

Reference: 2110212

Information Requests  
[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

13 January 2026

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about broadcasting complaints for BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky, and GB News.

We received this request on 19 November 2025. We wrote to you on 17 December 2025, explaining that we needed more time to consider where the public interest lay in withholding or disclosing the information requested. We have now concluded our consideration.

### Your request and our response

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*I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

*I would like to request data on audience complaints received by Ofcom in relation to the following broadcasters: BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky, GB News*

*Specifically, please provide:*

#### *1. The number of complaints received by Ofcom by all five broadcasters*

The information you have requested is available in our Broadcast Bulletin, available [here](#). To be helpful, we have provided the below data on the number of complaints received for the last three calendar years.

	2023	2024	2025 (to 9 Dec)
BBC	2,810 (1,259 cases)	2,369 (1,293 cases)	1,767 (1,051 cases)
ITV	33,419 (3,839 cases)	37,036 (3,596 cases)	32,747 (3,617 cases)
Channel 4	6,213 (941 cases)	4,702 (923 cases)	2,744 (932 cases)
Sky	5,693 (911 cases)	2,031 (926 cases)	3,403 (708 cases)
GB News	16,641 (1,432 cases)	3784 (1,371 cases)	4,676 (994 cases)

## *2. The number of complaints per 1,000 viewers, based on Ofcom's audience data*

*If possible, please supply this information for the most recent three years for which complete data is held. Please also provide a brief explanation of what audience data source is used, and whether this applies to total viewing, programme-specific viewing, or broadcaster-level viewing.*

Whilst we do hold data in scope of your request, we are unable to provide this information as we consider that its disclosure is exempt under section 43(2) of the FOI Act. This exemption deals with information that, if disclosed, would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of a person or company in this case, Barb Audiences Ltd ('Barb'). In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information. Annex A attached to this letter sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

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](mailto: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](#).

**Section 43(2) of the Act provides that:**

**Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).**

<b>Factors for disclosure</b>	<b>Factors for withholding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enabling the public to gain a better understanding of the commercial relationships between Ofcom and its suppliers and the nature of the services provided, and thereby increasing public confidence in Ofcom’s work.</li><li>• Generally, there is a public interest in transparency of expenditure, especially if public money is involved.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ofcom contracts with a number of companies and has a financial relationship with them. Companies need to be confident that information relating to their business, such as information about them as an organisation or relating to their products or services, will not be disclosed if it would, or would be likely to, prejudice their commercial interests.</li><li>• Disclosure of this information, contrary to Barb’s terms and conditions, would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests.</li></ul>
<b>Reasons why public interest favours withholding information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We consider that, on balance, the public interest in withholding disclosure of the requested information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.</li><li>• Ofcom enjoys a positive relationship with those companies it contracts with. The release of information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice commercial interests into the public domain would impair both Ofcom’s relationship with providers of services, and adversely affect its commercial relationships with other contractors. If contractors could not be confident that such information provided by them to Ofcom would be withheld from disclosure, except in compelling circumstances, commercial activity may be impeded. Weighing the issues presented, it is considered that on balance, the factors for withholding the requested information outweigh those for disclosing the information.</li></ul>	