

Reference: 01995044

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

3 June 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Disinformation-Related Interventions under the Online Safety Act 2023.

We received this request on 7 May 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request any information held by Ofcom relating to the monitoring, assessment or regulatory actions taken by the organisation in connection with disinformation and misinformation as part of its responsibilities under the Online Safety Act 2023.

Specifically, I would be grateful if you could provide:

- 1. Any internal reports, guidance documents, minutes of meetings, or correspondence (redacted if necessary) that outline how Ofcom has addressed or plans to address disinformation as harmful content under the Act.*
- 2. Any data, impact assessments, or performance indicators used by Ofcom to track the prevalence of disinformation and the effectiveness of relevant interventions during the period from October 2023 to the present.*
- 3. Clarification on whether Ofcom has issued any specific codes of practice or compliance measures to online platforms explicitly related to disinformation, beyond general content harm regulation.*
- 4. If no such information exists, I would appreciate a confirmation to that effect.*

Our response

With regards to your request for internal reports, guidance, minutes of meetings or correspondence relating to Ofcom’s plans to address disinformation as harmful content under the Online Safety Act, under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (‘the FOI Act’), Ofcom is not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the ‘appropriate limit’. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (‘the Regulations’), and is, for Ofcom, £450. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimate at a rate of £25 per person per hour, which equates to 18 hours of time. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in

determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it.

For question 1 of your request, Ofcom estimates that it would take at least 18 hours to search for and retrieve the information requested. Due to the broad nature of your request, it would require various teams searching through several years of emails, documents and correspondence. As such the cost of complying with your request will exceed the appropriate limit. We have therefore been unable to fulfil your request taking into account Section 12 of the FOI Act.

You may wish to consider submitting a narrower, more focused request, for example with a more limited date range or requesting specific documents concerning disinformation. Should you narrow the request, we shall consider your request under the FOI Act including whether disclosure is exempt under that act in the particular circumstances.

You may be interested to note that on 1 May 2025, we published a response to a Freedom of Information request which may be of assistance in addressing some of your queries. You can find this response [here](#).

The Online Safety Act does not explicitly identify disinformation as a harm that needs to be addressed by online services. However, it does name several offences and provisions that are relevant to misinformation or disinformation. More information about these can be found below. Services must also have particular regard to the importance of protecting users' rights to freedom of expression and privacy when implementing safety measures.

We set out our analysis, codes, and guidance relating to some of these issues in our December 2024 Statement on protecting people from illegal harms online.

Media literacy duties in relation to mis and disinformation: Since 2003 we have had responsibilities to promote and research media literacy, to ensure that audiences are equipped with the skills to navigate and understand content including news and critically engage with, for example, the accuracy and partiality of news sources and content.¹

Advisory Committee: As required by the Online Safety Act, we have established an advisory committee to advise us about specific areas of our work relevant to disinformation and misinformation, including but not limited to:

- How providers of regulated services should deal with disinformation and misinformation on such services.
- Ofcom's exercise of its transparency powers (as outlined above), including powers to require information from services about matters relating to disinformation and misinformation.
- Ofcom's exercise of its duties to promote media literacy in relation to countering disinformation and misinformation on regulated services (as outlined above).

We published [Terms of Reference](#) for the Advisory Committee, approved by the board on 2 April 2025, and have appointed Lord Allan of Hallam, a non-executive member of Ofcom Board, as the Chair of the Committee. This reflects the importance of this Committee and its work, and to ensure senior-level accountability. As required by the Act, the Committee will publish a report within 18 months of its establishment (in April 2025) and periodic ones after that. More information about this can be found [here](#).

¹ As set out in section 11 and section 14(6)(a) of the Communications Act 2003.

With regards to Ofcom’s data, performance indicators and interventions regarding disinformation, one of the ways in which we monitor this data is through research undertaken as part of our Making Sense of Media Programme. In May 2025, Ofcom published a research report called [Co-creating ways to navigate and mitigate against mis and disinformation](#). This report explored with participants ways to navigate and mitigate the impact of mis and disinformation. In September 2024, we published a set of media literacy outcomes to support third-sector organisations in their evaluation work. [The Outcomes, indicators and survey questions bank](#) identifies two outcomes related to disinformation (3.1 and 3.3).

This work forms part of Ofcom’s media literacy programme of work, to help inform Ofcom’s media literacy duty under the Online Safety Act to heighten public awareness and understanding of the nature and impact of misinformation and disinformation online, as well as ways to mitigate exposure to such information.

We also monitor this data through the recording of complaints. We can confirm that we have completed searches of our complaint records for the terms “*misinformation*”, “*disinformation*”, and “*misinformation & disinformation*”. For complaints containing the terms “*misinformation*” or “*misinformation & disinformation*”, we found a total of 140 results. For complaints containing only the term “*disinformation*”, we found a total of 139 results.

Given the scope of the Online Safety Act, Ofcom has not issued any specific codes of practice or compliance measures to online platforms explicitly related to disinformation. Existing codes and guidance have focussed on some of the areas outlined above, such as our decisions on how we expect providers of regulated services under the Online Safety Act to protect their users from illegal content. More information on this can be found [here](#).

We 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,

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](#).