
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 18 April and 12 June 2020

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	Date¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website	17/10/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Ayia Napa: Mother of convicted Briton backs Cyprus boycott	01/01/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Eurovision 2019: The Israeli-Palestinian situation explained	19/05/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: General election 2019: What to look out for on LGBT issues	17/11/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Khagendra Thapa Magar: World's shortest mobile man dies aged 27	18/01/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Prince Andrew defers military promotion honour	07/04/2020	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 18 April and 12 June 2020

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 ¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News app	08/05/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	14/11/2019	Complaints handling	1
BBC News website	14/11/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	28/11/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	01/12/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	06/12/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	18/12/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	18/04/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	22/04/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	28/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	30/05/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	01/06/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website	04/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	09/06/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	n/a	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Abuse on the campaign trail doesn't shock me any more'	21/12/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Climate change hope for hydrogen fuel	02/01/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Climate change: 'Clear and unequivocal' emergency, say scientists	08/11/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Confessions of a slaughterhouse worker	06/01/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: How scared should we be?	24/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: 'I'm stuck in isolation with my homophobic parents'	26/03/2020	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 online material	Date¹	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Coronavirus: NHS doctor 'overwhelmed' after Visor Army plea	01/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: 'One billion' could become infected worldwide – report	28/04/2020	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: 'Pets no risk to owners' vets stress	08/04/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Target reached as UK tests pass 100,000 a day	01/05/2020	Accuracy	2
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Trump says he is taking unproven drug hydroxychloroquine	19/05/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Coronavirus: Welsh health minister caught swearing about Labour AM	17/04/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: General election 2019: Child poverty 'will rise' under Conservative plans	26/11/2019	Impartiality	2
BBC News website: Hong Kong protests: Knife attacker bites man's ear after stabbing four	03/11/2019	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Intersex surgeries: Is it right to assign sex to a baby?	15/01/2019	Privacy	1
BBC News website: Palestinian conflict: Diaries of childhood in Israeli military detention	20/12/2019	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Why didn't the Bank of England appoint a woman?	24/12/2019	Harm and Offence	1
BBC website: Is meat really that bad for you?	07/10/2019	Accuracy	1
World Business Report: China's surveillance boom	23/10/2019	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.

BBC online material	Date²	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Hong Kong protests: Knife attacker bites man's ear after stabbing four	03/11/2019	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 News website	06/05/2020	1
www.wiwibloggs.com	07/05/2020	1
Twitter	07/06/2020	1

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