

Reference: 01713125

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

16 November 2023

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning BBC's *Shetland* complaints. This request was received on 8 November 2023 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

- *How many complaints, if any, has the BBC crime drama Shetland received since August 2021?*
- *If there were complaints, when was each received?*
- *And what did each complaint say?*
- *Were the complaints upheld?*

For clarity I am referring to the series Shetland, produced by ITV Studios for BBC.

Background

By way of background, Ofcom assesses every complaint it receives. Based on an initial assessment of the complaint and a consideration of the related content, Ofcom will consider whether there may have been a breach of the Broadcasting Code (or other Ofcom codes or licence conditions). In cases where Ofcom considers there may have been a breach, it will launch an investigation. The possible outcomes of an investigation are that we judge an issue is in breach, resolved or not in breach of our rules.

For complaints about the BBC, as outlined in our published procedures for investigating breaches of content standards on BBC broadcasting services¹, Ofcom can normally only consider complaints

¹ See: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0002/100100/Procedures-for-investigating-breaches-of-content-standards-on-BBC-broadcasting-services-and-BBC-on-demand-programme-services.pdf

where the complainant has already complained to the BBC and the BBC has reached its final decision.

Ofcom's Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin (the 'Bulletin'), published every fortnight on our website, includes decisions about the complaints we have considered. [The Bulletin](#) covers a range of cases, including those which Ofcom has escalated for full investigation, and those which, after careful assessment, Ofcom has decided not to pursue because they did not raise issues warranting investigation. The Bulletin can be accessed on our website.

The volume of complaints received may be a consideration in assessing general audience reactions, but it is not determinative as to whether Ofcom will proceed to investigate any given case. Rather, it is the particular issues which have been raised by the complainant(s) which are of primary concern in Ofcom's assessment of a programme.

Our response

Since August 2021, Ofcom has not received any complaints about *Shetland*.

We do not hold information on complaints that the BBC may have received directly.

If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Requests

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF