

Reference: 01794867

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

4 April 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Ofcom investigations into the BBC.

We received this request on 18 March 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request

Please provide me with the number of times, the BBC has broken Ofcom rules and why

Background

By way of background, complaints about broadcast standards are carefully assessed under Ofcom’s [Broadcasting Code](#) (“the Code”), which sets strict standards for programme content which broadcasters must follow. If we consider that these standards may have been breached, we will swiftly investigate. If we conclude that the standards set out in our Code have been breached, then we have the power to impose sanctions on broadcasters. Decisions about complaints we have received are published on [Ofcom’s Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#) (“the Bulletin”).

For complaints about the BBC, a new 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 on 3 April 2017. Please note that 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 a final decision on the complaint (known as the “BBC first” process).

Prior to 3 April 2017, complaints about matters such as harm and offence could be considered by Ofcom against the requirements of the Code. However, complaints relating to due accuracy, due impartiality, elections and referendums and commercial references in programmes on BBC services funded by the licence fee fell outside Ofcom’s remit, and regulatory responsibility for such complaints at that time sat with the BBC Trust.

Our response

Please find attached to our response a table summary of breach decisions against the BBC, with separate tables for standards complaints, fairness and privacy complaints, and sanctions (Annex A). For standards complaints, where available, we have included the relevant Code rules in breach in the “Issues” column.

For additional information, Ofcom decisions from 1 January 2020 can be accessed via the [Bulletin](#) and then selecting 'look at past decisions'. From there it is possible to filter by service name to focus on BBC services.

Decisions prior to 2020 can be accessed here: [Decisions prior to 2020](#).

Broadcasting and on demand sanctions decisions are available here: [Sanction decisions](#)

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,

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](#).

BBC Standards

Programme	Service	Transmission or Accessed Date	Issues	Decision	Bulletin Issue
Top of the Pops	BBC1	07 November 2003	Code On Standards	Breach	2
Promotion for Radio 4 Comedy	BBC	various	Code On Standards	Breach	7
Mark Radcliffe	BBC Radio One	13 October 2003	Standards Code of Guidance	Breach	8
Zane Lowe	BBC Radio One	15 October 2003	Standards Code of Guidance	Breach	8
Stitch Up	CBBC	27 February 2004	Standards Code of Guidance	Breach	9
EastEnders	BBC1	9 and 11 December	Standards Code of Guidance	Breach / Not in Breach	10
Jonathan Creek	BBC1	14 February 2004	Code on Standards	Breach	12
Trouble at the Top	BBC2	25 March 2004	Code on Standards	Breach	13
Britain's Streets of Vice	BBC1	28 February - 3 March 2005	Code on Standards	Breach	41
Zane Lowe's 'Most Punk'	BBC2 Wales	16 June 2005	Code on Standards	Breach	44
Stupid	BBC2	24 June 2005	Code on Standards	Breach	45
Pulp Fiction	BBC2	07 August 2004	Code on Standards	Breach	46
Promotions for Sunday Surgery	BBC Radio 1	19, 20 and 21 September 2005	1.3	Breach	53
Backlash - Sex and the Nanny State	BBC2	05 November 2005	1.4	Breach	54
Live 8 Coverage	BBC1	02 July 2005	Code on Standards	Breach	54
Sahara	BBC2	26 December 2005	1.14	Breach	56
Chris Moyles	BBC Radio 1	17 January, 14 and 20 February 2006	1.5, 1.14	Breach	62
Scott Mills	BBC Radio 1	02 February 2006	1.5, 2.3	Breach	62
The Slammer	CBBC	14 October 2006	1.13	Breach	80
Who do You Think You Are?	BBC2	30 October 2006	1.16	Breach	80
The Green Guide to Life	BBC Radio 2	14 April 2007	1.14	Breach	89
BBC News	BBC1	4 and 6 June 2007	2.13	Breach	92
Glastonbury	BBC2	23 June 2007	1.14	Breach	92
Glastonbury	BBC2	24 June 2007	2.3	Breach	95
Casualty	BBC1	08 September 2007	1.3, 1.11	Breach	99
McFly Competition	BBC Northwest Tonight (BBC1)	6,8,9 February 2007	2.11	Breach	100
EastEnders	BBC1	13 November 2007	1.3, 1.11	Breach	103
Blackpool Medics	BBC1	28 January 2008	1.14	Breach	110
EastEnders	BBC 1	21 March 2008 24 March 2008	1.3, 1.11, 2.3	Breach	112
Scott Mills	BBC Radio 1	12 August 2008	1.14	Breach	121
Nemone	BBC 6 Music	12 September 2008	2.3	Breach	123
Blue Peter	BBC1 & CBBC	4/9/11 January 2006 on both channels	2.2	Breach	124
Film Café	BBC Asian Network	17 February 2007	2.2	Breach	124

The Tom Robinson Show	BBC 6 Music	September 2006	2.11	Breach	124
Casualty	BBC1	13/14 September 2008	1.3 / 1.4 / 2.3	Breach	125
Chris Moyles	BBC Radio 1	20 January 2009	2.3	Breach	130
Talkback	BBC Radio Ulster	22 May 2009	2.3	Breach	140
Midlands Today	BBC 1 (Midlands)	26 June 2009	2.13	Breach	141
Top Gear	BBC2	02 August 2009	1.11	Breach	145
Saturday Kitchen Live	BBC1	05 December 2009	1.14	Breach	153
BBC News at Ten	BBC1	23 November 2010	2.12	Breach	176
Good Cop trailer	BBC1 HD	06 August 2012	1.3 and 1.11	Breach	220
Line of Duty	BBC 2	17 July 2012 / 24 July 2012	1.28	Breach	220
Dick and Dom's Hoopla!	CBBC	09 November 2012	Breach: 1.28 and 2.3 Not in Breach: 1.29	Breach / Not in Breach	227
Today	BBC Radio 4	22 March 2013	2.3	Breach	232
Dave Bayliss Interview	BBC Radio Cumbria	14 September 2013	1.14	Breach	243
Our World - Sri Lanka's Unfinished War	BBC 1 and BBC News channel	09 November 2013	1.3 and 2.3	Breach	249
Top Gear Burma Special	BBC2	16 March 2014	2.3	Breach	259
Radio 1's Big Weekend	BBC Radio 1	24 May 2014	1.14	Breach	264
World's Craziest Fools	BBC 3	30 June 2014	1.16	Breach	264
Newsbeat	BBC Radio 1	13 June 2014	2.3, 1.3	Breach	266
The Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw	BBC Radio 1	06 November 2014	1.14	Breach	272
News	BBC1	29 October 2014	1.3 and 2.3	Breach	276
South East Today	BBC1 South East	22 November 2014	2.12	Breach	276
Sponsored programmes	BBC World News	various dates between 23 October 2009 and 4 June 2011	9.1 (Oct 2008 Code) 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 (Dec 2009 Code) 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 (Sept 2010 Code) 9.15, 9.19 and 9.20 (Feb 2011 Code)	Breach	285
The Voice UK: the Live Final	BBC1	04 April 2015	2.12	Breach	287
Alex Dyke	BBC Radio Solent	12 August 2015	2.3	Breach	292
The One Show	BBC1	04 November 2015	2.3	Breach	297
Red Rock	BBC 1	20 July 2016	1.3 and 1.11	Breach	314
Don't Make Me Laugh	BBC Radio 4	21 April 2016	2.3	Breach	317
Victoria Derbyshire	BBC2 and BBC News	23 January 2017	1.4	Breach	324
Today	BBC Radio 4	10 August 2017	Breach: 5.1 Not in Breach: Rule 5.2	Breach / Not in Breach	351
Panorama	BBC 1	11 January 2016	1.28	Breach	359
Sunday Politics	BBC 1	30 April 2017	2.2	Breach	377
BBC News at Six	BBC 1	26 February 2021	5.1 and 5.2	Breach	445
World at One	BBC Radio 4	24 February 2021	5.1, 5.11, 5.12	Breach	455

BBC Fairness and Privacy

Programme	Channel	Transmission date	Decision	Bulletin issue
Traffic Cops: fatal attraction	BBC1	08 April 2003	Upheld in Part	6
Breakfast	BBC Radio Lincolnshire	14 November 2003	Upheld in Part	9
Front Line	BBC1	05 May 2003	Upheld	16
Today	BBC Radio 4	12 November 2003	Upheld in Part	16
Holidays in the axis of evil	BBC2	01 April 2003	Upheld	17
Panorama: What happened next?	BBC1	13 July 2003	Upheld in Part	20
X-Ray	BBC1 Wales	24 March 2004	Partly Upheld / Not Upheld	25
Correspondent - Kenya: White Terror	BBC2	17 November 2002	Upheld in Part	28
The Real Little Britain	BBC3	19 October 2004	Upheld	32
Jeremy Vine	BBC Radio 2	26 September 2003	Upheld in Part	34
Watchdog	BBC1	26 October 2004	Upheld in Part	34
Real Story - Shaken Baby Syndrome	BBC1	29 March 2004	Upheld in Part	44
Trouble at the Top	BBC2	25 January 2005	Upheld in Part	47
Inside Out	BBC1 (West Midlands)	01 November 2004	Upheld in Part	48
Watchdog	BBC1	07 September 2004	Upheld in Part	48
The National Trust	BBC4	17&18 April 2005	Upheld in Part	50
South East Today	BBC1	11 August 2004	Partly Upheld / Not Upheld	51
Watchdog	BBC1	07 December 2004	Upheld	55
Today	BBC Radio 4 and Breakfast, BBC Radio 5 Live	13 January 2004	Partly Upheld / Not Upheld	59
Prison Undercover: The Real Story	BBC1	09 March 2005	Upheld in Part	65
Undercover: The Real Story	BBC1	12 August 2004	Upheld in Part	72
The Schools Lottery	BBC2	03 April 2006	Upheld in Part	80
X-ray	BBC Wales	26 September 2005	Upheld in Part	80
East Midlands Today	BBC1 (East Midlands)	06 April 2006	Upheld in Part	81
Frontline Scotland: The Arlene Fraser Murder Trial - The Missing Evidence	BBC1 (Scotland)	19 October 2005	Upheld in Part	83
Undercover: The Real Story	BBC1	12 August 2004	Upheld in Part	84
Derry City Beat	BBC1 Northern Ireland	03 November 2004	Upheld	86
On The Air	BBC1 Northern Ireland	27/10/2006 and 19/12/2006	Upheld	92
Old Dogs New Tricks	BBC1	24 August 2006	Upheld in Part	93
Old Dogs New Tricks	BBC1	31 August 2006	Upheld in Part	94
Inside Out	BBC1 Yorkshire & Lincolnshire	26 January 2007	Partly Upheld / Not Upheld	97
East Midlands Today	BBC1	30/04/2007 to 04/05/2007	Upheld in Part	103
The Bulls**t Detective	BBC3	26 April 2007	Upheld in Part	105
Crisis at the Castle	BBC4	27 June 2007	Upheld in Part	111
Stephen Rhodes Consumer Programme	BBC Three Counties Radio	29 March 2007	Upheld in Part	115
Inside Out	BBC1 (London)	17 October 2007	Upheld in Part	118
Weekend Nazis	BBC1	27 August 2007	Partly Upheld / Not Upheld	121

Conning the Conmen	BBC3	29/03/2007 (repeated 04/04/2007 and 30/07/2007)	Upheld in Part	127
Amy: My Body for Bucks	BBC3	20 April 2008	Upheld in Part	129
Drivetime	BBC Radio London	28 May 2008	Upheld	132
Young Mums' Mansion	BBC3	07/04/08 to 18/04/2008	Upheld in Part	134
Car Wars	BBC1	01 November 2007	Upheld in Part	140
Hotel Trubble	BBC2	18 April 2009	Upheld in Part	146
Mischief - Your Identity For Sale	BBC3	11 September 2008	Upheld in Part	148
Pedigree Dogs Exposed	BBC1	19 August 2008	Upheld in Part	148
EastEnders	BBC1 (repeated on BBC3)	07 September 2009	Upheld	156
5 Live Breakfast	BBC Radio 5	08 September 2009	Upheld	158
Inside Out (London)	BBC1 London	11 January 2010	Upheld in Part	169
Panorama: Wills - the Final Rip Off?	BBC1	09 August 2010	Upheld	178
BBC Spotlight and BBC South Today	BBC1 South West and BBC1 South	28 June 2010	Upheld	184
Rip Off Britain	BBC1	07 December 2010	Upheld	185
The Prison Restaurant	BBC1	26 April 2011	Upheld in Part	189
Reporting Scotland	BBC1 Scotland	14 September 2011	Upheld	200
North West Tonight	BBC1 (North West)	04 August 2011	Upheld	201
Meet Britain's Chinese Tiger Mothers: A Wonderland Film	BBC2	05 January 2012	Upheld in Part	208
Panorama	BBC 1	05 November 2012	Upheld	229
East Midlands Today	BBC East Midlands	16 November 2012	Upheld in Part	230
Newsnight	BBC2	02 November 2012	Upheld	240
Cherry Healey: Old Before My Time	BBC 3	21 October 2013	Upheld	249
Motorway Cops	BBC 1	23 September 2013	Upheld in Part	254
Britons Living Behind the Veil	BBC News Channel	07 September 2015	Upheld	303
Reporting Scotland	BBC 1 Scotland	15 December 2015	Upheld	307
Partly Political Broadcast by the Scottish National Party	BBC 1 Scotland	12 October 2016	Upheld	331
The World at One	BBC Radio 4	26 January 2017	Upheld	358
Stephen: The Murder that Changed a Nation: Corruption and Conviction	BBC1	19 April 2018	Upheld	372
The Murder that Changed a Nation: Corruption and Conviction	BBC 1	19 April 2018	Upheld	372
Reporting Scotland	BBC 1 Scotland	06 May 2020	Upheld	408
Newsnight: The 'Real' Derry Girls and the Dissidents	BBC 2	05 November 2019	Upheld	412
Look East (West)	BBC 1 (regional)	10 August 2021	Upheld	452
Beyond Today: How is 'pick-up' culture still a thing; 1Xtra Talks: Pick-up Artists	BBC Sounds	9 October 2019, 24 October 2019	Upheld	454
Secrets of seduction bootcamp / Seduction Game	BBC Sounds	29 August 2019	Upheld	454
The Gold: Inside Story	BBC1	20 March 2023	Upheld	485
John Darvall	BBC Radio Bristol	11 September 2023	Upheld	495

Sanctions

Programme	Service name	Sanction number	Published date
Blue Peter	BBC1	18(07)	09 July 2007
Live Earth	BBC1 + BBC2	26(08)	09 April 2008
Comic Relief	BBC1	35(08)	30 July 2008
Sport Relief	BBC1	36(08)	30 July 2008
Children in Need	BBC1 (Scotland)	37(08)	30 July 2008
TMI	BBC2	38(08)	30 July 2008
Liz Kershaw	BBC 6 Music.	40(08)	30 July 2008
The Russell Brand Show	BBC 6 Music.	41(08)	30 July 2008
Clare McDonnell	BBC 6 Music.	42(08)	30 July 2008
Tony Blackburn	BBC London 94.9FM	50(08)	18 December 2008