

Reference: 1895835

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

10 October 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Ofcom's policy on use of the word 'lie' by media services.

We received this request on 13 September 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

Please provide OFCOM's policy on the use of the word "lie" (and "lies", etc) by the media services OFCOM regulates, when they are reporting on statements by politicians. If OFCOM has different policies for different media services please include all of them.

If OFCOM does not have a policy on the use of the word "lie", and whether media services should use euphemisms (e.g., "falsely claims" or "baseless claim") please clearly indicate that in the response.

Our response

Ofcom does not have a policy relating to the use of the word 'lie' or similar words by media services. However, it may be useful to know that Ofcom does have rules relating to misleading claims and allegations of wrongdoing in broadcasts. Rules [2.2](#) and [5.1](#) of the [Broadcasting Code](#) (the 'Code') and the related guidance notes refer to matters of material misleadingness in programmes and due accuracy in news, respectively. [Section seven](#) of the Code requires broadcasters to avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals in programmes, including Rule 7.11, which states that if a programme alleges wrongdoing or makes other significant allegations, those concerned should normally be given an appropriate and timely opportunity to respond. These rules are not prescriptive about specific language that broadcasters should use or avoid using, as this would be an editorial matter for broadcasters, provided they comply with the rules in the Code.

We hope this information is helpful. 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

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) 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](#).