# Metropolitan Police consider investigation into Gary Lineker’s controversial social media post



The Metropolitan Police are currently assessing whether to initiate an investigation into a controversial social media post by Gary Lineker, the renowned BBC presenter. Complaints regarding the post, which included imagery deemed offensive and referenced Zionism, led to his early exit from the BBC, a network he has been a prominent figure at since 1999.

In a statement, the police confirmed they had received multiple reports from the public regarding Lineker's post, indicating that decisions on any potential action will be made following an evaluation of the complaints. At this stage, the police have clarified that there is no formal investigation underway. Meanwhile, Lineker, aged 64, issued an unreserved apology for the post, referring to it as a "genuine mistake." He expressed regret for the "hurt and upset" caused, acknowledging that he should have exercised more caution.

The incident has not only affected Lineker's career but has also raised concerns at the highest levels of government. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak labelled Lineker's post "completely unacceptable," underscoring the importance of maintaining high standards within the BBC. This sentiment is echoed by Andrew Gilbert, vice president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, who praised the decision for Lineker to step down and emphasised the urgent need for antisemitism training for BBC staff.

This is not the first time Lineker's presence at the BBC has been called into question. He faced suspension earlier in 2023 over criticism directed at the government’s asylum policy, which was interpreted by some as a breach of the BBC's impartiality standards. The ongoing scrutiny of his social media activities has triggered broader conversations about freedom of expression and the responsibilities of public figures, particularly in politically charged environments.

Moreover, the BBC is reportedly conducting its own inquiries related to the social media post and has been in contact with affected individuals. This review comes at a time when the corporation is establishing new guidelines concerning its staff's social media conduct, aiming to clarify the boundaries between personal expression and professional responsibilities. The director-general of the BBC, Tim Davie, has been vocal about the need for the organisation to ensure its presenters adhere to rigorous standards, particularly in light of the backlash arising from Lineker's social media presence.

In light of these events, the debate surrounding the balance between freedom of speech and the BBC's editorial impartiality continues to evolve. There are both defenders and critics of the actions taken against Lineker, reflecting a wider societal discourse on these pivotal issues. Such controversies have led to calls within the BBC for enhanced dialogue and support mechanisms, particularly for Jewish and Muslim staff, as the organisation grapples with the impact of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict on its reputation and workforce.

Through this saga, Lineker’s situation has become emblematic of the complex interplay between celebrity influence, public accountability, and institutional standards within media. As the assessments by the Metropolitan Police proceed, the next steps for both Lineker and the BBC will undoubtedly shape the future of broadcasting standards and practices in the UK.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Sources [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/police-assessing-whether-investigate-gary-31687296), [[2]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/police-assessing-whether-investigate-gary-31687296)
2. Paragraph 2: Source [[3]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/bbc-police-tim-davie-gary-lineker-metropolitan-police-b2372601.html)
3. Paragraph 3: Sources [[2]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/police-assessing-whether-investigate-gary-31687296), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/23/jewish-bbc-staff-formal-complaint-antisemitism-gary-lineker/)
4. Paragraph 4: Sources [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530), [[6]](https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/current-affairs/gary-lineker-bbc-social-media-rules-chairman-newsupdate/)
5. Paragraph 5: Source [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/mar/11/assault-on-free-speech-gary-linekers-defenders-and-detractors)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/police-assessing-whether-investigate-gary-31687296> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/police-assessing-whether-investigate-gary-31687296> - The Metropolitan Police are evaluating whether to investigate Gary Lineker's social media post, which led to his early departure from the BBC. Lineker apologized for the post, which featured a picture of a rat and referenced Zionism. The BBC announced that Lineker would leave his presenting role after the upcoming Match of the Day, and would not host coverage of the 2026 World Cup or the FA Cup next season. The Prime Minister's official spokesperson described the post as 'completely unacceptable' and emphasized the importance of the BBC upholding the 'highest standards'.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/bbc-police-tim-davie-gary-lineker-metropolitan-police-b2372601.html> - The Metropolitan Police are assessing information related to a social media post by BBC presenter Gary Lineker. Detectives from the Met’s Specialist Crime Command met with BBC representatives to discuss the matter. The BBC is conducting its own inquiries and has been in contact with the young person's family. BBC director-general Tim Davie stated that the corporation became aware of a complaint in May and has been actively following up since then. The police investigation is ongoing, with no arrests made at this time.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/23/jewish-bbc-staff-formal-complaint-antisemitism-gary-lineker/> - Jewish BBC staff have filed formal complaints regarding alleged antisemitism and Gary Lineker’s social media activity. Employees have raised concerns about the corporation’s coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict and Lineker’s posts, including a deleted message calling for Israel to be banned from international football tournaments. One staff member expressed dissatisfaction with the management's response to these issues, stating that concerns about antisemitism are met with indifference. The BBC has established support groups for its Jewish and Muslim staff following the Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530> - The BBC announced a review of its social media guidelines following a controversy involving presenter Gary Lineker. The review aims to address 'grey areas' in the rules, particularly concerning freelancers outside news and current affairs. The new guidelines emphasize 'high standards of civility in public discourse', including treating others with respect and avoiding offensive language. The BBC stated that the guidelines balance freedom of expression with the responsibilities of freelancers and the expectations of audiences.
6. <https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/current-affairs/gary-lineker-bbc-social-media-rules-chairman-newsupdate/> - The BBC's new chairman stated that Gary Lineker's social media posts 'seem to breach' the corporation's guidelines. The comments highlight the ongoing debate over the balance between freedom of expression and the BBC's impartiality standards. The chairman's remarks suggest that Lineker's recent social media activity may have violated the BBC's rules, leading to further scrutiny of the presenter's online conduct and its alignment with the broadcaster's policies.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/mar/11/assault-on-free-speech-gary-linekers-defenders-and-detractors> - Gary Lineker's suspension from presenting 'Match of the Day' has sparked a nationwide debate about impartiality at the BBC. Supporters argue that the suspension is an 'assault on free speech', while critics contend that Lineker's comments violated the BBC's impartiality guidelines. The controversy has led to discussions about the balance between freedom of expression and the BBC's editorial standards, with various figures from media, sport, and politics weighing in on the issue.