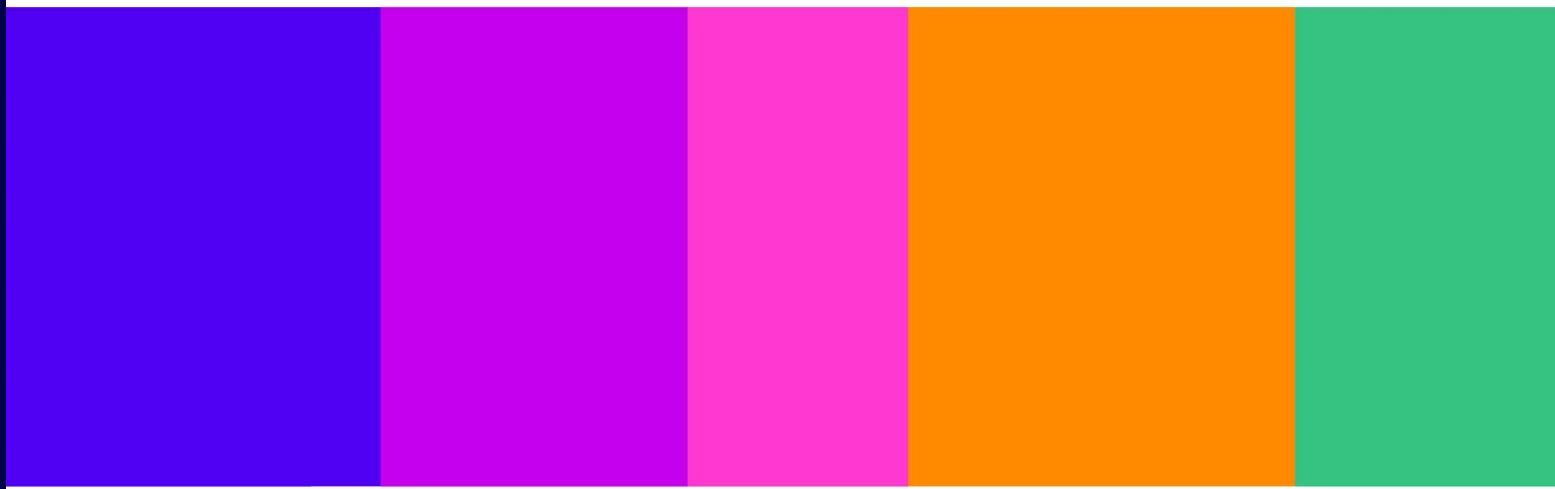


# **Ofcom Bulletin for complaints about BBC online material**

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# Contents

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## Section

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Introduction .....                      | 3 |
| Complaints assessed, not accepted ..... | 4 |
| BBC First .....                         | 5 |
| Out of remit complaints .....           | 9 |

# 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](#).

# Notice of Opinion

## Online material: *Al Jazeera staff allege harassment and bullying went unchecked*, BBC News website, 17 October 2022

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Ofcom has issued an Opinion to the BBC on whether it observed its own Editorial Guidelines in the content of an online article about allegations that the broadcaster, Al Jazeera, had failed to address staff complaints of inappropriate behaviour taking place at its headquarters in Doha, Qatar. The article was published on 17 October 2022. Ofcom's Opinion was that the BBC observed "Section Three: Accuracy", "Section Six: Fairness" and "Section Fifteen: Conflicts of Interest" of the BBC's Editorial Guidelines. Ofcom's full Opinion is set out in our [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#), together with a Fairness and Privacy Adjudication on whether a BBC news broadcast covering the same item was unfair to an individual under Section Seven the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

## Online material: *Young children exploited on OnlyFans, says US agent*, BBC News website, 27 October 2022

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Ofcom has issued an Opinion to the BBC on whether it observed its own Editorial Guidelines in the content of an online article reporting on the online safety measures in place on the OnlyFans website. The article was published on 27 October 2022. Ofcom's Opinion was that the BBC observed Sections 4 ("Impartiality") and Section 6 (Fairness to Contributors and Consent) of the BBC's Editorial Guidelines. Ofcom's full Opinion is set out in our [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#) together with a Fairness and Privacy Adjudication on whether the broadcast programme *Newsnight* on BBC 2 and standalone report *OnlyFans Uncovered* on BBC iPlayer covering the same item were unfair to an organisation under Section Seven of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

# Complaints assessed, not accepted

Closed between 30 March and 24 May 2024

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## Complaints about BBC online material that were upheld or partially upheld by the BBC

There were no complaints closed in this Issue which the BBC already upheld or partially upheld under the BBC First system.

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

## Complaints about BBC online material that were not upheld by the BBC

Below is an alphabetical list of complaints which the BBC did not uphold under the BBC First system. After careful assessment, Ofcom considered that these complaints did not raise substantive issues under the relevant BBC editorial guidelines that warranted further consideration by Ofcom.

| BBC online material   | Date <sup>2</sup> | Category     | Number of complaints |
|---|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| BBC News website: Cat killer Scarlet Blake found guilty of murdering Jorge Martin Carreno | 23/02/2024        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Cat killer Scarlet Blake jailed for Netflix show-inspired murder        | 26/02/2024        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Children starving to death in northern Gaza – WHO                       | 05/03/2024        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Fossil fuels: Can humanity really kick its addiction?                   | 10/12/2023        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Gaza death toll surpasses 24,000  | 15/01/2024        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Israel officials support Gaza destruction, court hears                  | 11/01/2024        | 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.

| BBC online material  | Date <sup>2</sup> | Category     | Number of complaints |
|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| BBC News website: Israel-Gaza war: World Food Programme stops deliveries to northern Gaza / Israeli report says Hamas sexual violence 'systematic and intentional' | 20/03/2024        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Jeremy Bowen: Iran's attack on Israel offers Netanyahu a lifeline  | 16/04/2024        | Impartiality | 1                    |

# BBC First

## Complaints closed between 30 March and 24 May 2024

### 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 complaints website   | 23/05/2024        | Complaints handling | 1                    |
| BBC News app   | 16/10/2023        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 17/11/2011        | Accuracy            | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 23/09/2023        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 01/11/2023        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 01/05/2024        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website: ADHD: Private clinics exposed by BBC undercover investigation                  | 16/05/2023        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Another state failure – will things ever change?                               | 21/05/2024        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Bud Light boycott over trans influencer Dylan Mulvaney hits beer giant's sales | 03/08/2023        | Impartiality        | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Climate change: Seasonal shifts causing 'chaos' for UK nature                  | 27/12/2023        | Accuracy            | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Crash boy's life saved by 20mph limit, says mum                                | 28/04/2024        | 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 |
|--|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| BBC News website: Ethnic minority workers in insecure jobs up 132% since 2011                | 14/08/2023        | Accuracy         | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Family courts: Children forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse  | 04/09/2023        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Kettering hospital baby death was investigated by major crime team         | 10/01/2024        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Police move in on University of Texas at Dallas protesters                 | 01/05/2024        | Accuracy         | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Rishi Sunak calls local election losses disappointing as Labour make gains | 03/05/2024        | Harm and Offence | 1                    |
| BBC News website: UN Security Council resolution 242   | 03/04/2024        | Accuracy         | 1                    |
| BBC News website: We want 20mph speed limit, say worried villagers                           | 19/04/2024        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Why BBC doesn't call Hamas militants 'terrorists' – John Simpson           | 19/10/2023        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC Travel: Pet-sitting: A unique way to travel the world for free                           | 29/03/2024        | Accuracy         | 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 Bitesize: What is the difference between sexuality and gender? | 26/02/2024        | 1                    |
| BBC News website   | 01/03/2024        | 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.