
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 2 March 2019 and 19 April 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.

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

Complaints about BBC online material

BBC online material	Date ²	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News	28/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Biking and challenging cultural stereotypes	20/10/2018	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC News website: How ancient DNA may rewrite prehistory in India	30/12/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Sydney axe attacks: Woman jailed for wounding 7-Eleven customers	18/01/2019	Accuracy	1

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.

BBC First

Complaints closed between 2 March 2019 and 19 April 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 ³	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News	21/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News	25/03/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC News website	07/01/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	12/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	12/02/2019	n/a	1
BBC News website	21/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	28/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	18/03/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC News website	22/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	24/03/2019	Editorial Integrity and Independence from External Interests	1
BBC News website	25/03/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC News website	10/04/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: BBC Scotland rejects bias claims from Rangers	20/02/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Brexit march: Million joined Brexit protest, organisers say	23/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Brexit march: Million joined Brexit protest, organisers say	24/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Cern cuts ties with 'sexist' scientist Alessandro Strumia	07/03/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Ethnic minority academics earn less than white colleagues	07/12/2018	Impartiality	1

³ 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: Frank Robinson, Major League Baseball's first black manager, dies at 83	08/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: India PM Modi 'must apologise to dyslexics' BBC News website: Abhinandan: Indians emulate pilot's 'hero moustache'	06/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Saddleworth Fire: Moorland 'needed controlled burning'	28/06/2018	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: What did we learn from the Bank of England?	28/11/2018	Impartiality	1
BBC Newsbeat website: Game of Thrones' Sophie Turner: 'I love a soul, not a gender'	28/03/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC Newsround website: Kashmir: Why are India and Pakistan fighting?	28/02/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC Newsround website: Kashmir: Why are India and Pakistan fighting? BBC News website: India Pakistan: Kashmir fighting sees Indian aircraft downed	01/03/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC Politics Twitter feed	12/04/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC Radio Scotland website	11/03/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC Sport website: Six Nations: Hostile atmosphere awaits England in Cardiff	19/02/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC website	02/01/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC website	15/03/2019	Impartiality	1
NI News	18/03/2019	Harm and Offence, other	1