

Reference: 540975

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Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your email dated 8 May which was addressed to Ofcom and other organisations. Within the email, there were some requests for information for Ofcom. We have considered those specific requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Please see our responses to each of your questions below.

What official reviews, or steps, any measures, or new policy and procedures have been established, or actions has been taken, if any, by you as a public regulator individually or has your respective Government with oversight over you taken?

It is unclear what information you are requesting under this question that forms a request under the Act. However, you may find the following information helpful.

Ofcom reviewed the UK's telecommunications regulations (the General Conditions) in 2016/17¹ and there are two new policies that may be of particular interest to you.

We have a new regulation coming into force in October that will require regulated providers to establish, publish and comply with clear and effective policies and procedures for the fair and appropriate treatment of consumers whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Also, from October, the following requirements will be extended to broadband:

- Priority fault repair for people who depend on their communications services because of disability or ill-health
- Third party bill management, allowing customers to nominate a trusted friend or relative to help manage their bills
- Bills and contracts in accessible formats such as large print and Braille

How many FOI requests are you refusing to answer yearly as a public regulator since May 2010 to April 2018?

Ofcom responds to all Freedom of Information requests as required under the Act. Please visit our website where we publish our responses: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/foi->

¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-1/review-general-conditions>

[dp/foi-responses](#). Publications of responses before 2016 can be found on The National Archives website.

How many complaints or concerns over disability issues do you receive each year? Please give details.

Ofcom does not hold information in the format you have requested. We log complaints on our complaints database by category of the complaint issue (with reference to relevant rules and codes). There is no specific category for complaints or concerns for “disability issues”.

This reflects the fact that Ofcom is the communications regulator. For example, Ofcom is responsible for enforcing legislation about television access services (subtitles, sign language and audio description). Many deaf and hard of hearing people use subtitles, but they are also used by hearing people, for example when watching television at low volume.

A complaint to Ofcom about subtitle quality will be logged as being about subtitles rather than about deafness. There is no obligation on the person making the complaint to say whether they are deaf or not, and it is therefore not possible for Ofcom to judge if the complaint is disability-related.

How many internet and telecommunications providers have been taken to court for disability discrimination?

This information is not held by us. Ofcom is not responsible for enforcing the Equality Act 2010 and issuing court claims against telecommunications providers for disability discrimination.

If you have any queries, then please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Jerin John

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for undertaking internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact:

Steve Gettings
The Secretary to the Corporation
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road

London SE1 9HA

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF