

Annex 3. Definitions and Abbreviations

The following definitions are provided to aid understanding of concepts covered by this guidance. For a full list of terms associated with the online safety fees regime, please refer to our fees statement.¹

Term	Meaning
The Act	Online Safety Act 2023
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.
Fees regime	Online safety fees regime
Fees statement	Online Safety Fees and Penalties Statement which set out our final decisions to implement the fees and penalties regime, published on 26 June 2025.
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).
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	The notification under Section 83(1)(a) of the Act. An initial notification is used where it is a provider's first fee paying year.

¹ [Statement: Online Safety - fees and penalties - Ofcom.](#)

Term	Meaning
Manner of Notification document	A document which sets out the manner in which providers should supply the evidence, documents and other information to support their notifications under section 83(1) of the Act. See Regulation 3(5) of the Notification Regulations and Annex 5 of the fees statement for more detail.
New fee cycle notification	The notification required under Section 83(1)(b)(i) of the Act. A new fee cycle notification is used where the provider has paid online safety fees in one or more prior years, but the previous charging year was not a fee-paying year in relation to the provider, and the charging year in question is a fee-paying year in relation to the provider.
Non fee-paying notification	The notification required under Section 83(1)(b)(ii) of the Act). A non fee-paying notification is used where the previous charging year was a fee-paying year in relation to the provider, and the charging year in question is not a fee-paying year in relation to the provider.
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.
Notification window	For the initial notification, this is the time period in which the Act requires a provider of a regulated service to provide notification to Ofcom through the portal. This term is also used for subsequent charging years to describe the four-month period during which the portal will remain open for providers to notify Ofcom.
Online safety fees portal	The secure online portal that providers must use to electronically submit a QWR Return, as prescribed by the Manner of Notification document (and Regulation 3(5) of the Notification Regulations).

Term	Meaning
Qualifying period	The period for which a determination of QWR is to be made for the purposes of setting fees. See chapter 3.1 of the fees statement and the QWR Regulations.
QWR	Qualifying worldwide revenue. See chapter 3 of the fees statement and the QWR Regulations.
QWR Regulations	Regulations made by Ofcom under Section 85(1) of the Act that set out how QWR is to be determined and the 'Qualifying Period' to which QWR relates in a charging year.
QWR Return	Describes the electronic submission of any type of fees notification required by the Act and responding to fees-related Requests For Information (RFI) that require QWR information to be submitted via the fees portal. See paragraph 2 of Annex 1 to this guidance for more info.
QWR Return Form	Structured Form within the fees portal in which providers enter QWR Return details. Providers must enter details into either the QWR Return Form or the downloadable Microsoft Excel template of the form (see paragraph 16 of Annex 2 to this guidance).
QWR Threshold	The threshold figure set by the Secretary of State under Section 86 of the Act. Providers whose QWR is equal to or greater than this threshold in a charging year are required to comply with the fees-related duties (unless they are exempt under Section 83(6) of the Act).
Threshold Regulations	Regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 86 of the Act specifying the QWR Threshold.
Regulated service	This 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.

Term	Meaning
Relevant parts of regulated service	Those parts of a regulated service on which (a) regulated user-generated content may be encountered (in the case of user-to-user services and combined services), (b) search content may be encountered (in the case of search services and combined services), and (c) regulated provider pornographic content may be encountered (in the case of a service within Section 80(2) of the Act). See Section 4(3) of the QWR Regulations.
Request for Information (RFI)	A notice from Ofcom requiring the provision of information under Section 100 of the Act for the purpose of exercising (or deciding to exercise) any of its online safety functions, including but not limited for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of a provider's QWR.
Rolling RFI	An RFI issued to providers who were liable for fees in the previous charging year to ascertain latest QWR.