

Reference: 01515547

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Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning broadcasting complaints in relation to the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip. Your request was received on 10 October 2022 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Background

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

In line with our published procedures¹ complaints about broadcast standards are carefully assessed under Ofcom's Broadcasting Code, which sets strict standards for programme content which broadcasters must follow. In cases where Ofcom considers there may have been a breach of the Code (or other Ofcom codes or licence conditions), 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.

You can find decisions about complaints we have received in Ofcom's Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin, published every fortnight on our website here:

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/enforcement/broadcast-bulletins>.

Your request & our response

"The amount of complaints the OFCOM received during the period between the 8th of September 2022 and the 19th of September 2022 in relation to the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth the Second, with general reference to the material and content emitted by responsible and co-operating media outlets, and the disruption to programming schedules between these dates."

We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to the rules in our codes). There is no specific category (or rule) used exclusively for complaints related to programming related to coverage of the Royals. We can, however, search for keywords in complaints, and can therefore report on complaints which contain specific words, for example, royal,

¹ Available at:

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

Queen, Duke, Philip, Elizabeth, Edinburgh (which would focus on any cases related to the coverage you cited). In addition we used a unique keyword to mark any complaints related to coverage of the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Using the unique keyword to filter complaints related to the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Ofcom identified 142 broadcasting standards complaints between the 8 and 19 September 2022. These may not necessarily relate to issues of disruption. For context, we received 1,090 broadcast standards complaints across all issues in the same period.

“The amount of complaints the OFCOM received during the period between the 9th of April 2021 and the 17th of April 2021 in relation to the death of HRH Prince Phillip, with general reference to the material and content emitted by responsible and co-operating media outlets, and the disruption to programming schedules between these dates.”

Using a keyword search to filter complaints containing ‘Duke’, ‘Edinburgh’ or ‘Philip’ we identified 328 broadcasting standards complaints during that period, out of a total of 1,397 complaints across all issues. These may not necessarily relate to issues of disruption.

I 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

Zach Westbrook

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