

Online Information Advisory Committee minutes 6(25)

Publication Minutes of the sixth meeting of the Online Information Advisory Committee held on 7 November 2025 at Riverside House, London SE1 9HA

Present

Richard Allan	Chair and Ofcom Board Member
Elisabeth Costa	Committee Member
Jeff Howard	Committee Member
Will Moy	Committee Member
Mark Scott	Committee Member
Devika Shanker-Grandpierre	Committee Member

In attendance

Colleagues from the Online Safety Group
John Pullinger, Chair, and colleagues from the Electoral Commission (item 4)
Governance Manager

Item 1: Welcome and declaration of members' interests

1. The Chair welcomed Members and attendees to the sixth meeting.
2. Researcher access to data from online platforms would be discussed under item 7. Some Members declared a relationship with UK Research and Innovation: Mark Scott, a member of the Social Platforms Data Access Taskforce; Jeff Howard as an academic researcher; and Lis Costa and Will Moy, employed by the research consultancy Behavioural Insights Team and the social science research network Campbell Collaboration respectively. [They did not need to recuse themselves under item 7 as the Committee did not make any recommendations related to proposals from third parties.]

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025

3. The Committee APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October. Members would be notified of the publication of the minutes from the 1st meeting later in November.

Item 3: Chair's update

4. There was interest amongst Parliamentarians in the work of the Committee and the Chair suggested engagement with the Public Policy team at a future Committee meeting.

5. Polls were due in May 2026 for the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd in Wales. It was noted that Ofcom's nations teams would welcome engagement with the Committee.

Item 4: Elections discussion

6. Members were joined by John Pullinger, Chair of the Electoral Commission, and colleagues from his team. The Committee was considering work that it might undertake on elections and welcomed discussion with the Commission to understand any concerns it had.
7. Two concerns were flagged by the Commission that may relate to Ofcom's Online Safety remit: i) around safety and security, including abuse and intimidation targeted at election candidates and officials; and ii) misinformation and disinformation that may impact trust. Education was also highlighted, to allow young people to make informed judgements during elections.
8. Discussion turned to a wide range of related issues. These included the nature of these concerns in an election context; the role of AI; the role of online services; and the nature of existing laws and regulations.
9. The Committee **NOTED** the discussion that had taken place.

Item 5: Statement and Guidance: A safer life online for women and girls

10. Ofcom was working on dedicated guidance for user-to-user and search services focused on the online safety of women and girls. Draft guidance had been consulted on earlier in the year and final guidance and a statement were expected to be published later in November. The Committee was briefed on this work.
11. The guidance was to focus on four harm areas: online misogynistic abuse and sexual violence; pile-ons and coordinated harassment; coercive control and stalking; and image-based sexual abuse. It included actions for service providers to address these harms; both foundational steps (codes of practice and risk assessment guidance) and other good practice steps. It aimed to ensure that providers take responsibility for women and girls online safety, work to prevent harms occurring and support women and girls when harm did occur.
12. There had been a programme of engagement to gain feedback from stakeholders, many of whom were supportive, but some concerns had been raised.
13. There was discussion of a range of related issues. These included impact on freedom of expression; linkages with Ofcom's work on the categorisation of services; false statements; deepfakes and instances where the victims were not aware they had been targeted; media literacy to educate people about when it was illegal to share images online; and profile and abuse, ranging from women in the public eye to children in school.
14. The Committee **NOTED** the briefing and discussion that had taken place.

Item 6: Outstanding points on Advice Note 1

15. The Chair thanked Members for their feedback and edits of the draft of the Committee's first advice note focused on understanding financial harm online. Agenda time had been allocated today to allow the Committee to reflect on the draft, to discuss a small number of outstanding issues and to finalise its conclusions.
16. There was likely to be external interest in the work of the Committee that could extend to the advice note. There would be liaison with the Ofcom Communications team prior to publication.
17. The Ofcom Board would receive copies of the advice note and its accompanying literature review prior to publication at its November meeting.

Item 7: Researcher access

18. The Committee was updated on Ofcom's work following the publication of its statutory report examining ways to enhance researchers' access to information held by regulated online services. The Committee noted that prior to Ofcom's report, the UK Government introduced legislation that allows it to create, if it chooses to do so, a new framework to enable researchers to access information held by the providers of online services.
19. The Committee Members discussed a range of related issues. These included potential legal issues associated with data scraping practices; read-across to the EU's Digital Services Act; the need for collaborative working across relevant stakeholders; lessons that could be learned from other sectors with more mature data sharing regimes; guidance that may be required to help stakeholders navigate any new processes; and the need for clear research priorities to be set in any future researcher access regime.
20. There was a short discussion of other key findings in the Ofcom report, including; the challenges that currently constrain access to this information; the potential implications for both service providers and researchers; the scope of any new regulations (including potential geographic restrictions); the benefits and challenges associated with various access models and how any new regime could inform future online safety policy development.
21. Attendees acknowledged that final decisions about the design of any new regime were ultimately matters for the UK Government.
22. The Committee **NOTED** the discussion that had taken place.

Item 8: Advice Note 2 discussion

23. Building on discussion at the previous meeting, Members considered further the Committee's work to explore online misinformation and disinformation and public order.
24. Members discussed a number of issues including: options to review relevant literature, how to narrow the subject area of a literature review, the role of

information vacuums, thresholds for illegality, and considering case studies where online information has been claimed to play a role.

25. The Committee noted the discussion that had taken place.

Item 9: Any other business

26. There was no other business.

Item 10: Date of the next meeting

27. The next Committee meeting would be on 5 December 2025.