

Reference: 02257907

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

17 August 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about broadcast standards complaint handling.

We received this request on 10 August 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request & our response

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information relating to Ofcom's handling of complaints made under the Broadcasting Code.

1. Investigation procedure

Please provide a copy of Ofcom's current internal guidance or procedure for investigating broadcast standards complaints, specifically detailing whether investigators are required to review the full broadcast in question (audio or video) or may reach a decision based on the complaint text alone?

2. Triage criteria

Please provide a copy of the criteria used to determine whether a complaint proceeds to a formal investigation or is closed with no further action.

In response to questions one and two, Ofcom handles complaints about broadcast standards with reference to our [published procedures](#). As set out in paragraphs 1.22 – 1.24 of the procedures, Ofcom will first consider whether, on its face, a complaint raises potentially substantive issues under the Broadcasting Code (or other Code to which these Procedures apply) which warrant investigation by Ofcom. It will do so by reference to the gravity and/or extent of the matter complained of, including, for example, whether it involves ongoing harm, harm to minors and/or financial harm. If Ofcom considers that it should assess the matter further, it may obtain a recording of the material. Based on an initial assessment of the complaint and a review of the relevant broadcast, Ofcom will consider whether there may have been a breach of particular provisions of the Broadcasting Code.

3. Time spent per case

Does Ofcom record the time spent by investigators on individual broadcast standards complaints? If so, would you be able to provide an average value for the time spent?

We do not hold this information.

4. Policy changes

Has Ofcom's internal guidance or procedure for investigating and triaging broadcast standards complaints (as referenced in points 1 and 2) been revised at any point in the last five years? If so, please provide copies of the current version and any prior version(s) in force during that period.

There have been no changes to the Procedures or Broadcasting Code in the past five years.

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](#).