

Reference: 1937696

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

15 January 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Islamophobia and anti-Muslim complaints.

We received this request on 31 December 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

Please can you provide the details of all complaints related to Islamophobia and anti-muslim coverage since January 2020?

Please can you provide a breakdown of when the complaints were made by month, which programme and outlet the complaints related to, and the action that was taken?

Our response

By way of background, Ofcom publishes decisions about complaints we have received in the [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#) (“the Bulletin”) every fortnight on our website, and a weekly [audience complaints report](#). 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.¹ Ofcom assesses every complaint it receives, and while a complaint may provide contextual background to a programme, when Ofcom is conducting an initial assessment or investigation, it reaches its own view as to whether there may have been, and then whether there has been, a breach of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code (“the Code”).

We log all complaints we receive on our complaints database, and they are categorised by which rules in the Code may have been breached. As a result, although the Code contains rules related to harmful or offensive content, including hate speech and the abusive treatment of religious views and beliefs, there is no specific category used exclusively to identify complaints related to Islamophobia or anti-Muslim material. Complaints in this area could be logged under a range of categories depending on exactly how a complaint is presented, therefore we do not hold searchable

¹ Please note that under the BBC’s [Charter and Agreement](#) set by Parliament, complaints about BBC programmes are considered under a system of “BBC First”, whereby a viewer or listener must normally complain to the BBC in the first instance and complete the BBC’s complaints process before complaining to Ofcom.

information in the format of your request. We would need to look at each complaint on a case-by-case basis which would take us over the permitted timescales for FOI requests².

Cases which Ofcom has escalated for investigation form a much smaller base than all complaints we consider, and previous Ofcom investigation decisions can be viewed in the Bulletin in the section titled "look at past decisions".

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](#).

² Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the "appropriate limit". The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour. Ofcom estimates that it would take at least 18 hours to identify, locate and extract the information you require and as such the cost of complying with your request will exceed the appropriate limit.