
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 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 material¹. 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.

¹ 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 27 May 2023 and 7 July 2023

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.

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

Complaints about BBC online material

BBC online material	Date ²	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: A27 Arundel bypass plans deferred until at least 2025	10/03/2023	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Benin Bronzes: Nigeria hails 'great day' as London museum signs over looted objects	28/11/2022	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Keir Starmer denies targeting Labour left-wingers after Abbott suspended	28/04/2023	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: NI Protocol: No breakthrough on deal after UK-EU talks	16/01/2023	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Richard Sharp: BBC had no concerns about integrity, review finds	12/03/2023	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Wellcome Collection closes 'racist, sexist and ableist' Medicine Man display	27/11/2022	Accuracy	1

² 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 First

Complaints closed between 27 May 2023 and 7 July 2023

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 ³	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website	12/04/2023	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	21/04/2023	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Global network of sadistic monkey torture exposed by BBC	20/06/2023	Harm and Offence	2
BBC News website: Ukraine counter-offensive actions have begun, Zelensky says	09/06/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Ukraine war: Satellite images reveal Russian defences before major assault	23/05/2023	Harm and Offence	1
BBC News website: 'We want Brixton to be a black Silicon Valley'	26/06/2023	Harm and Offence	2
BBC Sport website: Have Your Say	03/07/2023	Other	1

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³ 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.