

Reference: 01815677

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

24 May 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about GB News complaints and Standards procedures.

We received this request on 1 May 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request & our response

“What was the number of Complaints, for Political Bias, against GB News (or its presenters or guests) since it started broadcasting. Please provide a breakdown by outcome (in breach, resolved or not in breach) and the reasons, for the outcome, for those found not in breach.”

By way of background, Ofcom publishes decisions about complaints we have received in the [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#) (“the Bulletin”), published every fortnight on our website. The Bulletin covers a range of cases, including those which Ofcom has escalated for full investigation, those which Ofcom has decided not to pursue because they did not raise issues warranting investigation, and those which fall outside Ofcom’s remit. Ofcom’s decisions to not pursue an investigation of complaints about GB News are available in the “assessed, not pursued” section of our Bulletin Hub by removing the “Issue” filter and filtering for “GB News”. You may also wish to refer to the “Look at past Decisions” and “Read our latest Decisions” tabs within the Bulletin for any completed investigations and their outcomes. The Bulletin can be filtered down to the Service (in this case, GB News) and to the complaint issue (i.e. due impartiality/bias or elections/referendums). This will give more granular information about the numbers of complaints received about different programmes.

Since GB News began broadcasting (13 June 2021), and up until the date of your request, we have received 5,784 complaints about impartiality and bias, including those received about content relating to elections and referendums. On the basis of 652 of these complaints, we have launched 16 investigations, of which 10 were found to be in breach of the Broadcasting Code (“the Code”) and 6 of these investigations are ongoing. None of these investigations have been resolved or found not in breach.

“Further, please provide the penalties against GB News when found in breach.”

We have not issued any sanctions against GB News in respect of a breach finding.

“Please also provide the guidance to which Ofcom works when considering complaints and to whom it is accountable.”

In line with our [procedures for investigating breaches of content standards](#), Ofcom carefully assesses every complaint we receive against the Code rules, and whether a complaint warrants further investigation. We have different procedures when investigating complaints relating to [fairness and privacy issues](#) and for complaints relating to [BBC programmes](#).

In terms of issues relating to impartiality, please refer to [Section 5](#) (due impartiality and due accuracy) and [Section 6](#) (elections and referendums) of the Code, and also our latest notes to broadcasters on [election programming](#) and [politicians as presenters](#).

Ofcom is an independent regulator and is accountable to Parliament. We provide further information on our website [Complaints about Ofcom](#).

“Please provide details of any hospitality received, by Ofcom staff or representatives/officers from persons associated with GB News.”

Ofcom staff are not permitted to receive or provide hospitality. Ofcom has a [Gifts & Hospitality Policy](#) which we publish on our website. We therefore do not hold the information requested.

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](#).