

Online Information Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

Approved by the Ofcom Board on:	2 April 2025 (effective 1 May 2025)
Previous versions:	

Terms of Reference

(Approved 2 April 2025, effective 1 May 2025)

Purpose

1. Section 152 of the Online Safety Act 2023 (the 'Act') requires Ofcom to establish and maintain an advisory Committee. The Committee is to consist of a chair appointed by Ofcom, and such number of other members appointed by the Ofcom Board as Ofcom consider appropriate.

Function and duties

2. The function of the Committee is to provide advice to Ofcom on those matters specified in section 152(4) of the Act¹.
3. The Committee must publish a report within 18 months of it being established and periodic reports thereafter.
4. The Committee must ensure that it provides practical advice to Ofcom which is based on high-quality and objective evidence.

Membership

5. Ofcom is required to have regard to the desirability of ensuring that members of the Committee include persons representing the interests of United Kingdom users of regulated services, the interests of providers of regulated services, and persons with expertise in the prevention and handling of disinformation and misinformation online.
6. The Committee shall be chaired by a Non-Executive Member of the Ofcom Board with experience in Online Safety matters, who is not the Chair of the Ofcom Board.
7. Members of the Committee shall be Non-Executive.
8. Members of the Committee shall be appointed for a three-year term.
9. The Committee will consist of at least 4 Members, including the Chair.

Secretary

10. The Corporation Secretary, or their nominee, shall act as the secretary of the Committee and will ensure that it receives information and papers in a timely manner to enable full and proper consideration to be given to issues.

Quorum

11. A quorum for any collective meeting shall be half of the total number of Members (rounded up to the nearest whole number).

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/50/section/152>

Frequency and conduct of meetings

12. The Committee will meet collectively at least once per annum. Additional meetings may also be held as and when required, at the request of the Chair of the Committee.
13. The Committee meetings shall be attended by relevant executive colleagues for specific items and, as appropriate, any observers.
14. In addition to these meetings, the executive may engage with Committee members individually from time to time in order to have more detailed discussions on matters relevant to the Committee's remit.
15. Members' attendance through videoconferencing software (e.g. Microsoft Teams) or phone is permissible for the purposes of determining a quorum.
16. In the absence of the Chair, the Chair shall nominate one of the remaining members to chair the meeting, or the remaining Members present shall select one of their numbers to do so.

Notice of meetings

17. Meetings of the Committee shall be called by the Secretary of the Committee at the request of the Chair.
18. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date of the meeting, together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee and any other person required to attend no later than five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers shall be sent to Committee Members and to other attendees, as appropriate, at the same time.
19. Individual engagement with members of the Committee and the executive shall be called at the request of the Ofcom executive.

Minutes of meetings

20. The Secretary to the Committee shall minute the proceedings of all Committee meetings, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.
21. Draft minutes of all Committee meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Committee following the meeting for approval. The Secretary shall keep copies of all approved Committee meeting minutes.

Reporting responsibilities

22. The Committee will report directly to the Ofcom Board through the Chair of the Committee. The Ofcom Board shall keep these terms of reference under review from time to time.
23. The Committee will produce an annual workplan for review and approval by the Ofcom Board.
24. The Ofcom Board will receive any reports produced by the Committee prior to publication.

Other matters

25. The Committee shall:

- Have access to sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to the Governance team for advice and assistance as required.
- Be provided with appropriate and timely training, both in the form of an induction programme for new Members and on an ongoing basis for all Members.
- Ensure that a periodic evaluation of the Committee's performance is carried out.
- At least annually, review its constitution and Terms of Reference to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Board for approval as part of the annual Board and Board Committee effectiveness review cycle.

Date of approval

April 2025

Date of next review

April 2026