

Reference: 2086781

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

3 November 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about complaints on Broadcasters in breach of licences.

We received this request on 6 October 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request and our response

I notice that OFCOM regularly holds TV stations, radio stations and community radio in breach of their licence.

I have also noticed that few that I have seen attract any penalty for these breaches, please disclose:

1 In each of the past 5 years how many times were the main TV channels found to be in breach?

2 In each of the past 5 years how many commercial radio stations and how many community radio stations have been found to be in breach?

3 In the past year other than being found to be in breach of their licence, how many sanctions including financial penalties were made against the main TV channels, commercial radio and community radio?

4 I have noticed that some stations are what can only be called repeat offenders without any sanction, why is this?

5 How many public complaints has OFCOM received in the past year against each of the UK TV broadcasters?

6 How many public complaints has OFCOM received in the past year against each of the UK radio stations?

7 How many public complaints has OFCOM received in the past year against each of the UK community radio stations?

We consider that the information that you have requested in questions 1,2,3,5,6, and 7 is exempt from disclosure under section 21(1) of the FOI Act. Section 21(1) of the FOI Act provides that information which is otherwise reasonably accessible to the applicant is exempt information. All The information which is in scope of your request is publicly available and therefore is withheld on that basis. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and therefore not subject to the public interest test.

For questions 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7, the [Broadcast Bulletins](#) list all cases from 2020 to date with separate sections for cases we have not pursued, and cases we have investigated. There is no specific category on our complaints database to distinguish between “main tv channels” or different types of licensed radio service, however complaints can be filtered by service name, and selecting right-click on the results will offer a “show as table” option which includes a sum total of the complaints listed in a selected view.

For question three, a separate area of our website lists [Sanctions Decisions](#).

In relation to question four, it may be useful to note the volume of complaints received may be a consideration in assessing general audience reactions, but it is not determinative as to whether Ofcom will proceed to investigate any given case; it is the particular issues which have been raised by the complainant(s) which are of primary concern in Ofcom’s assessment of a programme, and we assess complaints on a case-by-case basis, taking account of all the relevant factors, to determine whether there is a breach of the Broadcasting Code or other licence condition.

We 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](#).