

Reference: 02079411

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

10 October 2025

Dear,

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your follow up request for information concerning the 'C word' and full complaints data. We note that this request is in response to a previous FOI request: [Complaints about Offensive Language in UK Broadcasting](#).

We received this request on 17 September 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

*"Just to confirm - when you searched for these complaints, you didn't use c*** directly? You spelt out the actual swear word?*

I wonder if there is a way to capture all complaints referring to this word. Either with asterisk, or saying c word, as well as actually saying the word out loud?

Hope that makes sense.

If I can also get full list of complaints data mentioning offensive language / swearing for all years you have available - that would be amazing."

Our response

When identifying the complaints referred to in the response to your previous request - [Complaints about Offensive Language in UK Broadcasting](#), we searched for complaints with any of the following terms in their description: the full word, c*nt, cu*t, c**t, c***, c word and 'c' word. The same approach was applied for question 4 of your previous request (i.e. for complaints relating to the 'f' word and 's' word).

The number of broadcast television and radio complaints received over the last five years which were categorised under 'Offensive language' are as follows:

2020: 777

2021: 637

2022: 445

2023: 475

2024: 483

As mentioned in our previous response, we only hold searchable data on our complaints management system for the last five years. However, complaints data prior to 2020 is publicly

available by looking for complaints categorised as 'Offensive language' or 'Language' in previous [Broadcast and On Demand Bulletins published pre-January 2020](#). 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](#).