

Reference: 01440820

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Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning additional staff and funding for the Online Safety Bill. Your request was received on 4 April 2022 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

How many new staff does Ofcom propose to recruit to enforce new powers in the online harms bill?

When will the new staff be hired as it has not come into law yet?

Where will the additional funding for the new staff come from?

Our response

We answer your questions in turn below.

We explained in this [letter from Dame Melanie Dawes to the Chair of the DCMS Committee and the Chair of the Draft Online Safety Bill Joint Committee](#) that we would need to recruit around 300 additional full-time equivalent colleagues over the next few years in order for us to undertake the additional online safety duties.¹ The final resourcing needed will depend on the final scope of the online safety regime as defined in legislation.

We commenced hiring staff in 2021 in preparation for the online safety regime. The same letter contains further information about wider preparations for the online safety regime that you may find helpful: [Letter from Dame Melanie Dawes to Julian Knight MP and Damian Collins MP, 13 September 2021 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#)

¹ This is an estimate based on the scope of the Online Safety regime set out in the draft bill published in May 2021. This letter contains further information about wider preparations for the online safety regime that you may find helpful: [Letter from Dame Melanie Dawes to Julian Knight MP and Damian Collins MP, 13 September 2021 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#)

Ofcom's work to prepare for the online safety regime (including staff recruitment) is being funded through Ofcom's retention of Wireless Telegraphy Act (WTA) receipts². The Online Safety Bill provides for Ofcom's costs to be met by fees charged to industry.

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

Zach Westbrook

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

² You may refer to our [Tariff-Tables-2022-23.pdf \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#) and [Annual reports and plans - Ofcom](#) for further information on Ofcom's funding.