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# 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 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.

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<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](#).

# 1. Complaints assessed, not accepted

## Closed between 26 March 2022 and 13 May 2022

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
BBC News Style guide	01/10/2021	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 'As it happened: UK Covid cases hit highest daily total since January'	10/12/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Beauticians breaking the law on underage lip fillers'	14/12/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'Bristol patient in hotel left for week without nurse'	24/01/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'Foreign aid: Gates and others to partially cover UK aid cuts'	11/07/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'India and Pakistan: The students in jail for praising the wrong cricket team'	18/12/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Man damages BBC headquarters statue with hammer'	12/01/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'Mourid Barghouti: Leading Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti dies aged 76'	14/02/2021	Impartiality	1

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<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.

## 2. BBC First

### Complaints closed between 26 March 2022 and 13 May 2022

#### 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 red button	26/08/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'Al Jazeera reporter killed during Israeli raid in West Bank'	11/05/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'Balconies were blown off buildings' in Beirut'	04/08/2020	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'DJ Tim Westwood accused of sexual misconduct'	26/04/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Homes for Ukraine: Robert Jenrick takes in Ukrainian refugee family'	15/04/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Households cancel streaming services to cut costs, report says'	20/04/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'NI Election 2022: DUP to block Stormont Speaker over Protocol'	13/05/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Puberty blockers: Parents' warning as ruling challenged'	22/12/2020	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Sabita Thanwani killing: Family pay tribute to 'irreplaceable angel'	21/03/2022	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Sabita Thanwani killing: Family pay tribute to 'irreplaceable angel'	23/03/2022	Accuracy	1

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<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 News website: Vitamin D: The truth about an alleged Covid 'cover-up'	05/04/2021	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	26/10/2021	Accuracy	2
BBC News website: 'We're being pressured into sex by some trans women'	27/10/2021	Impartiality	1
BBC Sounds	28/03/2022	Other	1
BBC Sports website: 'Formula 1 comments page'	24/04/2022	Other	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.

<b>BBC online material</b>	<b>Date<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Number of complaints</b>
BBC News website: 'Plymouth shooting: Suspected gunman and five others die'	13/08/2021	1

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<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.