

# **Ofcom Bulletin for complaints about BBC online material**

---

Issue number 41

Published 25 September 2023



# Contents

---

## Section

Introduction .....	3
Complaints assessed, not accepted .....	4
BBC First .....	5
Out of remit complaints.....	8

# 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 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 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.

---

<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 8 July 2023 and 15 September 2023

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 <sup>2</sup>	Category	Number of complaints
<b>BBC News website: BP profit jump sparks calls for bigger windfall tax</b>	01/11/2022	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: Nottingham: Students among three killed in knife and van attacks</b>	14/06/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: Too early to discuss bonus, says British Gas boss</b>	16/02/2023	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News Website: Twenty-one convicted in West Midlands child sex abuse inquiry</b>	06/04/2023	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC Travel website: Sir Lancelot Jones: The Black farmer who inspired a US park</b>	19/06/2023	Harm and Offence	1

---

<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 8 July 2023 and 15 September 2023

---

### 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 News	14/06/2022	Complaints handling	1
BBC News app: Moscow residents shrug off skyscraper attack	02/08/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News Daily newsletter	24/05/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	02/05/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	27/06/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	20/07/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Anger in Western Isles over plans to protect Scottish waters	10/03/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News Website: Chingford couple put clowns on neighbour's fence, court hears	11/04/2022	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 online material	Date <sup>3</sup>	Category	Number of Complaints
<b>BBC News website: Coronavirus: cómo el hallazgo de rastros de SARS-CoV-2 en aguas residuales de 4 países (antes del brote en China) aumenta el misterio sobre su origen</b>	07/11/2020	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: Family courts: Children forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse</b>	04/09/2023	Impartiality	1
<b>BBC News website: Family courts: Children forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse</b>	05/09/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: Five arrested as protest halts elite UCI cycling race</b>	06/08/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: Have Your Say</b>	03/04/2023	Impartiality	1
<b>BBC News website: How slimmed-down websites can cut their carbon emissions</b>	23/08/2023	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: I don't have ADHD, but three private clinics say I do</b>	02/08/2023	Other	1
<b>BBC News website: Manipur: India outrage after women paraded naked in violence-hit state</b>	11/09/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: NHS consultant strike: How pay compares globally</b>	24/08/2023	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: Pakistan passenger train derailed killing 30</b>	06/08/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: Queen crossbow threat: Star Wars inspired Windsor Castle intruder</b>	08/07/2023	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: Scottish government wants drug possession to be decriminalised</b>	07/07/2023	Accuracy	1

BBC online material	Date <sup>3</sup>	Category	Number of Complaints
<b>BBC News website: Trans guidance is needed in schools, parents tell BBC</b>	13/09/2023	Impartiality	1
<b>BBC News website: US election result: What Biden's victory means for rest of world</b>	07/11/2020	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News Website: US midterm elections: Why are they so important?</b>	01/11/2022	Accuracy	1
<b>BBC News website: What is white privilege?</b>	09/08/2020	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC News website: Why are doctors demanding the biggest pay rise?</b>	12/03/2023	Impartiality	1
<b>BBC News website: Sextortion on Snapchat is not the end of my world, says victim</b>	08/09/2023	Harm and Offence	1
<b>BBC Sport website</b>	07/08/2023	Other	1
<b>BBC Sport website: The Ashes: England beat Australia by five wickets at Lord's to win T20 leg 2-1</b>	09/07/2023	Harm and Offence	1

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

# 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.

BBC online material	Date <sup>4</sup>	Number of complaints
BBC Instagram	31/07/2023	1
BBC News website: Laura Whitmore on incels, rough sex and cyber stalking	25/07/2023	1
fmr Prime Minister Bennett to BBC: “Why’d we enter Jenin? Because that’s where the terrorists are.”	05/07/2023	1

---

<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.