

Reference: 02076518

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

26 September 2025

Dear,

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning broadcast complaints related to body image.

We received this request on 11 September 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

"The purpose of this request is to obtain information on complaints made to Ofcom concerning the representation of body size and body image in programmes, including concerns about people being portrayed as underweight or overweight, together with complaints relating to the portrayal of unhealthy food, diets, obesity or lifestyle choices.

Specifically, I am seeking anonymised data on the following from January 2020 to the most recent month available, e.g. September 2025. If this is not feasible due to time or cost constraints, I confirm that I am happy to receive information relating to 2024-25 only:

- 1. The total number of complaints relating to the portrayal of people's body size, weight, or body image in television programmes (including references to individuals being overweight, underweight, or issues around body representation)."*
- 2. "The total number of complaints received in the same period relating to the depiction or promotion of food, diets, obesity or eating behaviours that could be considered unhealthy or harmful."*

Our response

For your information, Ofcom responses to previous FOI requests have already provided some data around this area where we were able to. Please see the following:

- [Broadcasting complaints re weight diet obesity](#)
[Annex A - Complaints related to weight, diet, obesity \(01927740\)](#)
- [Broadcasting complaints regarding weight, diet and obesity \(29 November to 31 December 2024\)](#)

[Annex – Data for Broadcasting complaints regarding weight, diet and obesity \(29 November to 31 December 2024\)](#)

As noted in the previous FOI responses, Ofcom do not categorise complaints in a manner to identify complaints in the area you described. Since 2020 we have received approximately 500,000 complaints, with 115,00 from 2024 to date. To look at each complaint in either period on a case-by-case basis to find any in scope of your request would take us over the permitted timescales for FOI requests.

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.

We would be happy to consider a narrower request, for example, we may be able to assist if we are provided with a defined list of keywords or a more specific time period e.g. last 3 complete months of 2025.

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](#).