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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 15 October 2022 and 9 December 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 website   | 24/09/2022        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 22/10/2022        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: BBC apologises to campaigner over libel claim  | 14/06/2022        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: BBC seeks swift response to bus anti-Semitism story complaints   | 09/01/2022        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Black scientists say UK research is institutionally racist; Firms join forces to combat racism in chemistry; Royal society of Chemistry report says racism 'pervasive' | 22/09/2022        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Cost of living: the people using solar panels and turbines to reduce bills   | 05/10/2022        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Roman Abramovich suffered 'suspected poisoning' at talks   | 29/03/2022        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Why many experts aren't impressed with the UK's energy plans   | 17/04/2022        | Accuracy     | 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 15 October 2022 and 9 December 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.

| <b>BBC online material</b>   | <b>Date<sup>3</sup></b> | <b>Category</b>                    | <b>Number of Complaints</b> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| BBC News website   | 07/11/2022              | Impartiality                       | 1                           |
| BBC News website   | 14/11/2022              | Impartiality                       | 1                           |
| BBC News website   | 24/11/2022              | Impartiality                       | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Even nuns watch porn, Pope says, warning of risks              | 27/10/2022              | Accuracy                           | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Al Jazeera staff allege harassment and bullying went unchecked | 17/10/2022              | Fairness, contributors and consent | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Israeli U-turn over West Bank romance declarations             | 05/09/2022              | Accuracy                           | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Ros Atkins on... Brexit and the UK economy                     | 29/10/2022              | Impartiality                       | 1                           |
| BBC News website: various articles   | 29/11/2022              | Accuracy                           | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Why brewing boss had to destroy a truck-load of beer           | 11/11/2022              | Other                              | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Wild swimmers are getting sick from sewage, campaigners say    | 24/11/2022              | Accuracy                           | 1                           |
| BBC News website: Young children exploited on OnlyFans, says US agent            | 27/10/2022              | Accuracy                           | 1                           |
| BBC website  | 05/09/2022              | Impartiality                       | 1                           |
| BBC website  | 21/10/2022              | Impartiality                       | 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.

| <b>BBC online material</b>   | <b>Date<sup>3</sup></b> | <b>Category</b>  | <b>Number of Complaints</b> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| BBC website: Stories of our times: The child abuse inquiry: What have we learned since Jimmy Savile? | 20/10/2022              | Harm and offence | 1                           |

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