

Reference: 01524144

Temiloluwa Dawodu
Information Rights Advisor
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

11 November 2022

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to the UK programme that has been the subject of the greatest number of complaints to Ofcom that were eventually upheld. We received this request on 28 October 2022. We have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”).

Your request

I would like to know which UK programme has been the subject of the greatest number of complaints to Ofcom that were eventually upheld by the regulator. (By 'programme', I mean the overarching series/brand, rather than a specific episode, so - e.g. Big Brother as a whole, rather than Big Brother Series 3 Episode 2.) I understand that your records only go back to 2014, so I would be happy for a figure only covering the period since then. Thanks.

Our response

It might be helpful to provide some background about Ofcom’s role in broadcast regulation.

Complaints about broadcasters’ compliance with the [Ofcom Broadcasting Code](#) (“the Code”) are handled under Ofcom’s published [procedures for handling complaints, investigations and sanctions on TV](#) relating to content standards, and fairness and privacy. If we consider that a programme presents issues under any of the rules of the Code, we work swiftly to investigate. Should we conclude that there has been a breach of the Code, we have the power to consider the imposition of a statutory sanction against the broadcaster in accordance with Ofcom’s published [procedures for the consideration of sanctions](#).

Ofcom considers broadcast standards cases on a case-by-case basis, and any action we take, for example finding a broadcast in breach of the Broadcasting Code or other relevant licence condition, would usually be in relation to an individual broadcast rather than an entire series.

We are able to provide the Ofcom investigation which we found to be in breach of the Code that attracted the highest number of complaints, and the programme / programme series which has attracted the highest number of complaints over time irrespective of outcome which we hope you find helpful.

The Ofcom investigation which has attracted the highest number of complaints and resulted in a breach, is *Celebrity Big Brother 2007* broadcast on 15, 17, 18 and 19 January 2007 which attracted just over 44,500 complaints. The details of this can be found in the [Ofcom Sanctions Committee report](#).

The most complained-about programme over time irrespective of outcome is *Good Morning Britain* at around 89,500 complaints since 2014 to date. For context, we received around 480,800 standards complaints across all issues in the same period.

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

Yours sincerely,

Temiloluwa Dawodu

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. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF