

MasterChef host's downfall after report

Gregg Wallace left show after team spent months investigating complaints over the presenter's conduct

Lewis Silkin

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The *MasterChef* presenter Gregg Wallace lost his job on the hit cooking show in July after an investigation by Lewis Silkin upheld complaints about his behaviour.

The former greengrocer stepped aside from his role in November 2024 after 13 people who worked with him on various TV programmes over a 17-year period accused him of inappropriate conduct. They included

the broadcaster Aasmah Mir, who initially complained to Banijay, the company that produces *MasterChef*, in 2017 after Wallace referred to one of her BBC Radio 4 colleagues as a "sexy bitch" during their first exchange on the set of *Celebrity MasterChef*.

She said she felt compelled to report him after learning he had made a rape joke to another contestant. After the news broke, other famous former contestants spoke out about their experiences with Wallace.

They included the presenter and journalist Kirsty Wark and the *Location, Location, Location* star Kirstie Allsopp, while Sir Rod Stewart attacked Wallace on Instagram, saying the presenter had "humiliated" his wife, Penny Lancaster, when she appeared on the show.

Wallace responded to the furore in an Instagram video, saying the complaints against him came from "a handful of middle-class women of a certain age, just from *Celebrity MasterChef*".

Lewis Silkin was commissioned by Banijay to investigate the allegations.



Gregg Wallace has revealed he is retraining as a fitness instructor

Its team examined 83 complaints and interviewed 78 witnesses over a seven-month period, as well as analysing documents and unedited programme footage. It found that 45 of the allegations were substantiated, mostly involving inappropriate sexual language or humour, with one instance of unwanted physical contact. Banijay said the report's findings made Wallace's return to the programme "untenable".

“She said she reported him after learning he had made a rape joke

Wallace is suing the BBC for up to £10,000 in damages, alleging that the broadcaster caused him "distress and harassment" by failing to hand over copies of his personal data.

This year he announced on social media that he was retraining as a fitness instructor.

Lewis Silkin is acting for the insurance giant Aon in a significant conspiracy claim against the rival broker Howden, arising from alleged unlawful "poaching raids" on its staff and clients in the UK and Brazil.

Aon alleges that one of its former executives, Antonio Rodrigues, broke his duty of loyalty to the company by helping Howden to recruit Aon staff and lure clients away while he was still employed there.

Rodrigues resigned in October 2023 to join Howden, and Aon says that a number of staff from its London cyber and Brazil reinsurance teams left in April and November 2023.

The claim forms part of wider proceedings in which Aon accuses Howden and several former employees of orchestrating unlawful recruitment drives in both countries.

After a dispute about where the case should be heard, the High Court ruled that most of the claims would remain in England, while proceedings against Rodrigues would take place in Brazil.

In other work, Lewis Silkin advised DS Smith, a multinational packaging and paper company, on a range of global mobility issues relating to the recruitment, employment and relocation of employees around the world.

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