

Reference: 02210914

Information Requests

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19 June 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about crisis response protocol: criteria and internal assessment methodology.

We received this request on 12 June 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request & our response

Background

On 10 June 2026, following civil unrest in Belfast and the spread of disorder across Northern Ireland, Scotland and parts of England, Ofcom published an open letter to online service providers reminding them of their duties under the Online Safety Act 2023. The open letter stated that Ofcom's role was to ensure platforms had appropriate compliance measures in place rather than to direct platforms to take down specific posts or accounts.

On 9 June 2026 - the day the disorder began - Ofcom published its finalised crisis response protocol as an addition to its Codes of Practice under the Online Safety Act 2023. The Technology Secretary subsequently announced proposed amendments to the Online Safety Act requiring faster action by platforms during times of crisis, and confirmed she had directly requested Ofcom hold urgent discussions with regulated services.

I am not requesting information obtained from any regulated service in the exercise of Ofcom's regulatory powers. I am requesting Ofcom's own authored policy and administrative documents.

Requests

I request the following specific information, to be treated as severable:

1. Crisis response protocol: drafting timeline

(a) Does Ofcom hold a written record - whether as a project log, decision record, approval chain document, or equivalent - identifying the date on which work began on the crisis response protocol published on 9 June 2026?

We can confirm that we hold an initial, internal planning document in relation to the crisis response protocol.

(b) If so: what is the earliest date recorded in that document as the commencement of work on the protocol?

On [17 October 2024](#), Ofcom wrote to Parliament regarding our implementation of the Online Safety Act, setting out that we would consult in 2025 on adding further measures to our online safety codes of practice – after finalising our first-edition codes, which were published in [December 2024](#). On [22 October 2024](#), Ofcom wrote to the Secretary of State setting out our evaluation of how platforms responded to the disorder that followed the 2024 Southport attack, in which we said that our additional codes measures consultation – mentioned in the previous letter to Parliament – would include a new crisis response protocol measure. We then commenced this work on 23 October 2024. We consulted on additional codes measures on [30 June 2025](#), and published our decision on the crisis response protocol measure on [9 June 2026](#).

(c) On what date was the crisis response protocol submitted for final internal approval prior to publication?

Final approval of the protocol was completed between 21 May and 26 May 2026.

2. Criteria for compliance monitoring versus emergency enforcement

(a) Does Ofcom hold any written document - whether as internal guidance, decision framework, operational policy, or equivalent - setting out the criteria by which Ofcom determines whether a regulated service's conduct during a period of civil disorder warrants emergency enforcement action under the Online Safety Act 2023, as distinct from compliance monitoring, open correspondence, or a quarterly compliance assessment?

Yes – this is publicly available and can be seen in [Section 3](#) of the Online Safety Enforcement Guidance, particularly in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9.

(b) If so: what is its title or designation, on what date was it produced or last revised, and under what classification is it held?

The Online Safety Enforcement Guidance was published on the Ofcom website on 16 December 2024.

3. The open letter decision record

(a) Does Ofcom hold a written decision record, briefing note, or equivalent document recording the

basis on which the open letter of 10 June 2026 was determined to be the appropriate regulatory response to the Belfast disorder, rather than a formal information notice, provisional notice of contravention, or application to court under the Online Safety Act 2023?

We do not hold the information requested.

For clarity, the open letter of 10 June 2026 was sent as it was considered conducive to Ofcom's statutory objectives. Publishing this letter does not preclude us from taking other actions, nor is it mutually exclusive with other regulatory actions. Therefore, no decision has been made within the scope of your question.

(b) If so: what is its title or designation, on what date was it produced, and at what level of seniority was the decision approved?

Not applicable, please see the response to question 3(a).

4. Grok investigation status

(a) Ofcom opened a formal investigation into X Internet Unlimited Company in January 2026 in relation to the Grok AI chatbot. Does Ofcom confirm that this investigation remains open as of the date of this request?

Yes. Please refer to the published article on our Enforcement Bulletin: [Investigation into X Internet Unlimited Company and its compliance with duties to protect its users from illegal content and child users from harmful content](#)

(b) If the investigation has been closed or suspended, on what date was that decision made?

Not applicable, please see the response to question 4(a).

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](#).