

Reference: 01576153

Information Requests  
[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

27 March 2023

### Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to Government guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and Ofcom. We received this request on 2 March 2023. We have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”).

### Your request

You asked:

*Please could you supply a statement summarising the constraints placed on Ofcom by the UK Government which were used to instruct newspapers and news agencies concerning what communications were acceptable.*

### Our response

By way of background, Ofcom was formally established as the independent communications regulator on 29 December 2003 following the passing of the [Office of Communications Act 2002](#). Ofcom is a statutory corporation. As a result, we operate independently from Government and are not overseen by a Minister, however we do have a relationship with the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and will liaise and provide evidence to them in respect of matters of interest to DCMS.

We do not hold the information you have requested. Ofcom’s remit does not cover newspapers and news agencies. We do have a duty to set and enforce broadcast standards in the content of television, radio and on demand services and these standards are set out in the [Broadcasting Code](#). In this regard you may find it helpful to refer to our webpage, [Broadcast standards during the coronavirus pandemic](#) which sets out our guidance to broadcasters relating to coverage of the coronavirus pandemic.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any queries, then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

## Information Requests

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](mailto: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