

Reference: 02207526

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

30 July 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning enforcement of Age Assurance duties for online pornography providers.

We received this request on 5 June 2026. We wrote to you on 26 June 2026 to say we needed more time to consider the public interest in disclosing or withholding some information and we have now concluded this. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act')

Your requests & our response

- 1. The number of online pornography providers or services that have been found non-compliant with age assurance requirements.*
- 2. The number of online pornography providers or services that have been fined for non-compliance with age assurance requirements.*

The answer to both questions 1 and 2 is 7 providers, which relates to 31 services.

Information on our enforcement programme can be found [here](#).

- 3. Of those fined, how many have paid their fine in full?*
- 4. Of those fined, how many have paid their fine in part?*
- 5. Of those fined, how many have not paid their fine?*

In respect of these 3 questions, whilst we hold this information, we are withholding this as we consider it is exempt from disclosure under section 44(1) of the FOI Act. Section 44(1) of the FOI Act provides that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. The enactment that prohibits the disclosure of this information is section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 ("the Act"). Under this section, we are prohibited from disclosing information with respect to a particular business that has been obtained in the exercise of our regulatory functions in relation to the online safety act, unless that business consents or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 of the FOI Act is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to the public interest test.

You may find the information in this [Investigation bulletin](#) useful.

- 6. Where fines remain unpaid, please confirm whether Ofcom has taken, is taking, or intends to take further enforcement or court action to recover those fines.*

We take the non-payment of penalties very seriously. There are a range of tools at our disposal and you can read more here: [What happens when a company doesn't pay a fine](#).

7. The number of online pornography providers or services Ofcom is currently aware of that remain non-compliant with age assurance requirements.

8. Of those currently known to be non-compliant, how many are subject to active enforcement action?

9. Of those currently known to be non-compliant, how many are not currently subject to enforcement or court action, and, where recorded, the reason for this.

In answer to questions 7, 8 and 9, Formal findings of non-compliance follow an investigation. For the number of services known to be non-compliant, we refer you to the answer to questions 1 and 2.

10. The number of online pornography websites, domains, platforms, or services that have been blocked at ISP level by Ofcom, or following action initiated by Ofcom.

11. For any ISP-level blocking actions identified in response to Question 10, please provide:

a. the date of the blocking action;

b. the legal basis used;

c. the number of websites, domains, platforms, or services affected;

d. whether the blocking action remains in force; and

e. whether the blocking action applied to all UK ISPs or only specified providers.

In answer to questions 10 and 11, the answer is zero.

12. The number of formal information notices, enforcement notices, penalty notices, or similar regulatory notices issued by Ofcom to online pornography providers or services in relation to age assurance compliance.

We have issued 32 formal notices to providers of pornography services regarding age assurance compliance. As per our enforcement programme bulletins of 3 and 28 April 2025, we have also written informally to several hundred providers of porn sites regarding age assurance, and this work remains ongoing. More broadly, services which fall short of their obligations can expect to hear from us.

13. The number of cases where Ofcom has identified a provider as non-compliant but has been unable to enforce against that provider because of jurisdictional, ownership, identification, or overseas enforcement issues.

Please refer to the answers to questions 7, 8 and 9 above.

14. Any recorded estimate held by Ofcom of the approximate number of offshore pornographic websites, domains, platforms, or services that are currently accessible to users within the United Kingdom.

We do not hold this information. For context, the Online Safety Act applies regardless of the geographic location of the provider, if the service can be accessed by UK users.

15. If no recorded estimate is held in relation to Question 14, please confirm whether Ofcom holds any internal assessment, briefing, report, risk analysis, enforcement document, or similar recorded information concerning the scale of offshore pornographic websites accessible in the UK.

Please see our response to question 14.

16. Any recorded policy, guidance, procedure, operational framework, enforcement strategy, or internal assessment held by Ofcom setting out the measures available or being used to address offshore pornography providers that are accessible in the UK but do not comply with age assurance requirements.

We can confirm that we hold some information within scope of this question. However, we are unable to disclose this as we consider that this information is exempt from disclosure under section 36 of the FOI Act. In particular, section 36(2)(c) of the FOI Act provides 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 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.

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.

17. Any recorded policy, guidance, procedure, or internal framework used by Ofcom to determine when non-compliant pornography providers should be escalated to fines, court action, ISP-level blocking, or other enforcement measures.

Ofcom enforces rules against the companies and service providers responsible for online services. We don't issue fines against individual websites, and any enforcement action is taken against the organisation operating the service.

Our [Online Safety Enforcement Guidance](#) is publicly available on Ofcom's website.

Ofcom publishes a list of financial penalties issued here: [Enforcement Bulletin](#).

We have also recently published this [bulletin](#) on our website which you may find useful.

Any further updates, including if we were to conclude an investigation and impose any additional penalties, will be published to the bulletin. You can also [subscribe to email updates](#) for the areas/sectors you are interested in.

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 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.

In my reasonable opinion, disclosure of the information requested would, or would be likely to, inhibit:

- (i) the free and frank exchange of advice or views for the purposes of deliberation, or
- (11) 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.

Date: 30 July 2026

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.
- In this case, it is considered that disclosure would:
 - inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, and
 - otherwise prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs
- The application of section 36 is subject to a public interest balancing test.

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
• Ofcom recognises that its approach to its duties under the Online Safety Act 2023 is 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.	• The documentation in relation to which the exemption is claimed reflects internal Ofcom guidance. • The documentation being withheld concerns guidance on Ofcom's regulatory functions under the Online Safety Act, regarding our monitoring of and enforcement against pornography providers accessible in the UK which do not comply with age assurance requirements. • The documentation contains discussions between colleagues regarding policy development. In order to regulate effectively, Ofcom colleagues must be able to have free and frank discussions and deliberations to create effective and robust guidance. Disclosure of this document would be likely to inhibit this free and frank exchange of views. • Disclosure of this information would also be likely to prejudice Ofcom's ability to effectively regulate under the Online Safety Act, by disclosing information about Ofcom's internal guidance and policies in relation to its regulatory approach.

	Ofcom has published various information setting out our approach to online safety investigations and enforcement, which can be found on our website.
Reasons why the public interest favours withholding information	
- Ofcom is withholding the requested information. The public interest test has been applied based on disclosing information which would reveal internal guidance given to Ofcom employees regarding online safety regulatory actions. - Whilst there may be some weight attached to the public interest in disclosure to enable the public to understand how Ofcom is carrying out its regulatory functions, we consider that prejudice would be caused by such a disclosure.	