

Reference: 02243588

Information Requests
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12 August 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request concerning a register of categorised services.

We received this request on 15 July 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We sought clarification of your request on 24 July 2026 and this was received on the same day. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOI Act").

Your request

The High Court judgement on Wikimedia's judicial review revealed that then-DSIT minister Maggie Jones called a meeting in July 2024 to discuss concerns that certain "outliers" might fall within the scope of Category 1, "particularly Google Maps, Google Photos, Amazon, and eBay."

Only eBay made it onto the register at all, as a Category 2B service.

I am requesting information about why Google Maps and Amazon have not been categorised (as of July 2025).

This should cover correspondence between Ofcom officials about Google Maps and categorization, such as whether the threshold conditions were met. It should also cover correspondence between Google and Ofcom about the register.

Our response

We are unable to provide the requested information as we consider that section 12 of the FOI Act exempts us from our obligation to comply with your request.

Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the "appropriate limit". The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the "Regulations"), and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour, which equates to 18 hours of time.

Your request is broad and does not specify a particular time frame. A large number of staff from different areas and directorates have been involved generally in Ofcom's work on categorisation under the Online Safety Act 2023. In order to identify any "correspondence between Ofcom officials

about Google Maps and categorization”, as well as in relation to Amazon,¹ we would therefore need to ask many different colleagues to conduct searches of their emails and other documents covering an indeterminate period to identify any information within the scope of your request.

After carrying out the above searches, we would then need to manually extract and review any relevant information, assess and identify any that is relevant to your request, and consider whether any exemptions to disclosure apply. This process would take us beyond the 18-hour limit of complying with a request.

You may wish to consider submitting a narrower, more focused request, such as seeking information in relation to only one service (e.g. Google Maps or Amazon), specifying a particular timeframe for the correspondence you are seeking, or specifying a particular topic to which that correspondence you are seeking relates, such as correspondence relating to an assessment of whether the threshold conditions are met by a particular service. We would then consider this under the FOI Act. However, should you decide to make a further request for information, please note the aforementioned appropriate limit and/or that other exemptions may apply.

You may wish to refer the register of categorised services published on our [website](#), which gives information on the different categories of service and the relevant threshold conditions that must be met by a service in order to be entered on to the register.

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](#).

¹ You did not reference Amazon in your detailing of the type of correspondence you would like covered by your request. However, based on the framing of your request more broadly, we infer that you are also requesting similar correspondence in respect of Amazon, in addition to Google Maps.