Protection of Children Code of Practice for user-to-user services

Draft consolidated version incorporating amendments submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 43(1) of the Online Safety Act 2023 on 16 November 2026.

[VERSION NOT IN FORCE: This version incorporates amendments submitted to the Secretary of State on 16 November 2026 but which are not in force. For the current version of the Codes of Practice, see here]

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1. Introduction

The Protection of Children Code of Practice for user-to-user services

1.1 Under the Online Safety Act 2023 (the 'Act'), Ofcom is required to prepare and issue Codes of Practice for providers of Part 3 services, describing measures recommended for the purpose of compliance with specified duties imposed on those providers by the Act.

1.2 This document contains the Code applying to providers of regulated user-to-user services (including providers of combined services, so far as the duties applicable to user-to-user services apply in relation to those services) for the purpose of compliance with the following duties:

a) the safety duties protecting children set out in section 12(2) to (14) of the Act;
b) the duty about content reporting set out in section 20 of the Act, so far as it relates to content that is harmful to children, present on a part of a service that it is possible for children to access; and
c) the duties about complaints procedures set out in section 21 of the Act, so far as relating to the complaints set out in section 21(4)(b)(ii)[1] and (5).

1.2 Recommended measures for search services are set out separately in the Protection of Children Code of Practice for search services.

1.3 Over time Ofcom will update the Codes to take account of technological developments, new evidence, and any other relevant matters.

The recommended measures

1.4 Section 4 of this document sets out the recommended measures and is divided into subsections by thematic area. The meaning of terms in **bold** and terms in ***bold and italics*** is explained in Section 5.

1.5 The Act provides that service providers which implement measures recommended to them in the Codes will be treated as complying with the relevant duty or duties to which those measures relate. The duties to which each measure relates are set out in the index of recommended measures at Section 3 of this document.

1.6 Where a service provider implements measures recommended to it in these Codes which include safeguards for the protection of freedom of expression and/or for the protection of the privacy of United Kingdom users, the Act provides that they will also be treated as complying with the duties set out in section 22(2) (in respect of freedom of expression) and section 22(3) (in respect of privacy).

1.7 Service providers may seek to comply with a relevant duty in another way by adopting what the Act refers to as alternative measures. In doing so, service providers would also need to

[1] So far as relating to content that is harmful to children.

comply with the duty to have particular regard to the importance of protecting United Kingdom users' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of United Kingdom users.

1.8 Where they take alternative measures, service providers must also maintain a record of what they have done and how they consider that it meets the relevant duties, including how they have complied with the duty to have particular regard to the importance of protecting freedom of expression and privacy.

Data protection

1.9 Implementing the recommended measures set out in this Code will inevitably involve the processing of personal data. The Information Commission ('the ICO') is the statutory regulator for data protection law and has made clear that it expects service providers to comply fully with data protection law when taking measures for the purpose of complying with their online safety duties under the Act.

1.10 The ICO has set out that it expects service providers to take a 'data protection by design and by default' approach when implementing online safety systems and processes. It advises service providers to familiarise themselves with the data protection legislation, the ICO's Children's code and relevant ICO guidance, including the updated opinion published by the ICO in January 2024 setting out the Commission's expectations for age assurance under the Children's code, to understand how to comply with the data protection regime.

External documents

1.11 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).

2. Application and scope

2.1 This Code of Practice applies to a ***provider*** in respect of the **regulated user-to-user service** that it provides.

2.2 If a person is the ***provider*** of more than one **regulated user-to-user service**, this Code has effect in relation to each such service (so far as applicable).

2.3 This Code applies regardless of whether or not the ***provider*** of the service is inside the United Kingdom.

2.4 The services in respect of which each recommended measure in this Code applies are specified in the "application" section of each measure. An overview can be found in the index of recommended measures in Section 3 of this document.

2.5 Section 5 of this document includes provision about a service's risk and size. The subsection headed 'Risks of harm' (which begins at paragraph 5.3) sets out when a service is at low, medium or high risk of harm arising from a specific kind of ***content that is harmful to children***, and includes a definition of '**multi-risk (children)**'.

2.6 The subsection headed 'User numbers' (which begins at paragraph 5.6) explains when a service is to be treated as having more than a particular number of monthly **active United Kingdom users** for those measures which apply in relation to **services** of a certain size, and how to calculate the number of monthly **active United Kingdom users**. The definition of '**large service**' is included in the definitions section in Section 5 of this document.

2.7 [Not used]

2.8 The subsection headed 'Content prohibited on a service' (which begins at paragraph 5.16) sets out when a kind of ***content that is harmful to children*** is to be taken as **prohibited** on a service or **allowed** on a service.

2.9 The measures in this Code of Practice are recommended for the purpose of compliance with the **safety duties protecting children** and the **reporting and complaints duties** and their scope and application should be construed accordingly. In particular, the recommended measures should be construed in light of sections 8 and 13 of the **Act.**

2.10 Section 8 provides that:

a) the duties set out in Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the **Act** which must be complied with in relation to a ***user-to-user service*** that includes ***regulated provider pornographic content*** do not extend to—

   i) the ***regulated provider pornographic content***, or
   ii) the design, operation or use of the service so far as relating to that content;

b) the duties set out in Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the **Act** which must be complied with in relation to a ***combined service*** do not extend to:

   i) the ***search content*** of the service,
   ii) any other content that, following a ***search request***, may be encountered as a result of subsequent interactions with ***internet services***, or
   iii) anything relating to the design, operation or use of the ***search engine***; and

c) the duties set out in Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the **Act** which must be complied with in relation to a ***user-to-user service*** extend only to:

   i) the design, operation and use of the service in the United Kingdom, and
   ii) in the case of a duty that is expressed to apply in relation to users of a service, the design, operation and use of the service as it affects ***United Kingdom users*** of the service.

2.11 Section 13 provides that:

a) the **safety duties protecting children** extend only to such parts of a service as it is possible for children to access (and a ***provider*** is only entitled to conclude that it is not possible for **children in the United Kingdom** to access a service, or a part of it, if ***age verification*** or ***age estimation*** is used on the service with the result that **children in the United Kingdom** are not normally able to access the service or that part of it);
b) so far as a **safety duty protecting children** relates to ***non-designated content that is harmful to children***, the duty is to be taken to extend only to addressing risks of harm from the kinds of such content that have been identified in the **children's risk assessment** (if any have been identified); and
c) the duties set out in sections 12(3) and (9) of the **Act** are to be taken to extend only to **content that is harmful to children** where the risk of ***harm*** is presented by the nature of the ***content*** (rather than the fact of its dissemination).

3. Index of recommended measures

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
Governance and accountability			
PCU A1	Annual review of risk management activities	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are a **large service**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†
PCU A2	Individual accountable for the safety duties protecting children and reporting and complaints duties	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†
PCU A3	Written statements of responsibilities	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†
PCU A4	Internal monitoring and assurance	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are both a **large service** and **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†
PCU A5	Tracking evidence of new and increasing harm to children	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU A6	Code of conduct regarding protection of children from harmful content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†
PCU A7	Compliance training	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (9) to (14) Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)† and (3)†

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
Age assurance			
PCU B1	Age assurance process	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that use an **age assurance process** to determine which ***United Kingdom users*** of the service are ***children***.	Section 12(2), (3), (4) and (6)
PCU B2	Use of highly effective age assurance – services where the principal purpose is the hosting or dissemination of primary priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** where the **principal purpose** of the service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **primary priority content.**	Section 12(3)(a), (4) and (6)
PCU B3	Use of highly effective age assurance – services where the principal purpose is the hosting or dissemination of priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** where the **principal purpose** of the service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content.**	Section 12(2), (3)(b) and (7)
PCU B4	Use of highly effective age assurance – services that do not prohibit primary priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** where (a) Recommendation PCU B2 does not apply to the service and (b) one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content** are **allowed** on the service or all kinds of **primary priority content** are **prohibited** on the service, but it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** all ***regulated user-generated content*** the provider determines is in breach of its ***terms of service***.	Section 12(2), (3)(a), (4) and (6)

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU B5	Use of highly effective age assurance – services that do not prohibit priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** where (a) Recommendation PCU B3 does not apply to the service and (b) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **priority content** and either one or more of those kinds of content is **allowed** on the service or each of those kinds of content is **prohibited** on the service, but it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** all such content when the provider determines it to be in breach of its ***terms of service***.	Section 12(2), (3)(b) and (7)
PCU B6	Use of highly effective age assurance – services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of primary priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are (a) at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content** which are **allowed** on the service, and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.	Section 12(2), (3)(a), (4) and (6)
PCU B7	Use of highly effective age assurance – services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of priority content or non-designated content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are (a) at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **priority content,** other than **bullying content,** which are **allowed** on the service or one or more specific **identified kinds of non-designated content** which are **allowed** on the service, and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.	Section 12(2), (3)(b), and (7)
Content moderation			
PCU C1	Having a content moderation function to review and assess suspected content that is harmful to children	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(2), (3) and (10) Section 21(2)(b)†

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU C2	Having a content moderation function that allows for swift action against content harmful to children	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(2), (3), (4), (6), (7) and (10) Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU C3	Setting internal content policies	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C4	Performance targets	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C4A	Steps to take on reversal of content decisions	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 13(8) Section 22(2) and 22(3)
PCU C5	Prioritisation	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C6	Resourcing	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C7	Provision of training and materials to individuals working in content moderation (non-volunteers)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C8	Provision of materials to volunteers	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU C9	[Not used]		
PCU C10	[Not used]		

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU C11[2]	Crisis response	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either (a) a **large service** at medium **risk** of one or more specified kinds of content, or (b) a **service** at high **risk** of one or more specified kinds of content. The specified kinds of content are: **abusive content**, **content inciting hatred**, **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**, and **violent content (person)**.	Section 12(2) and 12(3)
PCU C12	Crisis response (dedicated channel for law enforcement)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are a **large** service at medium or high **risk** of one or more specified kinds of content. The specified kinds of content are: **abusive content**, **content inciting hatred**, **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**, and **violent content (person)**.	Section 12(2) and 12(3)
Reporting and complaints			
PCU D1	Enabling complaints	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)(a)†
PCU D2	Having easy to find, easy to access and easy to use complaints systems and processes	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 20(2)* Section 21(2)(c)†
PCU D3	Provision of information prior to the submission of a complaint	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**	Section 21(2)(c)†

[2] Recommendations PCU C9 to PCU C10 are left intentionally blank because Ofcom consulted on adding them to the Code. See Annex 9 ([DRAFT] Protection of Children Code of Practice for User-to-user services) to OFCOM's consultation titled 'Additional Safety Measures. Online Safety', published on 30 June 2025 (at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/illegal-and-harmful-content/online-safety-additional-safety-measures).

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU D4	Appropriate action – sending indicative timeframes	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**	Section 21(2)(b)† and (c)†
PCU D5	Appropriate action – sending further information about how the complaint will be handled	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**	Section 21(2)(b)† and (c)†
PCU D6	Opt-out from communications following a complaint	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D7	Appropriate action for relevant complaints about content considered harmful to children	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(3) Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D8	Appropriate action for content appeals – determination (services that are large or multi-risk)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D9	Appropriate action for content appeals – determination (services that are neither large nor multi-risk)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are neither a **large service** nor **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D10	Appropriate action for content appeals – action following determination	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D10A	Appropriate action for content appeals – action following determination (content decision not reversed)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either (or both) a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 21(2)(b)†

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU D11	Appropriate action for age assessment appeals (services that are large or multi-risk)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D12	Appropriate action for age assessment appeals (services that are neither large nor multi-risk)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are neither a **large service** nor **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D13	Appropriate action for complaints about non-compliance with certain duties	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
PCU D14	Exception: manifestly unfounded complaints	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 21(2)(b)†
Recommender systems			
PCU E1	Content recommender systems: excluding potential primary priority content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** (a) that are at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content** and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.	Section 12(2), (3)(a), (4) and (6)
PCU E2	Content recommender systems: excluding or giving a low degree of prominence to potential primary content and non-designated content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** (a) that are at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **priority content**, other than **bullying content**, or **identified kinds of non-designated content** and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.	Section 12(2), (3)(b) and (7)
PCU E3	Content recommender systems: enabling children to give negative feedback	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are (a) a **large service**, (b) at medium or high **risk** of two or more specific kinds of **content that is harmful to children**, other than **bullying content**, and where (c) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.	Section 12(2) and (3)

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
Settings, functionalities and user support			
PCU F1	Providing age-appropriate user support materials for children	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU F2	Providing information to children when they restrict content or interactions with other accounts	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are a **large service** and **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU F3	Signposting children to support when they report harmful content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are at medium or high **risk** of **bullying content**, **eating disorder content**, **self-harm content** or **suicide content**.	Section 12(2)
PCU F4	Signposting children to support when they post harmful content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that (a) are a **large service**, (b) are at medium or high **risk** of **bullying content**, **eating disorder content**, **self-harm content** or **suicide content**, and (c) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has **posting content functionality**.	Section 12(2)
PCU F5	Signposting children to support when they search for harmful content	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that (a) are at medium or high **risk** of **eating disorder content**, **self-harm content** or **suicide content**, and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **searching content functionality**.	Section 12(2)
Terms of service			
PCU G1	Terms of service: substance (all services)	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(9), (11) and (12) Section 21(3)†
PCU G1A	Terms of service: substance (large or multi-risk services)	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that are either (or both) a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)**.	Section 12(9), (11) and (12) Section 21(3)†

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU G2	Terms of service: substance (Category 1 services)	***Category 1 services*** that are ***likely to be accessed by children***.	Section 12(14)
PCU G3	Terms of service: clarity and accessibility	All **services likely to be accessed by children**.	Section 12(13)
User access			
PCU H1	[Not used]		
PCU H2	User sanctions	**Services likely to be accessed by children** (a) that are either (or both) a **large service** or **multi-risk (children)** and (b) on which one or more specific kinds of **relevant content that is harmful to children** are **prohibited**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
User controls			
PCU J1	User blocking and muting	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that have **user profiles** and where a **child-accessible part** of the service has at least one specified functionality and that are either (a) at high **risk** of one or more of the specified kinds of content or (b) are at medium **risk** of one or more of the specified kinds of content and have more than 700,000 monthly **active United Kingdom users**. The specified kinds of content are: **abusive content**, **bullying content**, **content inciting hatred**, **eating disorder content**, **self-harm content**, **suicide content**, **violent content (animal), violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**, and **violent content (person).**	Section 12(2) and (3)

Recommended measure		Application	Relevant duties
PCU J2	Disabling comments	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that have **commenting on content functionality** on a **child-accessible part** of the service and that are either (a) at high **risk** of one or more of the specified kinds of content or (b) are at medium **risk** of one or more of the specified kinds of content and have more than 700,000 monthly **active United Kingdom users**. The specified kinds of content are: **abusive content**, **bullying content**, **content inciting hatred**, **eating disorder content**, **self-harm content**, **suicide content**, **violent content (animal), violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)** and **violent content (person)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)
PCU J3	Invitations to group chats	**Services likely to be accessed by children** that (a) are at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the specified kinds of content and (b) where a **child-accessible part** of the service has **group messaging functionality**. The specified kinds of content are **abusive content**, **bullying content**, **content inciting hatred**, **eating disorder content**, **regulated pornographic content**,**self-harm content**, **suicide content**, **violent content (animal)**, **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)** and **violent content (person)**.	Section 12(2) and (3)

* So far as it relates to content that is harmful to children, present on a part of the service that it is possible for children to access.

† So far as relating to the complaints set out in section 21(4)(b)(ii) (so far as relating to content that is harmful to children) and (5).

4. Recommended measures

A. Governance and accountability

PCU A1 Annual review of risk management activities

Application

PCU A1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is a **large service.**

Recommendation

PCU A1.2 The provider's most senior **governance body** in relation to the service should carry out and record an annual review of risk management activities having to do with **harm to children**, including as to risk remaining after the implementation of appropriate Code of Practice measures. The review should include how developing risks are being monitored and managed.

PCU A2 Individual accountable for the safety duties protecting children and reporting and complaints duties

Application

PCU A2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides**.**

Recommendation

PCU A2.2 The provider should name an individual accountable to the most senior **governance body** for compliance with the **safety duties protecting children** and the **reporting and complaints duties**.

PCU A2.3 Being accountable means being required to explain and justify actions or decisions regarding:

a) **harm to children** risk management and mitigation (including as to risk remaining after the implementation of appropriate Code of Practice measures), and
b) compliance with the relevant duties,

to the most senior **governance body**.

PCU A3 Written statements of responsibilities

Application

PCU A3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU A3.2 The provider should have written statements of responsibilities for senior managers who make decisions about the management of risks having to do with **harm to children**.

PCU A3.3 A statement of responsibilities is a document which clearly shows the responsibilities that the senior manager performs in relation to the management of risks having to do with **harm to children** and how those responsibilities fit in with the provider's overall governance and management arrangements in relation to the service.

PCU A4 Internal monitoring and assurance

Application

PCU A4.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is both a **large service** and **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU A4.2 The provider should have an internal monitoring and assurance function to provide independent assurance that measures taken to mitigate and manage the risks of **harm to children** identified in the **children's risk assessment** are effective on an ongoing basis. This function should report to, and its findings should be considered by, either:

a) the body that is responsible for overall governance and strategic direction of a service; or

b) an audit committee.

PCU A4.3 This independent assurance may be provided by an existing internal audit function.

PCU A5 Tracking evidence of new and increasing harm to children

Application

PCU A5.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU A5.2 The provider should track evidence of new kinds of **primary priority content** or **priority content**, and unusual increases in particular kinds of **content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**, on **child-accessible parts** of the service. Relevant evidence may include, but is not limited to, that derived from:

a) complaints processes;

b) content moderation processes;

c) information that may come to light following an investigation or inquiry by a coroner or procurator fiscal into the death of a ***child***; and

d) information from **trusted flaggers** and any other expert group or body the provider considers appropriate.

PCU A5.3 The provider should ensure that any new kinds of **primary priority content** or **priority content** or unusual increases in particular kinds of **content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** are regularly reported through relevant governance channels to the most senior **governance body**.

PCU A5.4 To understand this, the provider should establish a baseline understanding of how frequently particular kinds of **content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** occur on **child-accessible parts** of the service to the extent possible based on its internal data and evidence. The provider should use this baseline to identify unusual increases in the relevant data.

PCU A6 Code of conduct regarding protection of children from harmful content

Application

PCU A6.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU A6.2 The provider should have a code of conduct that sets standards and expectations for individuals working for the provider around protecting **children in the United Kingdom** from risks of **harm to children**.

PCU A7 Compliance training

Application

PCU A7.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU A7.2 The provider should secure that individuals working for the provider who are involved in the design and operational management of the service are trained in the service's approach to compliance with the **safety duties protecting children** and the **reporting and complaints duties**, sufficiently to give effect to them. This measure does not apply in relation to **volunteers**.

PCU A7.3 This does not affect Recommendations PCU C7 (provision of training and materials to individuals working in content moderation (non-volunteers)) and PCU C8 (provision of materials to volunteers).

B. Age assurance

PCU B1 Age assurance process

Application

PCU B1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** that uses an **age assurance process** to determine which ***United Kingdom users*** of the service are ***children***.

Recommendation

PCU B1.1A In order to ensure that its **age assurance process** is highly effective at correctly determining whether or not a ***user*** is a ***child***, the provider should ensure that it meets each of the criteria listed under:

a) PCU B1.1B (technical accuracy),
b) PCU B1.1C (robustness),
c) PCU B1.1D (reliability), and
d) PCU B1.1E (fairness).

PCU B1.1B The technical accuracy criterion is fulfilled if:

a) the provider has ensured that the measures forming part of the **age assurance process** for the service have been evaluated against appropriate metrics to assess the extent to which they can correctly determine the age or age range of a person under test lab conditions and the results indicate that the measures are able to correctly determine whether or not a particular ***user*** is a ***child***;
b) where the **age assurance process** used on the service involves the use of ***age estimation***, the provider uses a **challenge age approach**; and
c) the provider periodically reviews whether the technical accuracy of the **age assurance process** for the service could be improved by making use of new technology and, where appropriate, makes changes to the **age assurance process**.

PCU B1.1C The robustness criterion is fulfilled if:

a) the provider has:
    i) taken steps to identify methods ***children*** use to circumvent the **age assurance process** used on the service to determine that the relevant individual is not a ***child*****;** and
    ii) taken feasible and proportionate steps to prevent ***children*** using those methods;
b) the provider has ensured that the **age assurance** measures forming part of the **age assurance process** for the service have been tested in multiple different environments during the development of the **age assurance process**; and

c) the provider has identified, and taken appropriate steps to mitigate against, methods of circumvention that are easily accessible to **children in the United Kingdom** and where it is reasonable to assume that **children in the United Kingdom** may use them.

PCU B1.1D The reliability criterion is fulfilled if:

a) where age **assurance** measures forming part of the **age assurance process** rely on artificial intelligence or machine learning, the provider has taken steps to ensure that:

i) the artificial intelligence or machine learning has been suitably tested during the development of the **age assurance process** to ensure it **produces reproducible results**;
ii) the artificial intelligence or machine learning is regularly tested to ensure it **produces reproducible results**;
iii) the outputs of the artificial intelligence or machine learning used are monitored and assessed against key performance indicators designed to identify whether the artificial intelligence or machine learning **produces reproducible results**; and
iv) in circumstances where the artificial intelligence or machine learning used are observed to be producing unreliable or unexpected results, the root cause of the issue is identified and rectified; and

b) the provider has taken steps to ensure that any evidence relied upon as part of the **age assurance process** comes from a trustworthy source.

PCU B1.1E The fairness criterion is fulfilled if:

a) the provider has ensured that any elements of the **age assurance process** for the **service** which rely on artificial intelligence or machine learning have been tested and trained on data sets which reflect the diversity in the target population; and
b) the provider has ensured that any elements of the **age assurance process** which rely on artificial intelligence or machine learning have been evaluated against either the outcome or the error parity and the results indicate that the **age assurance process** does not produce significant bias or discriminatory outcomes.

PCU B1.2 The provider should have regard to the following when implementing **highly effective age assurance** on the service:

a) the principle that **age assurance** should be easy to use, including by **children in the United Kingdom** of different ages and with different needs;

b) the principle that **age assurance** should work effectively for all ***users*** regardless of their characteristics or whether they are members of a certain group;

c) the desirability of ensuring interoperability between different kinds of **age assurance**;

d) the **age appropriate design code** and the Information Commission's Opinion titled "Age Assurance for the Children's code" published on 18 January 2024.[3]

PCU B1.3 The provider should ensure that ***users*** are able to easily access information about what a provider's **highly effective age assurance** is intended to do and how the provider's **highly effective age assurance** works prior to commencing the **highly effective age assurance** for the service.

PCU B1.4 The provider should not publish ***content*** that directs or encourages ***United Kingdom users*** to circumvent the **highly effective age assurance**, or **content controls** or **access controls** used in conjunction with it, on the service**.**

PCU B2 Use of highly effective age assurance – services where the principal purpose is the hosting or dissemination of primary priority content

Application

PCU B2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides where the **principal purpose** of the service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **primary priority content**.

PCU B2.2 For the purposes of paragraph PCU B2.1, the principal purpose of a **service** is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **primary priority content** if the main activity or objective pursued by the **service** is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **primary priority content**.

Factors that are relevant when determining whether the principal purpose of a service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content** include, but are not limited to:

a) whether the service promotes one or more kinds of **primary priority content**;
b) the types of ***regulated user-generated content*** on the service**;**
c) how ***regulated user-generated content*** on the service is presented and described; and
d) the extent to which the service provides access to ***regulated user-generated content*** other than **primary priority content**.

[3] Age assurance for the Children's code | ICO

Recommendation

PCU B2.3 The provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to target **access controls** to prevent all ***United Kingdom users*** of the service from accessing any ***user-to-user part*** of the service unless they have been determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU B2.4 The provider should have ***systems and processes*** which enable a ***United Kingdom user*** who is unable to access the service, or parts of it, because the **age assurance process** used to comply with PCU B2.3 has determined them to be a **child user**, to request that this decision be rectified where it is incorrect. The provider should deal with any such requests promptly.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B2.5 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process); and

b) PCU B2.4.

PCU B3 Use of highly effective age assurance – services where the principal purpose is the hosting or dissemination of priority content

Application

PCU B3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides where the **principal purpose** of the service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content**.

PCU B3.2 For the purposes of PCU B3.1, the principal purpose of a **service** is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content** if the main activity or objective pursued by the **service** is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content**.

Factors that are relevant when determining whether the principal purpose of a service is the hosting or dissemination of one or more kinds of **priority content** include, but are not limited to:

a) whether the service promotes one or more kinds of priority content;
b) the types of ***regulated user-generated content*** on the service;
c) how ***regulated user-generated content*** on the service is presented and described; and

d) the extent to which the service provides access to ***regulated user-generated content*** other than **priority content**.

Recommendation

PCU B3.3 The provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to target **access controls** to prevent all ***United Kingdom users*** of the service from accessing any ***user-to-user part*** of the service unless they have been determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU B3.4 The provider should have ***systems and processes*** which enable a ***United Kingdom user*** who is unable to access the service, or parts of it, because the **age assurance process** used to comply with PCU B3.3 has determined them to be a **child user,** to request that this decision be rectified where it is incorrect. The provider should deal with any such requests promptly.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B3.5 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process);

b) PCU B3.4.

PCU B4 Use of highly effective age assurance – services that do not prohibit primary priority content

Application

PCU B4.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides where:

a) Recommendation PCU B2 does not apply to the service; and

b) either:

i) one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content** are **allowed** on the service; or

ii) all kinds of **primary priority content** are **prohibited** on the service, but it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** all ***regulated user-generated content*** the provider determines is in breach of its ***terms of service*** pursuant to PCU C1.3(a).

Recommendation

PCU B4.2 For the purpose of targeting **content controls** or **access controls** recommended by PCU C2.3(b) and PCU C2.4 at ***children***, the provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to determine whether or not ***United Kingdom users*** of any **child-accessible part** of the service are ***children***. (But see PCU C2.3(b), PCU

C2.4 and PCU C2.12 in relation to where it is not technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls**.)

PCU B4.3 The **age assurance process** referred to in PCU B4.2 can be carried out:

a) in respect of all ***United Kingdom users*** of those parts of the service; or
b) in respect of only such of those ***users*** as do not wish for **appropriate moderation action for primary priority content** to restrict their access to ***content***,

so that (in either case) **appropriate moderation action for primary priority content** does not restrict the access to ***content*** of those users determined to be ***adults***.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B4.4 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process);
b) where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8 (in relation to content moderation);
c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable) and PCU D10; and
d) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable).

PCU B5 Use of highly effective age assurance – services that do not prohibit priority content

Application

PCU B5.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides where:

a) Recommendation PCU B3 does not apply to the service; and
b) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **priority content** and either:
    i) one or more of those kinds of content is **allowed** on the service; or
    ii) each of those kinds of content is **prohibited** on the service, but it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** all such content when the provider determines it to be in breach of its ***terms of service*** in accordance with PCU C1.4(a).

Recommendation

PCU B5.2 For the purpose of targeting **control controls** or **access controls** recommended by PCU C2.6(b) and PCU C2.7 at ***children***, the provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to determine whether or not ***United Kingdom users*** of any **child-accessible part** of the service are ***children***. (But see PCU C2.6(b), PCU C2.7 and PCU C2.12 in relation to where it is not technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls**, or either not technically feasible or not considered proportionate to apply **HEAA access controls**.)

PCU B5.3 The **age assurance process** referred to in PCU B5.2 can be carried out:

a) in respect of all ***United Kingdom users*** of those parts of the service; or
b) in respect of only such of those ***users*** as do not wish for **appropriate moderation action for priority content** to restrict their access to ***content***.

so that (in either case) **appropriate moderation action for priority content** does not restrict the access to ***content*** of those users determined to be ***adults***.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B5.4 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process);

b) where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8 (in relation to content moderation);

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable) and PCU D10; and

d) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable).

PCU B6 Use of highly effective age assurance – services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of primary priority content

Application

PCU B6.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content** which are **allowed** on the service;

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.

Recommendation

PCU B6.2 For the purpose of excluding content indicated potentially to be **primary priority content** from ***children's*** content feeds in accordance with Recommendation PCU E1, the provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to determine whether or not ***United Kingdom users*** of any **child-accessible part** of the service which has a **content recommender system** are ***children***.

PCU B6.3 The **age assurance process** referred to in PCU B6.2 can be carried out:

a) in respect of all ***United Kingdom users*** of that part of the service; or
b) in respect of only such of those ***users*** who do not wish for content indicated potentially to be **primary priority content** to be excluded from their content feeds,

so that (in either case) content indicated potentially to be **primary priority content** is not excluded from the content feeds of those users determined to be ***adults***.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B6.4 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process);

b) Recommendations PCU C1 and PCU C2, and PCU C3 to PCU C8 (where applicable);

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable);

d) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

PCU B7 Use of highly effective age assurance – services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of priority content or non-designated content

Application

PCU B7.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of:

i) one or more specific kinds of **priority content**, other than **bullying content**, which are **allowed** on the service; or

ii) one or more specific **identified kinds of non-designated content** which are **allowed** on the service; and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.

Recommendation

PCU B7.2 For the purpose of excluding content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** from ***children's*** content feeds, or giving such content a low degree of prominence, in accordance with Recommendation PCU E2, the provider should use **highly effective age assurance** to determine whether or not ***United Kingdom users*** of any **child-accessible part** of the service which has a **content recommender system** are ***children***.

PCU B7.3 The **age assurance process** referred to in PCU B7.2 can be carried out:

a) in respect of all ***United Kingdom users*** of that part of the service; or

b) in respect of only such of those ***users*** who do not wish for content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** to be excluded from their content feeds,

so that (in either case) content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** is not excluded from the content feeds of those users determined to be ***adults***.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU B7.4 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B1 (age assurance process);

b) Recommendations PCU C1 and PCU C2, and PCU C3 to PCU C8 (where applicable);

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable);

d) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

C. Content moderation

PCU C1 Having a content moderation function to review and assess suspected content that is harmful to children

Application

PCU C1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU C1.2 The provider should, as part of its **content moderation function**, have ***systems and processes*** designed to review and assess ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service that the provider has reason to suspect may be **relevant content that is harmful to children**.

PCU C1.3 For the purpose of PCU C1.2, when the provider has reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant primary priority content**, the provider should review the content and either:

a) where the provider is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** **prohibit** the kind of **relevant primary priority content** which it has reason to suspect exists, consider whether the content is in breach of those ***terms of service***;

b) otherwise, determine, on the basis of all relevant information that is reasonably available to the provider, whether the content is **relevant primary priority content.**

PCU C1.4 For the purpose of PCU C1.2, when the provider has reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant priority content**, the provider should review the content and either:

a) where the provider is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** **prohibit** the kind of **relevant priority content** which it has reason to suspect exists, consider whether the content is in breach of those ***terms of service***;

b) otherwise determine, on the basis of all relevant information that is reasonably available to the provider, whether the content is **relevant priority content**.

PCU C1.5 For the purpose of PCU C1.2, when the provider has reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant non-designated content** the provider should review the content and either:

a) where the provider is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** **prohibit** the kind of **relevant non-designated content** which it has reason to suspect exists, consider whether the content is in breach of those ***terms of service***;

b) otherwise determine, on the basis of all relevant information that is reasonably available to the provider, whether the content is **relevant non-designated content**.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU C1.6 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

za) Recommendation PCU C4A;

a) where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8 (in relation to content moderation);

b) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable), PCU D10, and PCU D10A (where applicable); and

c) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

PCU C2 Having a content moderation function that allows for swift action against content harmful to children

Application

PCU C2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU C2.2 The provider should, as part of its **content moderation function,** have ***systems and processes*** designed to:

a) prevent **child users** from encountering **relevant primary priority content** and **primary priority content proxy**; and

b) protect **child users** from encountering **relevant priority content** and **priority content proxy**; and

c) protect **child users** from encountering **relevant non-designated content** and **non-designated content proxy**,

of which it is aware (see also PCU C1.2).

Primary priority content

PCU C2.3 When the provider determines that ***content*** is in breach of its ***terms of service*** (pursuant to PCU C1.3(a)) the provider should:

a) swiftly ***take down*** the content; or

b) where it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** the content, take **appropriate moderation action for primary priority content**, unless it is not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls**.

PCU C2.4 When the provider determines that the content is **relevant primary priority content** (pursuant to PCU C1.3(b)), the provider should take **appropriate moderation action for primary priority content**, unless it is not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls**.

PCU C2.5 **Appropriate moderation action for primary priority content** means swiftly applying **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls**.

Priority content

PCU C2.6 When the provider determines that the content is in breach of its ***terms of service*** (pursuant to PCU C1.4(a)) the provider should:

a) swiftly ***take down*** the content; or

b) where it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** the content, swiftly take **appropriate moderation action for priority content**, unless:

i) in relation to a service to which Recommendation PCU B5 applies it is not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls** or **other content level actions** and it is either not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA access controls**, or the provider does not consider it proportionate to apply **HEAA access controls**; or

ii) in all other circumstances, it is not currently technically feasible to apply **other content level actions**.

PCU C2.7 When (pursuant to PCU C1.4(b)) the provider determines that the content is **relevant priority content**, the provider should take **appropriate moderation action for priority content**, unless:

a) in relation to a service to which Recommendation PCU B5 applies it is not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA content controls** or **other content level actions** and it is either not currently technically feasible to apply **HEAA access controls**, or the provider does not consider it proportionate to apply **HEAA access controls**; or

b) in all other circumstances, it is not currently technically feasible to apply **other content level actions**.

PCU C2.8 **Appropriate moderation action for priority content** means:

a) in relation to a service to which Recommendation PCU B5 applies, swiftly applying **HEAA content controls, other content level actions** or **HEAA access controls**; and

b) otherwise, swiftly applying **other content level actions** (or, where the provider chooses to do so, **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls** instead of or as well as **other content level actions**).

Non-designated content

PCU C2.9 When the provider determines that the content is in breach of its ***terms of service*** (pursuant to PCU C1.5(a)) the provider should:

a) swiftly ***take down*** the content; or

b) where it is not currently technically feasible to ***take down*** the content, the provider should take **appropriate moderation action for non-designated content**, unless it is not currently technically feasible to apply **other content level actions.**

PCU C2.10 When (pursuant to PCU C1.5(b)) the provider determines that the content is **relevant non-designated content**, the provider should take **appropriate moderation action for non-designated content** unless it is not currently technically feasible to apply **other content level actions.**

PCU C2.11 **Appropriate moderation action for non-designated content** means swiftly applying **other content level actions** (or, where the provider chooses to do so, **HEAA content controls** or **HEAA access controls** instead of or as well as **other content level actions**).

PCU C2.12 If, in designing the ***systems and processes*** referred to in PCU C2.2, the provider concludes that:

a) it is not currently technically feasible to apply one or more of **HEAA content controls, HEAA access controls** or **other content level actions** (either in specific circumstances or at all); or

b) in relation to **relevant priority content**, it is not proportionate to apply **HEAA access controls** (either in specific circumstances or at all),

the provider should make and keep a written **record** of how technical feasibility and/or proportionality (as applicable) has been assessed and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

PCU C2.13 In designing the ***systems and processes*** referred to in PCU C2.2(b) and (c) and in particular the aspects of those ***systems and processes*** relating to:

a) whether to apply **HEAA content controls**, **other content level actions** or **HEAA access controls**, as applicable (in circumstances where it is technically feasible to apply one or more of these); and

b) what type(s) of **other content level action** to take (if any);

the provider should have regard to at least the following factors:

i) the findings of the service's **children's risk assessment** as to risk of **harm to children** in different age groups from particular kinds of **priority content** and **non-designated content**;

ii) the nature of the content concerned;

iii) the severity of potential ***harm*** to **child users** that may arise if they ***encounter*** the content concerned;

iv) the extent to which other **relevant priority content, priority content proxy, relevant non-designated content** and **non-designated content proxy** has been found to be present on the same part of the service; and

v) the interests of **children in the United Kingdom** in receiving ***content*** that is not harmful to them by means of the service.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU C2.14 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users***' right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

za) Recommendation PCU C4A;

a) where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8 (in relation to content moderation);

b) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable), PCU D10, and PCU D10A (where applicable);

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable); and

d) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they

consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

PCU C3 Setting internal content policies

Application

PCU C3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C3.2 The provider should set and record (but need not publish) internal content policies setting out rules, standards and guidelines around:

a) how **relevant content that is harmful to children** is to be dealt with on the service, including whether or not any kinds of **content that is harmful to children** are or are not allowed on the service or certain parts of it; and

b) how policies should be operationalised and enforced.

PCU C3.3 The policies should be drafted in such a way that moderation action is taken in accordance with Recommendation PCU C2 (having a content moderation function that allows for swift action against content harmful to children).

PCU C3.4 The provider should:

a) have regard to the service's **children's risk assessment** (including, in so far as relevant, its findings as to **harm to children** in different age groups) in setting these policies; and

b) have processes in place for updating these policies in response to evidence of new and increasing **harm to children** on the service (as tracked in accordance with PCU A5.2).

Safeguard for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU C3.5 Recommendation PCU C4A is a safeguard to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***.

PCU C4 Performance targets

Application

PCU C4.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both):

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C4.2 The provider should set and record performance targets for its **content moderation function** covering at least:

a) the time period for taking **relevant content moderation action**; and

b) the accuracy of decision making.

PCU C4.3 In setting its targets, the provider should balance the need to take **relevant content moderation action** swiftly against the importance of making accurate moderation decisions.

PCU C4.4 The provider should effectively measure and monitor its performance against those targets.

PCU C4.5 For the purpose of PCU C4.2 and PCU C4.3, "**relevant content moderation action**" refers to:

a) the action recommended in PCU C1.3 to PCU C1.5 and PCU C2.3 to PCU C2.11; or

b) where it is not currently technically feasible for the provider to take the action recommended in PCU C2.3 to PCU C2.11 and one or more specific kinds of **relevant content that is harmful to children** are **prohibited** on the service, the action recommended in PCU C1.3 to PCU C1.5, so far as it relates to at least those specific kinds of **relevant content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** (or both).

PCU C4A Steps to take on reversal of content decisions

Application

PCU C4A.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU C4A.2 If a ***provider*** reverses a previous decision that ***content*** is ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**, and this reversal is not in relation to a **relevant complaint** that is a **content appeal** (for which, see PCU D10), it should take the steps listed in PCU D10.2(a), (b) and (c).

PCU C5 Prioritisation

Application

PCU C5.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both):

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C5.2 The provider should prepare and apply a policy in respect of the prioritisation of ***content*** present on the service for review. In setting the policy, the provider should have regard to at least the following:

a) the desirability of minimising the number **child users** encountering a particular item of **relevant content that is harmful to children**;

b) the severity of potential ***harm*** to **child users** if they ***encounter*** **relevant content that is harmful to children** on the service, including whether the content is suspected to be **relevant primary priority content**, **relevant priority content** or **relevant non-designated content**, and taking into account the **children's risk assessment** of the service; and

c) the likelihood that the ***content*** is **relevant content that is harmful to children**, including whether it has been reported by a **trusted flagger**.

PCU C6 Resourcing

Application

PCU C6.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both):

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C6.2 The provider should resource its **content moderation function** so as to give effect to its internal content policies and performance targets having regard to at least:

a) the propensity for external events to lead to a significant increase in demand for content moderation on the service; and

b) the particular needs of its ***United Kingdom user*** base as identified in its **children's risk assessment**, in relation to languages.

PCU C7 Provision of training and materials to individuals working in content moderation (non-volunteers)

Application

PCU C7.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both):

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C7.2 The provider should ensure individuals working in content moderation receive training and materials that enable them to fulfil their role in moderating ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service including in relation to Recommendations PCU C1 and PCU C2 and the internal content policies set in accordance with Recommendation PCU C3. This measure does not apply in relation to **volunteers**.

PCU C7.3 The provider should ensure that in doing so:

a) It has regard to at least the service's **children's risk assessment** and evidence of new and increasing **harm to children** (as tracked in accordance with PCU A5.2); and

b) where the provider identifies a gap the understanding of individuals working in content moderation in relation to a specific kind of **content that is harmful to children**, it gives training and materials to remedy this.

PCU C8 Provision of materials to volunteers

Application

PCU C8.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both):

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU C8.2 The provider should ensure **volunteers** in its **content moderation function** have access to materials that enable them fulfil their role in moderating ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service including in relation to Recommendations PCU C1 and PCU C2 and the internal content policies set in accordance with Recommendation PCU C3.

PCU C8.3 The provider should ensure that in doing so:

a) it has regard to at least the service's **children's risk assessment** and evidence of new and increasing **harm to children** (as tracked in accordance with PCU A5.2); and

b) where the provider identifies a gap in such volunteers' understanding of a specific kind of **content that is harmful to children**, it gives materials to remedy this.

PCU C9 [Not used]

PCU C10 [Not used]

PCU C11 Crisis response

Application

PCU C11.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets either of the following conditions:

a) the service is a **large service** at medium **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:
    i) **abusive content**;
    ii) **content inciting hatred**;
    iii) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;
    iv) **violent content (person)**; or

b) the service is at high **risk** of one or more of the kinds of content listed in sub-paragraph (a).

Key definitions

PCU C11.2 In this Recommendation PCU C11:

"crisis" means an extraordinary situation in which there is a serious threat to public safety in the United Kingdom which is highly likely to:

a) have resulted (in whole or in part) from a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service; and/or
b) have caused, or cause, a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service;

"relevant harmful content" means any of the following kinds of content:

a) **abusive content**;
b) **content inciting hatred**;
c) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;
d) **violent content (person)**.

Recommendation

PCU C11.3 The provider should prepare and apply (but need not publish) a written internal protocol ("crisis response protocol") to identify and respond to a crisis, for the purposes of mitigating and managing the risks arising from a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service during a crisis.

PCU C11.4 The provider's crisis response protocol should include, but need not be limited to, the following:

a) indicators, identified by the provider, that the provider will consider in determining whether a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur;
b) how the provider will regularly monitor the indicators referred to in sub-paragraph (a) to determine whether a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur;
c) how the provider will keep the indicators referred to in sub-paragraph (a) under regular review to ensure they remain the relevant indicators to be identified in the crisis response protocol;

d) details of a crisis response team, including representatives of sufficient seniority from relevant internal teams, that the provider will deploy if the provider determines that a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur;
e) how the provider will deploy the crisis response team referred to in sub-paragraph (d) as soon as reasonably practicable if the provider determines that a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur;
f) systems and/or processes, identified by the provider, to mitigate and manage the risks arising from a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service during a crisis; and
g) how the provider will deploy the systems and/or processes referred to in sub-paragraph (f) as soon as reasonably practicable if the provider determines that a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur.

PCU C11.5 If Ofcom gives a public statement notice to the provider by virtue of section 175(3) of the **Act**, the provider should consider this, in addition to the indicators referred to in PCU C11.4(a), in determining whether a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur.

PCU C11.6 Where the provider determines that any of the indicators referred to in PCU C11.4(a) no longer remain relevant, or where new indicators are identified or existing indicators require updating, it should update its crisis response protocol accordingly.

PCU C11.7 When the provider determines that the crisis has ended, or 90 days after the crisis began, if earlier, the provider should conduct and record (but need not publish) a post-crisis analysis recording key decisions made during the crisis and assessing whether the crisis response protocol remains appropriate for mitigating and managing the risks arising from a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service during a crisis. The provider should then use the post-crisis analysis to make changes to the crisis response protocol, as needed, to address any identified deficiencies.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU C11.8 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C5, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8;
b) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2; and
c) Recommendations PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable), PCU D10, and PCU D10A (where applicable).

PCU C12 Crisis response (dedicated channel for law enforcement)

Application

PCU C12.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is a **large service** at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:

a) **abusive content**;
b) **content inciting hatred**;
c) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;
d) **violent content (person)**.

Key definitions

PCU C12.2 In this Recommendation PCU C12:

"crisis" means an extraordinary situation in which there is a serious threat to public safety in the United Kingdom which is highly likely to:

a) have resulted (in whole or in part) from a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service; and/or
b) have caused, or cause, a significant increase in relevant harmful content on the service;

"relevant harmful content" means any of the following kinds of content:

a) **abusive content**;
b) **content inciting hatred**;
c) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;
d) **violent content (person)**.

Recommendation

PCU C12.3 If the provider determines that a crisis is occurring or is likely to occur, it should ensure there is a dedicated channel for law enforcement to contact the provider on matters related to the crisis.

D. Reporting and complaints

PCU D1 Enabling complaints

Application

PCU D1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D1.2 The provider should have ***systems and processes*** which enable **prospective complainants** to make each type of **relevant complaint** in a way which will secure that the provider will take appropriate action in relation to them.

PCU D2 Having easy to find, easy to access and easy to use complaints systems and processes

Application

PCU D2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D2.2 The ***systems and processes*** referred to in PCU D1.2 should be operated to ensure that:

a) for **relevant complaints** regarding a specific piece of ***content***, a reporting function or tool is clearly accessible in relation to that ***content***;

b) processes for making other kinds of **relevant complaints** are easy to find and easily accessible;

c) they are designed so that they only include reasonably necessary steps; and

d) it is possible when making **relevant complaints** to give the provider supporting information.

PCU D2.3 In designing the ***systems and processes*** referred to in PCU D1.2, including its reporting tool or function, the provider should consider the accessibility needs of its ***United Kingdom user*** base having regard to:

a) the service's **children's risk assessment** including the groups of **children in the United Kingdom** identified as using the service;

b) other relevant information the provider holds on its ***United Kingdom user*** base;

c) industry standards and good practice as to the design of the service, to ensure the reporting and complaints process is accessible to disabled people; and

d) comprehensibility, based on the likely reading age of the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian.

PCU D2.4 For the purposes of PCU D2.3, the ***systems and processes*** referred to in PCU D1.2 should be designed for the purpose of ensuring usability for those dependent on assistive technologies including:

a) keyboard navigation; and

b) screen reading technology.

PCU D3 Provision of information prior to the submission of a complaint

Application

PCU D3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children**.

Recommendation

PCU D3.2 The provider should ensure that the reporting function or tool for **relevant complaints** regarding a specific piece of ***content*** enables **prospective complainants** to easily access information on the following matters prior to the submission of a complaint:

a) whether the provider discloses (either routinely, upon request or otherwise) the fact that a complaint relating to a specific piece of ***content*** has been submitted to:

i) the ***user*** that generated, uploaded or shared the ***content*** complained about; or

ii) any ***user*** other than the **complainant**;

and, if so,

iii) the circumstances in which the provider makes the relevant disclosure; and

iv) the information disclosed about the complaint and the person that submitted the complaint; and

b) the information about the complaint and the **complainant** that the provider discloses to another ***user*** appealing an action taken by the ***provider*** in relation to ***content*** generated, uploaded or shared by the ***user***.

PCU D4 Appropriate action – sending indicative timeframes

Application

PCU D4.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**

Recommendation

PCU D4.2 The provider should acknowledge receipt of each **relevant complaint** and provide the **complainant** with an indicative timeframe for deciding the complaint.

PCU D4.3 PCU D4.2 does not apply if:

a) the provider's acknowledgement is non-ephemeral; and

b) the **complainant** has opted out from receiving non-ephemeral communications in relation to their **relevant complaint**.

PCU D5 Appropriate action – sending further information about how the complaint will be handled

Application

PCU D5.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**

Recommendation

PCU D5.2 In the acknowledgment of receipt of each **relevant complaint**, referred to in Recommendation PCU D4, the provider should set out:

a) the possible outcomes; and

b) confirmation of whether the provider will inform the **complainant** of its decision whether to uphold the complaint and details of any action taken as a result.

PCU D6 Opt-out from communications following a complaint

Application

PCU D6.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) at medium or high **risk** of any specific kind of **content that is harmful to children.**

Recommendation

PCU D6.2 The provider should enable the **complainant** to opt out of receiving any non-ephemeral communications in relation to a **relevant complaint**.

PCU D7 Appropriate action for relevant complaints about content considered harmful to children

Application

PCU D7.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D7.2 When the provider receives a **relevant complaint** about ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service which may be ***content that is harmful to children***:

a) it should treat the complaint as reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant primary priority content** or **relevant priority content** and/or **relevant non-designated content** (as applicable) and review the content in accordance with PCU C1.3 or PCU C1.4 (as applicable); and

b) if Recommendations PCU C4 and PCU C5 are not applicable to the provider, it should consider the complaint promptly.

PCU D7.3 PCU D7.2 does not apply to a complaint identified as manifestly unfounded in accordance with PCU D14.2.

PCU D8 Appropriate action for content appeals – determination (services that are large or multi-risk)

Application

PCU D8.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU D8.2 The provider should determine **relevant complaints** which are **content appeals**.

PCU D8.3 The provider should, as a minimum, monitor its performance against performance targets relating to the following:

a) the time it takes to determine the **content appeal;** and

b) the accuracy of decision making,

and should resource itself so as to give effect to those targets.

PCU D8.4 The provider should have regard to the following matters in determining what priority to give to review of a **relevant complaint** which is a **content appeal**:

a) the seriousness of the action taken against the ***user*** or in relation to the ***content*** (or both) to which the **content appeal** relates;

b) whether the decision that the ***content*** was ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** was made by ***content identification technology*** and, if so, any other information available about the accuracy of the ***content identification technology*** at identifying similar types of ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**; and

c) the past error rate on the service in relation to decisions about similar kinds of ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**.

PCU D8.5 In determining **relevant complaints** which are **content appeals** relating to the ***United Kingdom user*** being **sanctioned**, the provider should consider whether,

in the circumstances of the case, the **sanction** that has been imposed is appropriate, having regard to its policy on **sanctions**.

PCU D9 Appropriate action for content appeals – determination (services that are neither large nor multi-risk)

Application

PCU D9.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is neither of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU D9.2 The provider should determine **relevant complaints** which are **content appeals** promptly.

PCU D10 Appropriate action for content appeals – action following determination

Application

PCU D10.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D10.2 If, in relation to a **relevant complaint** that is a **content appeal**, the provider reverses a decision that ***content*** was ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**, the provider should:

a) so far as appropriate and possible for the purpose of restoring the position of the ***content*** or ***user*** (or both) to what it would have been had the decision not been made, reverse the action taken against the ***user*** or the ***content*** (or both) as a result of that decision;

b) where there is a pattern or significant evidence of ***regulated user-generated content*** being ***taken down***, or access to such content being restricted, in error, adjust any relevant content moderation guidance if appropriate to ensure it is accurate; and

c) where possible and appropriate, take steps to secure that the use of automated content moderation technology does not cause the same ***content*** to be ***taken down***, or access to it restricted, again.

PCU D10A Appropriate action for content appeals – action following determination (where content decision not reversed)

Application

PCU D10A.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides, which is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) a **multi-risk service**.

Recommendation

PCU D10A.2 If the provider upholds, in whole or in part, a **relevant complaint** that is a **content appeal** relating to the ***user*** being **sanctioned** under the provider's policy on **sanctions** (see Recommendation PCU H2), but does not reverse its decision that ***content*** was **content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**, the provider should:

a) reverse the action taken against the ***user***, and

b) apply the appropriate **sanction** having regard to its policy on **sanctions** (see Recommendation PCU H2).

PCU D11 Appropriate action for age assessment appeals (services that are large or multi-risk)

Application

PCU D11.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**; or

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU D11.2 The provider should have regard to the following matters in determining what priority to give to consideration of an **age assessment appeal**:

a) the seriousness of the restriction applied to the user's ability to access ***content*** on the service as a result of the assessment of their age;

b) whether the decision to restrict access to ***content*** on the basis of the user's age was made without human oversight and, if so, information available about the accuracy of the specific technology used in making age assessments of the type concerned;

c) the past error rate on the service in relation to age assessments of the type concerned; and

d) any representations made by the user as part of the complaint as to the effect of the decision on their livelihood.

PCU D11.3 The provider should, as a minimum, monitor its performance against performance targets relating to the following:

a) the time it takes to determine the **age assessment appeal**; and

b) the accuracy of decision making,

and should resource itself so as to give effect to those targets.

PCU D11.4 If the provider determines that the user's age was incorrectly assessed, the provider should take any necessary steps to enable the user to access ***content*** to which access was restricted as a result of that incorrect assessment (so far as appropriate and possible for the purpose of restoring the position to what it would have been had the assessment been correct).

PCU D11.5 The provider should monitor trends in **age assessment appeals** to help improve any **age assurance process** used on the service**.**

PCU D12 Appropriate action for age assessment appeals (services that are neither large nor multi-risk)

Application

PCU D12.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is neither a **large service** nor **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU D12.2 The provider should determine **age assessment appeals** promptly.

PCU D12.3 If the provider determines that the user's age was incorrectly assessed, the provider should take any necessary steps to enable the user to access ***content*** to which access was restricted as a result of that incorrect assessment (so far as appropriate and possible for the purpose of restoring the position to what it would have been had the assessment been correct).

PCU D12.4 The provider should monitor trends in **age assessment appeals** to help improve any **age assurance process** used on the service**.**

PCU D13 Appropriate action for complaints about non-compliance with certain duties

Application

PCU D13.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D13.2 This Recommendation PCU D13 applies to **relevant complaints** that the provider is not complying with:

a) the **safety duties protecting children**;

b) the duty about content reporting set out in section 20 of the **Act**, so far as it relates to **content that is harmful to children** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service.

PCU D13.3 The provider should nominate a responsible individual or a team to ensure that such complaints are directed to an appropriate individual or team to be processed.

PCU D13.4 **Relevant complaints** should be handled:

a) in a way that protects ***United Kingdom users***, including ***children***; and

b) within timeframes the provider has determined are appropriate.

PCU D13.5 PCU D13.3 and PCU D13.4 do not apply in relation to complaints identified as manifestly unfounded in accordance with PCU D14.2.

PCU D14 Exception: manifestly unfounded complaints

Application

PCU D14.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU D14.2 When the provider receives a **relevant complaint** that is not a **content appeal** or an **age assessment appeal**, it may disregard the complaint only if:

a) the provider has prepared and implemented a policy in accordance with PCU D14.3 to PCU D14.6, setting out the information and attributes that indicate a **relevant complaint** is manifestly unfounded;

b) the provider identifies the complaint as manifestly unfounded in accordance with that policy; and

c) the provider has in place a process to monitor the degree to which the application of the policy incorrectly identifies complaints which are not manifestly unfounded, and to review the policy in accordance with PCU D14.4 to PCU D14.6.

PCU D14.3 In designing a policy for the purposes of PCU D14.2(a), the provider should have regard to:

a) the need to identify manifestly unfounded complaints accurately; and

b) the risks posed to (i) particular groups of vulnerable users and (ii) **child users**, if **relevant complaints** are incorrectly identified as manifestly unfounded.

PCU D14.4 The provider should, at minimum, carry out an annual review of the policy to ensure it is not incorrectly identifying **relevant complaints** as manifestly unfounded.

PCU D14.5 If the policy is incorrectly identifying **relevant complaints** as manifestly unfounded, the provider should make changes to it with a view to ensuring its accuracy.

PCU D14.6 The provider should keep a record of its review process and any changes it has made.

E. Recommender systems

PCU E1 Content recommender systems: excluding potential primary priority content

Application

PCU E1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **primary priority content**; and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.

Recommendation

PCU E1.2 In this Recommendation, "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance** (and see Recommendation PCU B6 (use of highly effective age assurance by services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of primary priority content).

PCU E1.3 The provider should ensure that any **content recommender system** on a **child-accessible part** of the service is designed and operated so that content indicated potentially to be **primary priority content** on the basis of **relevant available information** is excluded from relevant users' content feeds.

PCU E1.4 For the purposes of PCU E1.3, the provider should:

a) identify what **relevant available information** exists;

b) design the **content recommender system** so as to take appropriate account of that **relevant available information**; and

c) ensure the **content recommender system** operates so that content indicated potentially to be **primary priority content** is excluded from relevant users' content feeds.

PCU E1.5 If the service's **content moderation function** reviews content indicated (for the purposes of this Recommendation) potentially to be **primary priority content** and determines it not to be **relevant primary priority content** in accordance with PCU C1.3, this Recommendation no longer applies to that content.

PCU E1.6 This Recommendation does not recommend the use of any specific kind of ***proactive technology***, or the use of ***proactive technology*** to analyse ***user-***

generated content communicated privately or metadata relating to ***user-generated content*** communicated privately.[4]

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU E1.7 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B6 (use of highly effective age assurance by services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of primary priority content);

b) Recommendations PCU C1, PCU C2 and PCU C4A, and where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C5, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8);

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable);

d) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

PCU E2 Content recommender systems: excluding or giving a low degree of prominence to potential priority content and non-designated content

Application

PCU E2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more specific kinds of **priority content**, other than **bullying content**, or **identified kinds of non-designated content**; and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.

Recommendation

PCU E2.2 In this Recommendation, "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance** (and see Recommendation PCU B7 (use of highly

[4] Ofcom has published **guidance on content communicated 'publicly' and 'privately' under the Online Safety Act**.

effective age assurance by services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of priority content or non-designated content).

PCU E2.3 The provider should ensure that any **content recommender system** on a **child-accessible part** of the service is designed and operated so that content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** on the basis of **relevant available information** is excluded from, or given a low degree of prominence in, relevant users' content feeds.

PCU E2.4 For the purposes of PCU E2.3, the provider should:

a) identify what **relevant available information** exists;

b) design the **content recommender system** so as to take appropriate account of that **relevant available information**; and

c) ensure the **content recommender system** operates so that content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** is excluded from, or given a low degree of prominence in, relevant users' content feeds.

PCU E2.5 In designing the ***systems and processes*** for the action to be taken by the **content recommender system** in relation to content indicated potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content**, the provider should take account of the service's **children's risk assessment** (including its findings as to risk of **harm to children** in different age groups).

PCU E2.6 The provider should also ensure that content which the service's **content moderation function** has determined to be **relevant priority content** or **relevant non-designated content** is excluded from, or given a low degree of prominence in, relevant users' content feeds.

PCU E2.7 If the service's **content moderation function** reviews content indicated (for the purposes of this Recommendation) potentially to be either **priority content** or an **identified kind of non-designated content** and determines it not to be **relevant priority content** or **relevant non-designated content** in accordance with PCU C1.4 or PCU C1.5, this Recommendation no longer applies to that content.

PCU E2.8 This Recommendation does not recommend the use of any specific kind of ***proactive technology***, or the use of ***proactive technology*** to analyse ***user-generated content*** communicated privately or metadata relating to ***user-generated content*** communicated privately.[5]

[5] Ofcom has published **guidance on content communicated 'publicly' and 'privately' under the Online Safety Act**.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU E2.9 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU B7 (use of highly effective age assurance by services with a content recommender system that pose a risk of priority content or non-designated content);

b) Recommendations PCU C1, PCU C2 and PCU C4A, and where they are applicable, Recommendations PCU C3, PCU C4, PCU C5, PCU C6, PCU C7 and PCU C8;

c) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8 or PCU D9 (whichever is applicable) and PCU D10;

d) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **age assessment appeals**, and PCU D11 or PCU D12 (whichever is applicable); and

e) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

PCU E3 Content recommender systems: enabling children to give negative feedback

Application

PCU E3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets all of the following conditions:

a) the service is a **large service**;

b) the service is at medium or high **risk** of two or more specific kinds of **content that is harmful to children**, other than **bullying content**; and

c) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **content recommender system**.

Recommendation

PCU E3.2 In this Recommendation "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU E3.3 The provider should ensure that a feature is included enabling relevant users to give negative feedback on pieces of ***regulated user-generated content***

encountered as a result of the operation of a **content recommender system** on a **child-accessible part** of the service.

PCU E3.4 The feature should not make visible to other ***users*** of the service:

a) the fact that a particular ***user*** has given negative feedback on a specific piece of content, or

b) the number of times that ***users*** have given negative feedback on a specific piece of content.

PCU E3.5 Where a relevant user has given negative feedback on a specific piece of content, that piece of content should be excluded from that user's content feed.

PCU E3.6 The provider should ensure that the **content recommender system** is designed and operated so as to take account of negative feedback given by a relevant user for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of that user encountering similar ***regulated user-generated content***.

PCU E3.7 This Recommendation does not recommend the use of ***proactive technology*** to analyse ***user-generated content*** communicated privately, or metadata relating to ***user-generated content*** communicated privately.[6]

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU E3.8 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU C4A;

b) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12 in the Illegal content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

[6] Ofcom has published **guidance on content communicated 'publicly' and 'privately' under the Online Safety Act**.

F. Settings, functionalities and user support

PCU F1 Providing age-appropriate user support materials for children

Application

PCU F1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU F1.2 The provider should make ***publicly available*** (including to ***United Kingdom users*** who are not registered to use the service and persons in the United Kingdom who are not users of the service) materials which explain:

a) how ***United Kingdom users*** or ***affected persons*** can report ***content*** which they consider to be **content that is harmful to children**; and

b) how to make other kinds of **relevant complaints**.

PCU F1.3 Where a **child-accessible part** of the service includes the feature in question, the provider should also make ***publicly available*** (including to ***United Kingdom users*** who are not registered to use the service and persons in the United Kingdom who are not users of the service) materials which explain:

a) how to **block** or **mute** other user accounts (and see Recommendation PCU J1);

b) how a ***user*** can prevent other ***users*** from **commenting on content** which that user has posted (and see Recommendation PCU J2); and

c) how to control whether to become part of a **group chat** (and see Recommendation PCU J3).

PCU F1.4 The materials should in each case include:

a) a section aimed at ***children*** which includes at least one of the following:

i) visual elements;

ii) audio-visual elements;

iii) interactive elements; and

b) a section aimed at the parents or guardians of ***children***.

PCU F1.5 The section of the materials aimed at ***children*** should be clear, comprehensible and easy for a **child user** to understand.

PCU F1.6 The materials should not include any material which would be ***content that is harmful to children*** if it were ***regulated user-generated content*** in relation to a service.

PCU F1.7 If it is possible to register to use the service, the provider should ensure that the materials are provided to ***United Kingdom users*** during the registration process.

PCU F1.8 The provider should ensure that the materials are easy to find on the service.

PCU F2 Providing information to children when they restrict content or interactions with other accounts

Application

PCU F2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is both a **large service** and **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU F2.2 In this Recommendation "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU F2.3 PCU F2.4 applies when, on a **child-accessible part** of the service, a relevant user seeks to:

a) **block**, **mute**, **report conduct** or take equivalent action against a ***user*** or user account;

b) use a **content restriction tool** with an indication that the user considers the content to be **content that is harmful to children**; or

c) report ***regulated user-generated content*** using a reporting function or tool.

PCU F2.4 The provider must provide the relevant user with information about:

a) the effect of the action, including any types of interaction or access to ***content*** that it would restrict;

b) in the case of action against a ***user*** or user account, whether that ***user's*** user account would be notified; and

c) the further options available to limit interaction with another ***user's*** user account or restrict the ***content*** they ***encounter***, or otherwise increase their safety.

PCU F2.5 The information should be:

a) prominently displayed; and

b) clear, comprehensible and easy for a **child user** to understand.

PCU F3 Signposting children to support when they report harmful content

Application

PCU F3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:

a) **bullying content**;

b) **eating disorder content**;

c) **self-harm content**;

d) **suicide content**.

Recommendation

PCU F3.2 In this Recommendation:

"relevant harmful content" means any of the following kinds of content in respect of which the service is at medium or high **risk**:

a) **bullying content**;

b) **eating disorder content**;

c) **self-harm content**;

d) **suicide content**;

"relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU F3.3 PCU F3.4 and F3.5 apply where a relevant user reports ***regulated user-generated content*** on the service using a reporting function or tool.

PCU F3.4 Where the provider:

a) has a means of identifying that the report relates, or might relate, to a specific kind (or kinds) of relevant harmful content, or

b) is otherwise aware that the content reported is or might be relevant harmful content of a specific kind (or kinds),

the provider should signpost that user to appropriate support for that kind (or those kinds) of content as quickly as possible after the report is made.

PCU F3.5 Otherwise, the provider should signpost that user to appropriate support for all kinds of relevant harmful content as quickly as possible after the report is made.

PCU F3.6 Appropriate support for a kind of relevant harmful content is support that:

a) can be accessed by **children in the United Kingdom**;

b) is comprehensible and suitable in tone and content for the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian;

c) relates to the **harm to children** associated with that kind of harmful content; and

d) is either produced by, or in consultation with, one or more third party organisations that have expertise relating to that type of harm.

PCU F3.7 Before signposting to support provided by a third party organisation which is not a **public body**, the provider should have regard to any terms published by the relevant organisation relating to the use of its support, including as to obtaining its consent.

PCU F4 Signposting children to support when they post harmful content

Application

PCU F4.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets all of the following conditions:

a) the service is a **large service**;

b) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:

i) **bullying content**;

ii) **eating disorder content**;

iii) **self-harm content**;

iv) **suicide content**;

c) a **child-accessible part** of the service has **posting content functionality**.

Recommendation

PCU F4.2 In this Recommendation:

"relevant harmful content" means any of the following kinds of content in respect of which the service is at medium or high **risk**:

a) **bullying content**;

b) **eating disorder content**;

c) **self-harm content**;

d) **suicide content**;

"relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU F4.3 Where the provider becomes aware (through their ***systems and processes***) that **content posted** by a relevant user on a **child-accessible part** of the service is or might be relevant harmful content of a specific kind (or kinds), the provider should signpost that user to appropriate support for that kind (or those kinds) of content as quickly as possible after becoming so aware.

PCU F4.4 Appropriate support for a kind of relevant harmful content is support that:

a) can be accessed by **children in the United Kingdom**;

b) is comprehensible and suitable in tone and content for the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian;

c) relates to the **harm to children** associated with that kind of harmful content; and

d) is either produced by, or in consultation with, one or more third party organisations that have expertise relating to that type of harm.

PCU F4.5 Before signposting to support provided by a third party organisation which is not a **public body**, the provider should have regard to any terms published by the relevant organisation relating to the use of its support, including as to obtaining its consent.

PCU F5 Signposting children to support when they search for harmful content

Application

PCU F5.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:

i) **eating disorder content**;

ii) **self-harm content**;

iii) **suicide content**; and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has a **searching content functionality**.

Recommendation

PCU F5.2 In this Recommendation:

"relevant harmful content" means any of the following kinds of content in respect of which the service is at medium or high **risk**:

a) **eating disorder content**;

b) **self-harm content**;

c) **suicide content**;

"relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU F5.3 Where the provider becomes aware (through their ***systems and processes***) that a relevant user on a **child-accessible part** of the service has searched:

a) using one or more terms relating to suicide, an act of deliberate self-injury or an eating disorder; or

b) for content containing specific, practical or instructive information regarding suicide methods, an act of deliberate self-injury, an eating disorder or behaviours associated with an eating disorder,

the provider should signpost that user to appropriate support for the kind of relevant harmful content to which the search request relates as quickly as possible after becoming so aware.

PCU F5.4 Appropriate support for a kind of relevant harmful content is support that:

a) can be accessed by **children in the United Kingdom**;

b) is comprehensible and suitable in tone and content for the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian;

c) relates to the **harm to children** associated with that kind of harmful content; and

d) is either produced by, or in consultation with, one or more third party organisations that have expertise relating to that type of harm.

PCU F5.5 Before signposting to support provided by a third party organisation which is not a **public body**, the provider should have regard to any terms published by the relevant organisation relating to the use of its support, including as to obtaining its consent.

G. Terms of service

PCU G1 Terms of service: substance (all services)

Application

PCU G1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU G1.2 The provider should include the following in the ***terms of service***:

a) provisions specifying how **children in the United Kingdom** are to be protected from **content that is harmful to children**, addressing:

i) separately for each kind of **primary priority content**, how ***children*** of any age will be prevented from encountering that kind of content by means of the service;

ii) separately for each kind of **priority content**, how ***children*** will be protected (or prevented) from encountering that kind of content by means of the service (including any ways in which that protection differs for children in different age groups); and

iii) how ***children*** will be protected (or prevented) from encountering **identified kinds of non-designated content** by means of the service (including any ways in which that protection differs for children in different age groups);

b) provisions giving information about any ***proactive technology*** used for the purposes of compliance with a safety duty protecting children set out in section 12(2) or (3) of the **Act** (including the kind of technology, when it is used, and how it works);

c) provisions specifying the policies and processes that govern the handling and resolution of **relevant complaints**;

d) provisions specifying details about the operation of any measures which are designed to prevent **children in the United Kingdom** under a certain age from accessing the whole or a part of the service.

PCU G1.3 The provider should apply the provisions referred to in PCU G1.2(d) consistently.

PCU G1A Terms of service: substance (large or multi-risk services)

Application

PCU G1A.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that is either (or both) of the following:

a) a **large service**;

b) **multi-risk (children)**.

Recommendation

PCU G1A.2 The provider should include in the ***terms of service*** provisions giving information about its policy on **sanctions**, addressing, at least, the **sanctions** which the provider may impose on ***users*** who generate, upload or share ***content*** that it determines to be **relevant content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** (see Recommendation PCU H2).

PCU G2 Terms of service: substance (Category 1 services)

Application

PCU G2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each ***Category 1 service*** that is ***likely to be accessed by children*** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU G2.2 The provider should summarise the findings of its **children's risk assessment** (including as to levels of risk and as to the nature, and severity, of potential **harm to children**) in the ***terms of service***.

PCU G3 Terms of service: clarity and accessibility

Application

PCU G3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides.

Recommendation

PCU G3.2 The provider should ensure that the provisions included in the ***terms of service*** in accordance with Recommendation PCU G1 are:

a) easy to find, such that they are:

i) clearly signposted for the general public, regardless of whether they have registered with or are using the service; and

ii) locatable within the ***terms of service***;

b) laid out and formatted in a way that helps ***United Kingdom users***, including ***children***, read and understand them;

c) written to a reading age comprehensible for the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian; and

d) designed for the purposes of ensuring usability for those dependent on assistive technologies, including:

    i) keyboard navigation; and

    ii) screen reading technology.

H. User access

PCU H1 [Intentionally left blank]

PCU H2 User sanctions

Application

PCU H2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides:

a) that is **a large service** or **multi-risk (children)** (or both); and
b) on which one or more specific kinds of **relevant content that is harmful to children** are prohibited.

Recommendation

PCU H2.2 The provider should prepare and apply a policy in respect of the **sanctions** to be imposed on ***United Kingdom users*** who generate, upload or share:

a) the specific kinds of **relevant content that is harmful to children** that are **prohibited** on the service, or
b) **content that is harmful to children proxy**,

with the objective of preventing the future dissemination of **relevant content that is harmful to children**.

PCU H2.3 The policy should set out the **sanctions** that the provider may impose on a ***United Kingdom user*** who generates, uploads or shares ***content*** that the provider determines to be **relevant content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** (see PCU C1 and C2 with regard to determining **relevant content that is harmful to children** and **content that is harmful to children proxy**).

PCU H2.4 In setting its policy on the circumstances in which it will impose a **sanction** on such a ***user***, and the seriousness of the appropriate **sanction** in those circumstances, the provider should have regard to at least the following factors:

a) the severity of potential harm to **child users** if they encounter the **relevant content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy** on the service;

b) whether the ***user*** has previously generated, uploaded or shared **relevant content that is harmful to children** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**, including whether the ***user*** was **sanctioned** for doing so; and

c) the potential impact of the type and duration of the **sanction** on the ***user*** being **sanctioned**.

PCU H2.5 The provider should regularly review and update the policy on **sanctions** to ensure it remains fit for purpose, taking into account at least:

a) the service's **children's risk assessment**; and

b) any matters arising from **relevant complaints**, which have been determined since the policy was last reviewed, which were **content appeals** relating to ***users*** who had been **sanctioned** under the provider's policy on **sanctions**.

Safeguards for freedom of expression and privacy

PCU H2.6 The following measures are safeguards to protect ***United Kingdom users'*** right to freedom of expression and the privacy of ***United Kingdom users***:

a) Recommendation PCU C4A;
b) Recommendations PCU D1 and PCU D2, so far as they relate to **content appeals**, PCU D8, PCU D10.2(a), PCU D10A, and PCU H2.4;
c) Recommendations ICU D1 and ICU D2, so far as they relate to complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with its duties in relation to freedom of expression or privacy, and ICU D12, in the Illegal Content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services.

I. [Not used]

[Intentionally left blank]

J. User controls

PCU J1 User blocking and muting

Application

PCU J1.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets all of the following conditions:

a) the service is:

i) at high **risk** of one or more of the kinds of content set out in PCU J1.2; or

ii) at medium **risk** of one or more of the kinds of content set out in PCU J1.2 and has more than 700,000 monthly **active United Kingdom users** (see paragraphs 5.6 to 5.9);

b) the service has **user profiles**; and

c) a **child-accessible part** of the service has one or more of the following functionalities:

i) **user connection functionality**;

ii) **posting content functionality**;

iii) **user communication** (including but not limited to: (1) **direct messaging functionality**; and (2) **commenting on content functionality**).

PCU J1.2 The kinds of content are:

a) **abusive content**;

b) **bullying content**;

c) **content inciting hatred**;

d) **eating disorder content**;

e) **self-harm content**;

f) **suicide content**;

g) **violent content (animal)**;

h) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;

i) **violent content (person).**

Recommendation

PCU J1.3 In this Recommendation "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance.**

PCU J1.4 PCU J1.5 and PCU J1.7 apply in relation to any **child-accessible part** of the service which has **user connection functionality**, **posting content functionality** or **user communication** (including but not limited to **direct messaging functionality** and **commenting on content functionality**).

PCU J1.5 The provider should make available to all relevant users who are registered to use the service the option to **block** each of:

a) a specific user account, whether or not **connected** to that relevant user's user account; and

b) where the service has **user connection functionality,** all user accounts which are not **connected** to that relevant user's user account.

PCU J1.6 "**Block**" means to take action that will result in:

a) **blocked users** being unable to send **direct messages** from the **blocked account** to the **blocking account**;

b) **blocking users** being unable to send **direct messages** from the **blocking account** to the **blocked account**;

c) the **blocking user** being unable to ***encounter***, by means of the **blocking account**, any **content posted** on the service using the **blocked account** (regardless of where on the service it is posted), including but not limited to: (i) **reactions** to ***content***; and (ii) **content posted** using the **blocked account** which is subsequently posted by another ***user***;

d) the **blocked user** being unable to ***encounter***, by means of the **blocked account**, any **content posted** on the service using the **blocking account** (regardless of where on the service it is posted), including but not limited to: (i) **reactions** to ***content***; and (ii) **content posted** using the **blocking account** which is subsequently posted by another ***user***; and

e) the **blocking account** and **blocked account**, if they were **connected**, no longer being **connected**,

and "**blocking**" is to be read accordingly.

"**Blocked account**" means the user account that action has been taken against.

"**Blocking account**" means the user account through which the action resulting in **blocking** has taken place.

"Blocked user" means the ***user*** operating the **blocked account**.

"**Blocking user**" means the ***user*** operating the **blocking account**.

PCU J1.7 The provider should make available to all relevant users who are registered to use the service the option to **mute** other user accounts (whether or not **connected** to that relevant user's user account) on the service.

PCU J1.8 "**Mute**" means to take action that will result in the **muting user** being unable to ***encounter*** any **content posted** on the service using the **muted account**, including:

a) **reactions** to **content posted** using the **muted account**; and

b) **content posted** using the **muted account** which is posted by another ***user***,

by means of the **muting account,** unless the **muting user** visits the **user profile** associated with the **muted account**, in which case the **muting user** will experience that **user profile** as if the **muted account** had not been **muted**,

and "**muting**" is to be read accordingly.

"**Muting account**" means the user account through which the action resulting in **muting** has taken place.

"**Muted account**" means the user account that the action has been taken against.

"**Muted user**" means the ***user*** operating the **muted account**.

"**Muting user**" means the ***user*** operating the **muting account**.

PCU J1.9 For the avoidance of doubt:

a) save for where **muting** is reciprocal, **muted users** should continue to ***encounter*** the **content posted** using the **muting account**;

b) functionality from the **muted user's** perspective should continue as if the **muting user** had not **muted** the **muted account**; and

c) providers should not at any time notify **muted users,** or otherwise make them aware, that the **muted account** has been **muted** by the **muting user**.

Muting is reciprocal where a ***user*** has through a user account ("A") **muted** a user account ("B"), and a ***user*** has through user account B also **muted** user account A.

PCU J2 Disabling comments

Application

PCU J2.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is:

i) at high **risk** of one or more of the kinds of content set out in PCU J2.2; or

ii) at medium **risk** of one or more of the kinds of content set out in PCU J2.2 and has more than 700,000 monthly **active United Kingdom users** (see paragraphs 5.6 to 5.95.9); and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has **commenting on content functionality**.

PCU J2.2 The kinds of content are:

a) **abusive content**;

b) **bullying content**;

c) **content inciting hatred**;

d) **eating disorder content**;

e) **self-harm content**;

f) **suicide content**;

g) **violent content (animal)**;

h) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;

i) **violent content (person).**

Recommendation

PCU J2.3 In this Recommendation "relevant user" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU J2.4 PCU J2.5 and PCU J2.6 apply in relation to any **child-accessible part** of the service which has **commenting on content functionality**.

PCU J2.5 The provider should make available to all relevant users who are registered to use the service a feature which, if used or applied by a relevant user in relation

to a piece of content **posted** using that user's user account, will prevent other ***users*** of the service from **commenting** on that content.

PCU J2.6 Relevant users should be able to use or apply the feature referred to in PCU J2.5 when **posting content** or after having **posted content**.

PCU J3 Invitations to group chats

Application

PCU J3.1 This measure applies to a ***provider*** in respect of each **service likely to be accessed by children** it provides that meets both of the following conditions:

a) the service is at medium or high **risk** of one or more of the following kinds of content:

i) **abusive content;**

ii) **bullying content**;

iii) **content inciting hatred**;

iv) **eating disorder content**;

v) **regulated pornographic content;**

vi) **self-harm content**;

vii) **suicide content**;

viii) **violent content (animal)**;

ix) **violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)**;

x) **violent content (person)**; and

b) a **child-accessible part** of the service has **group messaging functionality**.

Recommendation

PCU J3.2 In this Recommendation:

"**group chat invitation**" means a notification sent to the user account of a relevant user (the "**invited user**") informing the **invited user** that another ***user*** (the "**inviting user**") has sought to make the **invited user** part of a particular **group chat**;

"**relevant user**" means any ***United Kingdom user*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**.

PCU J3.3 The provider should ensure that a relevant user only becomes part of a **group chat** on a **child-accessible part** of the service (including a **group chat** that the user has previously been part of) once the user has received a **group chat invitation** and has actively confirmed that they wish to become part of that **group chat**.

PCU J3.4 A **group chat invitation** should:

a) include any relevant publicly available information about the **inviting user** and the **group chat**;
b) be laid out and formatted in a way that helps **children in the United Kingdom** read and understand the information in it; and
c) be written to a reading age comprehensible to the youngest individual permitted to use the service without the consent of a parent or guardian.

PCU J3.5 A **group chat invitation** should not be designed in a way that encourages the **invited user** to confirm that they wish to become part of the **group chat**.

PCU J3.6 The provider should ensure that the invited user is given a reasonable period of time after receiving the **group chat invitation** to decide whether they wish to become part of the relevant **group chat** (and if so to give that confirmation).

PCU J3.7 The provider should not directly notify the **inviting user** if the invited user declines to be part of the relevant **group chat**.

5. Definitions and interpretation

5.1 Terms in **bold** used in this Code have the meanings set out in table A. The meaning given applies even if the term is also used in the **Act**.

5.2 Terms in ***bold and italics*** used in this Code have the same meaning as in the **Act**. Table B provides a reference to the provision(s) in the **Act** containing the definition of the relevant term as well as additional notes and references which are intended to assist the reader. In the event of any inconsistency between the **Act** and the information in table B, the **Act** should be regarded as authoritative.

Table A - Definitions of terms in bold used in this Code

Term	Meaning
Abusive content	The content described in section 62(2) of the **Act.**
Access control	A means of restricting specific ***United Kingdom users'*** access to any ***user-to-user part,*** or all ***user-to-user parts*** of a **service**.
Act	The Online Safety Act 2023 (c.50).
Active United Kingdom user	As defined in paragraph 5.9.
Age appropriate design code	The code of practice issued under section 125 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12) on 12 August 2020.
Age assessment appeal	A complaint by a ***United Kingdom user*** who is unable to access ***content*** because measures used to comply with a duty set out in section 12(2) or (3) of the **Act** have resulted in an incorrect assessment of the user's age.
Age assurance	***Age verification*** and ***age estimation***.
Age assurance process	A ***system or process*** designed to determine whether a particular ***user*** is, or is not, a ***child*** that is comprised of one or more **age assurance** measures.
Allowed (content)	See the subsection headed 'Content prohibited on a service' (which begins at paragraph 5.16).
Appropriate moderation action for non-designated content	As defined in PCU C2.11.
Appropriate moderation action for primary priority content	As defined in PCU C2.5.

Term	Meaning
Appropriate moderation action for priority content	As defined in PCU C2.8.
Block, Blocking	As defined in PCU J1.6.
Blocked account	As defined in PCU J1.6.
Blocked user	As defined in PCU J1.6.
Blocking account	As defined in PCU J1.6.
Blocking user	As defined in PCU J1.6.
Bullying content	The content described in section 62(5) of the **Act**. See also section 62(12) of the **Act**.
Challenge age	The estimated age below which further steps will be taken to estimate or verify the exact age of the user before determining whether the user is a child as part of a **challenge age approach.**
Challenge age approach	An **age assurance process** comprised of two stages whereby if, at the end of the first stage of process, the estimated age of a user is found to be below a specified age, further steps are taken to estimate or verify the exact age of the user before determining whether the ***user*** is a ***child***.
Child user	A ***United Kingdom user*** who is under the age of 18.
Child-accessible part (of a service)	A ***user-to-user part*** of a **service** other than any part which **children in the United Kingdom** are not normally able to access as a result of the use on the service of ***age verification*** or ***age estimation***.
Children in the United Kingdom	People under the age of 18 in the United Kingdom.
Children's risk assessment	The most recent risk assessment carried out by the ***provider*** of a **service** pursuant to section 11 of the **Act**.
Comment on content	Reply to ***user-generated content*** or generate, upload or share ***content*** in response to another piece of ***user-generated content*** posted on open channels of communication, in such a way that the reply or content (as the case may be) is visually accessible directly from the original user-generated content without navigating away from that user-generated content.
Commenting on content functionality	***User-to-user service*** functionality that allows *users* to **comment on content**.

Term	Meaning
Complainant	The ***United Kingdom user*** or ***affected person*** who made the complaint.
Connect	See **connection**.
Connected (accounts)	Two user accounts with a **connection**.
Connection	An established link between two user accounts that one or both of the ***users*** operating those accounts has taken steps to establish. Connections include, but are not limited to: a) established links created when one ***user*** invites another ***user*** to establish a link between the user accounts of the two users that the other user accepts; b) established links created when one ***user*** elects to follow another ***user's*** user account; and c) established links created when one ***user*** elects to subscribe to another ***user's*** user account. The terms "connect", "connected" and "connection" are to be read accordingly.
Content appeal	A complaint by a ***United Kingdom user*** about any of the following actions, if the action concerned has been taken by the ***provider*** on the basis that ***content*** generated, uploaded or shared by the ***user*** is ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**: a) the content being ***taken down***, b) access to the content being restricted; c) the user being given a warning; d) the user being suspended, banned, or in any other way restricted from using the **service**.
Content control	A means of restricting specific ***United Kingdom users'*** access to a particular piece (or pieces) of ***regulated user-generated content*** on a **service**.
Content inciting hatred	The content described in section 62(3) of the **Act.**
Content moderation function	The ***systems and processes*** designed to review, assess and take action to in relation to ***content***, including ***content*** a ***provider*** has reason to suspect may be **relevant content that is harmful to children.**

Term	Meaning
Content posted	***Content*** generated, uploaded and/or shared on open channels of communication by a ***user*** of the service. "Posting content" and "posted content" are to be read accordingly.
Content recommender system	An algorithmic system which determines the relative ranking of an identified pool of ***content*** that includes ***regulated user-generated content*** from multiple ***users*** on content feeds. ***Content*** is recommended based on factors that it is programmed to account for, which may include but are not limited to: a) ***user*** feedback, such as interactions with a piece of ***content*** by means of likes, views and shares; b) predicted engagement with ***content*** based on a **user's** consumption history, such as likelihood of liking, sharing, and commenting on a piece of ***content***; c) profile and contextual characteristics, such as age and location; d) ***content*** liked by ***users*** with a similar consumption and engagement history; and e) popularity of a certain piece of ***content***. For the avoidance of doubt, references to **content recommender systems** in this Code do not include: a) a content recommender system employed exclusively in the operation of a functionality which suggests ***content*** to users in direct response to a search query; b) a product recommender system; or c) a network recommender system that suggests ***users*** and groups to follow.
Content restriction tool	A feature which enables a ***user*** to give negative feedback on a specific piece of ***content*** in a manner that is not visible to other ***users*** of the service, and which results in that piece of content or other pieces of ***content*** that share significant characteristics with it no longer appearing in the user's feed(s) or being given lower prominence.

Term	Meaning
Content that is harmful to children	a) **Primary priority content**; b) **priority content**; or c) content which is an **identified kind of non-designated content**.
Content that is harmful to children proxy	**Primary priority content proxy**, **priority content proxy** or **non-designated content proxy**.
Direct message	A message sent from a user account to a recipient user account that can only be immediately viewed or read on that specific recipient user account.
Direct messaging functionality	***User-to-user service*** functionality that allows ***users*** to send **direct messages**.
Eating disorder content	The content described in section 61(5) of the **Act.**
Governance body	A body which makes decisions within an organisation, for example a board of directors.
Group chat	A closed channel of communication in which specific user accounts can send and receive **group messages**.
Group chat invitation	As defined in PCU J3.2.
Group message	A message sent from a user account to more than one recipient user accounts that can only immediately be viewed or read on those user accounts.
Group messaging functionality	***User-to-user service*** functionality that enables a ***user*** to send **group messages**, through a closed channel of communication, to more than one recipient at a time and which can be immediately viewed or read by all recipients.
Harm to children	***Harm*** to **children in the United Kingdom *presented by* content that is harmful to children**.
HEAA access controls	**Access controls** that prevent all ***United Kingdom users*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**, accessing the part of the service on which the content is located.
HEAA content controls	**Content controls** that prevent all ***United Kingdom users*** of the service, other than any user determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**, ***encountering*** the content.

Term	Meaning
Highly effective age assurance	An **age assurance process** that meets each of the criteria listed under: a) PCU B1.1B (technical accuracy), b) PCU B1.1C (robustness), c) PCU B1.1D (reliability), and d) PCU B1.1E (fairness).
Identified kind of non-designated content	A kind of ***non-designated content that is harmful to children*** in respect of which the service's **children's risk assessment** has identified a low, medium or high **risk** of ***harm*** to **children in the United Kingdom.**
Invited user	As defined in PCU J3.2.
Inviting user	As defined in paragraph PCU J3.2.
Large service	A **service** which has more than 7 million monthly **active United Kingdom users** (see paragraphs 5.6 to 5.9).
Multi-risk (children)	See paragraph 5.5.
Mute, muting	As defined in PCU J1.8.
Muted account	As defined in PCU J1.8.
Muted user	As defined in PCU J1.8.
Muting account	As defined in PCU J1.8.
Muting user	As defined in PCU J1.8.
Non-designated content proxy	***Content*** that a ***provider*** determines to be in breach of its ***terms of service***, where: a) the ***provider*** had reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant non-designated content**; and b) the ***provider*** is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** prohibit the type of **relevant non-designated content** which it had reason to suspect existed.

Term	Meaning
Other content level action	One or more actions, other than **HEAA content controls,** taken in relation to the content to protect all ***United Kingdom users*** of the service, other than users determined to be an ***adult*** by the use of **highly effective age assurance**, from ***encountering*** that content. This includes, but is not limited to, excluding or giving the content a low degree of prominence in relevant users' content feeds, blurring, distorting or obscuring the content and applying a warning label to the content. For the avoidance of doubt, **HEAA access controls** do not fall within the scope of other content level action.
Posting content	See **content posted.**
Posting content functionality	***User-to-user service*** functionality allowing ***users*** to do one or more of generating, uploading or sharing ***content*** on open channels of communication.
Primary priority content	***Primary priority content that is harmful to children***. (This comprises **eating disorder content**, **regulated pornographic content**, **self-harm content**, and **suicide content**.)
Primary priority content proxy	***Content*** that a ***provider*** determines to be in breach of its ***terms of service***, where: a) the ***provider*** had reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant primary priority content**; and b) the ***provider*** is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** prohibit the type of **relevant primary priority content** which it had reason to suspect existed.
Priority content	***Priority content that is harmful to children***.
Priority content proxy	***Content*** that a ***provider*** determines to be in breach of its ***terms of service***, where: a) the ***provider*** had reason to suspect that the content may be **relevant priority content**; and b) the ***provider*** is satisfied that its ***terms of service*** **prohibit** the type of **relevant priority content** which it had reason to suspect existed.
Produce(s) reproducible results	Produce(s) the same or similar outputs when given the same or similar inputs.
Prohibited (content)	See the subsection headed 'Content prohibited on a service' (which begins at paragraph 5.16).

Term	Meaning
Prospective complainants	***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons***.
Public body	A public authority within the meaning of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (c.42).
Reacting to content	A ***user-to-user service*** functionality. Described by user communication functionality type. Includes functionalities such as 'liking' or 'loving' content.
Reaction (to *content*)	Expressing a view on ***content***, including, for example, by: a) applying a "like" or "dislike" button or other button of that nature, b) applying an emoji or symbol of any kind, c) engaging in yes/no voting, or d) rating or scoring ***content*** in any way (including giving star or numerical ratings).
Record	A written record, in an easily understandable form, that is dated when made and on each occasion that is updated.
Regulated pornographic content	***Pornographic content*** other than content of a type described in section 61(6) of the **Act**.
Regulated user-to-user service	A ***user-to-user service*** as defined in section 3 of the **Act**, which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 of the **Act** (subject to the disapplication in section 5 of the **Act**).
Relevant available information	Information that is reasonably available to the provider from the operation of the service, such as: a) metadata relating to content (including tags and labels); b) data relating to the user uploading, generating or sharing content (such as whether other content uploaded, generated or shared by that user has been assessed to be **content that is harmful to children**); c) reports about content which ***United Kingdom users*** or ***affected persons*** consider to be **content that is harmful to children**; d) negative feedback given by users (see Recommendation PCU E3); e) other indicators generated by technology used on the service.

Term	Meaning
Relevant complaint	The following kinds of complaint: a) complaints (including **reports**) by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** about ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service which they consider to be ***content that is harmful to children***; b) complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** if they consider that the provider is not complying with a duty set out in the following sections of the **Act**: (i) section 12 (safety duties protecting children); and (ii) section 20 (content reporting) so far as it relates to so far as it relates to **content that is harmful to children**, present on a **child accessible part** of a **service**; c) complaints by a ***United Kingdom user*** who has generated, uploaded or shared ***content*** on a service if that content is ***taken down***, or access to it is restricted, on the basis that it is ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**; d) complaints by a ***United Kingdom user*** of a **service** if the ***provider*** has given a warning to the ***user***, suspended or banned the ***user*** from using the service, or in any other way restricted the user's ability to use the service, as a result of ***content*** generated, uploaded or shared by the ***user*** which the ***provider*** considers to be ***content that is harmful to children*** or **content that is harmful to children proxy**; e) complaints by a ***United Kingdom user*** who is unable to access ***content*** because measures used to comply with a duty set out in section 12(2) or (3) of the **Act** have resulted in an incorrect assessment of the user's age.
Relevant content that is harmful to children	**Relevant primary priority content; relevant priority content;** or **relevant non-designated content**.
Relevant non-designated content	Any ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service that is an **identified kind of non-designated content** where the risk of ***harm*** is presented by the nature of the content (rather than the fact of its dissemination).

Term	Meaning
Relevant primary priority content	Any ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service that is **primary priority content** where the risk of ***harm*** is presented by the nature of the content (rather than the fact of its dissemination).
Relevant priority content	Any ***content*** present on a **child-accessible part** of the service that is **priority content** where the risk of ***harm*** is presented by the nature of the content (rather than the fact of its dissemination).
Reporting and complaints duties	The duty set out in section 20 of the **Act**, so far as it relates to ***content that is harmful to children*** present on a **child-accessible part** of a service, and the duties set out in section 21 of the **Act**, so far as relating to the complaints set out in section 21(4)(b)(ii) (so far as relating to ***content that is harmful to children***) and section 21(5) of the **Act**.
Reporting conduct	Making a complaint on the grounds that a ***user*** considers that a ***provider*** is not complying with its duties in relation to **content that is harmful to children** because the provider is allowing a ***user*** of a **service** it provides to use the features and functionalities of that service to increase the risk of **harm to children**.
Reports	Complaints by ***United Kingdom users*** and ***affected persons*** about ***content*** present on a service which they consider to be **content that is harmful to children**, made using a reporting function or tool provided by the service.
Risk	See the subsection headed 'Risks of harm' below (which begins at paragraph 5.3).
Safety duties protecting children	The duties set out in section 12 of the **Act**.
Sanction	An action taken against a ***user*****.** This includes: a) giving a warning to the ***user***, b) suspending or banning the ***user*** from using the **service**, or c) in any other way restricting the ***user's*** ability to use the **service**. The term "sanctioned" is to be read accordingly.
Searching content functionality	***User-to-user service*** functionality enabling ***users*** to search within the service for ***user-generated content***.
Self-harm content	The content described in section 61(4) of the **Act.**

Term	Meaning
Service	A **regulated user-to-user service**.
Service likely to be accessed by children	A **regulated user-to-user service** that is ***likely to be accessed by children*****.**
Suicide content	The content described in section 61(3) of the **Act.**
Trusted flagger	A person with expertise relating to one or more types of **harm to children** for whom the ***provider*** has established a dedicated reporting channel.
User account	Representations of a user in a service's information system. They may contain information required for registration to a particular service that are often attributes of a user's identity such as name, age, contact details and preferences.
User communication	***User-to-user service*** functionality type that describes functionalities by means of which ***users*** can communicate with one another either synchronously or asynchronously. Includes communication across open and closed channels.
User connection functionality	A ***user-to-user service*** functionality that allows users to create **connections**.
User profiles	A collection of information that has been shared by a ***user*** and may be viewed by other ***users*** of the service. This can include, but is not limited to, a username, biography or profile picture, as well as ***content*** generated, uploaded or shared by the ***user*** operating the user account associated with the user profile.
Violent content (animal)	The content described in section 62(7) of the **Act.**
Violent content (instructions for an act of serious violence against a person)	The content described in section 62(4) of the **Act.**
Violent content (person)	The content described in section 62(6) of the **Act.**
Volunteer	An individual who, in relation to the activity in question, is not: a) employed by the ***provider*** or anyone else, b) remunerated, or c) acting by way of a business.

Table B - Terms used in this Code that have the meaning given in the Act

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Adult	**Section 236(1)**
Affected person	**Section 20(5)** See also section 21(7). See the entries for "content", "child" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms.
Age estimation	**Section 230(3) and (4)** Section 4(4) defines "regulated service". A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). A "regulated search service" is an "internet service" (see the entry for "internet service" regarding the definition of that term) that is, or includes, a "search engine" (see the entry for "search engine" regarding the definition of that term) (subject to section 3(5) to (7)) that is a regulated search service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). Section 79(3) defines "Regulated provider pornographic content". Section 79(2) defines "provider pornographic content". See the entries for "content", "internet service", "pornographic content" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms.

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Age verification	**Section 230(2) and (4)** Section 4(4) defines "regulated service". A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). A "regulated search service" is an "internet service" (see the entry for "internet service" regarding the definition of that term) that is, or includes, a "search engine" (see the entry for "search engine" regarding the definition of that term) (subject to section 3(5) to (7)) that is a regulated search service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). Section 79(3) defines "Regulated provider pornographic content". Section 79(2) defines "provider pornographic content". See the entries for "content", "internet service", "pornographic content" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms.
Category 1 service	**Section 95(10)(a)** Section 95(2)(a) requires Ofcom to establish a register, a part of which sets out the **regulated user-to-user services** which Ofcom considers meet the Category 1 threshold conditions (as specified in regulations made under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 11 to the **Act**). Services for the time being included in that part of the register are Category 1 services.
Child	**Section 236(1)**
Combined service	**Section 4(7)** Paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 1 sets out the conditions to be met for a search engine not to be considered a public search engine. See the entry for "search engine" regarding the definition of that term. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5).

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Content	**Section 236(1)** See the entry for "internet service" regarding the definition of that term. See section 232 in relation to content communicated "publicly" or "privately".
Content identification technology	**Section 231(2)** Under section 231(1), content identification technology is listed as a form of "proactive technology". Section 231(3) describes situations where content identification technology will not be proactive technology.
Content that is harmful to children	**Section 60(2)** See the entries for "child", "combined service", "content", "harm", "primary priority content that is harmful to children", "Priority content that is harmful to children" and "search content" regarding the definitions of those terms. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (as defined in section 3(1) and (2), and section 204(1)) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). Section 55(2) defines "regulated user-generated content". Section 55(5) to (12) contain interpretative provisions. Section 55(3) and (4) define "user-generated content". Section 55(4) provides interpretation of the scope of "content generated, uploaded or shared by a user" and explains when a bot or other automated tool may be regarded as a user of a service.
Encounter (in relation to content)	**Section 236(1)**
Harm	**Section 234(2)** See the entries for "content" and "user" regarding the definition of those terms.
Internet service	**Section 228(1)** and **section 204(1)** Section 228(2) and (3) describe what is meant by a service that is made available by means of the internet.

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Likely to be accessed by children	**Section 37** Section 35(1) sets out what is meant by a "children's access assessment". Section 35(3) sets out when the "child user condition" is met in relation to a service. Section 36 details the requirement to carry out a children's access assessment. Schedule 3 makes provision about the deadline by which a first "children's access assessment" must be carried out. Section 236 defines a "child" (see also section 35(5)). Section 4(3) defines "Part 3 service". Section 236(1) defines "user-to-user part" in relation to a "user-to-user service". A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). A "regulated search service" is an "internet service" (see the entry for "internet service" regarding the definition of that term) that is, or includes, a "search engine" (see the entry for "search engine" regarding the definition of that term) (subject to section 3(5) to (7)) that is a regulated search service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). See the entries for "age verification", "age estimation" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms.
Non-designated content that is harmful to children	**Section 60(4)** See also section 60(2)(c), (3), (5) and (6). See the entries for "content", "combined service", "child", "primary priority content that is harmful to children", "priority content that is harmful to children", "search content" and "regulated user-generated content" regarding the definitions of those terms. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5).
Pornographic content	**Section 236(1)** See the entry for "content" regarding the definition of that term.

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Presented by (in relation to harm presented by content)	**Section 234(3) to (6)** See the entries for "content", "encounter" "harm", "internet service" "user" and "user-generated content" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms. Section 233(1) and (2) defines "functionality".
Primary priority content that is harmful to children	**Section 61** and **section 60(5) and (6)** See the entries for "content", "combined service", "pornographic content", "search content", "regulated user-generated content" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5).
Priority content that is harmful to children	**Section 62** and **section 60(5) and (6)** See the entries for "content", "combined service", "search content", "regulated user-generated content" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5).

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Proactive technology	**Section 231(1)** Section 231(2) defines "content identification technology". Section 231(3) describes situations where content identification technology will not be proactive technology. Section 231(4) defines "user profiling technology". Section 231(5) explains when technology will not be user profiling technology. Section 231(6) defines "behaviour identification technology". Section 231(7) explains when this technology will not be proactive technology. Section 231(8) to (13) contain further interpretative provisions. See the entries for "combined service", "content", "internet service", "pornographic content", "search engine", "regulated user-generated content", "search content", "user", "user-generated content" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of those terms. Section 125(12) and (13) define "accredited technology". Section 59(9) defines "CSEA content" (and section 59(11) to (14) contains further interpretative provisions). Section 59(2) defines "illegal content" (see also section 59(4) to (7) and (11) to (15)). Sections 3(4) and 204(1) define "search service". Section 79(2) defines "provider pornographic content". Section 236(1) defines "personal data". Section 4(4) defines "regulated service". Section 59(8) defines "terrorism content" (see also section 59(11) to (14)). A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5).
Provider	**Section 226** See the entries for "combined service", "internet service", "search engine and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms. Sections 3(4) and 204(1) define "search service".
Publicly available	**Section 236(1)**

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Regulated user-generated content	**Section 55(2)** Section 55(5) to (12) contain interpretative provisions. A "regulated user-to-user service" is a "user-to-user service" (see the entry for "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of that term) which is a regulated user-to-user service under section 4 (subject to the disapplication in section 5). See the entries for "content", "user" and "user-generated content" regarding the definitions of those terms. Section 236(1) defines "identifying content". Section 56 defines "recognised news publisher".
Search content	**Section 57(2)** Section 57(4) and (5) set out the meaning of "search" and "via search results". Sections 3(4) and 204(1) define "search service". See the entries for "content", "encounter" "internet service", "search engine", "search results", "user" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms. Section 236(1) defines "paid-for-advertisements". Section 56(1) defines "recognised news publisher".
Search engine	**Section 229** See the entries for "internet service" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms.
Search or search request	**Section 57(4)**
Search results	**Section 57(3)** Sections 3(4) and 204(1) define "search service". See the entries for "content", "internet service", "search engine", "search request" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms.
Systems and/or processes	**Section 236(1)**
Taking down (content)	**Section 236(1)** See the entries for "content" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms.

Term	Meaning under the OSA
Terms of service	**Section 236(1)** See the entries for "United Kingdom user" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms.
United Kingdom user	**Section 227(1)** See the entry for "user" regarding the definition of that term.
User	**Section 227(2) to (3)** Section 227(3) sets out individuals and entities that will not be users for the purposes of the **Act**. Section 227(4) to (6) provide further interpretation of terminology used throughout section 227. See the entries for "internet service", "search" "search engine" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms. Sections 3(4) and 204(1) define "search service". Section 228(2) and (3) describe what is meant by a service that is made available by means of the internet.
User-generated content	**Section 55(3) and (4)** See the entries for "user" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definition of those terms. Section 55(4) provides interpretation of the scope of "content generated, uploaded or shared by a user" and explains when a bot or other automated tool may be regarded as a user of a service.
User-to-user part (of a service)	**Section 236(1)** See the entries for "user-generated content" and "user-to-user service" regarding the definitions of those terms.
User-to-user service	**Section 3(1) and (2)** and **section 204(1)** See the entries for "content", "encounter", "internet service" and "user" regarding the definitions of those terms.

Risks of harm

Risk of harm

5.3 A **service** is at low, medium or high risk of a specific kind of **content that is harmful to children** if the service's **children's risk assessment** of the service identified a low, medium or high risk (as the case may be) of ***harm*** to **children in the United Kingdom *presented by*** that kind of **content that is harmful to children.**

5.4 A **service** is also at medium or high risk of a specific kind of **content that is harmful to children** if, by virtue of a confirmation decision given under section 134 of the **Act** in relation to a risk of serious harm, the duty set out in section 12(2)(a) of the **Act** applies in relation to the service as if a risk assessment carried out by the provider pursuant to section 11 of the **Act** had identified a medium or high risk (as the case may be) of serious ***harm presented by*** that kind of **content that is harmful to children**.

Multi-risk (children)

5.5 A **service** is **multi-risk (children)** if it is at medium or high risk of two or more specific kinds of **content that is harmful to children.**

User numbers

5.6 This subsection applies for the purpose of determining whether a **service** has more than a particular number of monthly **active United Kingdom users**.

5.7 A **service** has more than a particular number of monthly **active United Kingdom users**:

a) from such time as the average number of monthly **active United Kingdom users** is more than that number; and
b) until such time as the average number of monthly **active United Kingdom users** has been at or below that number for a continuous period of six months.

5.8 A **service's** average number of monthly **active United Kingdom users** is the mean number of **active United Kingdom users** per month for:

a) the six-month period ending with the month preceding the time in question; or
b) where the **service** has been in operation for less than six months, the period for which the service has been in operation.

5.9 In this subsection, an **active United Kingdom user** means any ***United Kingdom user*** who has accessed the ***user-to-user part*** of the **service**.

[Not used]

5.10 [Not used]

5.11 [Not used]

5.12 [Not used]

5.13 [Not used]

5.14 [Not used]

5.15 [Not used]

Content prohibited on a service

5.16 A kind of ***primary priority content that is harmful to children*** (or **relevant primary priority content**) is prohibited on a **service** if the provisions that have been included in the ***terms of service*** specify (regardless of the form of words used), for the purpose of compliance with section 12(9) of the **Act**, that the presence of that kind of content is prohibited on all **child-accessible parts** of the **service** for all ***users*** of those parts of the service. A kind of ***primary priority content that is harmful to children*** (or **relevant primary priority content**) that is not prohibited on a service is allowed on that service.

5.17 A kind of ***priority content that is harmful to children*** (or **relevant priority content**) is prohibited on a **service** if the provisions that have been included in the ***terms of service*** specify (regardless of the form of words used), for the purpose of compliance with section 12(9) of the **Act**, that the presence of that kind of content is prohibited on all **child-accessible parts** of the **service** for all ***users*** of those parts of the service. A kind of ***priority content that is harmful to children*** or **relevant priority content** that is not prohibited on a **service** is allowed on that service.

5.18 A kind of ***non-designated content that is harmful to children*** (or **relevant non-designated content**) is prohibited on a **service** if the provisions that have been included in the ***terms of service*** specify (regardless of the form of words used), for the purpose of compliance with section 12(9) of the **Act**, that the presence of that kind of content is prohibited on all **child-accessible parts** of the **service** for all ***users*** of those parts of the service. A kind of ***non-designated content that is harmful to children*** or **relevant non-designated content** that is not prohibited on a **service** is allowed on that service.