

Reference: 02199106

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

5 June 2026

Dear,

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning a definition of TV Service.

We received this request on 13 May 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

"I've been prompted by the vague wording on the TV Licensing website to go digging through the UK broadcasting legislation to try to find the definition of TV Service, since the TV License makes vague references to TV Services including streaming services.

For context, this is primarily for digital online content.

By my reading, services like YouTube, Twitch TV etc would most likely be considered multiplex services at best, but there doesn't seem to be clarity on whether individual contributors would be considered TV Services.

Logic would say no, I wouldn't instantly become a TV Service provider if I post a video on YouTube, for example.

The information I would like is:

What exactly constitutes a TV Service for the purposes of the TV License requirements.

I would like a definition of both TV Service, and Broadcast, for the purposes of the legislation and digital content - broadcast has obvious historical meaning when services were wirelessly transmitted, but less so with digital services.

Is the definition TV Service restricted to licensed broadcasters?

How does an individual member of public know what counts and what doesn't, please be as specific as possible.

What part of the legislation is relied on to require a TV License to watch recordings?

Where a streaming service is not broadcasting live, but providing video content on demand, are those videos automatically exempt?

Where a streaming service is provided "Live", is it automatically a TV Service?

What if a company is providing a live announcement to staff?

Where is the line between public and private audience if that matters."

Our response

We have considered your requested and confirm that we do not hold the requested information.

Please note, TV Licensing relates to the TV licence that consumers are required to have to watch or record programmes on a TV, computer or other device and to watch on-demand TV such as BBC programmes on BBC iPlayer etc. (please see here [TV licensing](#)), which differs from Ofcom's licensing regime. Please see [TLCS guidance notes for applicants](#) for more information about the scope of our licensing regime. Please also see [Notifying an on-demand service](#) that provides information to determine whether an On Demand Programme Service is required to be notified to Ofcom.

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](#).