/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Why so many people believe conspiracy theories	12/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC Weather website	25/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC World Service Radio (website)	16/11/2018	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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>
Advertisement on BBC website	29/01/2019	1
BBC iPlayer	11/12/2018	1
BBC News website	17/01/2019	1
BBC World Service on Twitter	20/02/2019	1

For information about how Ofcom deals with different types of BBC complaints, go to:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/how-to-report-a-complaint/how-ofcom-deals-with-bbc-complaints>

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<sup>4</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.