

Reference: 02115899

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

29 January 2026

Dear,

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning meetings with regulators from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA.

We received this request on 4 December 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

On 6 January 2026 we informed you that we needed more time to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing the information – we have now concluded our considerations.

Your request & our response

“I would like information about meetings Ofcom had with regulators from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States from November 4-6 that took place in London. Specifically I would like:

1. Briefings made in preparation for the meetings.

The information you have requested is being withheld as we consider that it is exempt from disclosure under the following sections of the FOI Act:

- Section 23(1), which applies to information supplied by or relating to security bodies, or in the alternative, Section 24(1), which applies where withholding information is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security; and
- Section 27(1)(a) and (c) and 27(2), which provide that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, or the interests of the United Kingdom abroad. Section 27(2) provides that information is exempt from disclosure if it is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.

Sections 24 and 27 are qualified exemptions, 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 test favours withholding the information for the reasons set out in Annexes A and B respectively to this letter. We have also considered the public interest test for both section 24 and 27 in the aggregate and consider that the public interest test remains in favour of withholding the requested information.

2. A list of attendees of the meetings.

The information you have requested is being withheld as we consider that it is exempt from disclosure, in particular under:

- Sections 23(1) or 24(1) FOIA. Section 23 FOIA deals with information that has been supplied by, or relates to, a body specified in that section. Section 24(1) may apply where section 23(1) does not apply and deals with information required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.
- Sections 27(1)(a) and (c) and 27(2) of the FOI Act. Sections 27(1)(a) and (c) provide that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, or the interests of the United Kingdom abroad. Section 27(2) provides that information is exempt from disclosure if it is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.

Sections 24 and 27 are qualified exemptions, 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, and respectively Annex B to this letter.

Further, we consider that information relating to individual attendees of meetings, which is personal data, is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOI Act, which provides that personal data which relates to persons other than the requester is exempt where, amongst other things, its disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. Those principles include that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40 is an absolute exemption under the FOI Act and is not subject to a public interest test. We have also considered the public interest test for both section 24 and 27 in the aggregate and consider that the public interest test remains in favour of withholding the requested information.

3. Minutes of the meetings.

We do not hold the requested information.

4. Documents made after the meetings such as post meeting “formal message” documents, or notes taken about the meetings.

Please see Ofcom’s news story published on 6 November 2025 which provides a factual and high-level statement on the meeting and topics discussed: [Authorities from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and NZ to enhance cooperation on telecoms security](#).

The final version of the joint statement which was published on 6 November 2025 outlines the areas of cooperation partners in attendance [Ofcom (UK), Federal Communications Commissions (US), Innovation Science and Economic Development (Canada), Department of Home Affairs (Australia) and National Cyber Security Centre (New Zealand)] signed up to. To progress these actions, partners have agreed to convene at least annually. [Joint statement on international cooperation in telecoms sector](#).

5. *If possible, please can the date on which these meetings were first arranged be provided?*

The meeting that took place in London 4-6 November 2025 was a follow-up to the meeting held by the Federal Communications Commissions in Washington, DC last year. Please see FCC November 2024 Press Release: [FCC ENFORCEMENT BUREAU CONVENES MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FROM AUSTRALIA, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM](#)

6. *Also if possible, please could you provide draft copies of the joint statement Ofcom published with the four other regulators from these countries?"*

The information you have requested is being withheld as we consider that it is exempt from disclosure, in particular under:

- Section 23(1), which applies to information supplied by or relating to security bodies, or in the alternative, Section 24(1), which applies where withholding information is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security; and
- Section 27(1)(a) and (c) and 27(2), which provide that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, or the interests of the United Kingdom abroad. Section 27(2) provides that information is exempt from disclosure if it is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.

Sections 24 and 27 are qualified exemptions, 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, and respectively Annex B to this letter. We have also considered the public interest test for both section 24 and 27 in the aggregate and consider that the public interest test remains in favour of withholding the requested information.

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

<p>Section 24(1) of the Act:</p> <p><i>“Information which does not fall within section 23(1) is exempt information if exemption from section 1(1)(b) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.”</i></p>	
Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofcom recognises that its approach to regulation and collaboration with other regulators internationally is a matter of interest to the public. Releasing such information could be said to increase transparency in our work and allow for discussion in a public forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regard to briefings prepared for the meetings, these contain information regarding UK and international telecoms regulation and security. Briefing materials were prepared for the purpose of the meetings, and provided in confidence for the exclusive purpose of enabling frank and open conversations. The requested documents contain information which, if disclosed, would be likely to make the UK or its citizens more vulnerable to a national security threat. The list of attendees at the meetings contains information about attendees which is not currently in the public domain. A joint statement was published between Ofcom and international regulators regarding international telecoms security. We consider that there is limited public interest in releasing draft copies of this document. We consider that information in the draft document, to the extent that it relates to UK bodies and was not contained in the published joint statement, contains information which it would be prejudicial to disclose.
<p>Reasons why public interest favours withholding information</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofcom is withholding the requested information. The public interest test has been applied on the basis of disclosing information which would reveal details of briefings, attendees, and draft documents pertaining to discussions between the UK and international bodies regarding telecoms security. 	

- We consider that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure. This is because withholding the requested information is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.
- Whilst we acknowledge there may be some weight attached to the public interest in disclosing the requested information to enable the public to understand how Ofcom is working with UK and international bodies to ensure telecoms security, we consider that disclosure of the information would impact the safeguarding of national security. We take into account that the relevant bodies have considered what it is safe to put into the public domain when drafting the joint statement.

Annex B

Sections 27(1)(a) and (c) and 27(2): Prejudice to relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, or to the interests of the United Kingdom abroad; and confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom.

Sections 27(1)(a) and (c) exempts information which the disclosure of would, or would be likely to, have any of the following effects:

- Prejudice relations between the UK and any other State; or
- Prejudice the interests of the United Kingdom abroad.

Section 27(2) exempts information which is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.

Key points:

- In this case, it is considered that disclosure would prejudice relations between the UK and international bodies in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the United Kingdom’s interests abroad. It is also considered that the information requested includes information which is confidential information obtained from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
- The application of section 27 is subject to a public interest balancing test.

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofcom recognises that its approach to regulation and collaboration with other regulators internationally is a matter of interest to the public. Releasing such information could be said to increase transparency in our work and allow for discussion in a public forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The documentation and information in relation to which the information is claimed relates to briefings and attendees at the relevant meetings, and draft copies of the joint statement published between Ofcom and international bodies. • The disclosure of these documents could affect Ofcom’s ability to effectively discuss such matters and to engage with international regulators in future. • Information provided for the meetings was provided in confidence, and disclosure of such information, including the names of attendees may undermine foreign officials’ confidence that they can have free, frank and open exchanges about bilateral issues with Ofcom, other UK public authorities,

	<p>and/or the UK Government if details of such discussions are released publicly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to fulfil its regulatory functions effectively, Ofcom needs to be able to engage with other international bodies by way of frank discussions and exchange of opinions. The disclosure of information about such discussions would, or would be likely to, inhibit free and frank discussions in the future for the reasons set out above. • As set out above, a joint statement was published between Ofcom and international regulators regarding international telecoms security. We consider that there is limited public interest in releasing draft copies of this document. • We consider that information in the draft document, to the extent that it relates to international bodies and was not contained in the published joint statement, contains information which, if disclosed, would prejudice relations between the UK and international bodies, and would also likely prejudice the interests of the UK abroad.
Reasons why public interest favours withholding information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofcom is withholding the requested information. The public interest test has been applied on the basis of disclosing information which would reveal details of briefings, attendees, and draft documents pertaining to discussions between the UK and international bodies regarding telecoms security. • We consider that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure. This is because the disclosure of this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the UK and international bodies in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the United Kingdom's interests abroad. • Whilst we acknowledge there may be some weight attached to the public interest in disclosing the requested information to enable the public to understand how Ofcom is working with UK and international bodies to ensure telecoms security, we consider that significant prejudice to international relations would be caused by such a 	

disclosure. We also acknowledge that information has been made public regarding these meetings, including the joint statement.