

Reference: 02010022

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

2 July 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your follow up request for information about complaints regarding racial misrepresentation in UK media.

We received this request on 9 June 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

The following information, limited to the three-year period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024:

- 1. The number of complaints received by Ofcom in which the primary or significant concern was the misrepresentation, stereotyping, or under-representation of racial or ethnic groups in UK television or radio broadcasts.*
- 2. A breakdown of these complaints by year and by general category, if recorded (e.g. offence, due accuracy, race discrimination, misleading content, etc).*
- 3. The number of these complaints that resulted in:*
 - * escalation to investigation*
 - * formal findings*
 - * sanctions, warnings, or guidance issued to broadcasters*
- 4. For any concluded investigations that fall within this scope, please provide:*
 - * a brief summary of the issue investigated*
 - * the outcome or decision*
 - * whether any corrective action or guidance was issued*

If available, I would also appreciate clarification on whether Ofcom is currently developing or considering any improvements to how complaints related to race and representation are categorised or tracked internally.

Our response

We have considered this follow up request and whilst we note that the focus has been narrowed, we still consider that the request is extremely broad such that Section 12 of the FOI Act will apply.

Under Section 12 of the FOI Act, Ofcom is not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate 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 ('the Regulations'), and is, for Ofcom, £450. The Regulations provide that

costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour which equates to 18 hours of time. 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.

As we outlined in our [previous response](#), complaints on the topics you have mentioned could be logged under a range of different categories depending on how they were presented. Therefore, for us to identify which complaints are relevant to your enquiry would require conducting an extensive manual search through all our complaint records from the specified time period. Searching would be further impacted by the date range for this request which spans a broad timeframe of 3 years, a period over which we hold approximately 180,000 complaints. Ofcom estimates that it would take over 18 hours to search for, identify and retrieve any information which may be relevant to this request. You may wish to consider a narrower, more focused request focusing on a much smaller period (e.g. of months, rather than years) or complaints related to specific broadcasters or programmes.

Regarding questions 3 and 4, as discussed in our [previous response](#), we are unable to identify any investigations within scope of your request from the much smaller pool of investigation cases.

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](#).