

Reference: 02170459

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

2 April 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about subscription based complaints data.

We received this request on 5 March 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request & our response

I am seeking recorded information that you hold about consumer complaints regarding subscription-based services (such as streaming video), particularly where consumers report difficulty cancelling, unexpected ongoing charges, automatic renewal arrangements, or price increases.

Please provide the following for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2024:

1. Complaint data (preferred)

Any complaint-level dataset or extract you hold where the complaint relates to subscription-based or automatically recurring services and includes one or more of the following themes:

- * difficulty cancelling a subscription or ending a contract*
- * being charged after requesting cancellation or after a free trial*
- * automatic renewal / "negative option" arrangements that consumers say were unclear*
- * unexpected price increases or renewal charges associated with a subscription*

If complaint-level data can be provided, please include (where recorded and non-identifying):

- * date received (at least month and year)*
- * sector/service type (if recorded)*
- * company/brand complained about (if recorded)*
- * complaint category / issue code (if recorded)*
- * outcome/status (if recorded)*

I am not seeking any personal data about complainants. Please redact any personal identifiers.

2. If (1) is not possible due to time/cost limits

If providing complaint-level data would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please instead provide aggregated data for the same period, for example counts of complaints by:

** month (or quarter) and*

** complaint category/issue code and*

** company/brand (if recorded) and/or sector (if recorded),*

limited to the themes listed above.

3. Internal summaries

Any internal reports, dashboards or briefing notes produced since 1 January 2019 that summarise trends or key issues in complaints about subscription services, cancellation difficulties, ongoing billing after cancellation, auto-renewal, or subscription-related price increases.

Our response

Subscription based streaming services (such as Netflix, Paramount+ and Amazon Prime) currently fall outside of Ofcom's regulatory remit. Therefore we do not have a subscription based category within our complaints management system.

In response to the information requested, we consider that this is exempt under section 12 of the FOI Act. Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates 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, and is, for Ofcom, £450, which is equivalent to 18-hours. 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. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

In order to satisfy your request, we would need to go through and individually assess the topic of every complaint that has been lodged with Ofcom. Over the 5 year time period of your request this would equate to an estimated 170,000 complaints. We would then need to extract the relevant information and consider whether any exemptions to disclosure apply. This would take us beyond the 18-hour limit of complying with a request.

We are unable to provide meaningful advice as to how to refine the request due to subscription based services being outside of our regulatory remit.

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](#).