

Reference: 2196386

Information Requests

[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

1 July 2026

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the publication of adult site names in enforcement announcements.

We received this request on 7 May 2026 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the FOI Act'). We wrote to you on 3 June 2026, explaining that we needed more time to consider where the public interest lay in withholding or disclosing the information requested. We have now concluded our consideration.

### Your request and our response

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*I am writing to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This request concerns Ofcom's practice of publicly naming individual adult websites by domain name in its enforcement announcements, published on its website and on X from 31 July 2025 onwards.*

*I would be grateful if you could provide the following information:*

*1. The job title and grade of the person who held authority to approve the decision to name individual adult websites by domain in Ofcom's public enforcement announcements.*

We can confirm that this information is not held.

*2. The name of that person, if they hold a Director-level role or above.*

We can confirm that this information is not held.

*3. Any document produced between 1 January 2024 and the date of this request that records the rationale for naming individual adult sites by domain name in enforcement communications, rather than identifying providers by company or legal entity name alone.*

We can confirm that this information is not held.

*4. Any document produced between 1 January 2024 and the date of this request that records whether Ofcom assessed, prior to publication, the risk of its publicly accessible enforcement announcements directing children to sites that had not implemented age verification.*

We do hold information in scope of your request. However, the information is being withheld as we consider this information exempt from disclosure under section 36 of the FOI Act. Section 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; and

- would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely 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 A to this letter. In Annex A of this letter, the qualified person, the Corporation Secretary for Ofcom, has confirmed that the exemption applies.

*5. Any document produced between 31 July 2025 and the date of this request that records any review, complaint, or escalation received by Ofcom following publication of those announcements, relating to child safety or traffic to named sites.*

We can confirm that this information is not held.

*6. Any policy, guidance, or procedure - in force at any point between 1 January 2024 and the date of this request - governing how Ofcom determines what identifiers to use when naming entities in public enforcement communications. I would prefer to receive this information by email in electronic format, preferably as PDF where documents are involved. If the cost of complying with this request is likely to exceed the appropriate limit under Section 12 of the Act, please contact me before refusing so that I may consider how to refine or prioritise the request.*

We can confirm that this information is not held.

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](mailto: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**

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. In my reasonable opinion, disclosure of the relevant information requested

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

In applying this exemption, I have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information.

I have set out in Annex B the exemption in full, as well as the factors I considered when deciding where the public interest lay in relation to the information concerned. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk).

Corporation Secretary

Date: 1 July 2026

## 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 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.
- would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation; and/or
- would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.
- The application of section 36 is subject to a public interest balance.

| Factors for disclosure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Factors for withholding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofcom recognises that disclosure of the documentation might be a matter of interest to the wider public. Releasing such information could be said to increase transparency in our work and allow for discussion in a public forum.</li> </ul>                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The documentation in relation to which the exemption is claimed encompasses internal discussions and information regarding Ofcom's risk management planning.</li> <li>• In order to fulfil its regulatory functions effectively, Ofcom needs to be able to engage internally and externally in frank discussions, and engage with members of organisations relevant to our functions as the online safety regulator.</li> <li>• Disclosure of information about such discussions and information would, or would be likely to, inhibit free and frank discussions in the future and this in turn would likely lead to less robust decision making, and less effective regulation.</li> <li>• Given the above, disclosing such communications would also likely prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.</li> </ul> |
| Reasons why public interest favours withholding information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this time, Ofcom is withholding the requested information. The public interest test has been applied on the basis of disclosing information which would reveal internal discussions and planning.</li> <li>• We consider that the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

disclosure.

- This is because the disclosure of this information is likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs, as it would affect Ofcom's ability to freely and effectively deliberate on and discuss such matters.
- Whilst there may be some weight attached to the public interest in disclosing, we consider this is limited, and that significant prejudice would be caused by such a disclosure.