

Reference: 01980427

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

1 May 2025

Dear,

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning programmes – matters of major political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy.

We received this request on 2 April 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

Please provide the internal guidance and case studies used to advise staff on whether a programme is dealing with a [matter of] "major" political or industrial controversy or a "major matter" relating to current public policy.

Our response

As you may be aware, [Section Five: Due Impartiality and Due Accuracy](#) of Ofcom's Broadcasting Code contains the following definition of "matters of major political or industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy" ("Major Matters"):

These will vary according to events but are generally matters of political or industrial controversy or matters of current public policy which are of national, and often international, importance, or are of similar significance within a smaller broadcast area.

Ofcom has also published [Guidance](#) on Section Five which provides further detail on the rules dealing with Major Matters (see paragraphs 1.59-1.64). Specifically, the Guidance explains that:

These additional rules are necessary because of the nature of the subject matter concerned: a matter of major political or industrial controversy or major matter relating to current public policy is of a significant level of importance and is likely to be of the moment.

The Guidance also contain a list of some relevant precedent Decisions.

Ofcom's assessment of whether a programme is dealing with a Major Matter is highly fact and context specific, and we would always consider the individual circumstances of each case when deciding whether a programme warrants investigation under these rules. Please see Ofcom's [Procedures](#) for investigating breaches of content standards for television and radio for more information on the process Ofcom follows when assessing and investigating broadcast programmes.

We have searched our records and identified a few internal presentations that contain slides relevant to your request – please see the enclosed. Please note that we have made a small number

of redactions to the speaking notes to these slides which relate to personal data or material which does not relate to your request.

We confirm that we do not hold any other documents responsive to your request.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress.

Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).