Reference: 00776077

Emma Leech
Information advisor
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

21 October 2019

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to Piers Morgan complaints.

We received this request on 27 September 2019 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

You asked:

“I wish to know how many complaints you have received about Mr Piece Morgan in particular to “comments” he has made about the Transgender Comments.”

Before responding to your question, I would like to provide some background information on Ofcom’s complaints procedures and reporting. Complaints about content standards are handled under Ofcom’s Procedures for investigating breaches of content standards for television and radio. Individual complaints received by Ofcom are assigned to cases. A case is opened when Ofcom is assessing a specific programme or issue and may consist of one or more complaints. The Standards & Audience Protection Team assess every complaint we receive, and we consider whether there may have been a breach of the Broadcasting Code (“the Code”). Where we consider there may have been a breach, we will launch an investigation. Our Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin, published every fortnight on our website, includes decisions about the complaints we have considered. The Bulletins can be accessed here.

Turning to your request, we have interpreted this to be in relation to comments made by Piers Morgan on the ITV programme ‘Good Morning Britain’.

We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to the rules in the Code). Complaints related to “transgender” would be logged under the category “transgender discrimination/offence”. There is no specific category used exclusively to identify the individual subject of a complaint such as whether a complaint relates to a specific individual in a

1 https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/guidance/procedures
programme making a comment, and we would only be able to identify this information by manually searching individual cases.

As the information is not readily accessible, you will understand that a considerable amount of time would be needed to manually locate, retrieve, identify and extract any relevant information. We estimate that this would take at least 18 hours, and so the cost of complying with your request will exceed the appropriate limit under Freedom of Information regulations.

Although this means we are unable to provide information in the form you requested, we can provide information on the number of complaints received about ‘Good Morning Britain’ logged under the category “transgender discrimination/offence”. As you have not specified a date range, we have provided complaint numbers received in 2019 up to the date of your request on 27 September.

The details of the complaints are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Transmission date</th>
<th>Number of complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning Britain</td>
<td>11/9/19</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning Britain</td>
<td>3/4/19</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning Britain</td>
<td>19/3/19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning Britain</td>
<td>23/9/19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning Britain</td>
<td>20/3/19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Leech

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3 Section 12 of the FoI 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.
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 exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact:

Corporation Secretary  
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