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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 observed the relevant 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 here on the Ofcom website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/ofcom-and-the-bbc/bbc-online-material>. 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 material, 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](#).

## Complaints assessed, not accepted

### Closed between 10 March and 11 May 2018

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.

For more information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC online material go to:

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/101893/bbc-online-procedures.pdf).

### Complaints about BBC online material

| BBC online material                                                        | Date <sup>2</sup> | Category     | Number of complaints |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| BBC News website: Belgrade's 'tiny head' Gagarin statue causes dismay      | n/a               | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Boris Johnson insists he is 'all behind' May over Brexit | 16/09/2017        | Accuracy     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: 100 Women                                                | 22/10/2017        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website                                                           | 03/11/2017        | Impartiality | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Girl says cycle helmets should be compulsory             | 16/12/2017        | Impartiality | 1                    |

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<sup>2</sup> This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material.

## BBC First

### Complaints closed between 10 March and 11 May 2018

#### 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 News website: Algeria military plane crash: 257 dead near Algiers                                                                   | 19/03/18          | Harm and Offence | 1                    |
| BBC Scotland website: Time for Love – the extraordinary news film exploring whether pressures of convention turn us against one another | various           | Religion         | 3                    |
| BBC Reporting Scotland                                                                                                                  | n/a               | Accuracy         | 1                    |
| BBC News website                                                                                                                        | 26/04/2018        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: A grenade lobbed into the customs union debate                                                                        | 02/05/2018        | Harm and Offence | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Ostracised and fetishised: The perils of travelling as a young black woman                                            | 30/04/2018        | Harm and Offence | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Markets, Brexit and bitcoin: 2018's themes                                                                            | 02/02/2018        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website                                                                                                                        | 03/07/2016        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website                                                                                                                        | 24/03/2018        | Impartiality     | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Russian spy poisoning: Nerve agent inspectors back UK                                                                 | 12/04/2018        | Accuracy         | 1                    |
| BBC News website: Have voters changed their minds about Brexit?                                                                         | 12/03/2018        | Accuracy         | 1                    |

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<sup>3</sup> This is the date the complainant first became aware of the 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 website: Football Predictor | 30/04/2018        | 1                    |
| BBC Twitter account             | 26/02/2018        | 1                    |

For information about how Ofcom deals with different types of BBC complaints, go to:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/how-to-report-a-complaint/how-ofcom-deals-with-bbc-complaints>

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<sup>4</sup> This is the date the complainant first became aware of the online material.