

Reference: 02259280

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

8 September 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about enabling recipients to verify messages sent by UK public bodies.

We received this request on 10 August 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request & our response

We request the following recorded information:

1. *Any recorded information held by Ofcom which considers whether the measures set out in the statement *Combatting mobile messaging scams* (15 July 2026) — including the know-your-customer requirements on business senders and the sender-identity provisions, which we understand operate before delivery rather than after it — extend to enabling the recipient of a message to verify for themselves that it originated from the UK public body it appears to come from.*

Ofcom does not hold this information. These Know Your Customer (KYC) measures are intended to prevent scammers from gaining access to A2P messaging services, rather than provide specific information or verifiability to recipients.

2. *Any recorded information showing whether messaging sent by public bodies (local authorities, NHS organisations, central government departments and their agencies) was considered separately, as a category, in the development of the 15 July 2026 statement, and if so what conclusion was reached.*

Ofcom does not hold this information. These senders were considered together with other organisations at high-risk of impersonation.

3. *Any recorded information which identifies which public authority Ofcom considers to hold responsibility for enabling citizens to verify communications sent to them by public bodies. If Ofcom holds no such information, please state so.*

Ofcom does not hold this information.

4. *Recorded correspondence between Ofcom and the Home Office, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, or the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, from 1 January 2025 to the date of this request, specifically concerning either (i) the*

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verification of public-sector sender identity, or (ii) the ability of citizens to authenticate communications received from public bodies. This question is confined to those two subjects and is not a request for general inter-departmental correspondence.

Ofcom does not hold this information.

5. *Recorded information held by Ofcom on the number of complaints, reports or referrals it has received, from 1 January 2024 to the date of this request, concerning messages or calls that impersonated a UK public body — including local authorities, the NHS, HM Revenue and Customs, and the Department for Work and Pensions — broken down by year and, if recorded, by the type of body impersonated.*

In response to the information requested, we consider that this is exempt under section 12 of the FOI Act. Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the “appropriate limit”. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, and is, for Ofcom, £450, which is equivalent to 18-hours. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

We do not have a complaint category in our systems specifically for impersonated messages or calls. Therefore in order to satisfy your request and provide the required information, we would need to individually assess the contents of each complaint, and there are over 3000 complaints. We have estimated that it would take 3-5minutes for us to review each complain and identify the relevant information. This would take us beyond the 18-hour limit of complying with a request.

You may wish to consider submitting a narrower, more focused request, for example, a much smaller timeframe such as a one-to-three-month period. We would then consider this under the FOI Act. However, should you decide to make a further request for information, please note that the aforementioned appropriate limit and/or other exemptions may apply.

6. *Any recorded information setting out whether sender-identity registration or equivalent measures arising from the 15 July 2026 statement will be available to, or mandatory for, local authorities and other public bodies, and on what timetable.*

Ofcom does not hold this information.

The [July 2026 statement](#) sets out that regulated communication providers will be required to undertake KYC checks and other due diligence measures, as described in new General Condition (GC) C9 and accompanying guidance, for all business senders at the onboarding stage. Business sender is defined in the GCs, and is likely to include local authorities and public bodies where they chose to use business messaging services in scope of our rules. The rules do not apply to business senders themselves, rather providers are required to implement them. These rules will take effect in July 2027.

7. *We recognise that “responsibility” is a broad word, and that a single question about it is easily answered in general terms. We therefore ask it in five separate parts. Please provide*

any recorded information which identifies the body holding responsibility for each of the following, and which indicates whether Ofcom considers any of them to fall within its own remit:

- (a) policy responsibility for the digital sender identity used by public bodies when they contact citizens;*

Ofcom does not hold this information.

- (b) verification of the sender at the telecommunications provider level;*

Our [July 2026 statement](#) sets out how Ofcom is approaching this matter.

- (c) the means by which a citizen receiving a communication can establish that it genuinely originated from the public body it appears to come from;*

Ofcom does not hold this information.

- (d) common standards for communication between public bodies and citizens;*

Ofcom does not hold this information.

- (e) mitigation of impersonation risk in cases where the body impersonated is a public authority.*

Ofcom does not hold this 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](#).