

Reference: 1915306

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

27 November 2024

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about a GB News decision.

We received this request on 31 October 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### Your request

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*I read you have fined GB News £100,000 for allegedly breaking impartiality rules in respect of an interview they held with the then prime minister Rishi Sunak.*

*I strongly believe your action to be politically motivated with the ultimate aim of silencing or putting this organisation out of business.*

*And is an attempt to stifle free speech.*

*1. As a matter of transparency and freedom of information, was any political pressure or complaint made to you by any political party, that required you to investigate this alleged breaking of the impartiality rules ?*

*2. Furthermore, on how many occasions have you investigated other media outlets, such as the BBC and ITV for similar alleged breaches, and on how many occasions have these allegations been substantiated ?*

### Our response

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By way of background, Ofcom publishes decisions about complaints we have received in the [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#) (“the Bulletin”), published every fortnight on our website, and a weekly [audience complaints report](#). The Bulletin covers a range of cases, including those which Ofcom has escalated for full investigation, those which Ofcom has decided not to pursue because they did not raise issues warranting investigation, and those which fall outside Ofcom’s remit.<sup>1</sup> Ofcom assesses every complaint it receives, and while a complaint may provide contextual background to a programme, when Ofcom is conducting an initial assessment or investigation, it reaches its own view as to whether there may have been, and then whether there has been, a breach of the Broadcasting Code.

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<sup>1</sup> We note that under the BBC’s [Charter and Agreement](#) set by Parliament, complaints about BBC programmes are considered under a system of “BBC First”, whereby a viewer or listener must normally complain to the BBC in the first instance and complete the BBC’s complaints process before complaining to Ofcom.

1. *As a matter of transparency and freedom of information, was any political pressure or complaint made to you by any political party, that required you to investigate this alleged breaking of the impartiality rules ?*

Ofcom is independent of Government and political parties. Our duties come from Parliament and we are funded by fees paid to us by the companies we regulate.

Complaints are logged on our system under the name of the individual making a complaint, and not with reference to any organisation they may or may not be representing. In total, we received 547 complaints about the *People's Forum* programme as broadcast. In order to answer your query, we would be required to carry out an evaluative exercise to determine whether a complaint appears to have been made on behalf of a political party or organisation. In our view this would require an exercise of judgment and would entail the creation of information, and therefore this information is not held.

2. *Furthermore, on how many occasions have you investigated other media outlets, such as the BBC and ITV for similar alleged breaches, and on how many occasions have these allegations been substantiated ?*

We hold information since 2018 in response to this question. Outside of formal election periods, since 2018, there have been investigations into 52 programmes under the same rules as those considered for the recent GB News [Breach Decision](#) and [Sanction Decision](#) (Rules 5.11 and 5.12). The outcome of each of these investigations has been published in the relevant Bulletin issue, as noted in the table below (note that some investigations related to more than one programme).

Programme	Service	Date	Decision	Bulletin Issue	Date of Issue
George Galloway	Talk Radio	16 March 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">371</a>	28/01/19
Sputnik	RT	17 March 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
News	RT	18 March 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
Worlds Apart	RT	1 April 2018	Not in Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
Today	NTV Mir Baltic	2 April 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">372</a>	11/02/19
Segodnya	NTV Mir Baltic	3 April 2018	Not in Breach	<a href="#">372</a>	11/02/19
Sputnik	RT	7 April 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
Crosstalk	RT	13 April 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
Crosstalk	RT	16 April 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
Crosstalk	RT	20 April 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">369</a>	20/12/18
George Galloway	Talk Radio	27 July 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">375</a>	25/03/19
George Galloway	Talk Radio	6 August 2018	In Breach	<a href="#">375</a>	25/03/19
Nick Ferrari	LBC 97.3FM	4 September 2018	Not in Breach	<a href="#">365</a>	05/11/18
The World Today	CGTN	11 August 2019	In Breach	<a href="#">403</a>	26/05/20

<b>The World Today</b>	CGTN	26 August 2019	In Breach	<a href="#">403</a>	26/05/20
<b>The World Today</b>	CGTN	31 August 2019	In Breach	<a href="#">403</a>	26/05/20
<b>The World Today</b>	CGTN	2 September 2019	In Breach	<a href="#">403</a>	26/05/20
<b>China 24</b>	CGTN	21 November 2019	In Breach	<a href="#">403</a>	26/05/20
<b>Make Debates Happen</b>	Sky News	Various dates	Not in Breach	<a href="#">409</a>	01/09/20
<b>World at One</b>	BBC Radio 4	24 February 2021	In Breach	<a href="#">455</a>	25/07/22
<b>RT News</b>	RT	27 February 2022	In Breach	<a href="#">454</a>	18/07/22
<b>RT News</b>	RT	1 March 2022	In Breach	<a href="#">454</a>	18/07/22
<b>RT News</b>	RT	2 March 2022	In Breach	<a href="#">454</a>	18/07/22
<b>Donbass Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow</b>	RT	1 - 2 March 2022	In Breach	<a href="#">454</a>	18/07/22
<b>Saturday Morning with Esther and Phil</b>	GB News	11 March 2023	In Breach	<a href="#">481</a>	18/09/23
<b>Martin Daubney (standing in for Laurence Fox)</b>	GB News	16 June 2023	In Breach	<a href="#">484</a>	23/10/23
<b>People's Forum: The Prime Minister</b>	GB News	12 February 2024	In Breach	<a href="#">498</a>	20/05/24

We hope this information is helpful. 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](#).