

# Online service categorisation: information notices

The Online Safety Act ('the Act') makes companies that operate a wide range of online services legally responsible for keeping people, especially children, safer online. It introduces a system for categorising some regulated online services based on key characteristics, including user numbers and functionality.

The providers of categorised services will be required to comply with additional duties depending on which category they fall within.<sup>1</sup> Some regulated services will be designated as category 1, 2A or 2B services if they meet certain thresholds that will be set out and brought into effect via secondary legislation that will be introduced by the Secretary of State.

We submitted our [research and advice](#) to the Secretary of State and published the advice in March 2024, including proposed thresholds. The Secretary of State will take a decision about those thresholds, considering our advice.

Once the secondary legislation is laid in Parliament, Ofcom will begin the process of engaging with providers that we believe may meet the thresholds by issuing draft information notices to relevant providers.

As we note in our [draft information powers guidance](#), Ofcom will, as a general rule, issue information notices in draft form to the stakeholder holding the relevant information to ensure that the notice is appropriately worded and targeted and sufficiently clear for the recipient to respond to within the proposed timeframe. While providers are not required to respond to draft information notices, we strongly encourage all providers who receive them to engage with Ofcom, particularly if there are any concerns or questions they might have about the draft notice.



Once the secondary legislation passes in Parliament and becomes law, we will issue final information notices that providers will be required to respond to.<sup>2</sup> The information that we require from

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<sup>1</sup> More information on these additional duties can be found in [Ofcom's call for evidence](#) (now closed).

<sup>2</sup> The secondary legislation will either pass in Parliament to become law or be rejected. If the secondary legislation is rejected by Parliament, providers who received draft information notices can expect further communications from Ofcom regarding our planned next steps.

providers will help us to make the necessary assessments of which services should be categorised and in which categories. We will publish the register of categorised services once we have made those assessments.<sup>3</sup>

Given some providers may not have been subject to an information notice from Ofcom before, we are publishing this information to allow services time to prepare and to build their understanding of the information notice process under the Act as it relates to the categorisation process.

Failing to comply with a final information notice can result in significant consequences. Failing to comply can include not responding by the given deadline or providing an inaccurate or incomplete response (to one or more questions or parts of questions).

For further details about information requests from Ofcom, visit our website [here](#).

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<sup>3</sup> This will include a list of emerging category 1 services.