

Annex 8. Definitions & abbreviations

Below we provide a list of definitions and abbreviations used in this document, including those words and abbreviations defined elsewhere in the statement.

Key definitions for the online safety funding regime

Term	Meaning
Accounting period	A period in respect of which accounts are prepared. See paragraph 5(7) of Schedule 13 to the Act.
The Act	The Online Safety Act 2023
Additional fees	Fees that Ofcom will charge providers of regulated services to cover its initial costs in accordance with Schedule 10 to the Act.
B2B	Business to Business
CA03	Communications Act 2003
Charging year	Any period of 12 months beginning with 1 April, except such a period that falls before the initial charging year. See section 90 of the Act.
Confirmation decision	A decision issued by Ofcom under section 132 of the Act that follows the issuance of a provisional notice of contravention.
Consolidated Fund	The central fund for public money in the UK.
DSA	Digital Services Act
DSS	Downstream Search Service
DSIT	Department of Science, Innovation and Technology
DST	Digital Services Tax
Fee paying year	In relation to a provider, under section 83(2) of the Act means a charging year where both of the following conditions apply: (a) the provider's qualifying worldwide revenue for the qualifying period that relates to that charging year is equal to or greater than the threshold figure that has effect for that charging year (see section 86 of the Act), and (b) the provider is not exempt (see subsection (6) of section 83).

Term	Meaning
Group QWR	Total worldwide revenues of the provider and every other entity which is a group undertaking in relation to the provider. The amount is used to calculate the maximum penalty where the provider and one or more of its group undertakings have been found jointly and severally liable for a breach of the provider's obligations under the Act.
Group undertaking	In relation to an undertaking, it means an undertaking which is (a) a parent undertaking or subsidiary undertaking of that undertaking, or (b) a subsidiary undertaking of any parent undertaking of that undertaking. See section 85(10) of the Act. ¹
HM Treasury	His Majesty's Treasury
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
Initial charging year	The period of 12 months beginning with 1 April specified by OFCOM in a published notice. See section 90 of the Act.
Initial notification	This is a notification under section 83(1)(a) of the Act. An Initial Notification is used where it is a provider's first fee paying year.
Initial costs	The costs incurred by Ofcom before the first day of the initial charging year in preparing for the exercise of its online safety functions or for exercising its online safety functions. ²
Manner of Notification document	See chapter 8 and Annex 5 for details.
NAO	National Audit Office
New fee cycle notification	This is a notification under section 83(1)(b)(i) of the Act. A new fee cycle notification is used where the previous charging year was not a fee-paying year, and the charging year in question is a fee-paying year.
Non fee-paying year notification	This is a notification under section 83(1)(b)(ii) of the Act). A non fee-paying Year notification is used where the previous charging year was a fee-paying year, and the charging year in question is not a fee-paying year.
Notification guidance	Additional guidance which will provide further details and guidance on the notification process and the required documentation. Ofcom will consult on this in Q3 2025 ahead of the fee regime coming into force.

¹ Section 1161(5) of the Companies Act 2006.

² Paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 10 to the Act.

Term	Meaning
Notification Regulations	Regulations made by Ofcom under section 85(2) of the Act, specifying or describing the evidence, documents or other information that providers must supply to Ofcom for the purposes of section 83 of the Act, including the way in which providers must supply the evidence, documents or information. ³
Part 5 services	Services that publish or display regulated provider pornographic content that are in scope of the duties in Part 5 of the Act.
Provisional notice of contravention	A notice issued by Ofcom relating to a regulated service to the provider of the service if they consider that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the provider has failed, or is failing, to comply with any enforceable requirement (see section 131 of the Act) that applies in relation to the service. ⁴
Provider	Has the meaning given to it under section 226 of the Act.
Qualifying period	The period for which a determination of QWR is to be made for the purposes of setting fees. See chapter 3.1 and the QWR Regulations.
QWR	Qualifying Worldwide Revenue. See chapter 3.
QWR Guidance	Additional guidance to aid providers in the process of calculating their QWR, such as in the apportionment process. Ofcom will consult on this guidance in Q3 2025, ahead of the fees regime coming into force.
QWR Return	This is the electronic form for submission when making a notification. See chapter 8 and Annex 5 for more detail.
QWR Regulations	Regulations made by Ofcom that set out how QWR is to be determined and the 'Qualifying Period' to which QWR relates, as per section 85(1) of the Act.
QWR base	The sum of all QWR from all eligible fee providers. This figure is used in conjunction with Ofcom's regulatory costs to calculate the percentage of provider QWR to be charged for fees. See chapter 7 for more details.
QWR Threshold	The Qualifying Worldwide Revenue threshold set by the Secretary of State in regulations made under section 86 of the Act.
QWR Threshold Regulations	Regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 86 of the Act specifying the QWR Threshold.

³ Section 85(2) of the Act.

⁴ Section 130(1) of the Act.

Term	Meaning
Regulated service	Means (a) a regulated user-to-user service; (b) a regulated search service; or (c) an internet service, other than a regulated user-to-user service or a regulated search service, that is within section 80(2) of the Act (including a service of a kind described in Schedule 2 to the Act). See section 4(4) of the Act.
Request for Information (RFI)	A notice requiring the provision of information under section 100 of the Act in which Ofcom requires to exercise any of its online safety functions, including for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of a person's QWR. ⁵
Secretary of State	Secretary of State for DSIT
Secretary of State's guidance	Guidance issued by the previous Secretary of State to Ofcom under section 87 of the Act about determining fees payable by regulated services, published on 24 May 2024. ⁶
SI	Statutory Instrument
SME	Small and medium enterprise
USS	Upstream Search Service
VSP	Video Service Provider, as defined in the Communications Act 2003 ⁷
VSS	Vertical Search Service
WTA	Wireless Telegraphy Act of 2006

⁵ Section 100(6)(d) of the Act.

⁶ [Guidance to the regulator about fees relating to the Online Safety Act 2023.](#)

⁷ [Section 368S of CA03](#), as amended by the [Audiovisual Media Services Regulations of 2020](#).