

Reference: 02140174

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

17 March 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).

We received this request on 30 January 2026. We wrote to you on 23 February 2026 to say we needed more time to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing the information and we have now concluded this. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Your request

I request disclosure of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between Ofcom and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) in November 2025, as referenced in Ofcom's publication "Ofcom and IWF reinforce partnership in fight against online child sexual abuse" (published 29 January 2026).

If the MoU has been amended or supplemented by any annexes, schedules, side letters or accompanying documents, I request disclosure of those materials as well.

Our response

We do hold this information, however, we are unable to disclose it as we consider it is exempt from disclosure under Section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act. This part of the act deals with information that, if disclosed would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

Section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act is a qualified exemption which means that we have had 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 the public interest favours withholding the information. The attached Annex to this letter sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

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

Section 31 (1) of the FOI Act provides that:

Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice –

- (a) the prevention or detection of crime;**
- (b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.**

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open policy making and public confidence in regulated activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the online safety regulator, Ofcom has powers and duties relating to preventing illegal harms online. The IWF is an independent, non-profit charitable organisation which works to prevent and remove child sexual abuse material online. To disclose the MoU between Ofcom and the IWF would provide details of how we work together to prevent illegal harms online. This is likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, specifically relating to child sexual abuse. • If offenders are aware of details within the MoU between Ofcom and the IWF, they may seek to circumvent measures in place to prevent illegal harms.
<p>Reasons why public interest favours withholding information</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of information about the relationship between Ofcom and the IWF could allow bad actors to circumvent measures in place intended to prevent and report illegal harms, in particular relating to child sexual abuse material. 	