

Reference: 01776113

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

5 March 2024

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about broadcasting complaints and those related to sexism.

We received this request on 8 February 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

### Your request

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*For each of the years 2018-2023:*

*(a) The total number of Ofcom broadcasting complaints received, and*

*(b) Of those, the number related to sexism*

*For each channel, station or streaming service.*

### Ofcom’s complaints processes

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Before responding to your question, we would like to provide some background information on Ofcom’s complaints procedures and reporting.

Complaints about Ofcom licensed services are handled in line with our published procedures for handling complaints, investigations and sanctions on TV, radio and video-on-demand services<sup>1</sup>.

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.

Ofcom’s Broadcast and On Demand 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 Bulletins can be accessed via the following link to our website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/broadcast-bulletins>

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/guidance/procedures>

For complaints about the BBC, as outlined in our published procedures for investigating breaches of content standards on BBC broadcasting services<sup>2</sup>, Ofcom can normally only consider complaints where the complainant has already complained to the BBC and the BBC has reached its final decision.

## Our response

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a) *The total number of Ofcom broadcasting complaints received for each of the years 2018-2023:*

Calendar year	Number of complaints
2018	54,279
2019	28,635
2020	83,379
2021	173,132
2022	36,572
2023	72,664

b) *Complaints related to sexism for each channel, station or streaming service for each of the years 2018-2023:*

We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to the rules in our codes). We do not have a specific category for “sexism”. However, any complaints about sexism would usually be logged under the category “Gender discrimination / offence”. Complaints information under this category is available in our published Broadcast and On Demand Bulletins however, for ease of reference we are able to provide a pdf showing broadcaster and numbers logged under the category “Gender discrimination/offence”.

If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

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](#).

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<sup>2</sup> 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](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)