

Reference: 2212113

Information Requests

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9 July 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about projected costs and staffing for enforcing under 16 social media ban.

We received this request on 15 June 2026 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the FOI Act').

Your request and our response

Projected costs and staffing for enforcement of the under-16 social media ban Dear [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology / Ofcom], I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In a letter to Sir Ian Cheshire and Dame Melanie Dawes announcing measures in response to the "Growing up in the Online World" consultation, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP, confirmed that the government "will ensure Ofcom has the funding it needs" to implement and enforce the new restrictions, including the ban on social media services for under-16s. The letter also referred to a request that Sir Ian Cheshire conduct an urgent review of whether Ofcom has the right capabilities in place. I am seeking the underlying figures behind these commitments.

I request the following, covering the period from 1 January 2026 to the date this request is processed:

- 1. Any projection, estimate, modelling, or business case for the additional funding to be provided to, or required by, Ofcom to implement and enforce the new restrictions, broken down by financial year where held.*
- 2. Any projection or estimate of the additional staffing (in full-time equivalents, by grade or team where held) required by Ofcom to implement and enforce the new restrictions, including the under-16 social media ban and the related age assurance, livestreaming, and chatbot measures.*
- 3. The findings, outputs, or any interim report arising from the review of Ofcom's capabilities referred to in the Secretary of State's letter, including any assessment of changes needed to Ofcom's structures or ways of working.*
- 4. Any correspondence between DSIT ministers / ministerial private offices and Ofcom (including emails and messages on any platform used for official business) discussing the cost or staffing implications of implementing and enforcing the new restrictions.*
- 5. Any submission, briefing, or advice to ministers (DSIT) or to the Board or Executive Committee (Ofcom) quantifying the cost or resourcing of the new duties.*

Our initial review shows your requests are very wide-ranging. For example: question 1 covers "any" modelling, question 2 "any" estimate, question 3 "any" outputs and question 4 "any" e-mails. Your questions therefore capture the work of a significant number of Ofcom employees. In order to

gather the information in the scope of the request those employees would each have to scrutinise work conducted over the past six months and extract information from their work which was responsive to the request. We estimate that it would take substantially in excess of 18 hours for that process to be conducted. We therefore consider this information exempted under section 12 of the FOI Act.

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.

As set out above, we estimate that it would take over 18 hours to locate, identify and extract the information you requested due to the substantial number of documents various teams would have to search through to obtain the information.

You may wish to consider submitting a narrower, more specific request and we would be happy to consider this under the FOI Act. Should you decide to make a further request for information, please note that other exemptions may apply.

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](#).