

Reference: 01431074

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31 March 2022

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to Peaky Blinders. We received this request on 8 March and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for:

Up to date information about the number of complaints received by Ofcom related to smoking, violence and alcohol in the show, Peaky Blinders since it aired in 2013 as follows:

- 1. How many complaints has the TV series attracted across each complaint type (violence, alcohol and smoking) since it aired in 2013 to its most recent season in 2022?*
- 2. How many complaints has the most recent season had for each complaint type smoking, violence and alcohol? (The season started Sunday 27th February)?*
- 3. What are the top 10 most complained about dramas for smoking?*

Background

Before responding to your question, we would like to provide some background information on Ofcom's complaints procedures and reporting, and our remit over the BBC.

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 services¹.

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.

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

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 Bulletins can be accessed via the following link to our website:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/broadcast-bulletins>.

For complaints about the BBC, a BBC Royal Charter and Agreement was published in December 2016, which gave Ofcom new regulatory responsibilities for the BBC. Ofcom took up these new responsibilities for matters related to harm and offence on 3 April 2017.

Prior to 3 April 2017 complaints in this area could be considered by Ofcom against the requirements of the Broadcasting Code, but for complaints after that point under the new procedures, Ofcom can normally consider complaints about BBC programmes only where the complainant has already complained to the BBC and the BBC has reached its final decision. This is known as the “BBC First” process.

Our response

1. *How many complaints has the TV series attracted across each complaint type (violence, alcohol and smoking) since it aired in 2013 to its most recent season in 2022?*

Although Ofcom publishes all complaints it considers in the Bulletin, we only hold searchable information on our complaints database for cases from 2014 onwards. For complaints about *Peaky Blinders* from 2014 onwards within the scope of your request, the following complaints related to violence were received, and were all not pursued.

Programme	Service	Transmission Date	Number of complaints
Peaky Blinders	BBC 2	16/10/2014	1
Peaky Blinders	BBC 2	16/10/2014	1
Peaky Blinders	BBC 2	02/10/2014	3

There have been no complaints about alcohol and/or smoking received.

2. *How many complaints has the most recent season had for each complaint type smoking, violence and alcohol? (The season started Sunday 27th February)?*

Ofcom has received no complaints to date about the most recent season of *Peaky Blinders*.

3. *What are the top 10 most complained about dramas for smoking?*

We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to the rules in our codes). Complaints about smoking would usually be logged under the category “Drugs, smoking, solvents or alcohol”, but there is no specific category (or rule) used exclusively for smoking. We do not therefore hold searchable information on complaints to enable us to filter cases specifically about smoking in isolation from drugs, solvents or alcohol. In addition, there is no

specific category to filter complaints by genre, so we are unable to provide data on such complaints specifically relating to drama programmes.

The top ten most complained about programmes across all genres for complaints logged under the category “Drugs, smoking, solvents or alcohol” from 2014 are:

Programme	Record Count
Coronation Street	345
Emmerdale	83
Love Island	82
The X Factor	35
This Morning	23
Celebrity Big Brother	23
Good Morning Britain	21
EastEnders	17
Celebrity Gogglebox	15
Brit Awards 2022	13

If you have any further queries, please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Scott

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

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