



Coimisiún
na Meán

Broadcasting & Video On-Demand Complaints

Insights Report

Published: 11 May 2026

Introduction

Coimisiún na Meán (“An Coimisiún”) began receiving and accepting complaints about broadcast and audiovisual on-demand (VOD) content from 15 March 2023, when it was established to replace its predecessor organisation, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), and is led by 5 Commissioners (“the Commission”). The complaint handling process supports An Coimisiún’s mission to regulate, support and develop a media landscape that underpins fundamental rights, balancing freedom of expression and the editorial independence of media service providers with protecting the interests of the audience, particularly children.

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the public about the volume and types of complaints An Coimisiún has accepted. This report aims to support better understanding of An Coimisiún’s approach to complaint handling and how the Commission decides on complaints.

This report contains:

- An overview of the Complaints Handling Process
- The number and types of complaints received between 15 March 2023 and 3 December 2025
- Insights and emerging trends in complaints
- Decision-making considerations
- Case Studies

The complaint numbers and statistics in this report are of complaints received and decided upon by An Coimisiún between 15 March 2023 and 3 December 2025, unless stated otherwise.

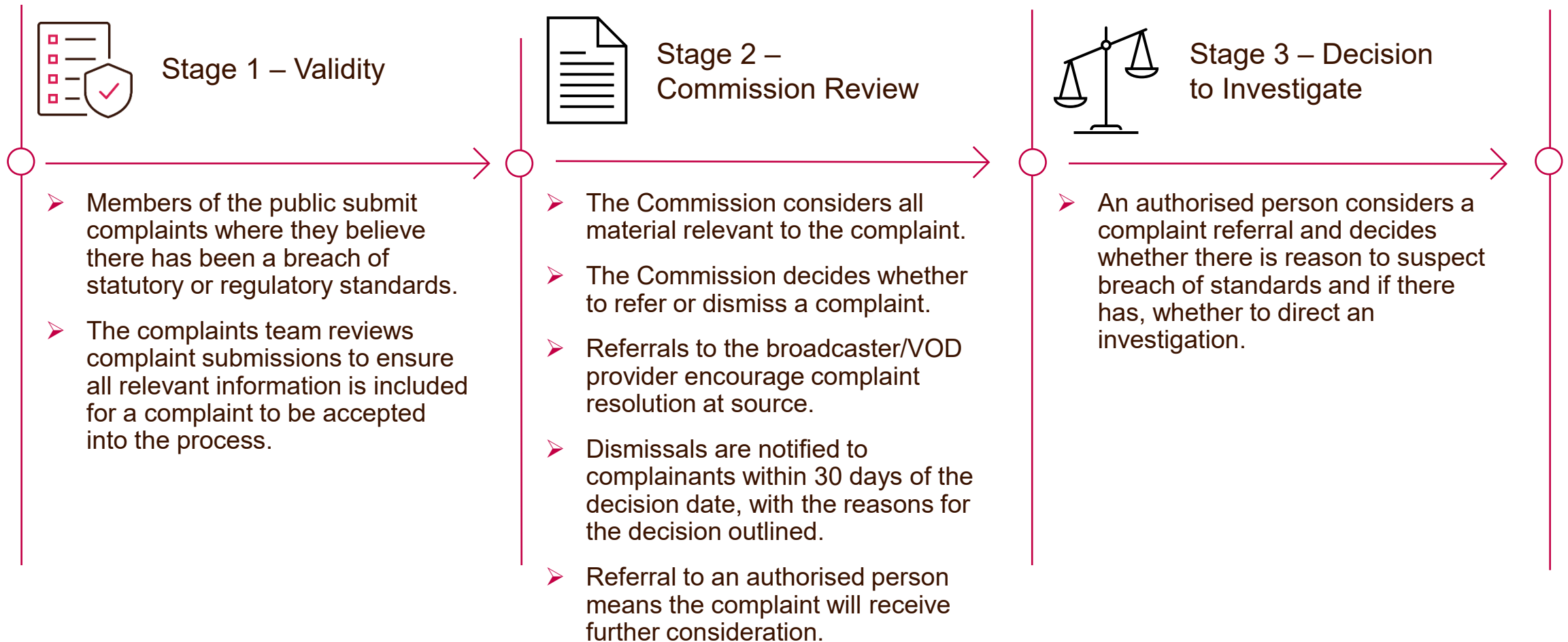
Disclaimer: This report uses plain English and was prepared solely for information purposes. It does not contain and should not be relied on as legal or regulatory guidance.

The information is based on Coimisiún na Meán’s own assessment of its data and statistics.

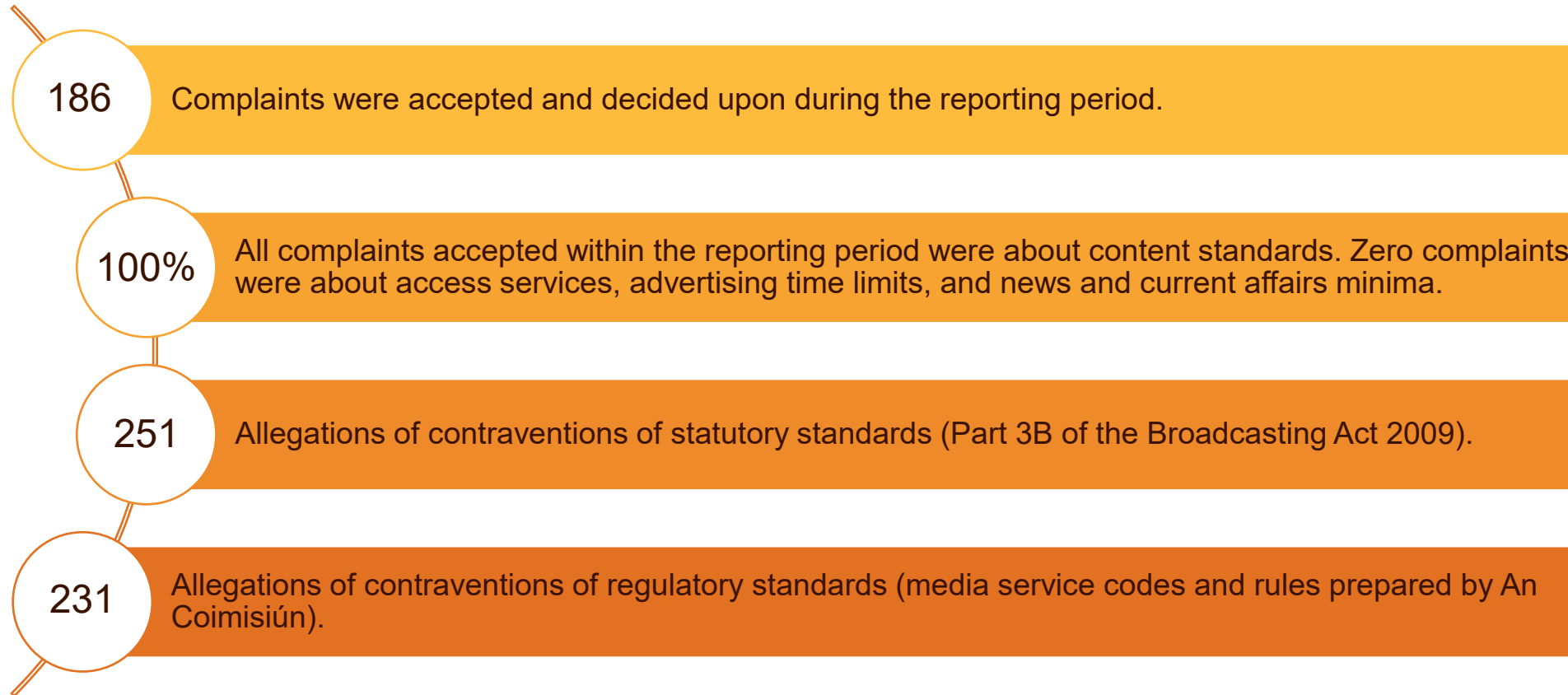
Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the information in the Report is accurate and up-to-date, it is for information purposes only.

Complaint information for case studies was summarised using AI.

The Complaints Handling Process



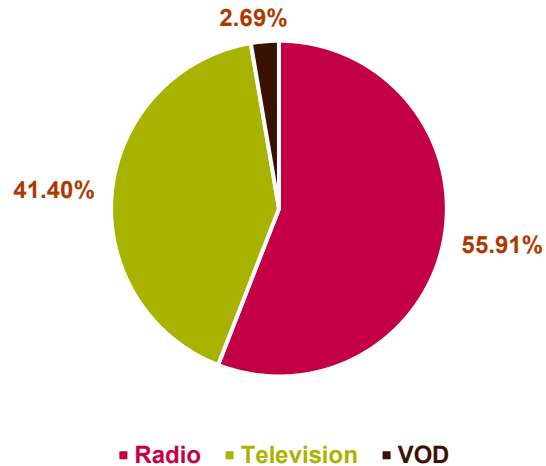
Reporting Period Statistics Overview



Complaints accepted and decided upon from 15 March 2023 to 3 December 2025

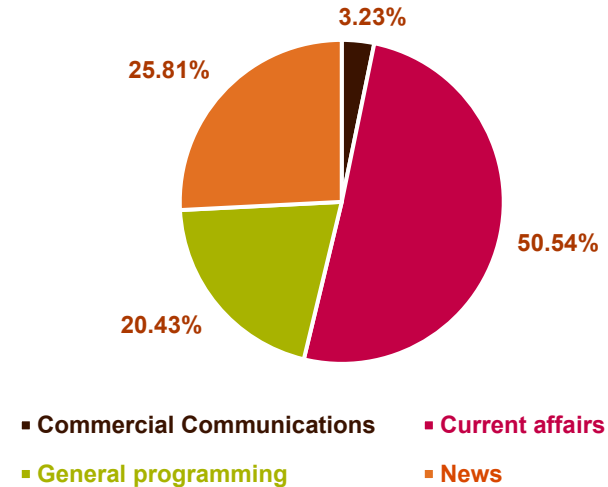
Reporting Period Statistics Overview

Complaints per Service Type



Data suggests that either the public may not be aware that complaints can be made about VOD services or that by the nature of how people access VOD content, people are less impacted as they can pick and choose what they watch.

Content Type



Although we have not accepted any complaints about Access Services, we are aware from our engagements with Access User Consultative Panels that there is some dissatisfaction regarding the quantity and quality of Access Services available on television broadcasts.

What can be complained about?

Statutory & Regulatory standards

Statutory Standards

Broadcasting Act 2009, as amended.

- Harm, undue offence, incitement to crime, incitement to violence or hatred against persons and groups in society, or anything that undermines the authority of the State (46J)
- Privacy (46K)
- News & current affairs (46L)
- Advertising (46M(2) & (3), 106(3), 127(6) (advertising))
- Retention of recordings (46P(1)(2))

These apply to content broadcast or made available on a VOD service.

Complaints can allege a breach of one or more statutory standards and/or one or more regulatory standards – so long as they are applicable to the content & service complained of.

Regulatory Standards

An Coimisiún's Media Service Codes and Rules.

- Code of Programme Standards
- Code of Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality in News & Current Affairs
- General Commercial Communication Code
- Children's Commercial Communications Code
- Access Rules for Television Broadcasters
- Rules on Advertising & Teleshopping
- Audiovisual On-demand Media Service Providers Code & Rules ("VOD Code")

Only the "VOD Code" applies to content accessed on a video on-demand service.

All other Codes & Rules apply to radio and television broadcasts only.

What can be complained about?

Types of content

News & Current Affairs: What's the Difference?

News

- News programming can be generally understood as fact-based reporting on new and noteworthy events.
- News must be objective and impartial.
- News shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting or making available the content.
- Section 46L(1)(a) only applies to news.



Current Affairs

- Current Affairs programming can be generally understood as discussion, opinion and analysis of issues of current public debate or controversy.
- The presentation of current affairs must be fair, objective, impartial and accurate.
- Should include a range of views, which may be achieved through facilitating debate and/or questioning and challenging contributors where appropriate.
- Section 46L(1)(b) only applies to current affairs.



Insights From Complaint Handling

Programmes categorised as something other than current affairs can sometimes include content that could be considered as current affairs depending on the framing and treatment of a topic.

Not all factual content is considered news or current affairs.

Complaints often allege a lack of 'balance.' Balance is not in itself a requirement, but there is an obligation for fairness.

Current affairs content must be 'fair to all interests concerned'.

Providing a range of views does not have to mean that each view is given equal air time.

Fairness can be achieved over the whole programme, or several programmes, provided the audience is aware they are connected.

General Programming standards are also applicable to news and current affairs content.

News and current affairs standards apply to a subset of VOD services called 'relevant media services', which provide news and current affairs content.



Common complaint concerns:

Lack of 'Balance'	Bias	Range of views
Expression of a presenter or broadcaster's own views	Accuracy	Misleading views
Offensive opinions	Treatment of contributors	Misleading information

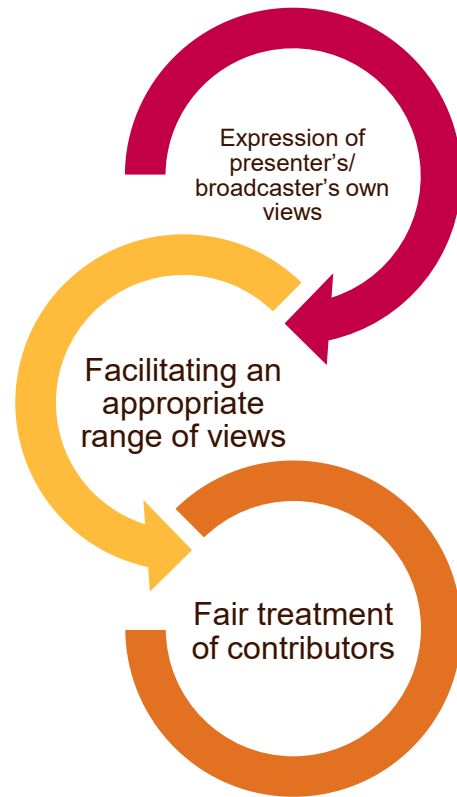


Common Complaint Considerations

- Is the programme news or current affairs? This determines which standards are applicable.
- What is the topic of the programme/segment and how is it framed?
- Was fairness achieved when the programme/segment is considered in whole and in context?
- Was an appropriate range of views provided either by contributors and/or the presenter?
- Are the complainants' concerns confined to their personal views or do they reflect concerns held by the general public?



Common complaint concerns:

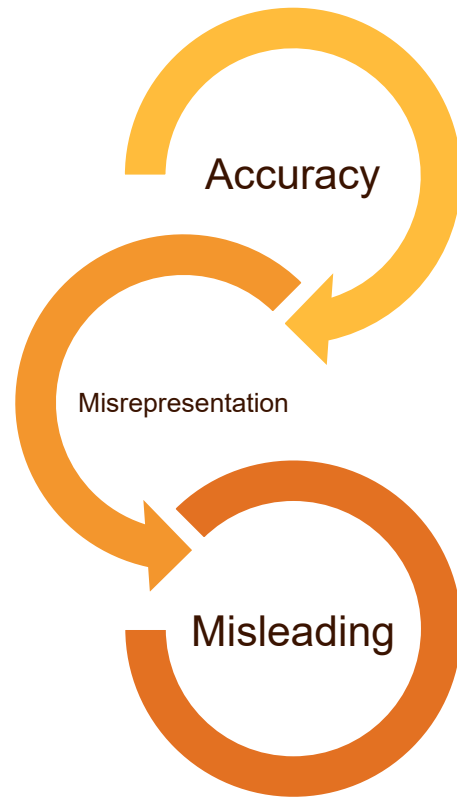


Common Complaint Considerations

- Did the presenter express an opinion on the topic being discussed?
- Did the presenter use rhetorical questions or provocative statements in order to elicit responses from contributors or to advocate a partisan position on the subject?
- Did the presenter facilitate the expression of a range of views on a subject of current debate or controversy?
- How was this achieved? Direct questioning, challenging statements made, rhetorical questioning and playing devil's advocate can contribute to establishing a range of views.
- Did the presenter fairly represent the views of those who did not (or chose not to) participate?
- Was robust challenge by the presenter unfair or appropriate for eliciting responses from contributors?



Common complaint concerns:



Common Complaint Considerations

- News and current affairs must be presented with due accuracy which takes account of the circumstances and facts known at the time.
- Has the content/story evolved and was this reflected in coverage?
- What sources did the broadcaster depend on? There is a significant responsibility placed on broadcasters/relevant VOD providers in ensuring that sources or information are valid. For this reason, broadcasters/relevant VOD providers are often best placed to respond to allegations of inaccuracy.
- Did the presenter's tone and/or language cause or contribute to misrepresentation of views or facts?
- Did the inaccuracy materially mislead the audience about the facts of the matter in focus?



Undue Offence

- Matters which cause offence differ from person to person and are largely subjective.
- Broadcasters/VOD providers create programming that reflects diverse tastes and interests which may offend some viewers.
- Programme material cannot be guaranteed to be free from offence.
- There is no right to not be offended.
- Undue offence is offence that is widespread, or is without justification.



Harm

- Harm is less subjective than undue offence.
- Harmful content is content which is interpreted to cause physical, psychological or emotional harm to a person.
- The standards aim to prevent harm to viewers and listeners, in particular children.



Incitement to Hatred

- Programme material should not support or allow discrimination, as defined under the Equal Status Act 2000 and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Programme material should not encourage violence or stir up hatred toward any group or individual(s). This is a criminal offence.



Incitement to Crime

- Programme material should not support or encourage crime, including violent, dangerous, or antisocial behaviour.

General Programming Standards

Privacy

- Any encroachment on the privacy of an individual in a programme or in the means employed to make a programme is not unwarranted.
- Encroachment on an individual's privacy must be reasonable, proportionate, and limited to the degree that is required to inform the audience in the public interest.
- Informed consent - participants in a programme should generally be aware of the subject matter, context and the nature and format of their contribution.



Protection of the Public Interest

- Programme material should not promote or incite to crime.
- Programme material shall not undermine the authority of the State.
- Programme material shall not provoke the public to commit terrorist acts.
- Programme material shall not encourage behaviour or views that are grossly prejudicial to the protection of the environment.



Insights from Complaint Handling

Complaints about privacy are generally made by a person whose privacy may have been unreasonably encroached upon.

Undermining the authority of the State is generally understood to mean subversive or insurgent material intended to undermine or destabilise the legitimacy of the Irish State and/or its institutions.

This provision is not intended to prevent critical analysis or scrutiny of topics which concern the Irish state and its history, or the Government.

General Programming – Common Complaint Concerns



Offence

- Humour
- Language
- Political opinions
- Religious beliefs



Harm

- Harm to children
- Stigmatisation



Incitement

- Incitement to hatred
- Incitement to crime



Content

- Strong language
- Sexual content



Common Complaint Considerations

- What time of day is the content scheduled?
- Is there editorial justification for the inclusion of the content?
- What is the likelihood of children being exposed to and affected by the content?
- What is the audience expectation of the programme?
- Are there audience warnings in advance of the content or helplines following?
- Is it likely that many were offended?
- Did the content harm the viewer(s) emotionally, psychologically or physically?
- Were there any steps taken to mitigate offence?

Insights from Complaint Handling

People often complain that offence was caused to somebody else or a group of people but not necessarily to the complainant.

Complainants often allege that certain views are harmful however these allegations sometimes stem from the complainant's views differing from that which was presented.

Discussions, depictions or references to crime do not necessarily equate to incitement to, or a clear call to commit crime.

We receive very few complaints about violent content. This conflicts with our recent research which shows 87% of people are concerned about violent content.

In October 2025, An Coimisiún conducted research into public attitudes to harmful and offensive content in broadcast, video-on-demand and cinema content in conjunction with the Irish Film Classification Office and the Office of the Children’s Ombudsman.

Key findings include:

Two thirds of respondents are not concerned about harmful or offensive content.

Parents see themselves as responsible for their young children’s viewing.

Violence/harmful behaviour is more concerning than strong language or sexual content.

Context is key – genre, duration and purpose influence the level of harm or offence that may be experienced.

Audience expectation determines impact.

The impact of harmful or offensive content is considered to be greater in reality programmes.

General Programming – Respect for Persons and Groups in Society

The statutory and regulatory standards provide for the protection of, and respect for, persons and groups in society, based on any of the grounds referred to in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

These grounds are: sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

The Code of Programme Standards provides that there should not be emphasis on protected characteristics unless there is a justification.

Incitement involves encouraging, promoting, or provoking others to commit acts of violence or hatred. This can be through direct calls for violence, content that dehumanises or vilifies a group in a way that could provoke hostility or encourage discrimination based on identity.



Insights from Complaint Handling

The programme type and the framing of content is a factor when considering if content was disrespectful.

This provision is not intended to prevent critical analysis or scrutiny of topics such as religion or immigration.

Emphasis on protected characteristics may not be intended to discriminate however discrimination may occur by singling out a person's characteristics from others.

Expressions widely recognised in everyday vernacular, such as 'Jesus', 'Jaysus', or 'Christ', are generally not considered blasphemous or offensive to the Christian faith.



Common complaint concerns:

Xenophobia	Discrimination	Incitement of hatred/violence
Misogyny	Disrespect to religion	Political intolerance
Sexism	Mental illness stigmatisation	Unjustified emphasis on protected characteristics



Common Complaint Considerations

- Was the allegedly disrespected group one of protected standing?
- Was there editorial justification for the inclusion of the content complained of?
- In what context did the content appear?
- Were there any steps taken to minimise the offence and/or harm that might be caused?
- What are the relevant cultural factors to be considered?
- Was the language used stigmatising?
- Was there a clear call to hatred or violence towards a protected group of persons?
- Were any terms, references or images included that could be considered unduly offensive to any persons or groups?
- What was the potential impact on an audience?

Advertising Time Limits

- Statutory and regulatory standards set out the time limits for broadcasting advertisements within daily and hourly timeframes.
- These limits do not apply to broadcasters' promotion of their own programmes.

Commercial Communications Standards

- Political and religious advertising on broadcasting and VOD services are not allowed under section 46 M(2).
- The Commercial Communications Codes apply to advertisements, sponsorship and product placement.
- The Codes require that commercial communications are recognisable as such and are not harmful to the public.
- The Codes provide for additional protections for children.
- There are specific rules for the advertising of products such as alcohol and medicinal products.

Insights from Complaint Handling

General programming standards also apply to commercial communications

We have not received any complaints about advertising time limits, and only 6 complaints were received about commercial communications

This provision is not intended to prevent critical analysis or scrutiny of topics which concern the Irish state and its history, or the Government

We have not received any complaints about religious or political advertising

We have not received any complaints about product placement or sponsorship

Complaints about advertising have generally been received from competitor companies or advocacy groups

Complaints about advertising can also be made to the self-regulatory body, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

We may receive few complaints about commercial communications due to ASA's co-regulatory role



Common complaint concerns:

Misleading

Comparative
Claims

Surreptitious

Subliminal



Common Complaint Considerations

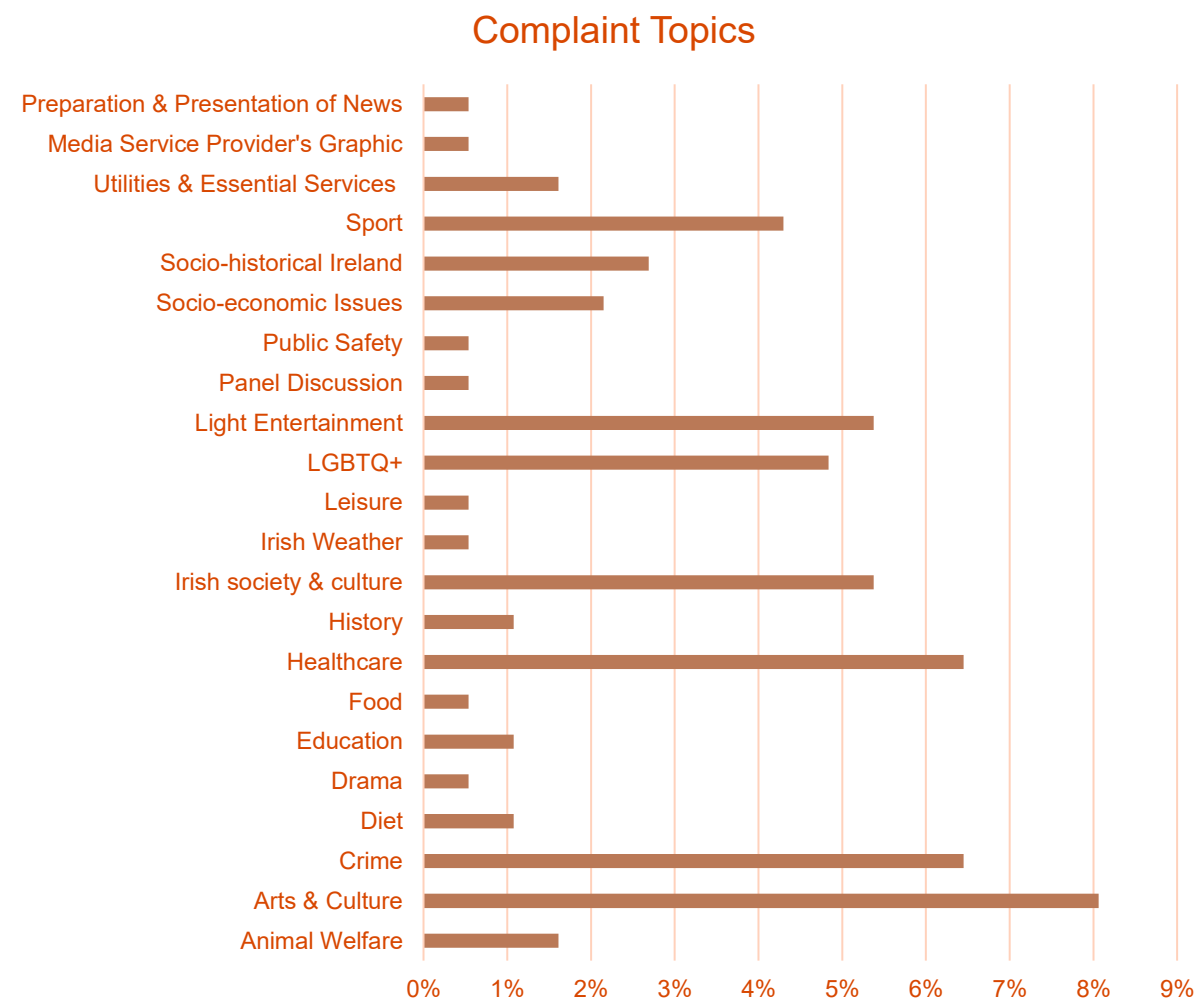
- Is it clear to the audience that they are being advertised to?
- Were overt/implicit comparisons between products/services made?
- Can the claims made in the advertisement be substantiated?
- What might the audience reasonably understand the claims made in the advertisement to mean?

What did the public complain about March 2023 - December 2025 Themes, factors and insights

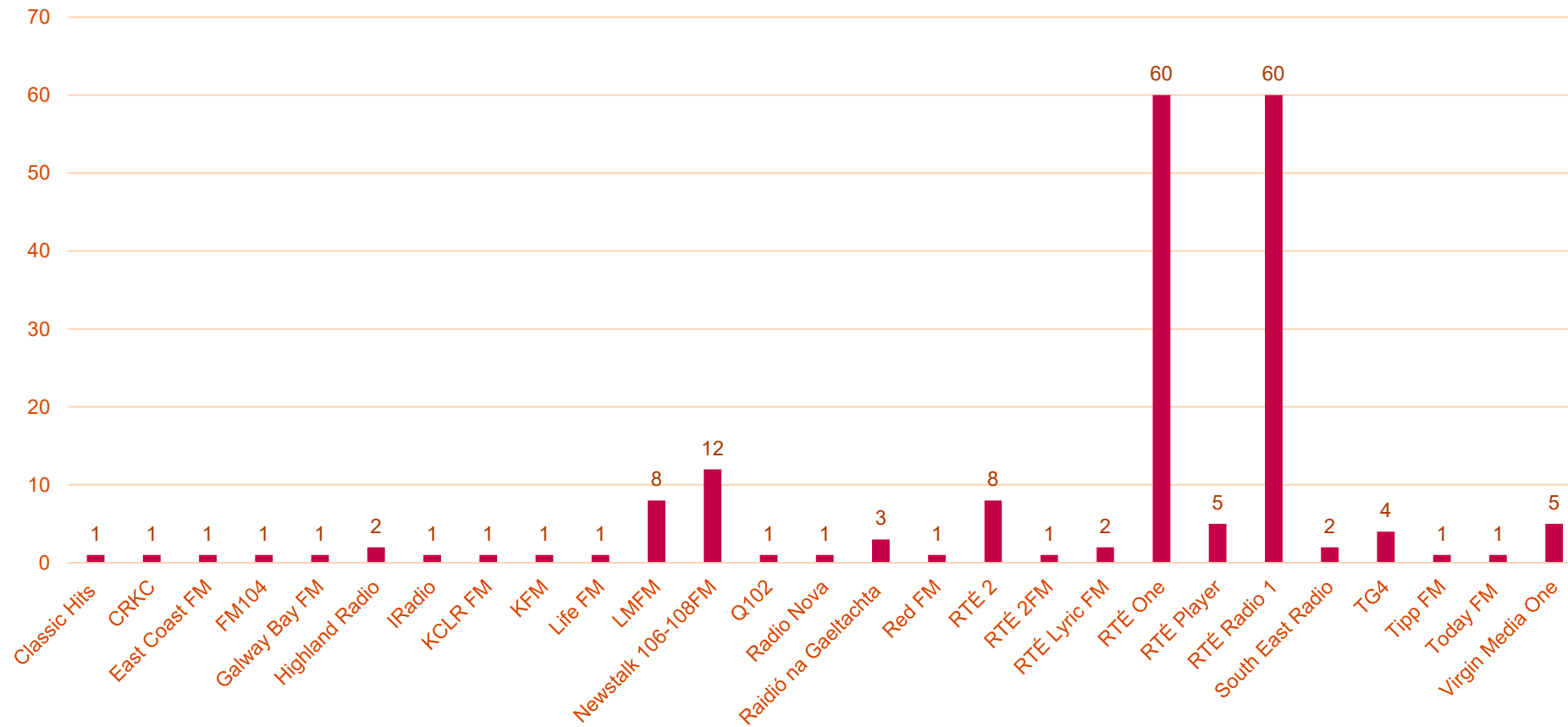
- This section reviews and examines complaints accepted and decided upon by the Commission from 15 March 2023 to 3 December 2025.
- The complaints team categorised the complaints according to the following data labels:
 - Service name
 - Service type
 - Broadcaster/Video-on-demand name
 - Content type
 - Topic of the content
 - The alleged breaches of standards
 - The reasons for the complaints
 - The decisions made by the Commission
- Complaint data was analysed by cross-referencing complaint volume and category labels.

Scope & Methodology

- This report focuses on the complaint categories with the highest volume of complaints.
- Global Affairs and Irish Politics & Government were the content categories most complained of.
 - 25.81% of complaints were in relation to global affairs, with a spike related to coverage of Gaza.
 - 17.74% of complaints accepted were in relation to Irish politics and government.
- The accompanying chart demonstrates the volume of complaints received about each topic with the above topics omitted, to gain further insights into other statistically significant categories. We have grouped categories which were not statistically significant as 'other' further in the report.

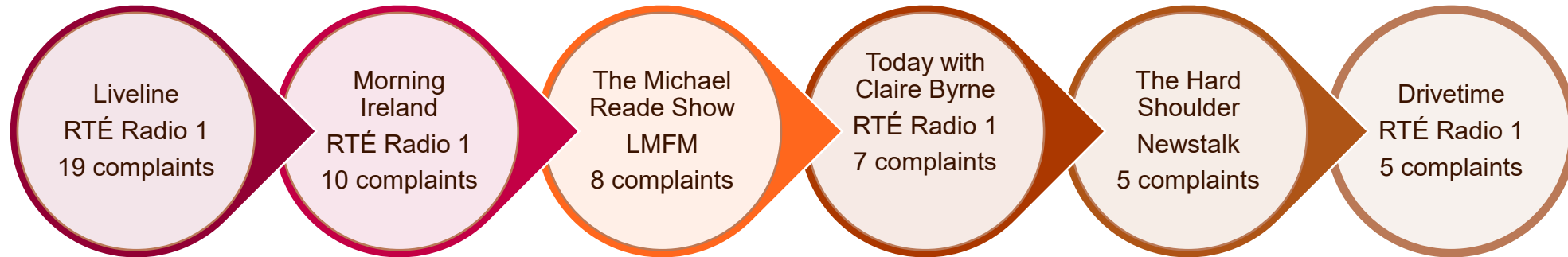


Complaints per Service



Most Complained About Programmes

Radio Programmes



Television Programmes



The data shows that RTÉ is the service provider about which most complaints were made.

- This may indicate that public service broadcasting is of great importance to audiences and that they hold them to a high standard across all types of content but particularly in relation to news and current affairs programming.
- This insight is supported by findings from the *Digital News Report Ireland 2025*: 'trust in Ireland's news industry remains strong, especially compared to other markets' and 'Offline, legacy publishers continue to dominate. RTÉ TV News (44%) and RTÉ Radio News (29%) are still the most accessed brands by consumers' [p12 & p13].
- Complaints made about RTÉ Lyric FM were about news broadcasts on the station and not about music that was played.

After RTÉ, the services complained about most were Newstalk, LMFM and Virgin Media Television.

- Newstalk and VMTV are national services, the larger available audience may explain the larger number of complaints about these broadcasters in comparison to local or regional broadcasters.
- The number of complaints about LMFM is due to a specific news story about the actions of the local County Council covered by *The Michael Reade Show*, where one complainant made 6 complaints out of the 8 complaints accepted. The other two complaints were made about separate content.

The data shows that a relatively small number of complaints are made about local radio stations in comparison to national broadcasters.

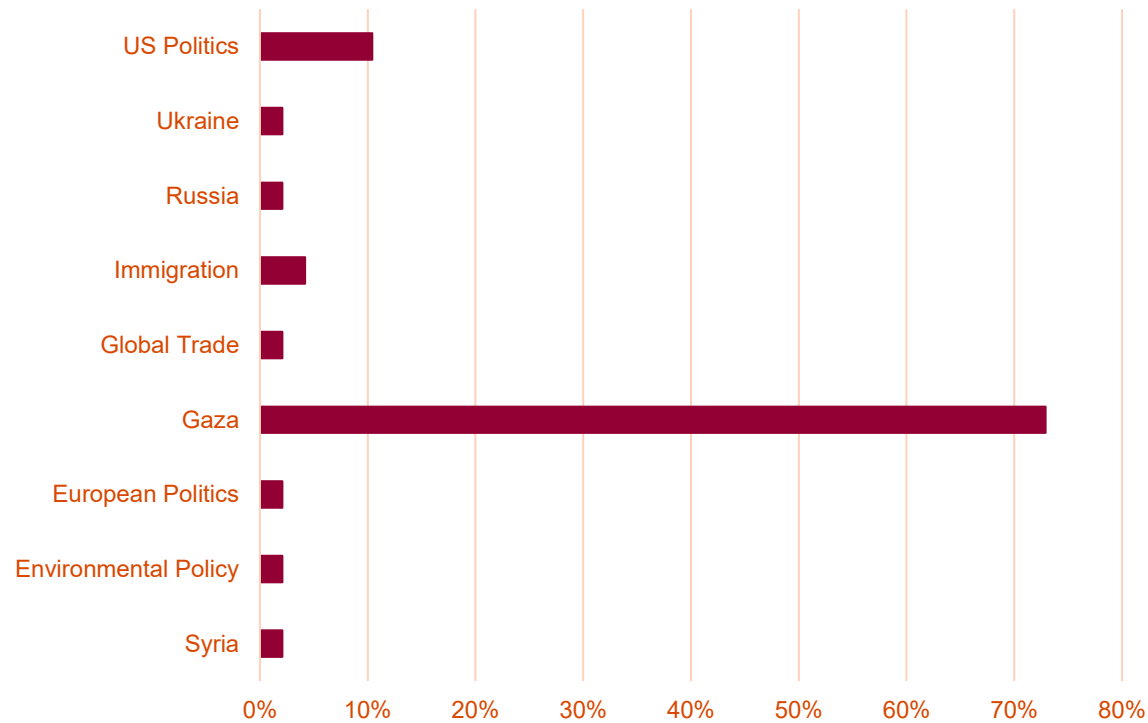
- Findings from the *Digital News Report 2025* and *JNLR IPSOS Q3 2025 Report* show that trust in local news and listenership of local radio stations remain high.
- The lower volume of complaints against local or regional broadcasters versus national broadcasters, and in particular RTÉ as a public service broadcaster, suggest that audiences hold the bigger broadcasters to a higher standard.
- This sentiment is something that we frequently see in complaints where people specifically outline that they expect better adherence to broadcast standards from the public service broadcaster.

VOD Streaming

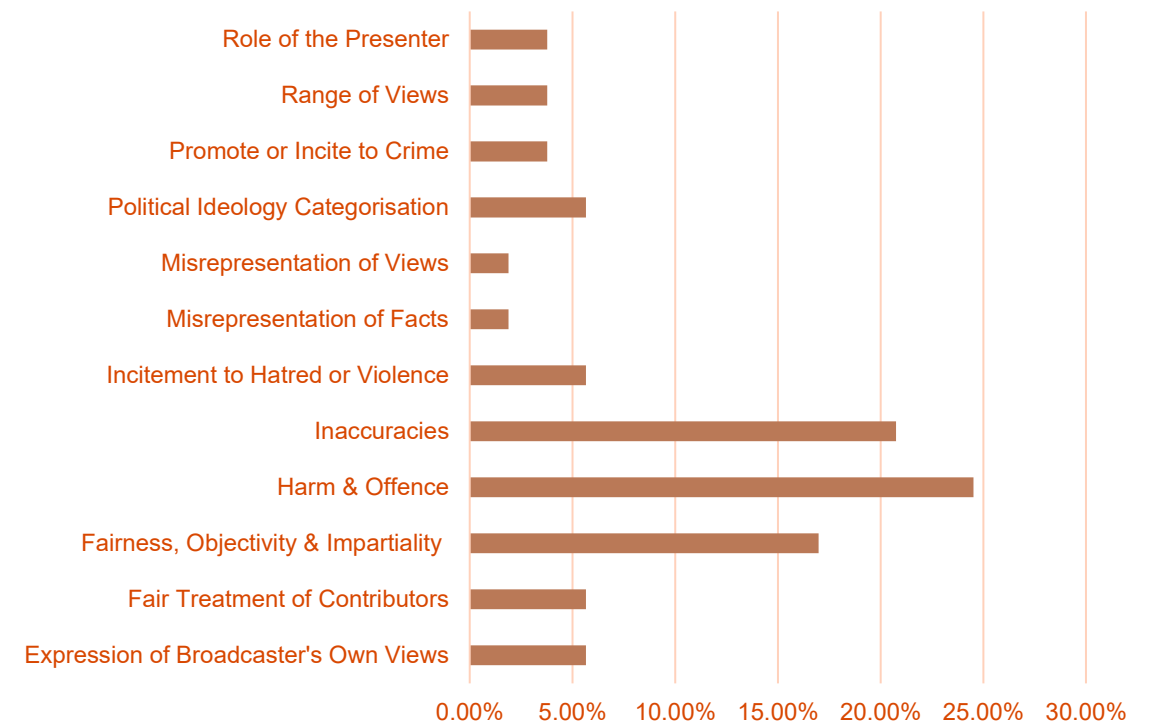
- Year-on-year statistics for the volume of streams is not currently available for the video on-demand service providers which An Coimisiún regulates.
- All complaints accepted about video-on-demand related to content previously broadcast, but later made available on a broadcaster's VOD service.

25.81% of all complaints accepted were in relation to programmes concerning global affairs. Approximately half of the complaints were in relation to news, and the other half were in relation to current affairs.

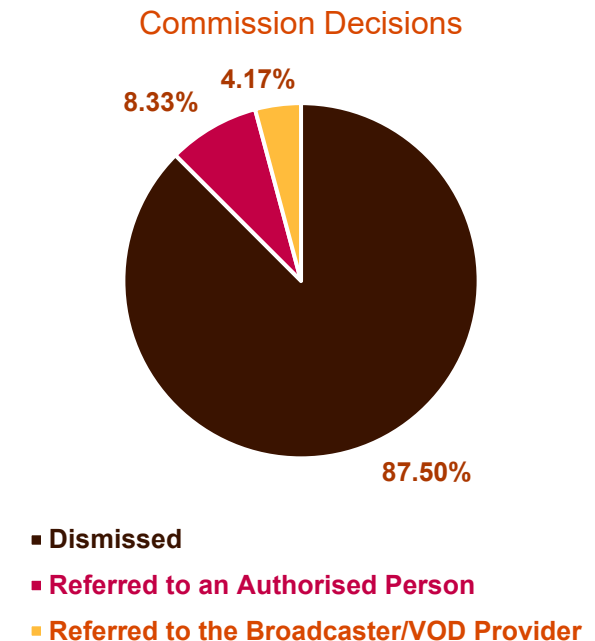
Content Topics



Complaint Concerns

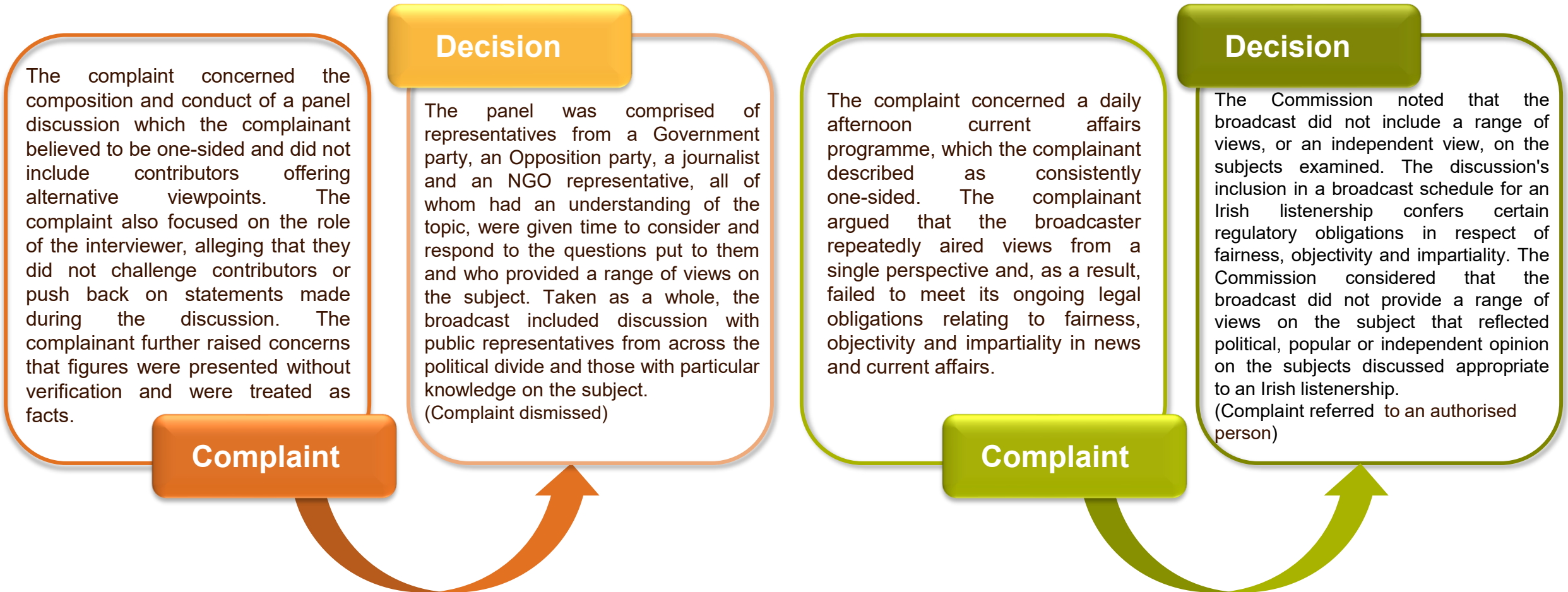


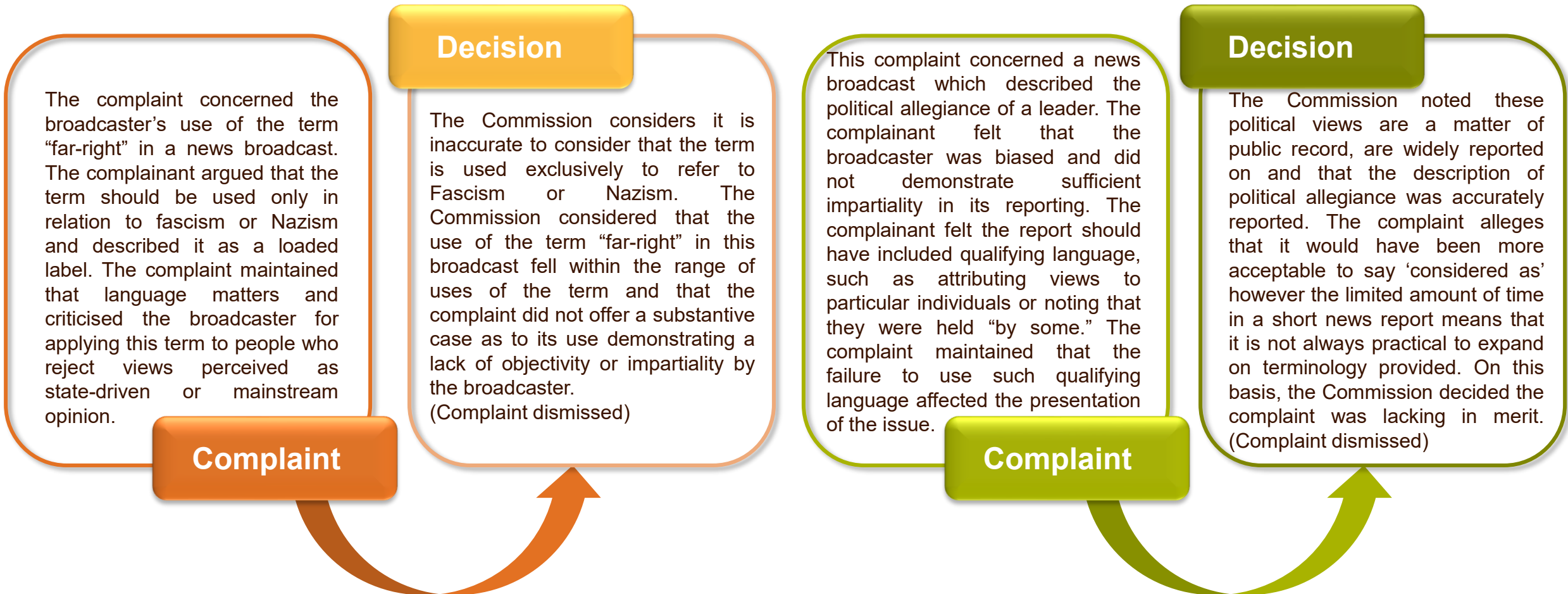
- 72.9% of complaints were about content covering the conflict in Gaza. This indicates that this global issue is one which the Irish public are particularly concerned about.
 - A common trend emerging from these complaints is that complainants believe that the expression of certain viewpoints caused harm or undue offence.
- Complaints suggest that accuracy is of high importance when reporting on, or discussing, global affairs, with a key concern being that inaccurate information may mislead audiences.
- Some complaints relating to the role of presenter allege the presenter did not challenge a contributor sufficiently while others allege the presenter unfairly challenged contributors.
 - These allegations appear to be closely linked to the complainant's viewpoint and indicate the divisiveness of perspectives on global issues amongst the Irish public.



Complaints Spotlight - Gaza

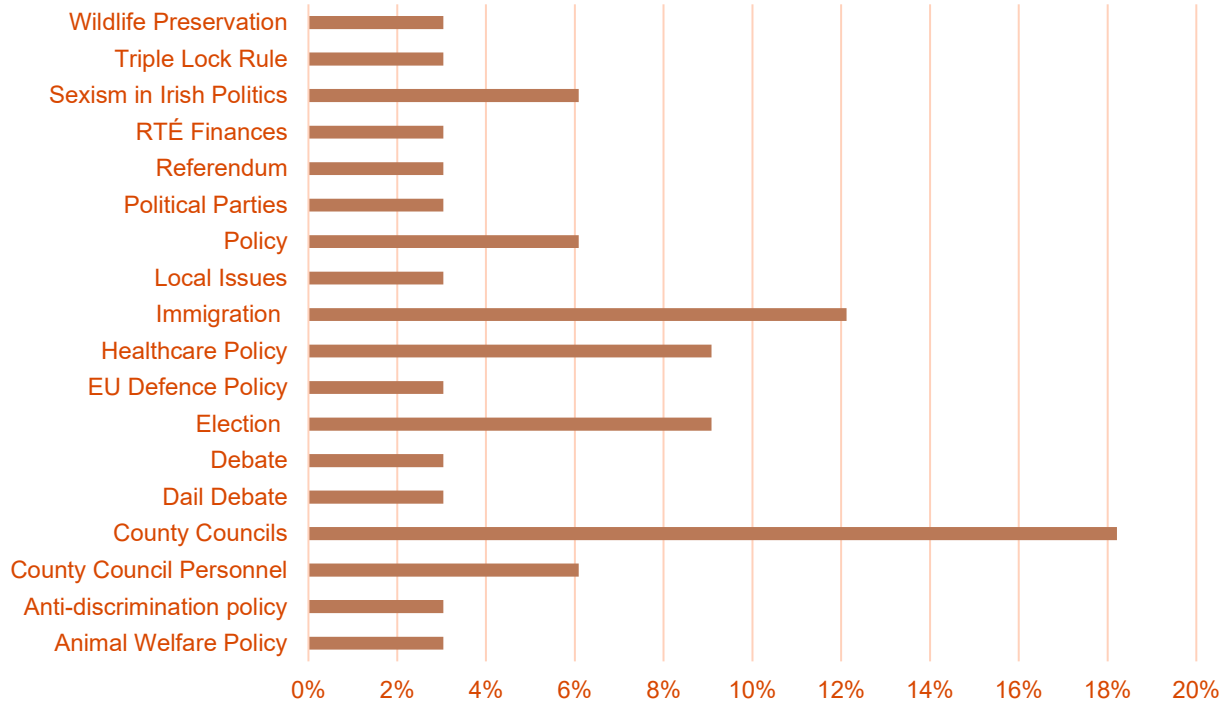
- 88.57% of complaints about coverage of Gaza related to RTÉ services.
 - 60% were radio programmes and 28.57% were television programmes.
 - 61.29% of these were current affairs programmes and 38.71% were news programmes.
 - Many of these complaints suggest that RTÉ should adopt a particular political stance in its coverage of the conflict and that in not doing so, the programmes and the broadcaster demonstrate bias, a lack of fairness and a lack of 'balance'.
 - Several complaints allege that the presentation of facts or discussion around the conflict may demonstrate antisemitism.
 - 6 complaints were made about the same edition of *Liveline*, during which a Palestinian woman spoke about her lived experience of the conflict, which suggests empathy with Palestinian perspectives:
 - The complaints allege that a particular question by the presenter to the woman was inappropriate, harmful and offensive.
 - This links in with the wider insight about the role of the presenter and complainants frequently alleging a lack of fair treatment of contributors, particularly those who are speaking about lived experience.
 - When deciding on these complaints, the Commission noted they misinterpreted the question asked by the presenter. On this basis, the Commission decided that the complaint allegations were unsustainable and all complaints were dismissed.
- Complaints sometimes reflect the wider discourse around the conflict such as the political standpoints of the musical bands Kneecap and Bob Vylan, whose musical performances have been the subject of coverage and controversy across the media.
- We received fewer complaints about Gaza on other services including iRadio, East Coast FM, Virgin Media Television and Life FM.
- The allegations in these complaints followed the above complaint trends, including allegations about fair treatment of contributors, offence, the range of views, as well as objectivity and impartiality.



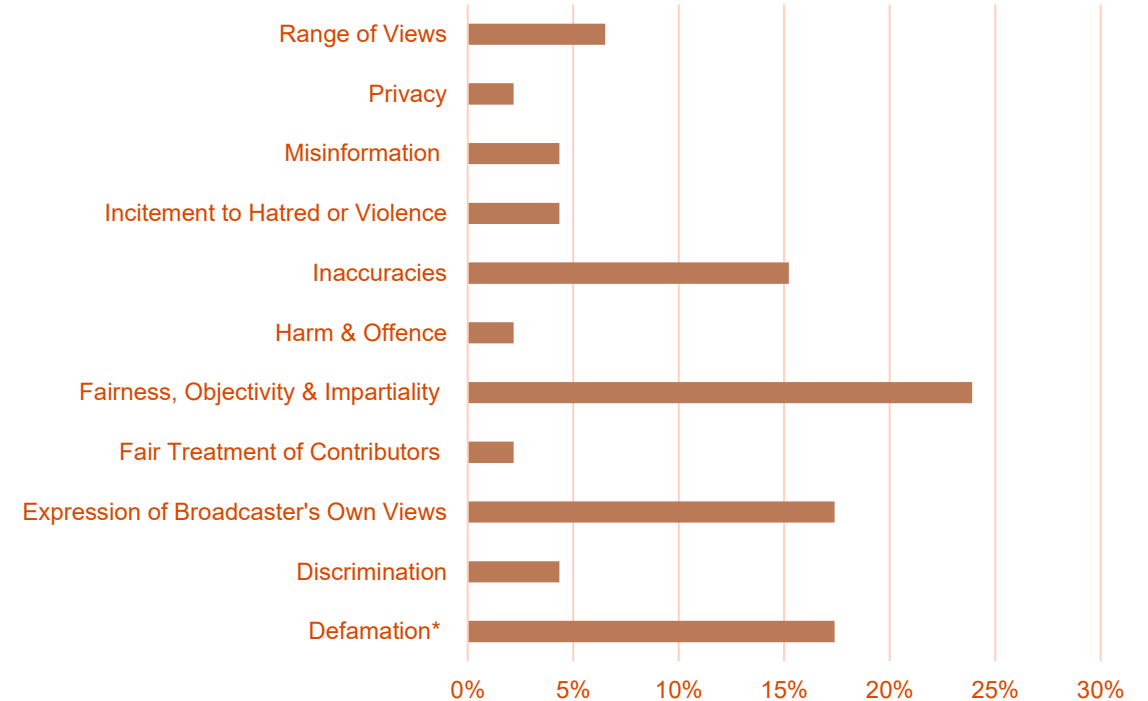


17.74% of complaints accepted were in relation to programmes concerning Irish Politics and Government. 70% of these complaints were about current affairs, and 30% about news.

Content Topics



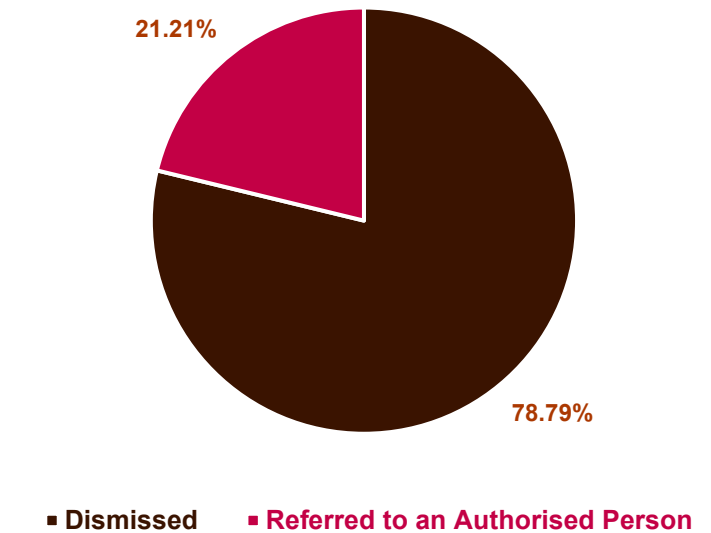
Complaint Concerns



*An Coimisiún has no regulatory remit regarding defamation.

- Complaints indicate that the public feel strongly about local issues in Ireland.
- Complaints indicate the importance of accuracy and access to a range of views for audiences when content is focused on policy issues which affect the Irish public.
- A large number of complaints relating to local Government were made by public bodies and representatives. Generally these complaints were dismissed on the basis that the scrutiny of the actions of public bodies and representatives in the public interest is an important function of the media.
- Complaints relating to Irish Politics and Government can often include a number of issues at once, for example: immigration, housing policy and discrimination are often covered together.
 - This may be reflective of the complexity of these matters for Government and the public.
 - Data indicates parity between complaints which appear to strongly favour pro- and anti-perspectives on issues of controversy which may indicate the polarisation of the public's views with regard to these matters.
- We have only accepted one complaint in relation to the coverage of a referendum:
 - The complaint alleged that the programme lacked a range of views and undermined the validity of the referendum.
 - The Commission found no reasonable basis to dismiss the complaint and decided to refer it to an authorised person to be considered for investigation. A decision is expected in 2026.

Commission Decisions



Complaints Spotlight– Elections



- An Coimisiún publishes guidelines to support broadcasters in meeting the requirements of fairness, objectivity and impartiality when covering content which focuses on elections and referendums.
- We tend to not receive as many complaints about elections in comparison to other topics relating to Irish Politics & Government.
- We received contacts from some candidates standing in the Local and European Elections 2024 and the General Election 2024.



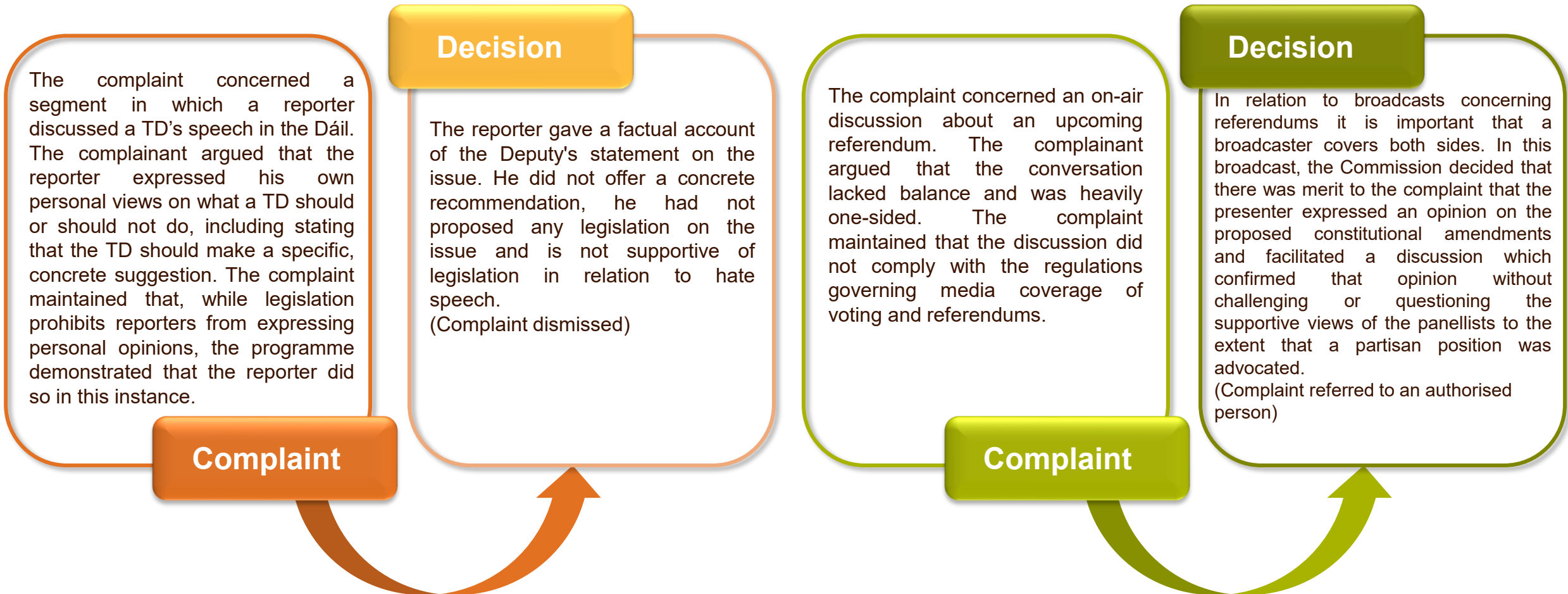
- Common concerns included fair treatment of the candidate in comparison to other candidates, usually related to not being given the opportunity to participate in a live broadcast by a broadcaster or only being offered the chance to do a pre-recorded piece instead of appearing on a live programme.
 - These contacts did not meet the criteria to be accepted as complaints, as complaints may only be made about material that was included in the programme and An Coimisiún does not interfere with the editorial freedom of broadcasters with regard to programme making.
 - We also received contacts from candidates alleging they did not receive as much airtime as other candidates.
- An equal allocation of airtime is not a regulatory requirement, though it may be appropriate in certain situations. The allocation should be fair and a proportionate approach may be adopted.

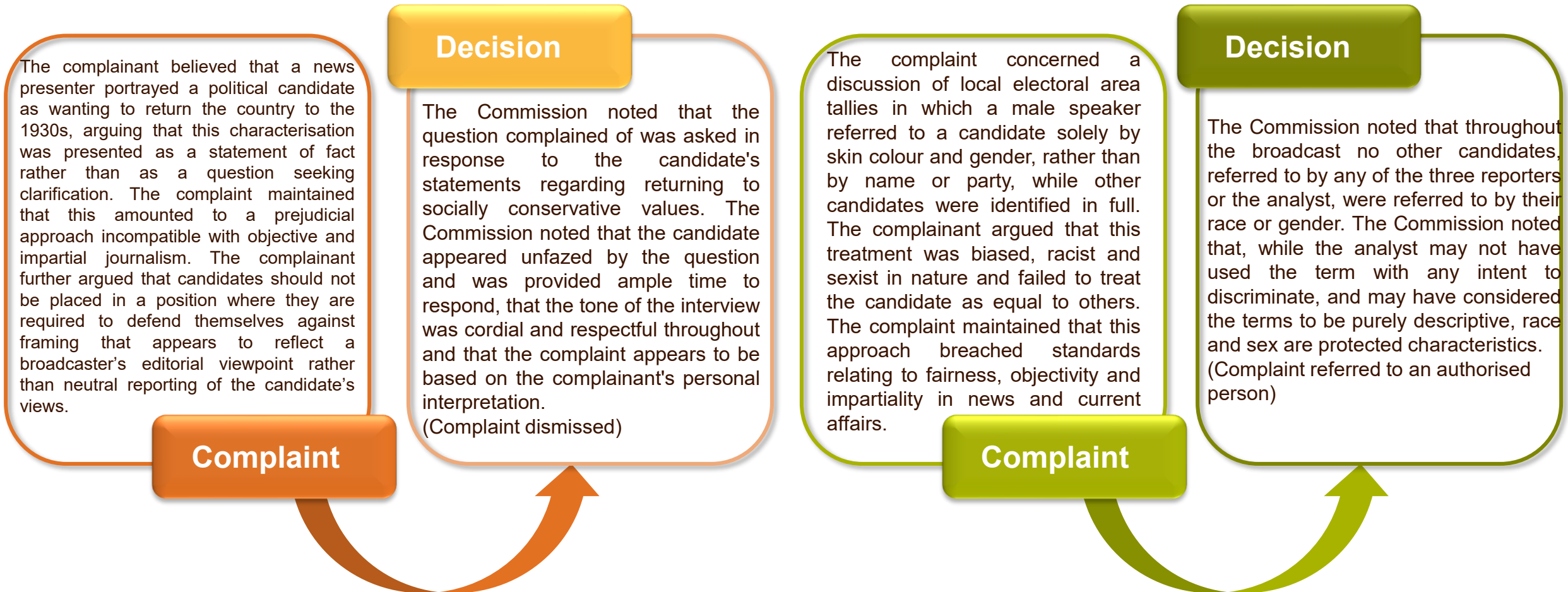


- Some complaints were referred to An Coimisiún by members of the public who supported candidates in the Presidential Election 2025.
- The allegations made about programmes that covered or focused on the topic of elections are broadly the same as those most commonly complained about in news and current affairs programming, those being:

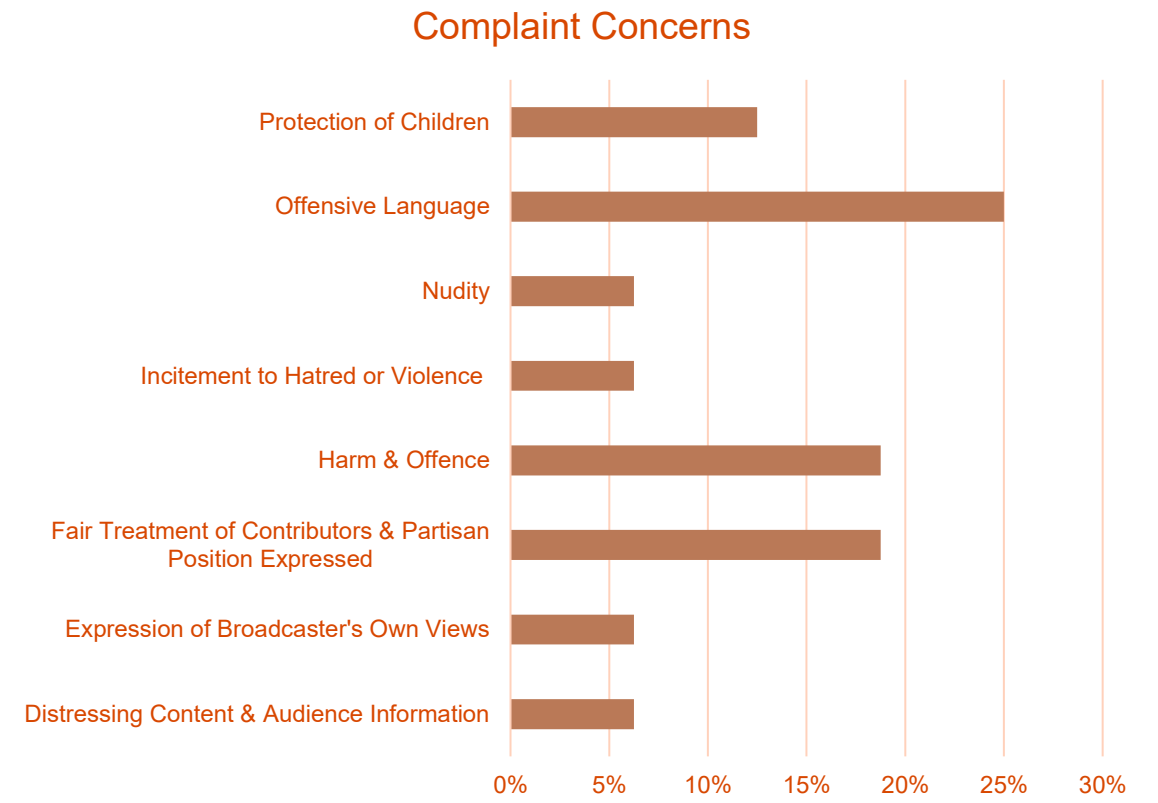
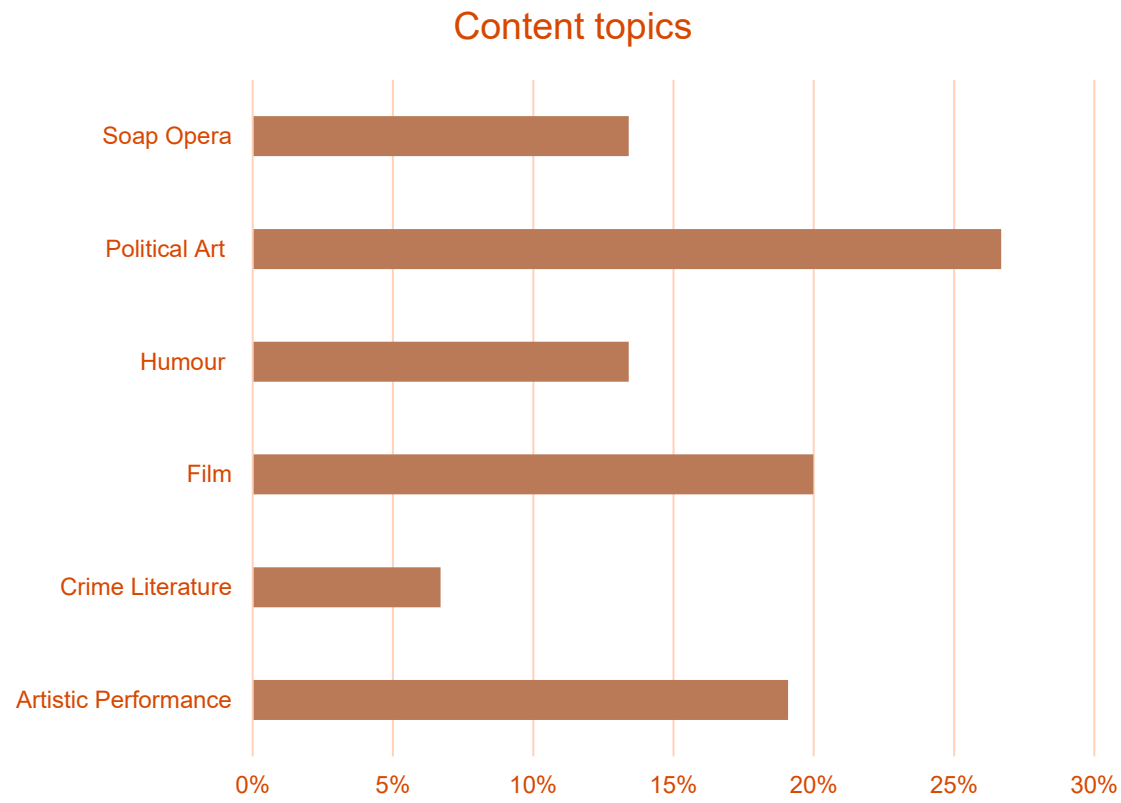


- Fair treatment of contributors
- Role of the presenter
- Range of views



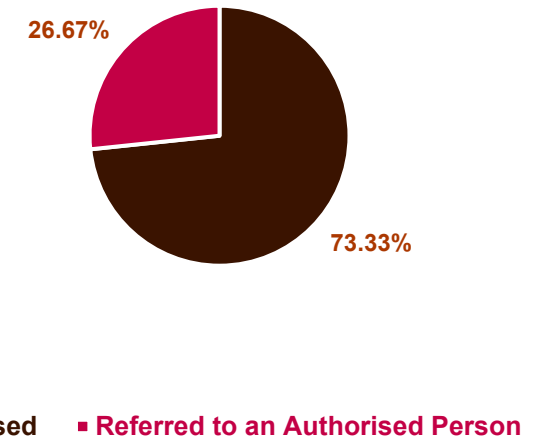


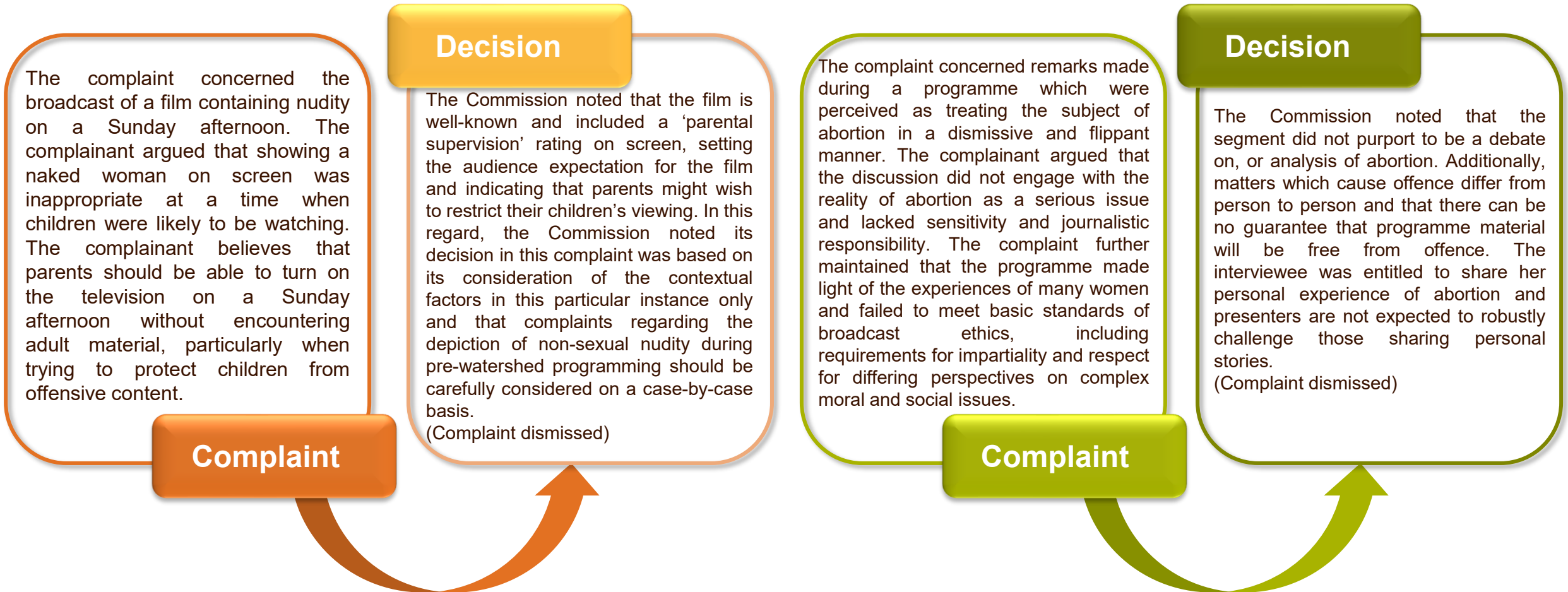
8.06% of complaints accepted were about programmes which focused on arts and culture.



- Some complaints alleged that the inclusion of artistic performances in content caused harm and offence. However, it is appropriate that broadcasters retain editorial independence in respect of decisions in relation to the freedom of expression for artists in their schedules.
 - Generally complaints concerned with artistic performances were dismissed by the Commission on the basis that responses to artistic performances are often a matter of individual interpretation.
- Humour is subjective and complaints which alleged undue offence based upon content which contained jokes or satire were generally dismissed by the Commission on the basis that widespread or undue offence was not indicated.
- Where content includes use of bad language, the scheduling of the content and audience expectation are key factors when considering whether harm or undue offence may have occurred.
 - One complaint about a film review included bad language and the Commission decided to refer the complaint to an authorised person on the basis of the likely expectations of the audience.
- Along with service providers, parents/guardians have responsibility over what their children watch, or listen to, both before and after the watershed. Service providers can support these decisions through the use of prior warnings and appropriate age signposting.
- 47% of these complaints included allegations of a breach of current affairs standards.
 - In some instances, although the focus of the programmes was on art and culture, the discussions touched on matters relating to current public debate or controversy.
 - In other instances, the opposite was the case and the standards relating to current affairs were not applicable to the content.
 - This highlights the importance of context and framing in determining the standards to which the content is required to adhere.
 - Some complaints which concerned the staging of a concert were considered current affairs content and the Commission decided to refer these complaints to an authorised person.

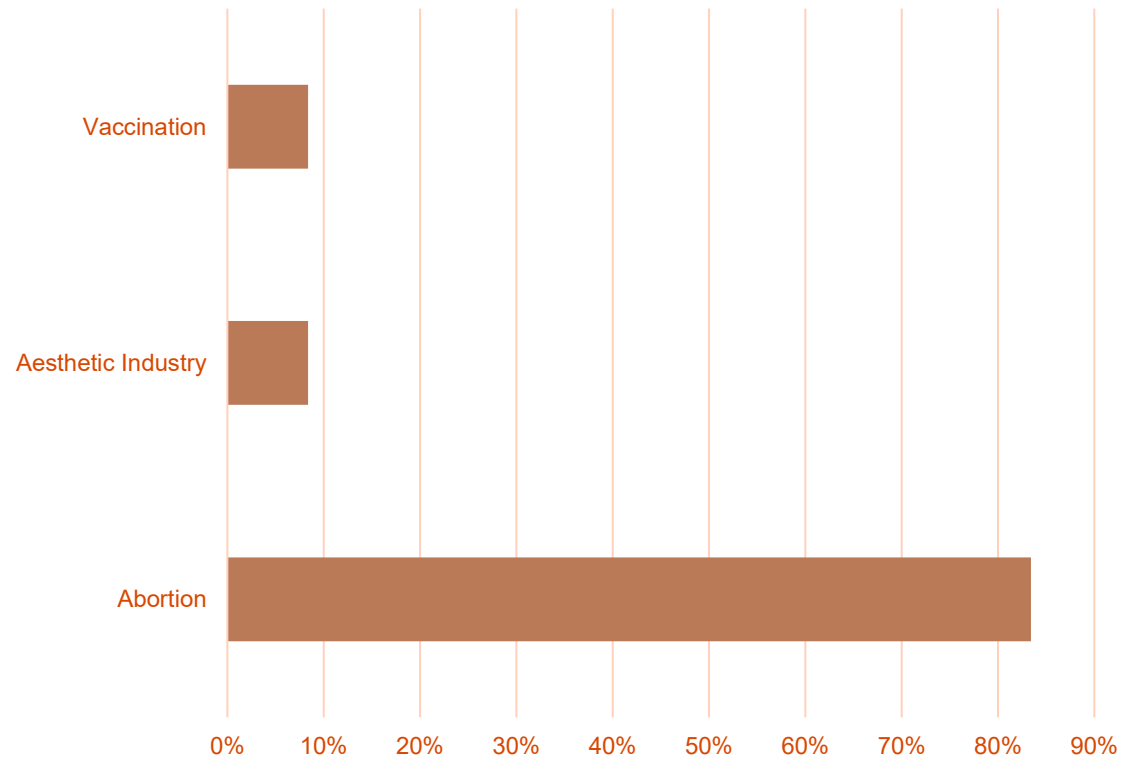
Commission Decisions



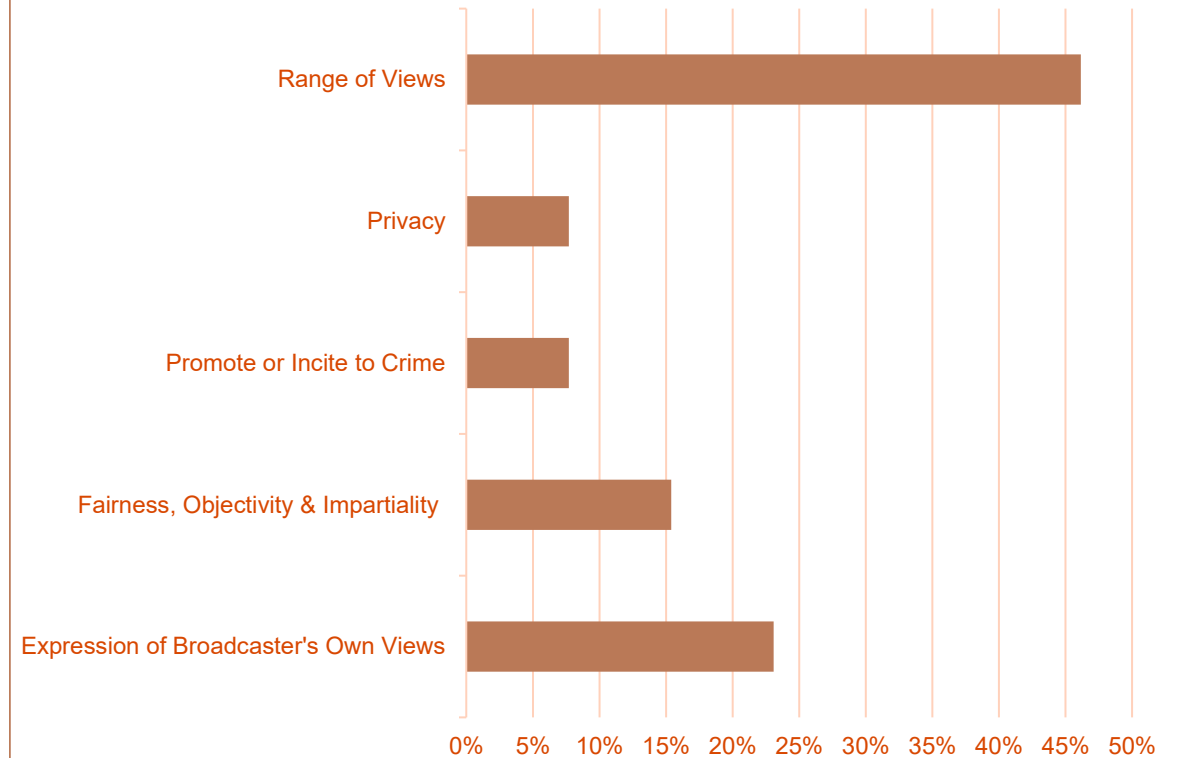


6.45% of complaints accepted were in relation to programmes concerning healthcare.

Content Topics

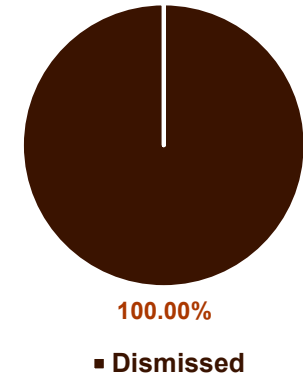


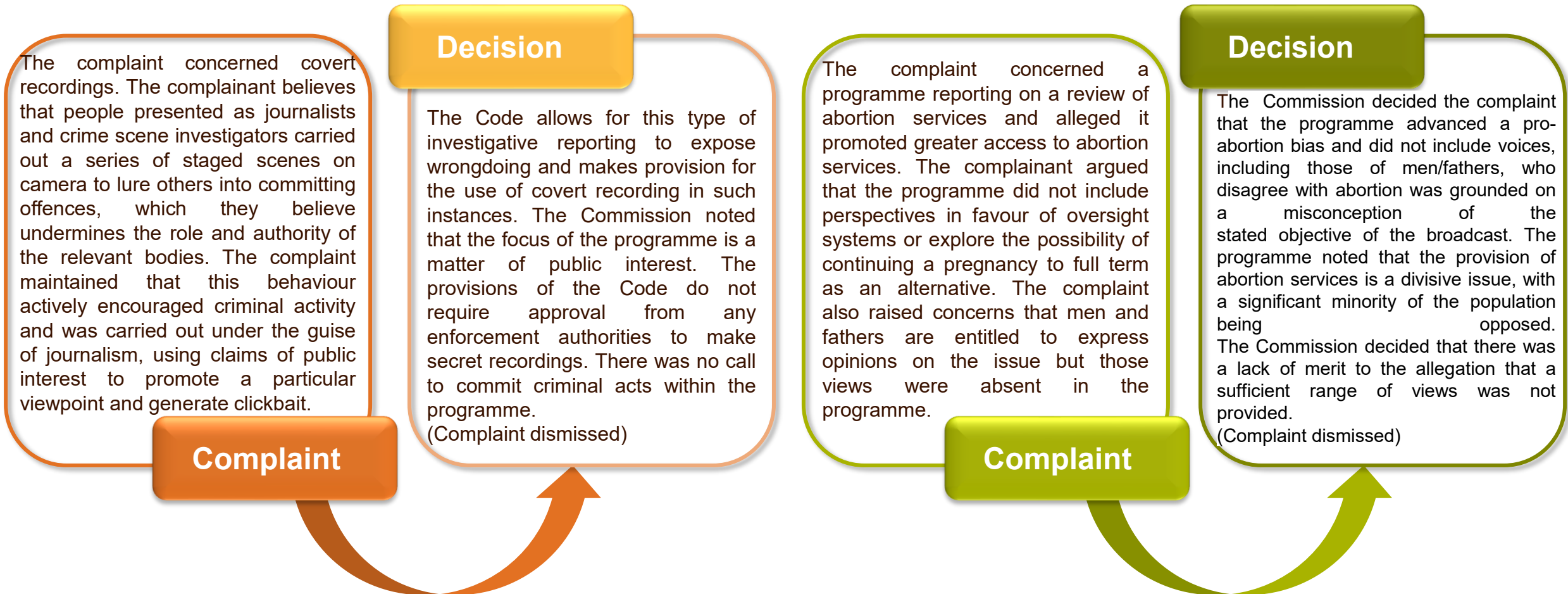
Complaint Concerns



- Complaints often allege that programming did not contain a range of views or contained an expression of the broadcaster's own views.
- Where a programme sets out to cover a narrow aspect of a healthcare-related topic in detail, some members of the public believe that inclusion of viewpoints on every aspect of the topic must be included in order for fairness to be achieved.
 - Fairness can be achieved through the inclusion of a range of views relevant to the aspect of the topic being covered.
 - The appropriate range of views may depend on the framing of the programme and the treatment of the topic.
- Complaints indicate that the public feel strongly about rights-based healthcare issues, such as abortion and vaccination.
 - The majority of the complaints accepted in relation to programming which focused on abortion were made by complainants who believed the programmes should have contained pro-life views.
 - Complaints in relation to abortion were received from both individual members of the public and a pro-life organisation.
 - One complaint alleged an unreasonable encroachment on privacy due to the inclusion of a covert recording however the Commission decided to dismiss this complaint as unsustainable as the person was not identifiable in the programme.
 - One complaint accepted in relation to vaccination was dismissed by the Commission as a similar complaint had previously been decided upon.
- A complaint made about the aesthetic industry alleged that in making covert recordings of the purchase of illegal products, the programme promoted and incited viewers to commit crime.
 - In limited circumstances, covert recordings may be justified in the public interest, subject to specific editorial safeguards that are beyond the scope of this report.
 - The Commission decided to dismiss the complaint on the grounds that it was unsustainable.

Commission Decisions

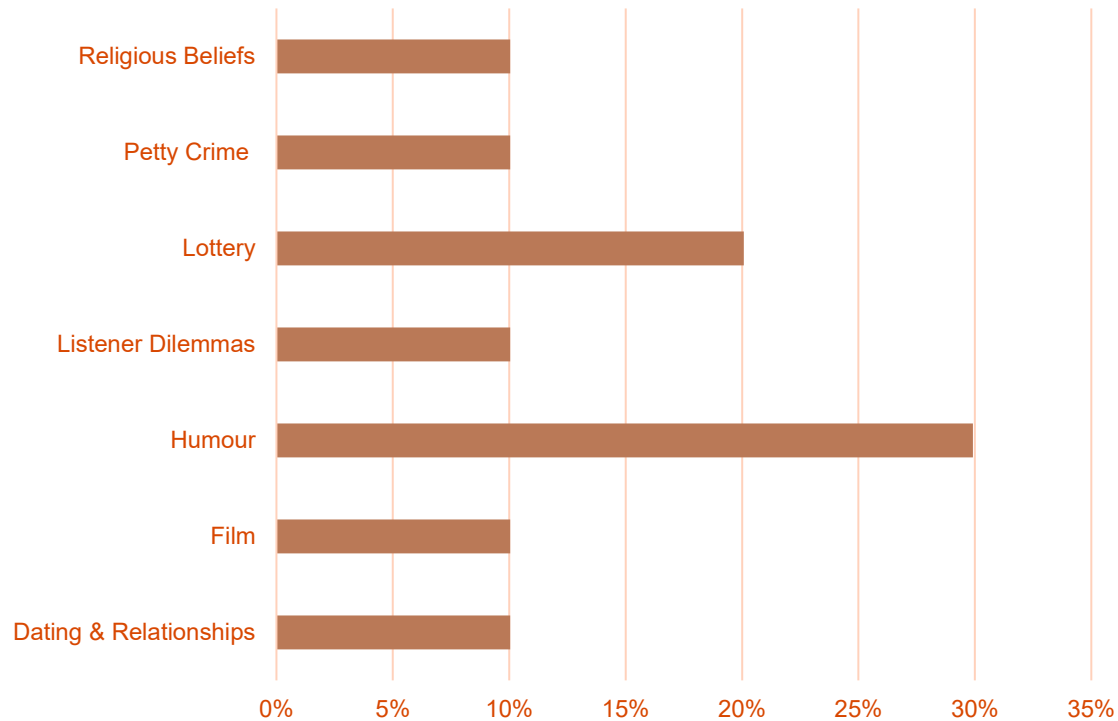




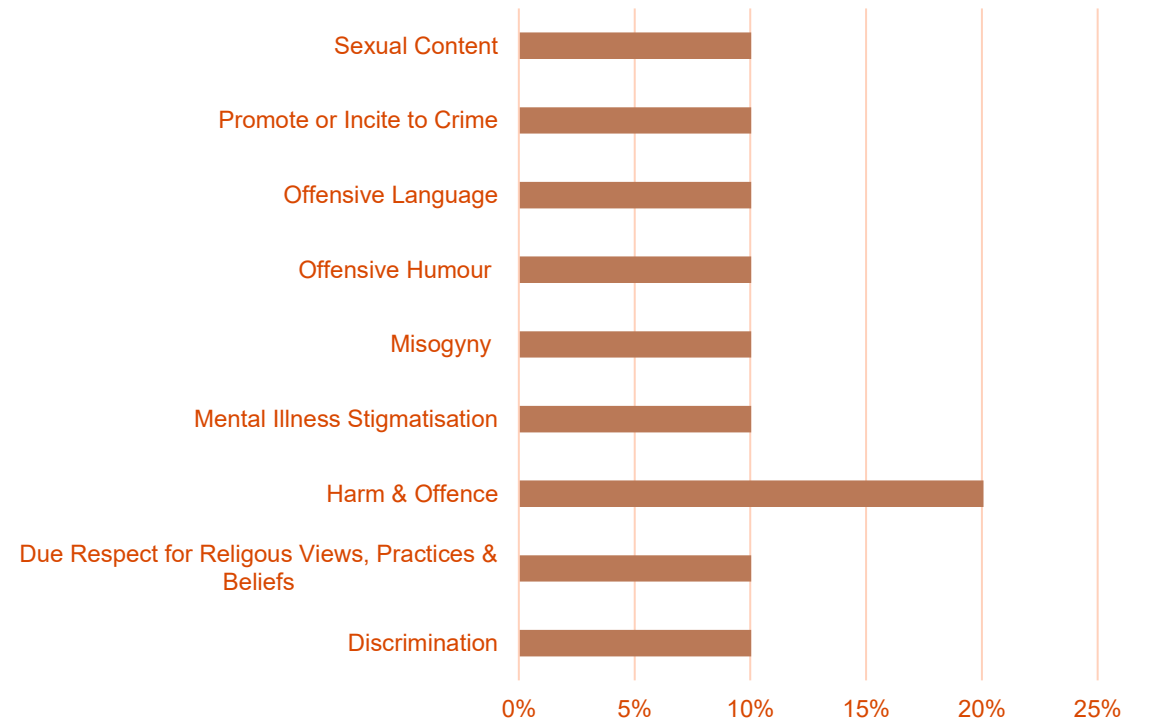
Light Entertainment

5.38% of complaints received were in relation to light entertainment programmes.

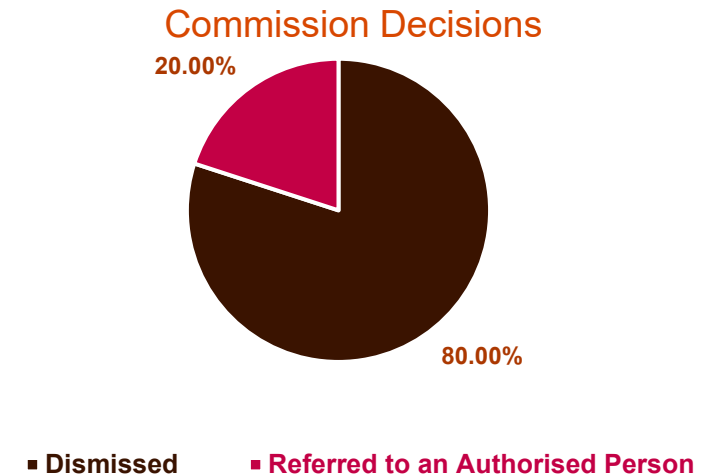
Content Topics

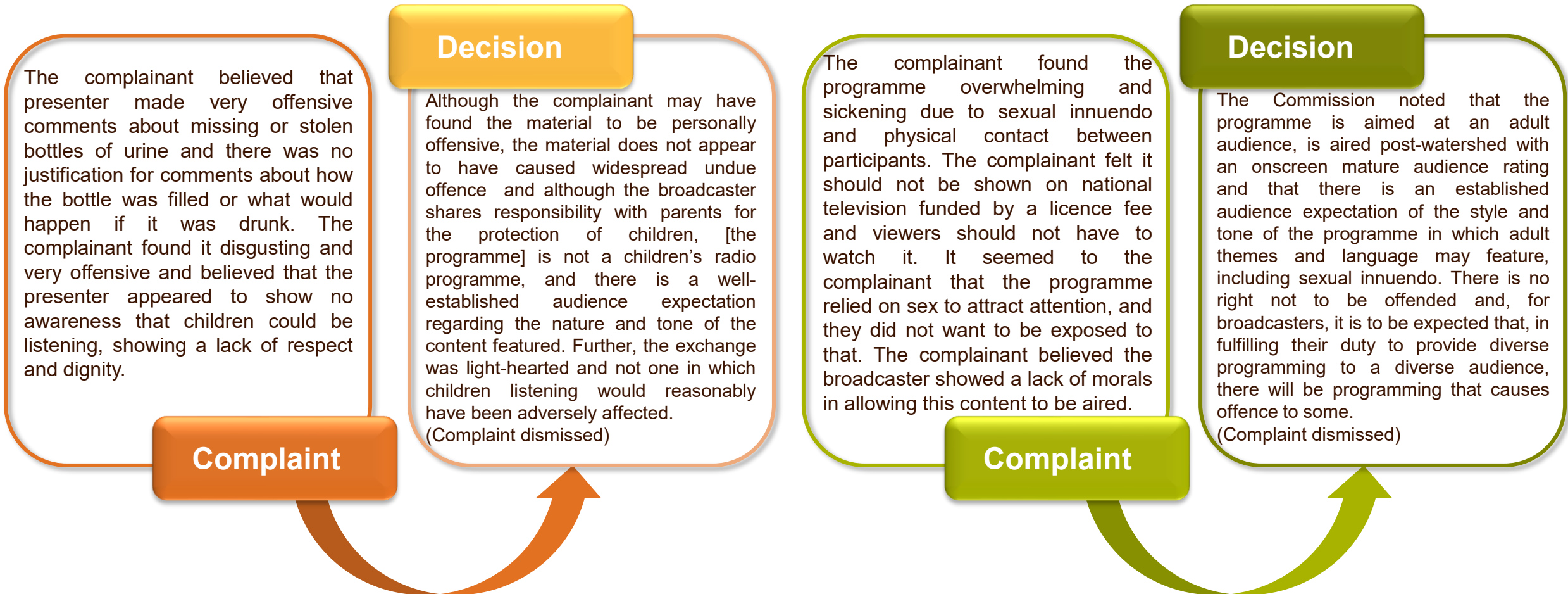


Complaint Concerns

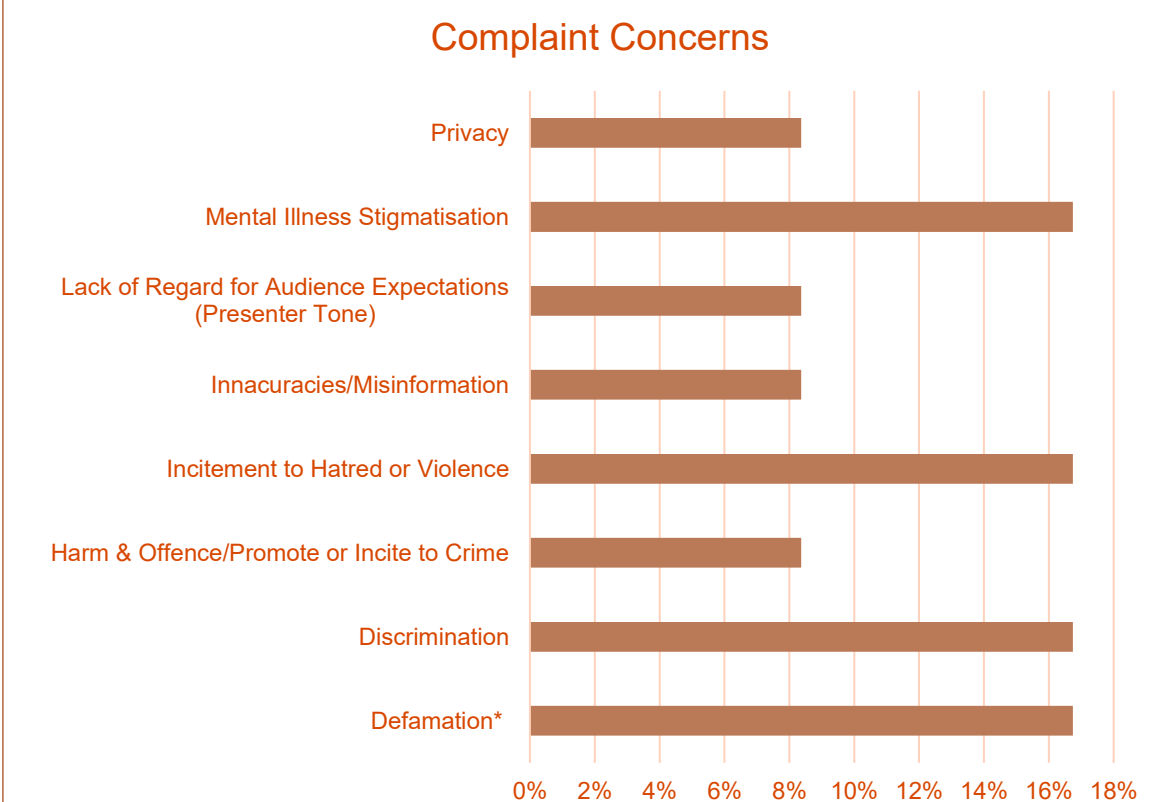
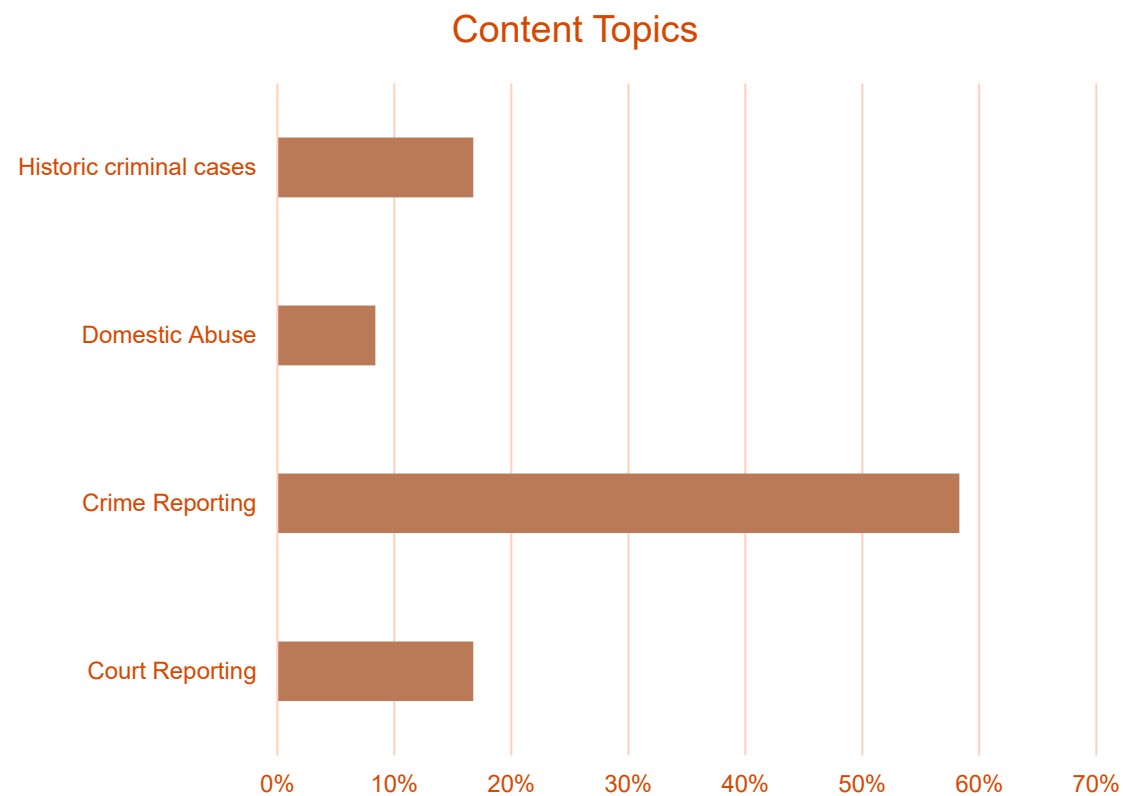


- Most complaints about light entertainment programmes alleged the content caused harm & offence.
- In deciding on these complaints, the Commission was particularly mindful of the audience expectation of each programme.
- Complaints indicate that the public tend to complain when they find something personally offensive. However, most content complained of was not considered to be ‘unduly offensive’.
- Complaints alleged that offence was caused by the humorous treatment of topics such as mental health and religion.
 - Some complaints alleged a lack of respect for religious beliefs despite religion not being the main focus of the programme.
 - In other complaints, segments of the programme focused on religious belief however they were in the context of a contributor speaking to their personal beliefs and lived experiences.
- While humour may mitigate the likelihood of undue offence being caused, the Commission considers the likely expectations of the audience as a whole.
 - A complaint about a programme which intended to take a humorous approach to the topic of theft and petty crime was deemed to have merit by the Commission on the basis that it trivialised such acts.
- The approach to covering a topic may impact the likelihood of undue offence being caused
 - A complaint about a programme which examined the impact of ADHD on artistic works was dismissed by the Commission as the framing of the topic was focused on the positive impact of ADHD on creativity.





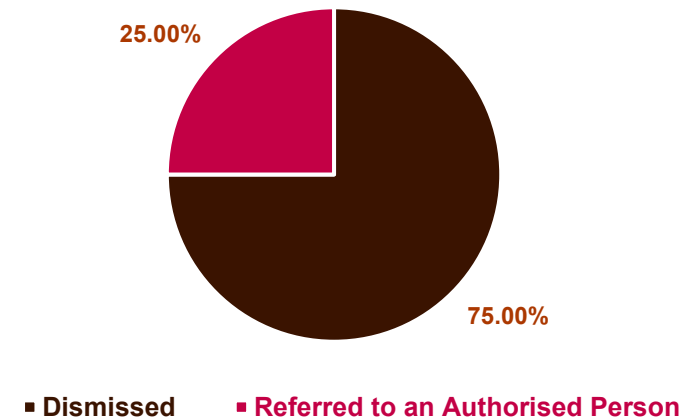
6.45% of complaints received were in relation to programmes concerning crime. 83% of these complaints were about news, and 17% about current affairs.

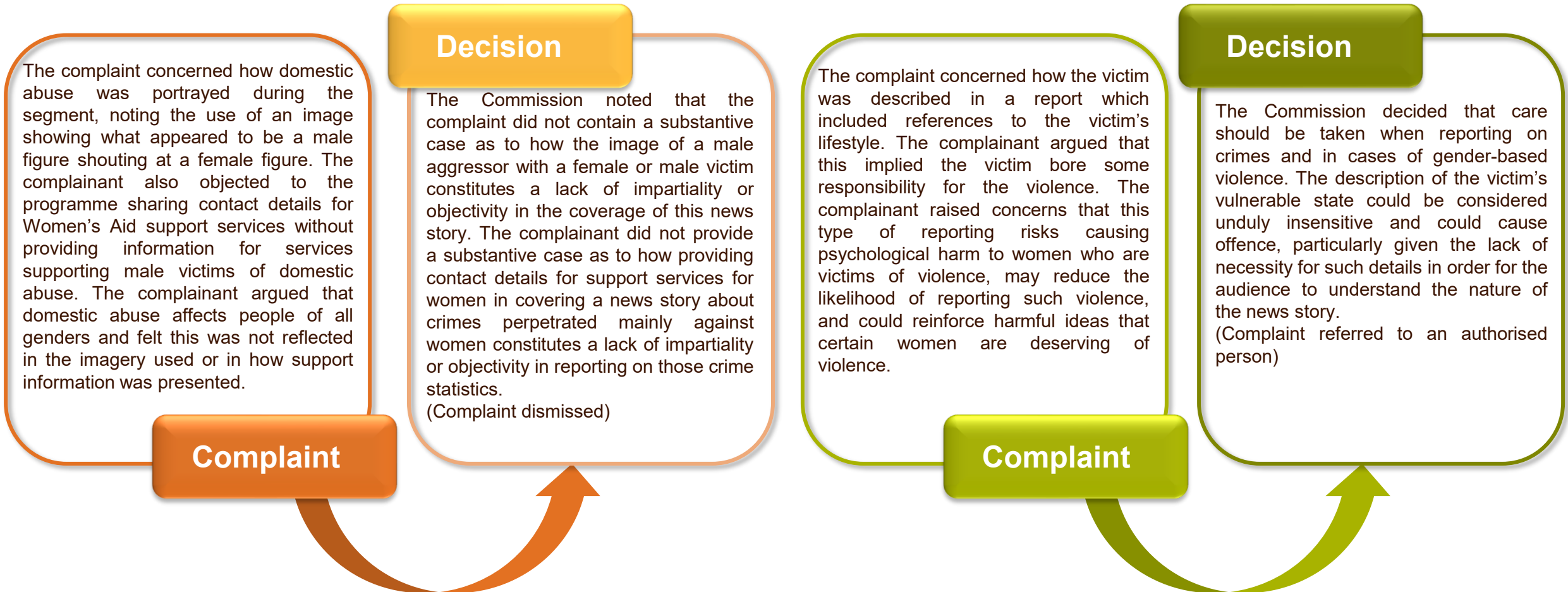


*An Coimisiún has no regulatory remit regarding defamation.

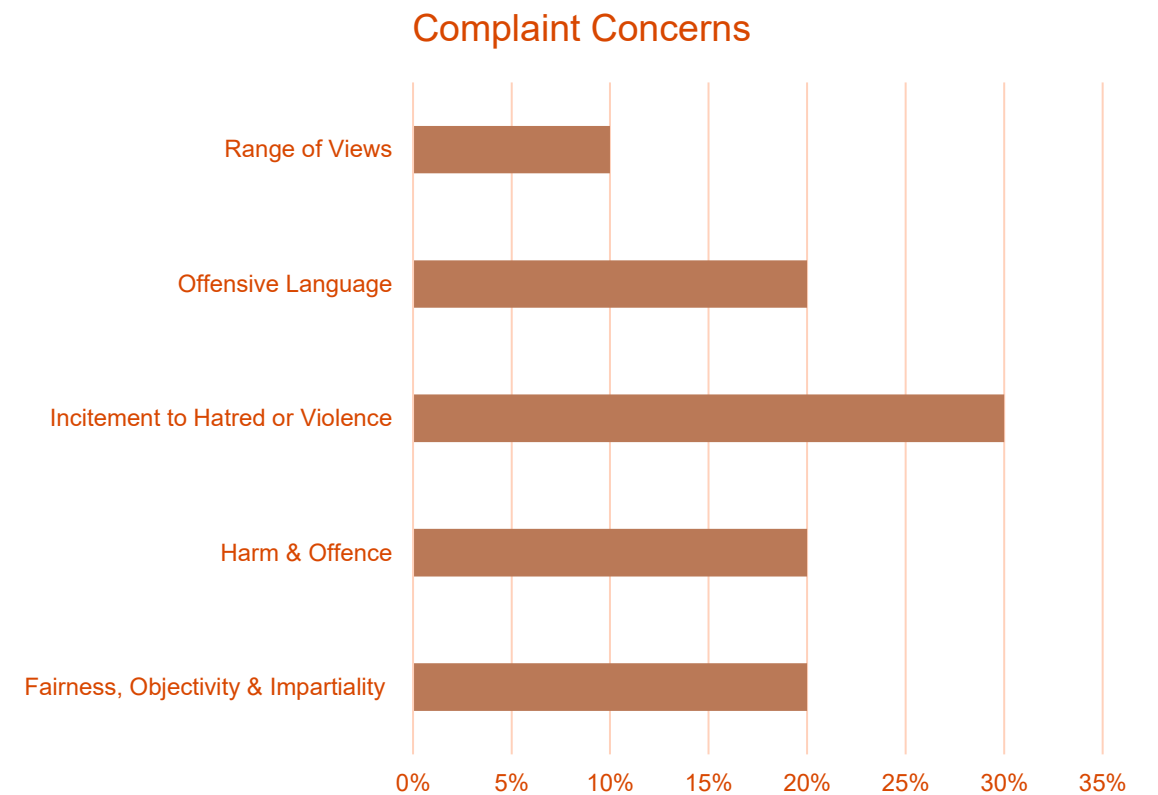
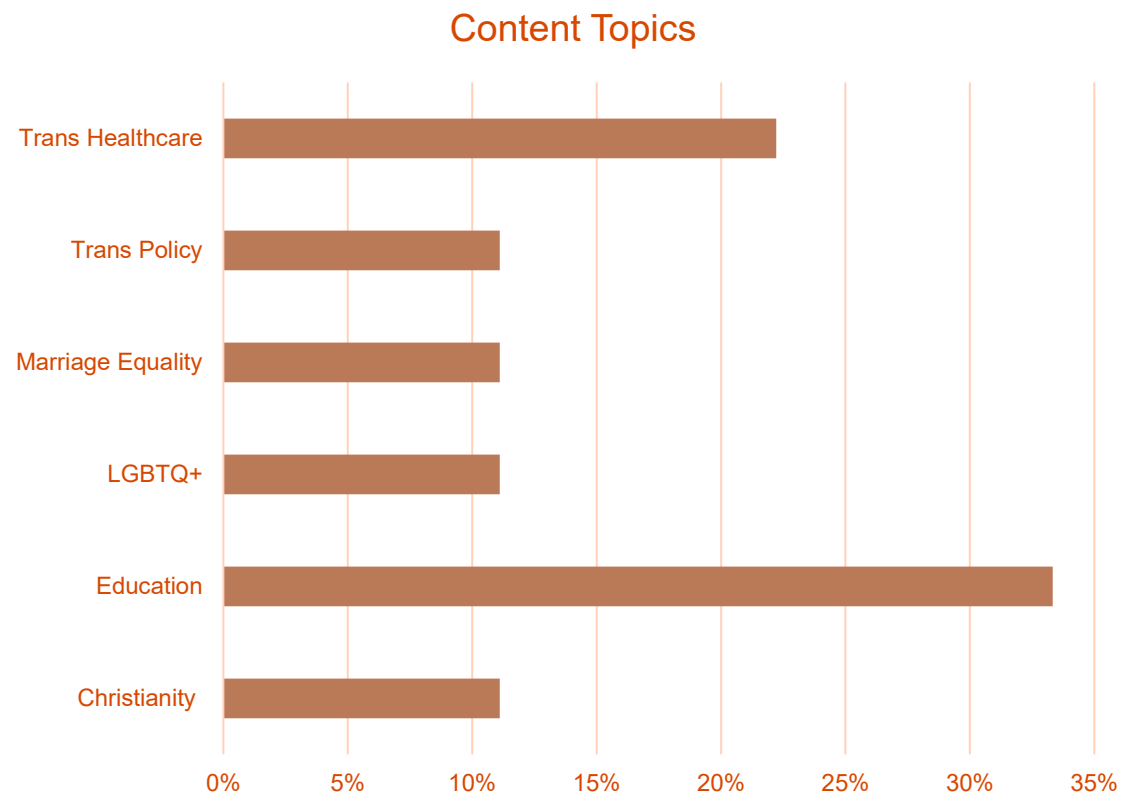
- Some complainants were concerned about the descriptions of victims and perpetrators in content which reported on, or discussed, crime.
 - Complainants were concerned that certain descriptions may have a negative impact, including the potential to stigmatise or incite hatred or violence against both victims and perpetrators. These concerns were particularly focused on non-nationals and individuals with mental health issues.
 - When considering these complaints, the Commission has regard to the accuracy of the descriptions and the editorial justification for their inclusion.
- Some complaints alleged content was defamatory.
 - Defamation does not fall under An Coimisiún's regulatory remit.

Commission Decisions



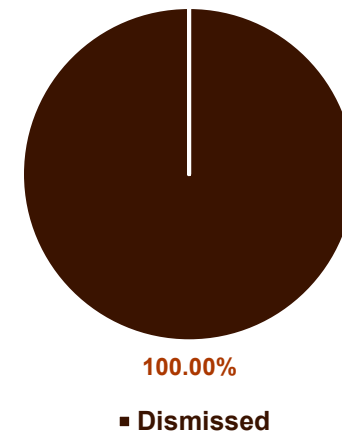


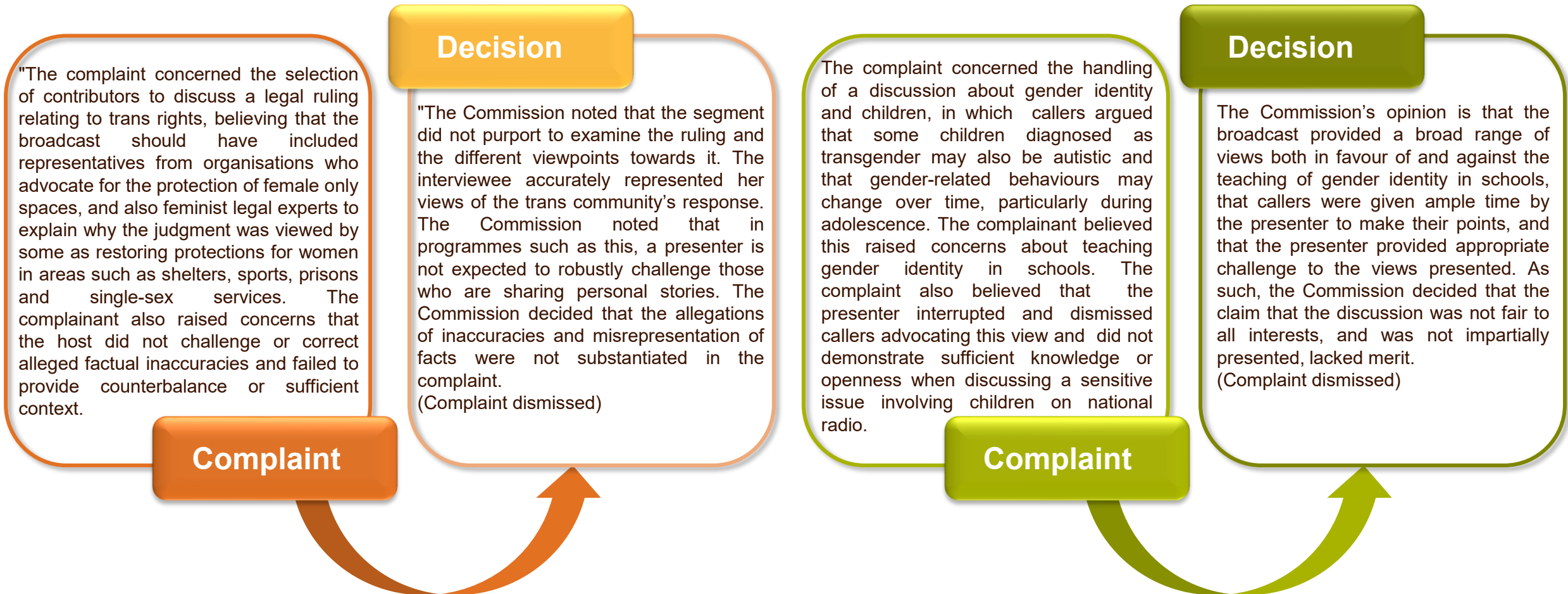
4.84% of complaints received were in relation to programmes concerning LGBTQ+ matters.



- Complaints were made by organisations as well as individuals, who held opposing views on various policy, education and health matters that relate to the LGBTQ+ community.
- Where a programme sets out to cover a narrow aspect of an LGBTQ+ topic in detail, some members of the public believe that inclusion of viewpoints on every aspect of the topic must be included in order for fairness to be achieved.
 - Fairness can be achieved through the inclusion of a range of views relevant to the aspect of the topic being covered.
 - The appropriate range of views may depend on the framing of the programme and the treatment of the topic.
- Complaints alleged a lack of fairness, objectivity and impartiality when contributors to programmes were speaking to their lived experiences.
 - In such circumstances, it is generally not a requirement or may not be appropriate for a presenter or interviewer to robustly challenge someone's personal story or experiences.
 - It is common for these allegations to be made by a complainant who holds opposing views or beliefs to those of the person speaking to their lived experience.

Commission Decisions

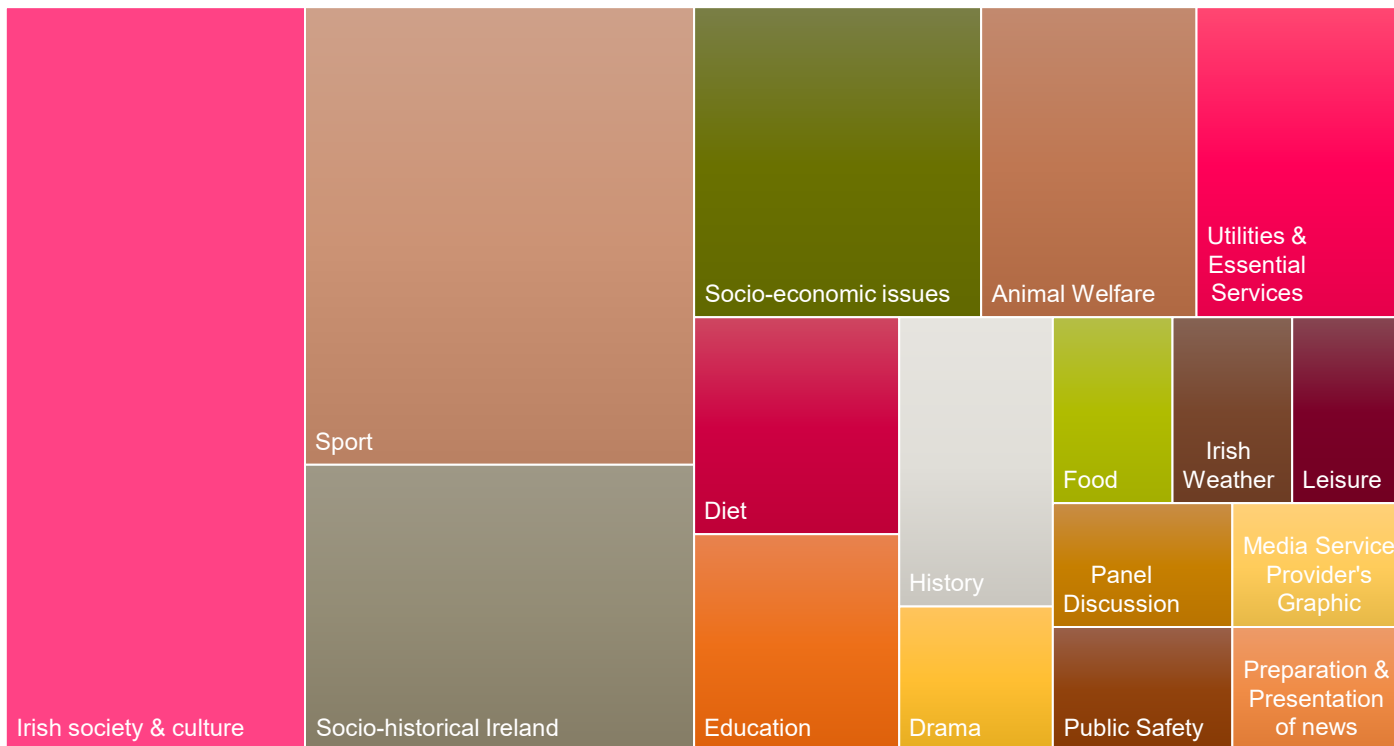




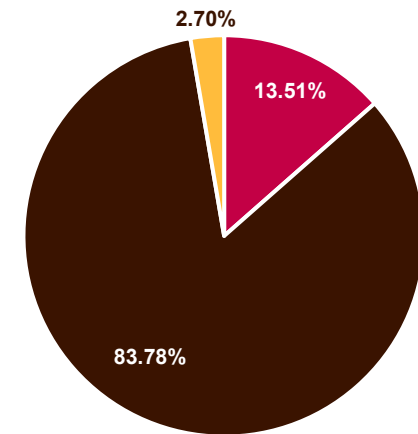
Other Complaint Topics

The remaining 24.82% of complaints were made in relation to these topics.

Complaint Topics



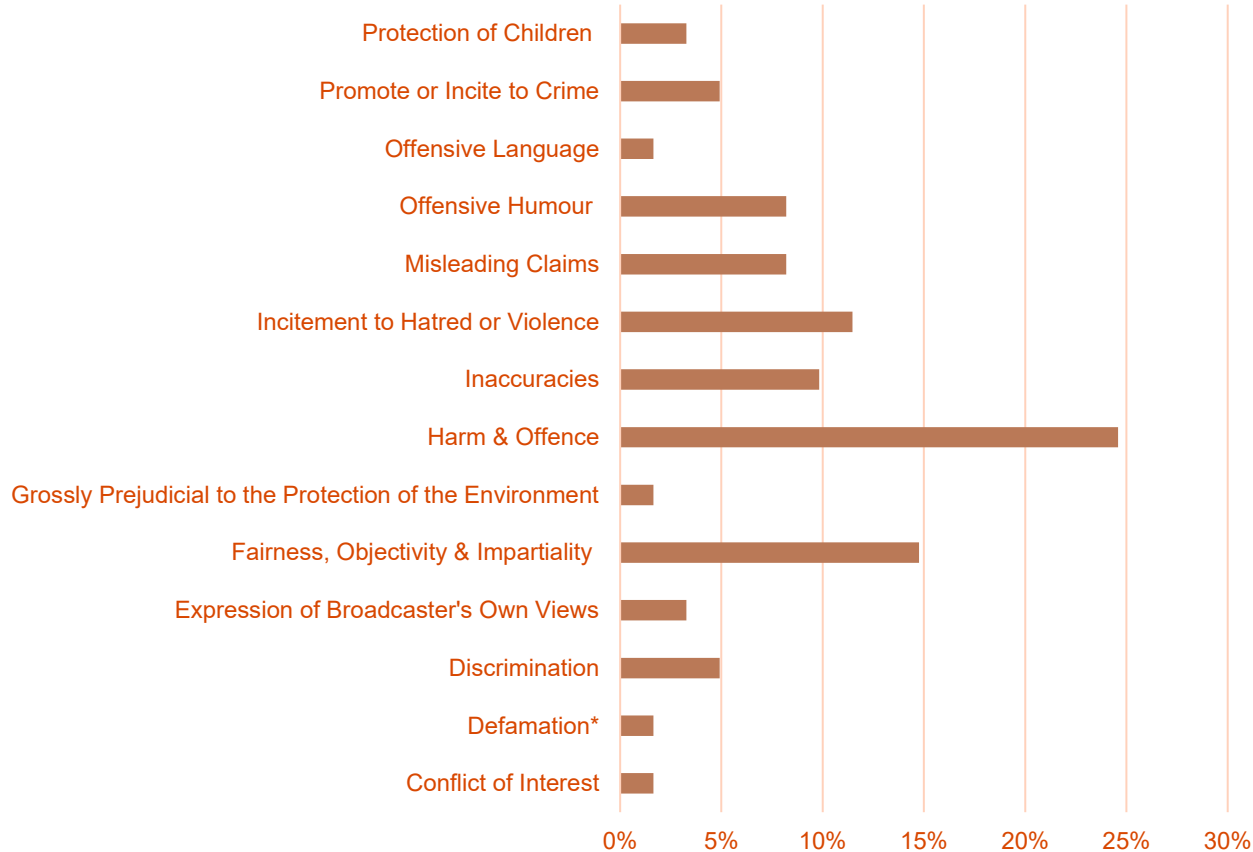
Commission Decisions



- Referred to an Authorised Person
- Dismissed
- Referred to the Broadcaster/VOD Provider

Other Complaint Topics

Complaint Issues



*An Coimisiún has no regulatory remit regarding defamation.

These complaints included a range of allegations of breaches of content standards and commercial communications standards. These complaints covered a wide range of topics, making it difficult to extract insights and emerging trends which complainants may hold.

Sport

Complaints made about sports programmes generally related to comments made by either the commentators or pundits on the programmes which complainants found offensive.

Utilities & Essential Services

These complaints were about advertisements and alleged the claims in the advertisements were misleading and surreptitious.

Irish Society & Culture

While no strong trends emerged, the number of complaints received may indicate that the public feel strongly about the portrayal of Irish society, culture and history in media.

Socio-historical Ireland

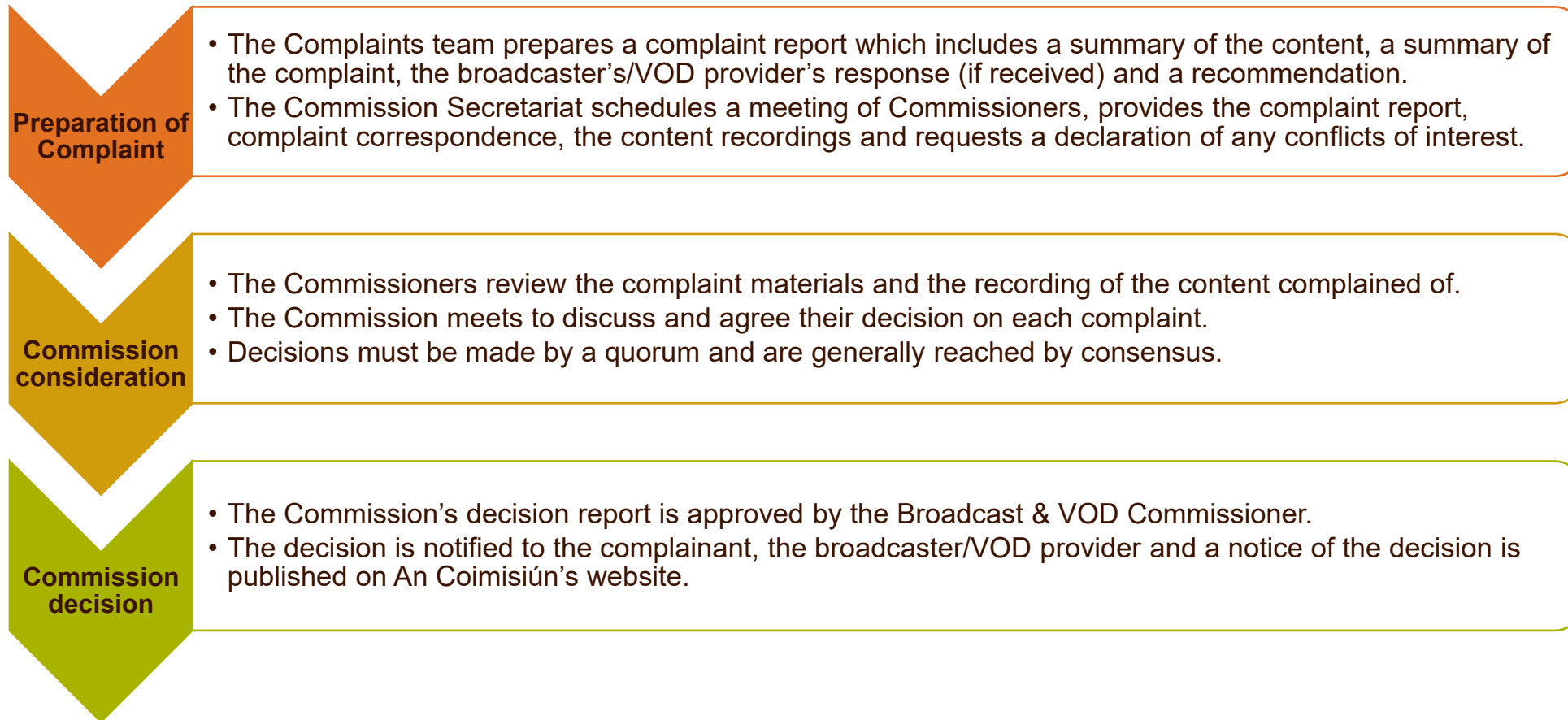
These complaints generally alleged that points made were inaccurate, harmful and offensive and incited hatred.

Animal Welfare

These complaints primarily focused on animal control. Complainants alleged that through the facilitation of discussion the presenter incited or promoted listeners to commit crime.

How does the Commission make Complaint Decisions? Factors and insights

What happens at a Commission complaints meeting?



Commission Decisions – Meaning of Decisions

1. Refer to the Broadcaster/ VOD Provider

- This decision means that the broadcaster/VOD provider will be obliged to consider, or reconsider, the complaint in accordance with its code of practice for complaint handling.
- This decision is likely to be made if a complaint has not been made to the broadcaster/VOD provider in the first instance, or the broadcaster/VOD provider did not consider the complaint as it is obliged to in statute under its Code of Practice for Complaint Handling.
- Complainants may still refer their complaint to An Coimisiún if they are dissatisfied with the broadcaster's/VOD provider's response

2. Dismiss

- There are four grounds for dismissal set out in statute under which the Commission may dismiss a complaint:
 - a) The complaint is frivolous or vexatious or was not made in good faith.
 - b) The subject matter of the complaint is trivial.
 - c) The complaint has been resolved effectively under a broadcaster's or video-on-demand provider's Code of Practice for Complaint Handling.
 - d) The complaint was not made in writing to Coimisiún na Meán in accordance with the statutory timeframes.

When dismissing under (a) and (b) above, the Commission applies the criteria as published on its website.

3. Refer to an Authorised Person

- Where there is no reasonable basis to dismiss a complaint, the Commission is required to refer the complaint to an Authorised Person to be considered for investigation.
- Where the Commission believes there is merit to a complaint, the complaint is generally referred to an authorised person.
- The Commission does not make a determination on whether or not there has been a contravention of standards in their decisions, this is decided upon by the Authorised Person.

Commission Decisions – A note on dismissal

Section 48(4) provides that when the Commission decides not to proceed further with complaints, they are ‘dismissed.’ One of four dismissal options must be selected:

a. Frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith

This decision usually means that the complainant has interpreted the standards in a way that is not sustainable (obviously unsustainable) or that the grounds upon which the complaint has been made are not sufficiently strong (lacking in merit).

b. The subject matter of the complaint is trivial

This decision usually means that the consequences stemming from a minor issue are minimal or could be considered a technicality or minimal non observance.

The Commission is obliged to use the language of the statute. It is conscious that this language can feel hurtful to complainants and does not reflect an opinion of the complainant or their concerns.

c. Resolved effectively

The Commission can dismiss a complaint if it has been resolved effectively under a broadcaster’s/VOD provider’s Code of Practice for Complaint Handling. In most cases, complaints are referred to An Coimisiún when the complainant is not satisfied with the broadcaster’s/VOD provider’s response. Consequently, no complaints have been dismissed on these grounds.

d. Statutory timeframe

The Commission can dismiss complaints made outside of the statutory timeframe to ensure fair procedures to all complainants and broadcasters/VOD providers.

Commission Considerations & Decisions

Respect for Editorial Freedom

The Commission is mindful that broadcasters/VOD providers have editorial independence in deciding on content to air.

The Commission's role is to set general content standards, not to determine what content should be made or how.

In whole and In Context

The Commission takes the whole programme into account, even if a complaint is made only about a particular segment.

The Audience Expectation

The Commission takes the programme style and tone into account.

The Commission considers the target audience and its expectations.

The Framing of the Programme

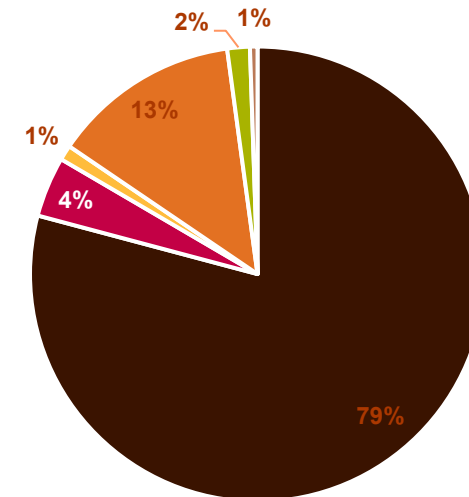
The Commission looks beyond the programme's topic and considers its framing and purpose.

Justification

The Commission considers whether the issues complained of were justified within the context of the programme.

i.e. whether mention of someone's race, gender, nationality was justifiable.

Commission Decisions



- Dismissed - Frivolous, Vexatious or Not Made In Good Faith
- Dismissed - Subject of the Complaint is Trivial
- Dismissed - Complaint Made Outside the Statutory Timeframe
- Referred to an Authorised Person to be Considered for Investigation
- Referred to the Broadcaster/VOD Provider for Consideration Under its Code of Practice for Complaint Handling
- Dismissed - Frivolous, Vexatious or Not Made In Good Faith & Subject of Complaint is Trivial

Complaints Referred to Authorised Persons

Who are authorised persons?



- The panel of authorised persons is comprised of senior Coimisiún na Meán staff with appropriate expertise and experience.

What is the role of authorised persons?



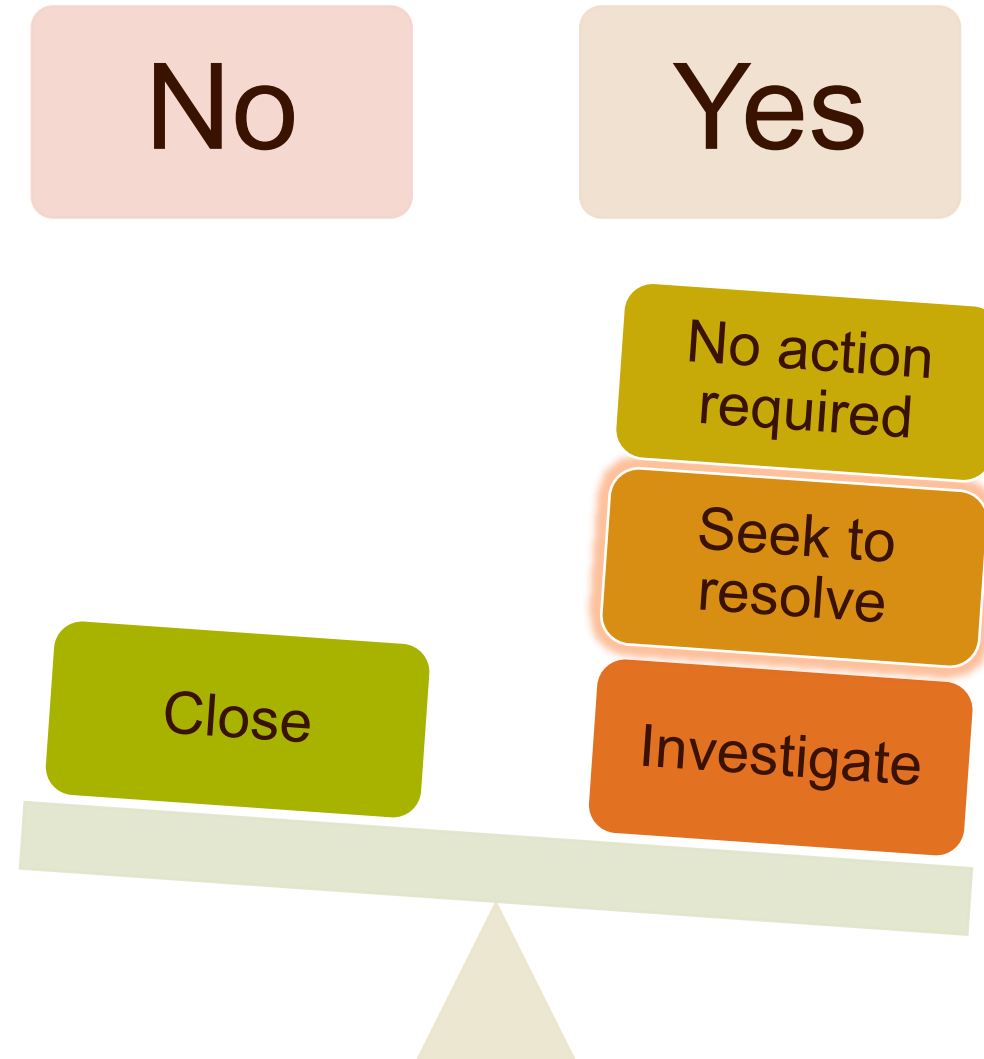
- An authorised person considers a complaint and decides whether there is reason to suspect that there has been a contravention in the programme material complained of.

What happens then?



- Where the authorised person decides there is reason to suspect a contravention, the AP then decides whether to direct an authorised officer to carry out an investigation.

Authorised Person Decisions – Is there reason to suspect a contravention?



Authorised Person Decisions – Seek to Resolve

What does seek to resolve mean?

Where an authorised person decides there is reason to suspect a contravention, the broadcaster/VOD provider may be offered an opportunity to make a submission on the decision. This submission may set out measures to address the issues and ensure no recurrence of them.

What happens then?

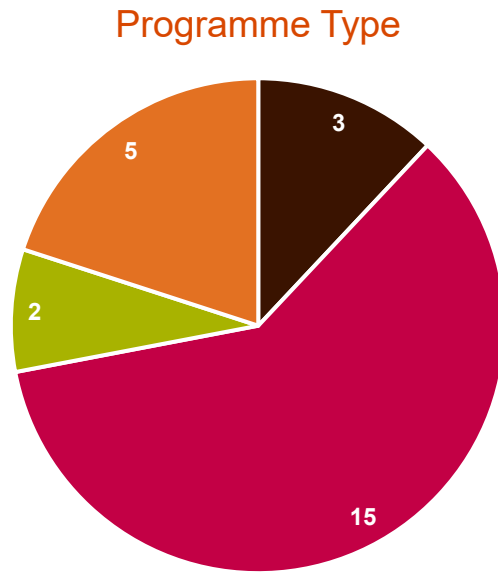
The authorised person considers the submission and makes a decision whether or not to commence an investigation.

And next?

Where the authorised person decides not to investigate on the basis of commitments made by the broadcaster/VOD provider, An Coimisiún follows up on their implementation.

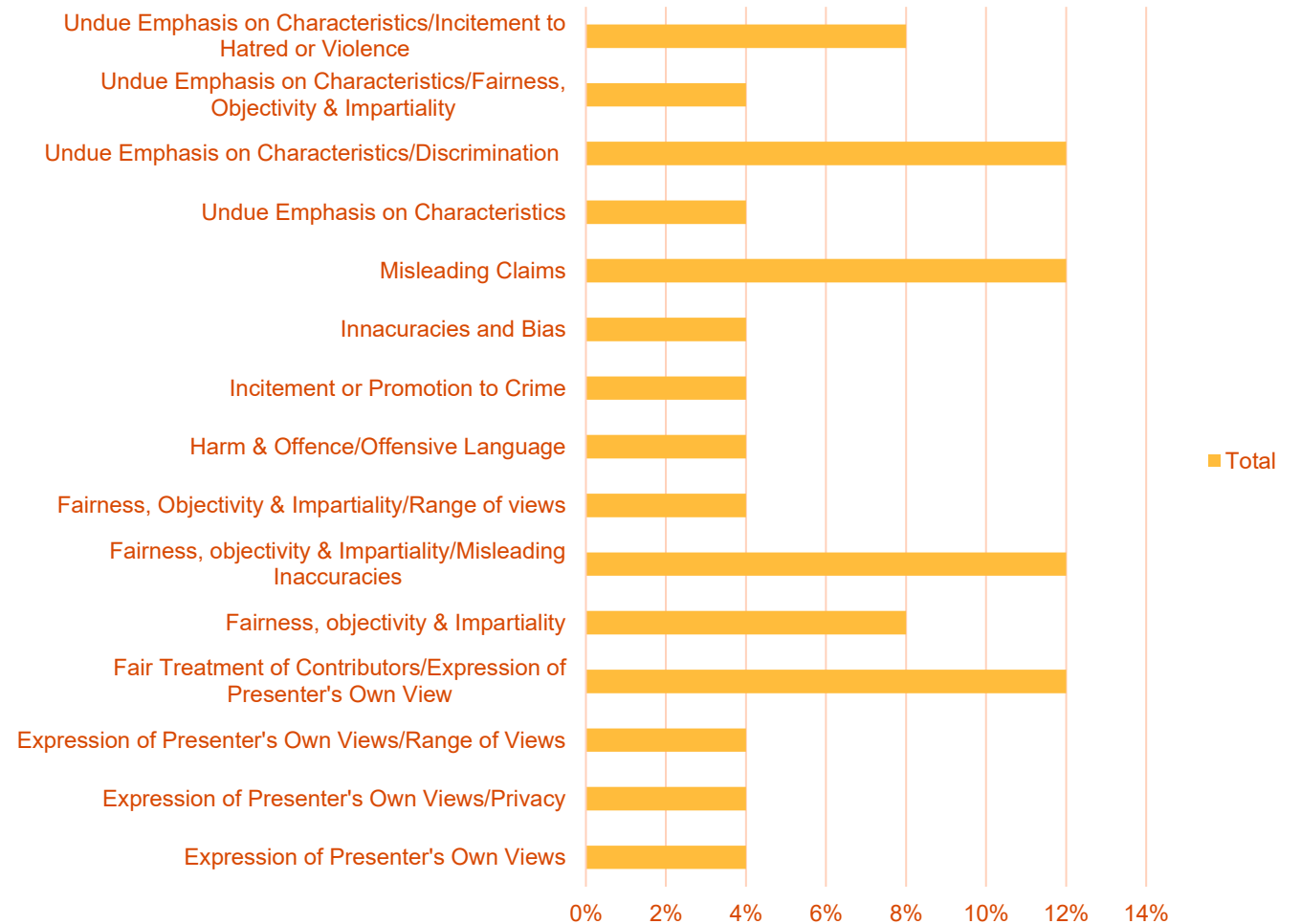
Where no submission is received, or the measures proposed are not sufficient, the authorised person may decide to direct an authorised officer to commence an investigation.

Authorised Person Referrals



- Commercial Communications
- Current affairs
- General programming
- News

Complaint Concerns

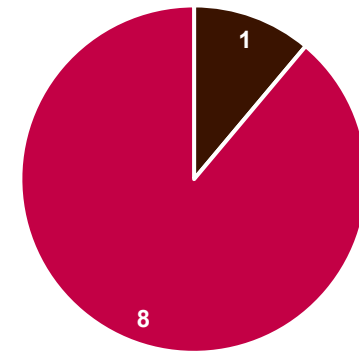


Complaints accepted and decided upon from 15 March 2023 to 3 December 2025. 25 complaints were referred to an authorised person in the reporting period.

Authorised Person Decisions

- The data set for complaints decided by authorised persons is relatively small compared to the number of complaints decided by the Commission.
- As a result, it is premature to draw insights from the authorised person decisions.
- Of the 25 complaints referred to an authorised person, 9 were decided upon in the reporting period.
- In cases where an authorised person decided there was reason to suspect a contravention, the authorised person decided not to direct an investigation.
- Of the 8 complaints that there was a reason to suspect a contravention:
 - 5 complaints – the authorised person directed the complaints team to engage with the broadcaster to monitor implementation of measures proposed or undertaken.
 - 3 complaints – the authorised person did not direct any further action.
- Informal resolution measures may include:
 - Training
 - Policy revision
 - Programming audits/QC
 - Oversight reform
 - Complaint handling improvements
 - Retractions/removal of content

Authorised Person Complaint Decisions



- No reason to suspect a contravention
- Reason to suspect a contravention but not direct investigation



Coimisiún
na Meán

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