

Reference: 02065659

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

10 September 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about enforcing the Online Safety Act on online users not located in the UK.

We received this request on 18 August 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

I request electronic copies of information regarding enforcing the Online Safety Act on online users not located in the UK affected by the Online Safety Act enforcement on online services and websites please.

Our response

The Online Safety Act ('the Act') makes companies that operate a wide range of online services legally responsible for keeping people, especially children, who are based in the UK, safe online. All in-scope services with a significant number of UK users, or targeting the UK market, are covered by the new rules.

The Act requires companies to assess risks of certain harms to UK users and to take steps to address those risks. Ofcom has produced regulatory guidance and codes of practice to help companies comply with their legal duties.

[Section 8 of the Act](#) provides that:

A duty set out in this Chapter which must be complied with in relation to a user-to-user service extends only to—

- (a) the design, operation and use of the service in the United Kingdom, and*
- (b) in the case of a duty that is expressed to apply in relation to users of a service, the design, operation and use of the service as it affects United Kingdom users of the service.*

Legal duties under the Act are restricted to *online services*. Ofcom does not enforce the Online Safety Act against *users* of online services, irrespective of where they are based.

It is, in any case, the prerogative of a regulated service to decide whether and to what extent it wishes to replicate its compliance efforts pursuant to the Act in jurisdictions outside the UK. This is not a requirement under the Act, as Ofcom has repeatedly made clear in our regulatory publications.

For instance, in our [Illegal Harms statement](#) we note that:

“The Act does not prevent service providers from having different terms of service for UK users and for users elsewhere in the world. In practice, where the Act requires content to be taken down, this refers to taking it down for UK users. Providers have flexibility over how their terms of service are drafted to cover illegal content, so long as they are drafted to specify how UK users are to be protected from illegal content.”

In conclusion, Ofcom does not enforce the Online Safety Act against online users, and where online services are subject to duties under the Act, these apply only with respect to the provision of their service to UK users.

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](#).