
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 met the required 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 standards, 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 26 June and 20 August 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

BBC online material	Date ¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Catholic Church 'cannot bless same-sex unions' BBC News website: Pope Francis indicates support for same-sex civil unions	16/03/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid in Scotland: Peacetime excess deaths highest since 1891	20/11/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: Ministers meet amid rising infection rates in England	01/12/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Elliot Page on Oprah Winfrey: Transition surgery 'life-saving'	30/04/2021	Suicide, Self-Harm and Eating Disorders	2
BBC News website: The tale of Algeria's stolen cannon and France's cockerel	13/10/2020	Impartiality	1

¹ 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 26 June and 20 August 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	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News App	01/09/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	04/03/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	21/05/2021	Other	1
BBC News website	26/06/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	19/07/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	04/08/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	30/09/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Armenia-Azerbaijan: Both sides defy Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire calls	01/10/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Beijing tells Nato to stop hyping up China threat	15/06/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Chechen teen 'tortured' in humiliating video	09/09/2020	Privacy	1
BBC News website: China's changes through one man's lens	27/06/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Classified Ministry of Defence documents found at bus stop	27/06/2021	Harm and Offence	2
BBC News website: Covid in Wales: Moves to 'minimise' pupils self-isolating	02/07/2021	Accuracy	1

¹ 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 online material	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: Covid: Is Scotland lagging behind on vaccine certificates?	06/07/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid: Ivermectin to be studied as possible treatment in UK	23/06/2021	Accuracy	2
BBC News website: Covid: School isolation rules could end in autumn	29/06/2021	Impartiality	2
BBC News website: Covid: Teachers 'not at higher risk' of death than average	25/01/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Covid-19: Recent claims about cremations and vaccines fact-checked	26/07/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Donald Trump 'paid \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017' – NY Times	28/09/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Football linked to 2,000 Scottish Covid cases	30/06/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: G7 summit: China says small groups do not rule the world	13/06/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: George Floyd murder: Derek Chauvin sentenced to over 22 years	26/06/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Have Your Say	02/08/2021	Other	1
BBC News website: India Covid: Delhi builds makeshift funeral pyres as deaths climb	27/04/2021	Content Information	1
BBC News website: Israel-Gaza: Rockets hit Israel after militants killed	12/05/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Jo Cox: Murdered MP's sister plans to stand in Batley and Spen	28/05/2021	Fairness, Contributors and Consent	1
BBC News website: Marcus Rashford: Hundreds of messages left on mural	12/07/2021	Accuracy	1

BBC online material	Date¹	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: Munchausen by Internet: Are chronic illness influencers really faking it?	05/08/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Polish law on property stolen by Nazis angers Israel	17/08/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Sulli Deals: The Indian Muslim women 'up for sale' on an app	01/07/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Tokyo Olympics: Capturing the perfect moment	08/08/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Newsround website: White privilege: What is it and how can it be used to help others?	04/07/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC Radio 4 website: Analysis – Why Are Even Women Biased Against Women?	26/07/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC website: Religions: Scripture	09/07/2021	Accuracy	1
Twitter	02/08/2021	Other	1

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