

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 14 September and 8 November 2024

Complaints about BBC online material that were upheld or partially upheld by the BBC

Below is an alphabetical list of complaints closed in this Issue which the BBC already upheld or partially upheld under the BBC First system. After careful assessment, Ofcom considered that these complaints did not raise substantive issues under the relevant BBC editorial guidelines that warranted further consideration by Ofcom.

BBC online material	Date ²	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Family courts: Children forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse	n/a	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Family courts: 'We kidnapped our kids from abusive dads and fled the UK'			

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

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.

Complaints about BBC online material that were not upheld by the BBC

Below is an alphabetical list of complaints which the BBC did not uphold under the BBC First system. After careful assessment, Ofcom considered that these complaints did not raise substantive issues under the relevant BBC editorial guidelines that warranted further consideration by Ofcom.

BBC online material	Date³	Category	Number of complaints
BBC News website: Adventure sports hub plan angers nature lovers	04/11/2023	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Gun licence probably easier to get than fishing permit	30/05/2024	Accuracy	1
BBC News website	03/08/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: One in 20 child strip-searches 'didn't follow rules'	19/08/2024	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: The Chevron deference, and why it mattered	12/07/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Woman, 70, in court over husband's death	31/05/2024	Accuracy	1

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.

BBC First

Complaints closed between 14 September and 8 November 2024

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 ⁴	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website	23/09/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website	23/09/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Beirut residents ignore Netanyahu's call to rise up against Hezbollah	11/10/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Bowen: Tactical triumph for Israel, but Hezbollah won't be deterred	18/09/2024	Harm and Offence, other	1
BBC News website: Brexit deal impact in UK is worsening, warn economists	27/09/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Father says baby twins killed by Israeli strike in Gaza as he registered births	13/08/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Has Israel taken enough action to prevent alleged incitement to genocide?	27/08/2024	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Hezbollah says it's ready for a ground offensive as Israel continues air strikes	29/09/2024	Impartiality	1

⁴ 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 online material	Date ⁴	Category	Number of Complaints
BBC News website: ICC prosecutor denies sexual misconduct allegations	29/10/2024	Other	1
BBC News website: Iran vows to avenge killing of Hamas political leader Haniyeh	31/07/2024	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: Israel launches ground invasion in Lebanon	01/10/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Israeli strikes on Gaza mosque and school kill 26, health ministry says	06/10/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Man jailed for 17 years for historic sex offences	22/10/2024	Accuracy	1
BBC News website: One medic left at Gaza hospital as Israel says it arrested 100 'terrorists'	16/10/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: 'Our winter fuel payment goes into the holiday kitty'	14/09/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Struggling council's £209,000 absent boss pay-off	08/10/2024	Impartiality	1
BBC News website: Pay off for council boss to be questioned by watchdog"	18/09/2024	Impartiality	1

[More information about how Ofcom assesses complaints about BBC 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 ⁵	Number of complaints
BBC's Misattribution of the Kurdish Shahmaran Myth.	27/09/2024	1

⁵ 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.