Reference: 01960985

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

17 March 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning complaints about online dating apps.

We received this request on 17 February 2025. You added to your request on 20 February 2025. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

Any complaints lodged for the period between the 1st of January 2021 until the 17th of February 2025 that mention the following keywords in the complaint:

Grindr
Tinder
Hinge
Bumble

How many of the received complaints led to an investigation

Please break it down per year and per app in an excel table

Is there any active consideration of investigating Grindr?

Please indicate for each complaint lodged against if it was filed by an:

- *Individual*
- *Charity/NGO*
- *Company or Organisation*
- *Public body or institution*

Our response

We can neither confirm nor deny whether we hold information that falls within the scope of this request. We consider that this information, if held, is exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act. Under section 44 of the FOI Act, information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. In this case, section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 prohibits the disclosure of information about a particular business (such as those referred to above), which we have obtained in the course of exercising a power conferred by, among other legislation, the Communications Act, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption under the Communications Act and does not require a public interest test.

We set out our approach to implementing the OSA in our October progress update and in an industry bulletin in January. In those publications, we set out what action we will take to drive compliance with the requirements of the Online Safety Act, including:

- **Gathering information:** We will use our powers to gather information. Our notice on Ofcom's access to services outlines that we'll also sometimes gather information by directly accessing services to understand and monitor user experience and consider the measures service providers have in place.
- **Supervisory engagement:** Our supervision team is engaging with a range of service providers, to ensure they understand their duties and act quickly to protect users online. This includes some of the largest sites and apps as well as smaller ones that present a high risk to users online. We intend to communicate our high-level plans to individual services by April 2025. We will review services' risk assessments carefully to ensure they have adequately addressed the biggest risks and with a particular focus on the areas identified above. We will work with services to ensure they comply with their duties but will not hesitate to take formal action where they don't meet our expected standards.
- **Opening enforcement programmes:** We will use cross-sector enforcement programmes to monitor and assess compliance on specific issues across a range of service providers. These could result in formal enforcement action. On 16 January 2025, we opened an Enforcement Programme to protect children from encountering pornographic content through the use of age assurance, focusing initially on those providers that display or publish pornographic content. On 3 March 2025, we opened a further Enforcement Programme to monitor compliance with the illegal content risk assessment duties and record keeping duties under the OSA. We expect to open more programmes in 2025.
- **Taking formal enforcement action:** Where there is a risk of serious harm to users - especially children - we will take enforcement action where service providers fail to comply with their duties, which may include issuing significant financial penalties, requiring them to make specific changes, and – in exceptionally serious cases – applying to the courts to block sites in the UK. We will generally engage with service providers beforehand to explain our concerns and will generally allow the opportunity to remedy our concerns before moving to formal action. Our Online Safety Enforcement Guidance sets out more information.

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,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress.

Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.