Paper to lie before both Houses of Parliament for a period of 40 days, during which time either House may resolve that the draft amendments to the code of practice be not approved.

Ofcom

Draft amendments (No. 2) to the Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services

Draft of amendments prepared under section 41 of the Online Safety Act 2023 and submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 43(1) on 16 November 2026.

Paper to lie before both Houses of Parliament for a period of 40 days, during which time either House may resolve that the draft amendments to the code of practice be not approved.

Office of Communications

Draft amendments (No. 2) to the Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 43(2) of the Online Safety Act 2023

November 2026

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1. Preamble

1.1 On 24 February 2025 Ofcom issued the Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services in accordance with section 41 of the Online Safety Act ('the Act').[1]

1.2 Ofcom issues the amendments set out in section 2 of this notification in accordance with section 43(4) of the Act.

1.3 In the course of preparing the draft of amendments to those Codes, Ofcom consulted the persons mentioned in section 41(6) and (7) of that Act.

1.4 In accordance with section 43(2) and (3) of the Act, the draft has been laid before Parliament for the 40-day period, during which time neither House of Parliament resolved not to approve the draft.

1.5 The amendments come into force [*at the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the day on which they are issued*] in accordance with section 43(4) of the Act.

1.6 Ofcom will publish the amended code of practice on its website in accordance with section 46 of the Act.

Signed by

[Name]

[Position]

A person authorised by Ofcom under paragraph 18 of the Schedule to the Office of Communications Act 2002

[Date]

[1] Ofcom, Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services (24 February 2025), as amended by "Amendments to Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to user services" on 9 September 2026 with effect from 30 September 2026 (the "Intimate image abuse amendments"). A consolidated version of the Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services incorporating amendments is published on Ofcom's website (Online safety regulatory documents and guidance).

2. Amendments

2.1 The Illegal content Codes of Practice for search services are amended as follows.

Amendments to the introduction

2.2 In Section 1 (Introduction)–

a) in paragraph 1.4–
   i) after "containing the", insert "main";
   ii) at the end, insert "We may from time to time amend these Codes or produce other Codes on specialist topics, which will be published on Ofcom's website (at https://www.ofcom.org.uk). Providers should ensure they check this site.";
b) in paragraph 1.11, for "Commissioner's Office" substitute "Commission";
c) in paragraph 1.12, for "Commissioner's" substitute "Commission's";
d) after paragraph 1.12, insert–

"External documents

2.3 A hard copy of any external document referred to in the recommended measures can be obtained by writing to Ofcom at Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HA (tel. 020 7981 3000).".

Amendments to index of recommended measures

Amendment relating to search moderation

2.4 In Section 3 (Index of recommended measures), in the entries after the heading "Search moderation", after the entry for ICS C3, insert the following entry–

ICS C3A	Steps to take on reversal of content decisions	All **services**.	CSEA Terrorism Other duties	Section 27(12) Section 33(2) and 33(3)

Amendment relating to settings, functionalities and user support

2.5 In Section 3 (Index of recommended measures), in the entry for ICS F3, in the second column, after "suicide" insert "and serious self-harm".

Amendments to recommended measures

Amendment relating to search moderation

Amendment to ICS C1

2.6 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection C (Search moderation), in ICS C1.8, before sub-paragraph (a), insert–

"za) Recommendation ICS C3A;".

Amendment to ICS C2

2.7 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection C (Search moderation), in ICS C2, at the end, insert–

"Safeguard for freedom of expression and privacy

ICS C2.5 Recommendation ICS C3A is a safeguard to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***.".

Insertion of a new recommendation (ICS C3A)

2.8 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection C (Search moderation), after ICS C3, insert–

"ICS C3A Steps to take on reversal of content decisions

Application

ICS C3A.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service** it provides.

Recommendation

ICS C3A.2 If a ***provider*** reverses a previous decision that ***search content*** is ***illegal content*** or **illegal content proxy**, and this reversal is not in relation to a **relevant complaint** that is a **content appeal** (for which, see ICS D9), it should take the steps listed in ICS D9.2(a), (b) and (c).".

Amendment to ICS C7

2.9 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection C (Search moderation), in ICS C7.11, before sub-paragraph (a), insert–

"za) Recommendation ICS C3A;".

Amendment to ICS C8

2.10 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection C (Search moderation), in ICS C8.17, in sub-paragraph (a), for "Recommendation ICS C1" substitute "Recommendations ICS C1 and ICS C3A".

Amendments relating to settings, functionalities and user support

2.11 In Section 4 (Recommended measures), in subsection F (Settings, functionalities and user support), in ICS F3–

a) in the heading of ICS F3, after "suicide" insert "and serious self-harm";
b) in ICS F3.2, in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), after "suicide" insert "or serious self-harm (or both)";
c) in ICS F3.3, in sub-paragraphs (c)(i) and (ii), after "suicide" insert "or serious self-harm (or both)".

Amendments to definitions and interpretation

Amendments to the 'Risk of illegal harm' subsection[2]

2.12 In Section 5 (Definitions and interpretation), in paragraph 5.5, for "17" substitute "18".

Amendments to definitions in Table C

2.13 In Section 5 (Definitions and interpretation), in Table C (Kinds of illegal harm) –

a) for the entry for "Encouraging or assisting suicide", substitute the following entry–

	Kind of illegal harm	Offences
3.	Encouraging or assisting suicide (or attempted suicide) and serious self-harm	An offence under section 2 of the Suicide Act 1961 (assisting suicide etc). An offence under section 13 of the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 (c. 20 (N.I.)) (assisting suicide etc). An offence under section 184 of the Online Safety Act 2023 (encouraging or assisting serious self-harm).

b) at the end, insert the following entry–

	Kind of illegal harm	Offences
18.	Cyberflashing	An offence under section 66A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (sending etc photograph or film of genitals).

[2] When publishing the next consolidated version of the Codes, Ofcom intends to also omit the footnote relating to paragraph 5.4.

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