

Reference: 02076081

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

5 November 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the office of the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner.

We received this request on 10 September 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act"). We wrote to you on 8 October 2025 to say we needed more time to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing the information requested – we have now concluded this.

Your request

Please provide copies of all correspondence sent to and received from the office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner on or after September 10, 2024.

This should include postal correspondence, as well as all emails sent to, or received from, email addresses on the domain @iasc.independent.gov.uk

Our response

Please find attached a bundle of documents that fall within scope of your request. These include meeting arrangements and other email correspondence. Some information in Document 10 has been redacted as we consider it is exempt from disclosure under S36 of the FOI Act. In particular, sections 36(2)(b)(ii) and (c) of the FOI Act provide that information held by a public authority is exempt from disclosure if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information –

- Would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or
- Would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely to otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.

Section 36 is a qualified exemption, which means that Ofcom is required to consider whether or not the public interest in disclosing the information you have requested outweighs the public interest in withholding the information. In this case, we consider that the public interest favours withholding the information for the reasons set out in Annex B to this letter. In Annex A of this letter, the qualified person, the Corporation Secretary for Ofcom, has confirmed that the exemption applies.

In addition, we have withheld names and job titles from the documents where reasonable as we consider this to be personal information which is exempt under Section 40 of the FOI Act. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and is not subject to the public interest test.

If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

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](#).

Annex A

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Section 36 exemption

The information we hold that falls within the scope of your request is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 36(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). I am a "qualified person" as referred to section 36(2) of the Act and duly authorised by a Minister of the Crown for the purposes of that section. The limbs of section 36 that apply here are:

(2) Information to which this section applies is exempt information if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act—

(b) would, or would be likely to, inhibit—

(i) the free and frank provision of advice, or

(ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or

(c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs

In my reasonable opinion, disclosure of the information requested would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.

Set out in Annex B is the exemption in full, as well as the factors that were considered when deciding where the public interest lay in relation to the information concerned.

If you have any queries about his letter, please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

Date: 5 November 2025

Corporation Secretary

Annex B

Section 36: Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs

Section 36 exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, have any of the following effects:

- inhibit the free and frank provision of advice,
- inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or
- otherwise prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

Key points:

- Section 36 can only be used if, in the **reasonable view of a "qualified person"**, disclosure of the requested information would have one of the specified effects.
- The application of section 36 is subject to a public interest balancing test.

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desirability of citizens being confident that decisions are taken on the basis of the best available information. • Knowledge that the arguments relating to a debate will be disclosable may improve the quality of those arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofcom, as a sector regulator, depends heavily on its on-going relationship with Stakeholders such as IASC. Disclosure of the requested information would mean that IASC would be reluctant to come forward and discuss necessary policy issues with Ofcom, and would be less willing to be open in any discussions, if they knew that what they said to us would be made public, such as their thoughts and opinions and confidential information. • In addition, to regulate effectively, Ofcom needs to be able to think through all the implications of particular policy options and undertake without prejudice rigorous and candid assessments with the input of stakeholders. • Disclosure of this information would create distrust between our stakeholders and Ofcom. This will mean that Ofcom would be unable to coordinate with stakeholders and gain valuable information and as such will affect the quality of Ofcom’s decision making and conduct of public affairs and policy development.

Reasons why the public interest favours withholding information

- A consequence of disclosure would be that stakeholders would be less likely to come forward and discuss important policy issues, and be less open, with Ofcom. Ofcom would therefore be less able to gauge Stakeholders' views as to how effective its regulation is and be unable to obtain invaluable stakeholder input. These factors would in turn lessen Ofcom's ability to meet its statutory obligation to ensure its regulation is effective and appropriate. This would be against the public interest.