

Reference: 01600303

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

12 May 2023

### Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for the below request for information concerning suspected underage users in the UK blocked by social media companies. Your request was received on 13 April 2023 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

#### Your request

*The number of (a) Snapchat, (b) TikTok, (c) Instagram, (d) Youtube, (e) Twitter, (f) Facebook, (g) Twitch, (h) WhatsApp, (i) Reddit, (j) Discord, and (k) Tumblr accounts belonging to suspected underage users in the UK that were blocked by each of those social media companies in the twelve months up to April 2022.*

#### Our response

We do hold information in relation to Snapchat, Twitch, and TikTok for the twelve months up to April 2022 in scope of your request. The rest of the companies you have listed are not in scope of our current Video Sharing Platform regime and we do not have information relating to them in scope of your request. Please note that in the future, they may fall within the upcoming online safety regime.

We are unable to disclose the information we hold as we consider its disclosure is exempt under section 44 of the FOI Act. Section 44 exempts the disclosure of information which is prohibited by another enactment. In this case, section 393 of the Communications Act 2003 (the CA2003) applies. Section 393 prohibits Ofcom from disclosing information which relates to a business (in this case, Snapchat, Twitch and TikTok) and has been obtained in exercise of our statutory powers. Section 393 prohibits disclosure of the information unless we have the consent of the business or one of the statutory gateways for disclosure under section 393(2) of the CA2003 has been met. Neither of these apply here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

The ICO has provided this guidance in relation to when section 44 of the FOI Act would be applicable: [Prohibitions on disclosure \(section 44\) - FOIA guidance](#)

If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) quoting 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. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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