



A Positive Vision for Media Literacy

Ofcom's Three-Year Media Literacy Strategy

[Welsh version available](#)

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Foreword

Media literacy has been an important part of Ofcom’s role since it was established in 2003 when the Communications Act directed Ofcom to research and promote media literacy across the UK. However, this publication marks a significant milestone as Ofcom’s first public articulation of a multi-year media literacy strategy in 20 years.

Publication of this strategy is timely. It is more important now than ever to think strategically about media literacy, given the dramatic changes in the landscape over the two decades since Ofcom started its work. Today, we live in a world of unprecedented media and communications. News and entertainment flood our screens and social media platforms enable limitless interactions. Advancing media literacy to support people to navigate content safely, and to flourish online, is increasingly essential to our daily lives.

Of course, perspectives on how media literacy best achieves this goal can vary. We were delighted to host in-person and online engagement events across the four UK nations in June and July and I would like to thank all those who attended. We heard a range of views across these events and through written consultation responses. These [responses have been closely considered](#) as we have finalised our strategy. I am confident that this strategy reflects how Ofcom can best support media literacy across the UK.

Ofcom now defines media literacy as “the ability to use, understand and create media and communications across multiple formats and services”. Media literacy therefore has a foundational role to play in our overall mission to “make communications work for everyone”, and our priorities for people in the UK to access media they trust and value and to live a safer life online.

While Ofcom has an important part to play, media literacy must be everyone’s business – online platforms, parents, educators, third-sector organisations, providers of health and social care, professionals working with children, broadcasters (including the public service broadcasters) and others. To realise the full potential of media literacy in the UK, contributions and collaboration from all is essential.

The prize is clearly worthy of the collective effort. Imagine a UK where people possess the critical thinking skills to better spot mis and disinformation and identify news and information they can trust. Where people understand why they are being served certain types of content while controlling what they do and don’t see and knowing what is authentic when they do see it. Where old and young can easily and confidently communicate with their loved ones on different platforms. And where children can explore online more safely, cared for by adults who can help balance the benefits and risks.



Yih-Choung Teh

Group Director of Strategy and Research, Ofcom

1. Overview

- 1.1 Ofcom’s mission is to make communications work for everyone. Since its inception in 2003, researching and promoting media literacy has been an integral part of this mission.
- 1.2 In 2019, we reinvigorated our approach creating the Making Sense of Media programme, with an increased focus on online media. In December 2021, we published our Approach to Media Literacy, which positioned Ofcom as a catalyst and convenor working with a range of stakeholders across the media literacy ecosystem. While Ofcom has previously published annual plans regarding its activities in media literacy, this document represents Ofcom’s first three-year strategy.
- 1.3 Strategy is about the choices we make. This document sets out at a high level what we will focus on to discharge our duties; it is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of everything we will do over the next three years. More details on the year-by-year activities can be found in our [annual plan](#).
- 1.4 The Online Safety Act 2023 (OSA) has clarified and added specificity to our media literacy duties in the 2003 Communications Act, including¹:

Building awareness

- Ofcom is to heighten public awareness and understanding of how people can protect themselves and others online.
- Ofcom is to focus on groups disproportionately affected by harm, including women and girls², and help users understand and reduce exposure to mis and disinformation.
- Ofcom has discretion on how to meet these duties (for example, pursuing activities and initiatives, or commissioning or taking steps to encourage others to do so) and how to prioritise different objectives.

Encouraging technology and systems

- Ofcom is to encourage the development and use of technologies and systems so that users of regulated services can protect themselves and others online (e.g., such as providing context to content).
- Ofcom is to signpost users to resources, tools or information that can raise awareness about how to use regulated services to mitigate harms.

Publishing a media literacy strategy and annual statement

¹ Section 166 of the Online Safety Act 2023.

² Importantly, different groups of women and girls are affected differently by online harm. Age, sexuality, gender identity, race and ethnicity, along with many other factors, intersect with gender to influence women and girls’ experiences online. For example, women and girls from minority ethnic backgrounds are more at risk of experiencing online harm and are twice as likely to believe that the risks of being online outweigh the benefits according to our Online Experiences Tracker research.

- Ofcom is required to publish a media literacy strategy which sets out how we propose to exercise our media literacy functions, stating our objectives and priorities over a period not more than three years.
 - Ofcom’s annual report must contain a media literacy statement on our work.
- 1.5 Various definitions of media literacy exist. Given the increasing ways we are online and the complexity that brings, we now define media literacy as “the ability to use, understand and create media and communications across **multiple formats and services**”.
- 1.6 These services are constantly evolving, playing a more influential role in virtually all aspects of our daily life while also introducing new risks, particularly relating to online safety and mis and disinformation. This underpins the importance of media literacy to Ofcom’s mission and particularly our strategic priorities: “media we trust and value” and “a safer life online”.
- 1.7 Ofcom has a valuable role as the broadcast media regulator and online safety regulator. Our strategy to improve media literacy starts with our existing regulatory levers. For example, ensuring people have access to trusted and accurate news is critical in maintaining a well-functioning democracy. To support this, we uphold standards on air and ensure due accuracy and due impartiality in news and current affairs. We also work on ensuring media plurality so that people have access to a wide range of views from a variety of sources.

Public Service Media

- 1.8 Our Public Service Media (PSM) review will explore the importance of linear and online PSM news, as well as the role of media literacy in helping audiences navigate the multiple and varied ways to get news, and ways to mitigate mis and disinformation online. We will work with public service broadcasters (PSBs) to understand their approaches to mitigating mis and disinformation and consider what more could be done to enable people.
- 1.9 In addition, as part of our work to implement the Media Act, we are updating our guidance for PSBs on what should be included in their statements of programme policy - an annual report about how they meet their PSB obligations. As part of this, we are planning to retain the requirement that PSBs promote media literacy. Together, our work across the broadcasting sector supports one of the core components of media literacy: the ability to think critically about media and have access to different perspectives. This is a vital element of a media we trust and value.
- 1.10 We will also engage with the BBC as part of our ongoing performance programme, assessing the BBC’s delivery of duly accurate and impartial news and formal and informal educational content. Further, we will build an understanding of how it is using its unique position to support media literacy and the learning of audiences of all ages.

Online safety

- 1.11 Similarly, to help people live a safer life online, we have already made proposals to help ensure online services support their users to interact and engage with online content safely, with further work to come. For example:
- Our [draft Illegal Harms Codes](#) include proposals that promote media literacy and give users more control over their online experiences, including allowing them to block or mute other users and to disable comments. We have also made proposals to ensure that terms of service that prohibit illegal content are clear and accessible

to users, so they know what is and is not allowed by different services, and that complaints systems are easy to find, access and use.

- Our guidance for [Video Sharing Platforms \(VSPs\)](#) describes how to use media literacy to keep users safe, e.g., by providing information for children about methods for reducing the risks of unknown contacts and harmful content³.

1.12 We published a report about [VSPs’ approaches to designing and implementing their terms and conditions](#), sharing our findings that users need advanced reading skills to understand VSPs’ terms and conditions. We continue to prioritise driving improvements in this area.

1.13 Next year, following completion of the OSA’s register of categorised services⁴, we will set out our approach to duties on these services to empower users to choose what types of content they see, and to have clear terms of service that enable users to make informed choices about which services they want to use.

1.14 As we implement the OSA, we will continue to draw on our media literacy expertise and understanding of consumer behaviour to shape our regulatory expectations of online services.

Our strategy

1.15 Our strategy to fulfil our media literacy duties is to use our wide range of powers and duties under broadcasting and online safety legislation, supplemented by specific media literacy activities (overview set out in Figure 1 below).

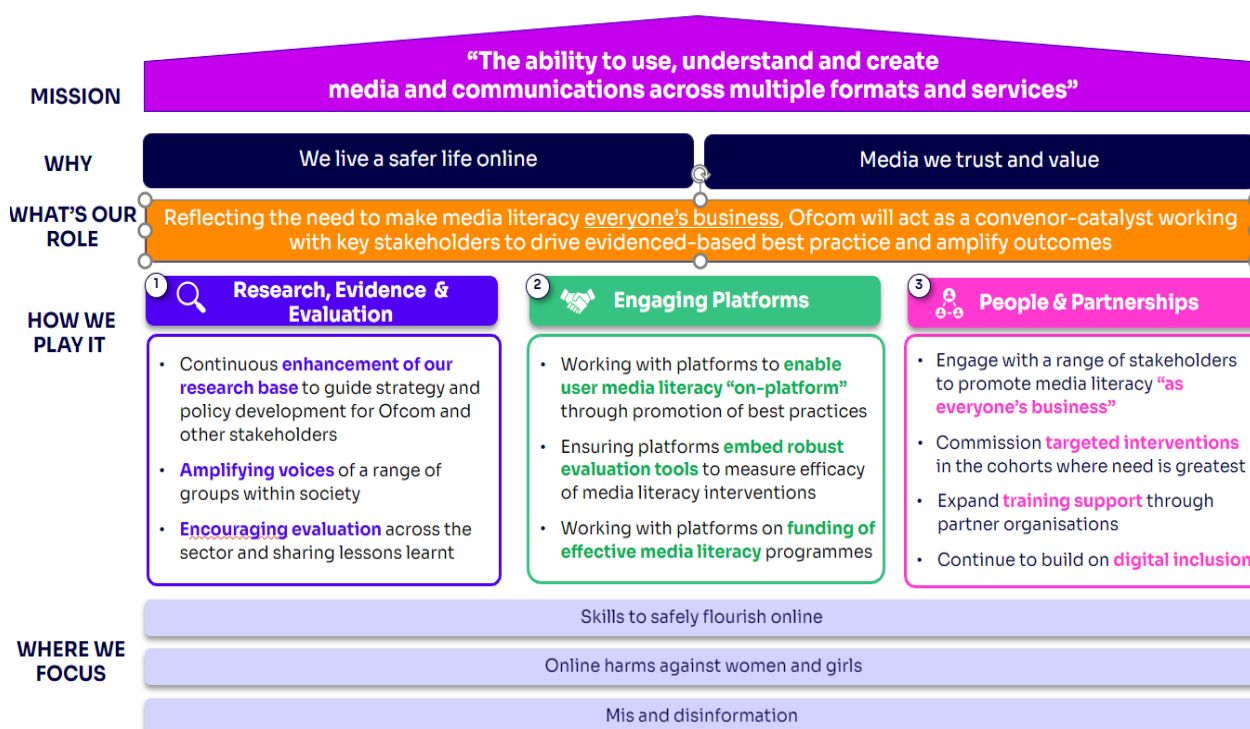


Figure 1: Summary of Ofcom’s Media Literacy Strategy (2024 – 2027)

³ See [Video-sharing platform guidance \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#), p. 49.

⁴ The term *categorised services* refers to a subset of larger user to user and search services that fall within the scope of the Online Safety Act.

- 1.16 We have developed our media literacy strategy prioritising three central elements (“Research, Evidence and Evaluation”, “Engaging Platforms” and “People and Partnerships”). The rationale for each element is as follows:
- **Research, Evidence and Evaluation:** This builds on our heritage of research and evidence gathering about the daily realities of adults and children, as well as our well-received evaluation resources.
 - **Engaging Platforms:** Online platforms and services, alongside broadcasters, are a primary conduit for communications and media consumption. They have a significant role to play in encouraging media literacy for their audiences.
 - **People and Partnerships:** Media literacy is about people, and impact is best achieved through local trusted partners, who are experts in delivery.
- 1.17 Our strategy involves making choices about what we will do and what we will not do. Media literacy is everyone’s business, and this strategy recognises that it is not Ofcom’s role to ‘do it all’ and we are selective about what we prioritise over the next three years. For example, whilst the challenges of how media literacy is taught in schools is rightly a matter for Government and the devolved administrations, we plan to support children by training the professionals that work with them, including teachers.
- 1.18 Throughout, we balance a universal media literacy offer with targeted support for those who need it most. Such groups include children, communities experiencing financial disadvantage and older adults. To ensure that delivery of our strategy is equitable and considers the experiences and perspectives of the groups we aim to support, we have undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) and considered children’s rights throughout. This will be an ongoing process as we deliver the strategy.
- 1.19 The challenges are significant, and successful execution of the media literacy strategy will require a coordinated effort from a myriad of stakeholders across the UK. We believe the near-term opportunities and potential future rewards are worth this effort.

The consultation process

- 1.20 We are publishing a [Statement](#) alongside our strategy. The purpose of the statement is to explain the decisions we’ve taken and how we have taken account of the feedback we have received.
- 1.21 We have included a glossary explaining key terms used throughout this document. The glossary can be found in Annex 1.
- 1.22 The consultation ran for eight weeks from publication on 29 April 2024 until 24 June 2024 which was the deadline for responses. We received 46 written responses from a range of stakeholders (including third-sector organisations, academics, public bodies, broadcasters, online services and individuals), conducted specialist children’s consultations to include the voices of children and young people, and held in-person events in London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh (as well as an online webinar where over 150 attendees inputted into the consultation process).

2. Research, evidence and evaluation

Outcomes: By 2027, there will be better understanding and measurement of media literacy, due to stakeholders using our research evidence for their policy development and activities. By 2027, there will be a deeper understanding of ‘what works’ for the delivery of media literacy interventions in relevant sectors.

- 2.1 Our longstanding quantitative research into the media use and attitudes of adults and children in the UK, as well as our longitudinal Media Lives qualitative reports, provide useful evidence on the critical evaluation skills and online knowledge and understanding among internet users in the UK, as well as attitudes to news and information more broadly. We additionally conduct research that provides in-depth insight on particular topics, such as our report into [minority beliefs](#).
- 2.2 Our work with third-sector organisations delivering media literacy initiatives helps them carry out specialist reporting that demonstrates how well their projects went – including how effective they were at improving people’s media literacy. This reporting, often required by funders, is known as evaluation. We have created a suite of resources supplemented by workshops to build capacity within organisations with little experience of evaluation.
- 2.3 We have boosted our evaluation toolkit with additional [materials](#) to further empower those running media literacy programmes to evaluate their own projects and use and share those findings to support the delivery of more effective initiatives in the future.

Our goals and how we will get there

- 2.4 To expand the breadth and depth of our insight into online and media use in the context of daily life and support the sector in understanding ‘what works’ for the delivery of media literacy initiatives, we will:

GOAL ONE: Continue to use our research to inform our policy development and media literacy interventions, and to encourage its use and further analysis by stakeholders.

- 2.5 We will achieve this through the following activities:
 - Identifying key impact measures from our datasets to help us and others monitor ‘what works’. We will ensure that we assess changes in media literacy over time, using a range of core measures.
 - Using an increased range of robust and innovative methods to gain insights into priority topics including:
 - > Understanding better how we can help various cohorts navigate the challenges of mis and disinformation. For example, this year we will explore what messages and approaches might work best, and from whom those messages might come (including PSM providers).

- > Exploring why users engage in the perpetration of harmful activity which disproportionately affects women and girls⁵ drawing out the media literacy implications of how they understand their actions and their impact online. Understanding how people get drawn into communities that propagate and promote discriminatory views against women and girls and understanding how and where these views can be found, is an important first step. This will inform future media literacy work across Online Safety, including the development of the guidance on content and activity that disproportionately affects women and girls, which we intend to publish early in 2025.
- > Finding ways to increase users' understanding of where and how their personal information is used by social media platforms and other online services. Our previous Day in the Life qualitative research has illustrated how users' understanding of the ways in which platforms use their data is often limited, so we will provide insight into how platforms might address this media literacy gap in order to inform platform best practice.
- > Exploring the insights from our project with first-time voters. This work focused on content of democratic importance, looking at exposure to mis and disinformation and generative AI, in an election year. We will share those findings to ensure the insights can inform relevant work.

GOAL TWO: Amplify the voices and testimony of a range of groups within society so that our research is useful to as many people and organisations as possible.

2.6 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Configuring our tracker samples, and carrying out bespoke research, to enable us to listen to different groups of people, including those who are disproportionately affected by harmful content and activity, and conducting secondary analysis to gain a deeper understanding of different audiences, including women and girls, and children.
- Sharing our understanding of how the issues we address in our research programme make an impact on a range of demographic and geographic groups, particularly targeting protected characteristics.

GOAL THREE: Share our knowledge on 'what works' in media literacy delivery.

2.7 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Publishing the findings from our commissioned media literacy activities outlined in the People and Partnerships section of this strategy.
- Providing tools and guidance to better equip organisations delivering media literacy interventions to teach critical skills that help people identify mis and disinformation. This

⁵ This includes online misogyny as well as other forms of online gender-based violence and abuse ("OGBVA"). We currently use this term to refer to a wide range of online content and activity which disproportionately affects women and girls, including by enacting or reinforcing misogyny, sexism and other forms of gender-based harm. This term is widely used in the United Kingdom, however, we recognise there are other terms used, for example online violence against women and girls (VAWG) and tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).

could be in the form of a toolkit and workshops which we would design, deliver and evaluate over the duration of the three-year strategy.

GOAL FOUR: Support providers of media literacy initiatives to carry out evaluation, leading to a culture where best-practice approaches are developed, shared and used to develop more effective interventions.

2.8 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Offering training and resources that equip professionals delivering media literacy interventions with knowledge and skills related to the evaluation process. To fulfil and embed this culture more widely, we will focus on knowledge sharing through workshops, surgeries, and webinars.
- Requiring organisations we commission to provide impact and process evaluations which are proportionate to the scale of delivery and contract.

GOAL FIVE: Conduct an impact evaluation of our three-year media literacy strategy and share those learnings in order to model best practice.

2.9 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Setting out our activities across the MSOM programme in the annual plan and reporting on whether these have been achieved each year.
- Evaluating the impact of the three-year media literacy strategy using an evaluation framework.

Indicators of success

2.10 We will be transparent about what we have achieved in relation to our strategic goals for Research, Evidence and Evaluation and will include the following indicators of success when measuring and reporting our progress:

- Our media literacy research continues to be widely used and cited by the media literacy community, media and governments in the UK and internationally in relation to policy development and media literacy interventions.
- We have an expanded network of research partners and stakeholders nationally and internationally.
- More organisations delivering media literacy interventions conduct impact evaluations and share best-practice approaches.

Summary- what's different from our previous approach?

2.11 We highlight the following four key differences running through our strategic approach to Research, Evidence and Evaluation:

- Changes to sample sizes allowing more detailed analysis of different groups.
- A particular focus on the media literacy areas outlined in the OSA.

- Increased liaison with a range of sectors for media literacy interventions and evaluation.
- Increased outreach and embedding of our work to those working in media literacy, adjacent sectors and the wider public.

3. Engaging Platforms

Outcome: By 2027, platforms and broadcasters will provide better media literacy support for their users, more evaluation of the effectiveness of that support, and longer-term funding for media literacy initiatives.

- 3.1 As we have reflected in our amended definition of media literacy, people are now encountering media through a variety of formats and services and are faced with an ever-growing choice of content. These shifts in consumption require more critical understanding of the context around the content we engage with, especially as the difference between formats becomes more seamless and invisible, even to confident users. This is important because what matters is what people expect and need to be able to navigate content safely, and flourish online.
- 3.2 Our expectation is that people are less concerned about the route by which content is served to them than they are about being able to engage with what they want, when they want to, using services or devices that work best for them. For example, Ofcom's News Consumption Survey shows that the use of online sources for news continues to increase. In 2024, seven in ten (71%) UK adults are consuming news via online sources (this is now on a par with television (70%)). Social media is a significant component of online news consumption, with more than half of UK over-16s (52%) now using it as a news source. This rise in online consumption sits alongside consumption of news on traditional platforms.
- 3.3 We recognise that broadcasters, and particularly the public service broadcasters (PSBs), have a role to play in encouraging media literacy among all audiences, alongside the growing responsibilities of the major online platforms who have such a big influence over the content and the context in which people encounter it, while using their services.
- 3.4 We, and many of the respondents to our consultation, are of the view that online platforms and services have an important role to play in promoting media literacy to the millions of people that use them. We will consider how to use our powers and duties under the OSA to monitor what progress online services make in promoting media literacy, including by engaging the largest firms on the steps they take to support the literacy of their users. This may include evidence gathering to understand the impact of this activity where relevant and proportionate. In addition, we will consider including measures that support users' media literacy in our online safety codes of practice⁶.
- 3.5 We will use the research and engagement we carry out for our media literacy work to inform our policy development for online safety and broadcasting, and vice versa. However, we expect our media literacy work to be broader in scope and to focus more on best practice, which may go significantly further than services' online safety duties. We will publish research and make recommendations about what more platforms can do to support and protect their users, including developing and using technologies and systems that provide context on content.

⁶ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/illegal-and-harmful-content/draft-transparency-reporting-guidance/>

- 3.6 What happens on platform must be part of the solution to existing and future media literacy challenges. Some platforms, online services and broadcasters already deploy features and tools, such as pop-ups and notifications, to provide context to the content their users see. [Research commissioned by Ofcom](#) outlines the benefits and challenges that users identify about such interventions on platforms to promote media literacy.
- 3.7 To do this consistently and well, platforms will need to prioritise interventions supporting media literacy and be more transparent about their design and outcomes. Building on our [Best Practice Principles by Design](#), we want to better understand how else users think platforms can promote their media literacy, so that they can protect themselves, function and flourish online.
- 3.8 We also recognise the efforts of online services in developing and/or funding third-party media literacy and journalism projects, as these act as an essential complement to what happens on the platform. However, organisations that are funded by platforms and delivering media literacy initiatives or resources face a number of challenges that may limit their full potential. These include fragile and short-term funding agreements, a constant pressure for ‘new’ content, and potentially selective or partial content created to suit brand values rather than user needs.
- 3.9 We will illuminate the impact that investment by online services and broadcasters in media literacy has. This may include using our information gathering and transparency powers, to explore the effectiveness of investment on product and in developing the media literacy of users. By building a clearer picture of the measures and resourcing already committed to media literacy, we can then better determine if Ofcom needs to take further action.

Our goals and how we will get there

- 3.10 We will provide evidence-based recommendations to encourage platforms to develop robust and thorough media literacy interventions that focus on what happens on platform and what is funded elsewhere. We will:

GOAL ONE: Build on work prioritising users’ media literacy on platform by promoting best practice.

- 3.11 We will achieve this through the following activities:
- Working with platforms that have pledged the Best Practice Principles for Media Literacy by Design to drive further action and monitor/ report on whether platforms honour their commitment. By inviting all regulated services to pledge to adopt the Best Practice Principles, we will continue to expand our work to a broader range of services.
 - Building collective understanding of what users consider helpful to better navigate the online environment and to foster more positive experiences online. In particular, we are interested in understanding how platforms can best support users by providing information at different points in the user journey, including providing context on the content they see online, and are commissioning research on this issue. We will look at the following specific issues:
 - > Mis and disinformation.
 - > Harmful content and activity that disproportionately affects women and girls.
 - > Protection of personal information.

- > Content of democratic importance, (such as authoritative, multi-sourced and accurate news).
- Continuing to build collective understanding on what users expect from online services to make the online environment better and more positive. We will look at specific issues such as the impact on children of ‘persuasive design’. This impact could be positive or may contribute to harms. We will consider how services can help users make informed choices and mitigate potential harms by supporting the media literacy of their users.
- Turning our research into actionable insights for platforms by highlighting what works best for users, what good looks like and using our influence to encourage platforms to make changes to their products and services informed by users’ expectations¹.
- In line with our duties in the OSA, producing a statement setting out how providers of regulated services might develop, pursue and evaluate activities or initiatives relevant to media literacy in relation to regulated services.

GOAL TWO: Ensure that platforms embed evaluation to build understanding of what works to promote media literacy.

3.12 We will achieve this through the following activity:

- Exercising our influence and monitoring the progress online services make. We will also publish/report on where platforms could be doing more. We will promote media literacy by design on platform. As a first step in this process, we have announced that major platforms across social, search and gaming have pledged to adopt our Best Practice Principles for Media Literacy by Design. We will work with participating platforms to drive further action on platform in line with these principles - which emphasise monitoring and evaluation - and invite all regulated services to participate to ensure they support the safe and rewarding use of their services.

GOAL THREE: Work to ensure platforms’ funding of media literacy programmes.

3.13 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Encouraging online services to promote, support and directly fund media literacy skills development for their users and others. This should include investing in best practice media literacy by design on platform and providing sustainable funding to support direct to user programmes developed/delivered by the media literacy sector.
- Building our understanding of how platforms fund and invest in media literacy as part of informing our expectations for services.
- Setting clear expectations for platforms and direct-action surrounding funding. To achieve more sustainable funding for the sector we will use available levers, which are likely to include our relationships across the sector, evidence gathering powers and Ofcom’s supervisory relationships with regulated services.

GOAL FOUR: Review what broadcasters are doing to support the media literacy of audiences to help them mitigate the impact of mis and disinformation.

3.14 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Analysing, through the PSM review how broadcasters support the media literacy skills of their users especially with regard to news, and mis and disinformation.
- Drawing on our wide range of powers and duties under broadcasting and online safety legislation to help support a flourishing media sector which provides trusted and accurate news to UK audiences. Our PSM review will consider whether we need to make changes to our existing rules where relevant, and we may also identify areas where further Government intervention is needed. We will set out our conclusions in the PSM review findings document next year.

Indicators of success

- 3.15 We will be transparent about what we have achieved in relation to our strategic goals for Engaging Platforms and will include the following indicators of success when measuring and reporting our progress:
- Online services measure the impact of their interventions on platform and share their learnings.
 - Best-practice principles for media literacy initiatives are implemented by organisations delivering programmes.
 - Platforms are transparent about their funding of media literacy. This should include investing in best practice media literacy by design on platform and providing sustainable funding to support direct to user programmes developed/delivered by the media literacy sector.
 - Broadcasters will better articulate how they deliver media literacy to help audiences mitigate the impact of mis- and disinformation.

Summary–what’s different from our previous approach?

- 3.16 We highlight the following six key differences running through our strategic approach to Engaging Platforms:
- Our focus on users’ expectations of platforms informs all our work.
 - Our commitment to commissioning research to better understand what users expect from platforms and consider helpful to contextualise the content they see online.
 - Our work encouraging platforms to measure the impact of their interventions.
 - Our approach to fostering a culture where sharing learnings is standard practice.
 - Our focus on platforms’ funding of media literacy to drive sustainable investment in media literacy on and off platform.
 - Our work with broadcasters assessing how they support the media literacy of audiences to help them mitigate the impact of mis and disinformation.

4. People and Partnerships

Outcomes: By 2027, more people will have access to the skills and support they require to navigate content and safely flourish online, and educators and other priority workforces will be better enabled to deliver media literacy skills. By 2027, media literacy will be a greater priority for a broader range of organisations and sectors.

- 4.1 Ofcom has long recognised the need for individuals, families and communities to have media literacy skills. Our research dispels any myths that younger people (sometimes referred to as ‘digital natives’) simply understand all facets of being online and possess the necessary skills and behaviours to navigate it confidently and knowledgeably.
- 4.2 We know that many people get their news from social media and can be served a limited range of news topics there⁷. In this environment, mis- and disinformation can proliferate quickly, and some find it difficult to identify what they can trust⁸. During the recent UK General Election, 60% of adults claimed they had encountered false or misleading information⁹. Our experience and insights suggest that media literacy interventions are most effective when they are delivered by trusted voices. In addition to the professionals that an individual already trusts to support them, this could be someone from the same community or with similar life experiences as the participants. Our experience has been that while this approach is effective it usually requires a substantial resource investment.
- 4.3 We are taking an equitable approach to delivery, focusing our resources on those who have particular media literacy needs, for example communities experiencing financial disadvantage, older people and children. We recognise that not all people with these characteristics will struggle with their media literacy, however this approach will help us to target our work and resources where they are likely to have the greatest impact.
- 4.4 Our work with children will take a child rights-based approach so that, in planning and undertaking work, we will consider the possible direct and indirect impacts on children. In particular, our work supports article 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (access to information from a variety of media sources). We will ensure that any work targeting children takes their views into account.
- 4.5 Children with particular characteristics are more likely to need support with their media literacy skills and we therefore will prioritise initiatives for children with special educational needs and disabilities, communication difficulties, experience of care, mental health difficulties and/or physical impairments.
- 4.6 We will apply this equitable approach across each of the topics our work tackles, including mis- and disinformation and harmful content and activity that disproportionately affects women and girls. Where media literacy relates to digital identity and respecting others online, our work may focus directly on one group of children but have an intended indirect effect for another group of children. For example, our work on online misogyny is likely to

⁷ Ofcom, [Online news research update](#), 2024, pages 17-19.

⁸ Ofcom, [Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report, 2024](#).

⁹ In the previous week. See Ofcom, UK General Election news and opinion-formation survey 2024.

directly target teenage boys and young men and we hope it will result in positive outcomes for girls and young women as well as the young men themselves.

- 4.7 People and partnerships are at the heart of our approach. We are committed to convening media literacy practitioners and others working in related areas or with key communities, creating opportunities for them to share expertise and learn from others. We achieve this through events for our network of individuals and organisations with a shared interest in media literacy, and through our Advisory Panel and working groups. We also forge partnerships with third-sector organisations, local authorities and other bodies through our work building on digital inclusion infrastructure, and through our programme commissioning pilot projects for underserved communities.
- 4.8 Some broadcasters already engage in media literacy initiatives, and we recognise the important role they could play in delivering media literacy. We also recognise the benefits and opportunities of engaging with international stakeholders to learn and share insights for mutual benefit and to understand more quickly what works and what doesn't.

Our goals and how we will get there.

- 4.9 Media literacy should be everyone's business. To get there, we will:

GOAL ONE: Commission targeted interventions in the cohorts where the need is greatest and share best practice with organisations delivering media literacy activities and their funders.

- 4.10 We will achieve this through the following activities:
- Using our research to identify key audiences and geographic areas where interventions will have the most impact.
 - Identifying topics, drawing on our evidence base, to cover in interventions including:
 - > Understanding how to identify and protect against mis and disinformation.
 - > Mitigating misogynistic and sexist behaviours online.
 - > Understanding how to identify content of democratic importance (such as authoritative, multi-sourced and accurate news).
 - > Equipping people with the skills and knowledge to protect their personal information.
 - Commissioning organisations who are experts in working with the target cohort/s.
 - Sharing insights and lessons learned from these interventions with organisations well-placed to deliver media literacy activities and those who fund them through our networks and beyond.

GOAL TWO: Engage with education authorities and schools to encourage and support media literacy education.

- 4.11 We will achieve this through the following activities:
- Continuing to develop relationships with the education departments in each nation to provide media literacy support: DFE in England, Education Scotland, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in Wales and the Education Authority in Northern Ireland, as well as relevant stakeholders such as children's commissioners, Skills England and education regulators.

- Working with the Welsh Government to understand the impact of the Digital Competence Framework on media literacy skills among children and young people in Wales and sharing that insight with other relevant Government departments and National Administrations as necessary.
- Engaging with the forthcoming curriculum review in England where it is relevant to media literacy.
- Commissioning Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses for teachers, evaluating the impact of the training and signposting participants on to further resources.
- Working with regional partners to understand what works in media literacy education and sharing our learnings with teachers, senior leaders and relevant education authorities.
- Collaborating with Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) in England to ensure their schools are equipped to support and signpost parents with a view to developing this into a national approach.

GOAL THREE: Continue to build on the digital inclusion infrastructure, so that those new to technology can start and continue well.

4.12 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Developing our ‘place-based’ model of media literacy where local experts build on the existing offer in their community and embed media literacy into local digital strategies and/or digital inclusion offers. This work is conducted in areas of financial disadvantage. We will:
 - > Work with relevant government departments and consortia across the UK to influence policy and funding models.
 - > Hear from other areas who would be interested in understanding our approach and what we have learnt.
 - > Expand to a fourth community in Northern Ireland.
 - > Partner with digital inclusion experts to add media literacy into their offering.
- Learning from and collaborating with digital inclusion experts by joining the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales and the LGA’s Digital Inclusion Network in England as well as any forthcoming equivalents in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- Working with the Good Things Foundation to support Digital Inclusion Hubs to offer media literacy.

GOAL FOUR: Forge new relationships and expand our network to make media literacy a priority for a wider range of organisations.

4.13 We will achieve this primarily through the following activities:

- Forming relationships with organisations who have trusted relationships with communities who are either not very active online or more likely to inhabit a hostile environment online, for example:
 - > Organic communities created by and for women and girls. These communities may support others online, tackle online misogyny or offer support to women and girls who have experienced online gender-based violence and abuse. We would also be keen to amplify the work already being done in these communities.

- Exploring how public service broadcasters might address media literacy considerations.
 - > We will be working with broadcasters as part of our Public Service Media Review to explore options for how they can work with platforms and other partners to develop effective initiatives.
- Delivering a bespoke media literacy engagement plan for the nations that recognises local context and needs in each place. Activities might include:
 - > Events such as roundtables, discussion events and stakeholder events.
 - > Nation-specific media literacy working groups.
- Building a broad coalition of organisations working in the third sector. This could be in areas adjacent to media literacy who may be delivering media literacy ‘by stealth’ (for example, through programmes focused on community cohesion or health). This would also include organisations working with parents.
- Partnering with expert organisations. This could be in the form of a matchmaking service run by Ofcom to link up experts in mitigating mis- and disinformation with practitioners who do not have in-depth knowledge. It could also be a service where experts skilled in having discussions with audiences with minority beliefs share best practice approaches to challenging conversations.

GOAL FIVE: Build on our role as a convenor of media literacy experts to co-create policy and practical recommendations on emerging technologies such as AI.

4.14 We will achieve this through the following activities:

- Examining emerging technology trends and their media literacy implications, convening relevant sector policy actors and in-house and external technological expertise in topics such as AI and virtual technologies. This approach will help support those working on media literacy to understand the practical implications for how people’s day-to-day lives may be impacted by future and emerging technologies. We will do this by:
 - > Setting up an emerging technology trend ad-hoc working group of experts from the media literacy sector and beyond who will identify the media literacy opportunities and challenges related to key elements of life online and explore how emerging and future technology may influence users’ experience.
 - > The group will develop and publish policy and programme recommendations to encourage the sector to integrate these into their work. These recommendations will reflect our work related to our powers and duties under broadcasting and online safety legislation.

Indicators of success:

4.15 We will be transparent about what we have achieved in relation to our strategic goals for People and Partnerships and will include the following success indicators when measuring and reporting our progress:

- Inclusion of media literacy in local digital strategies with a goal of 10 local digital inclusion strategies including media literacy across the UK over three years.

- Measurable media literacy impact of commissioned media literacy activities.
- Development of partnerships with key organisations engaged in media literacy.
- Public service broadcasters are better equipped to deliver effective media literacy interventions.
- The Making Sense of Media (MSOM) network grows and includes representatives from delivery organisations adjacent to media literacy and those representing vulnerable cohorts.
- Number of professionals trained through our ‘train the trainer’ initiatives and improved participant confidence compared with baseline surveys.

Summary- what’s different from our previous approach?

- 4.16 We highlight the following four key differences that run through our strategic approach to People and Partnerships:
- Increased focus on building media literacy – through our network and interventions – in areas of need.
 - Commitment to supporting media literacy skills for children through our training offer.
 - Renewed focus on broadening our work with partner organisations to create as wide a coalition as possible working towards a shared goal.
 - Emphasis on co-creation with media literacy experts to devise practical policy recommendations.

A1. Glossary

Many different terms are used when discussing media literacy. We have defined some which are used in this document. It is important to note that there is sometimes overlap in the way that terms are used.

Baseline

When carrying out an evaluation, a baseline is the starting point against which to measure change. This could be the participants' existing level of knowledge about a topic or their existing level of skills.

Data

In the context of media literacy research and evaluation, data refers to information about participants and their experiences. It could be measurements, observations, survey responses, transcripts of interviews or feedback from participants. It can be qualitative (narrative) or quantitative (numerical). Data can be analysed and used to better understand usage, attitudes and experiences of participants, or to assess an intervention in terms of its outcome and its impact.

Evaluation

In the context of our work, we understand evaluation as specialist reporting that demonstrates how well a media literacy intervention went – including how effective it was at improving people's media literacy.

Impact

Impact in the context of evaluation for media literacy interventions refers to longer-term change at an individual or societal level that can be attributed to the outcomes of an intervention. Impact is the cumulative result of achieved outcomes. For example, the impact of a media literacy project could be:

- a change in the way that participants consume news.
- an increase in the creativity of the audience regarding online media.
- increased resilience to disinformation.

Impact evaluation

Impact evaluation will focus on what the project achieved in terms of change for the target audience and/or wider society, and whether intended outcomes were achieved.

Indicators

Impact indicators and outcome indicators are the measurable pieces of evidence that allow you to track the changes that have taken place as a result of a programme or work or project.

Intervention

Intentional action to promote media literacy; this could range from a programme of workshops on media literacy delivered by a third-sector organisation, to a suite of accessible resources (such as a lesson plan or how-to guides) posted on a website, to a pop-up on a social media platform with information about content the user is seeing.

Longitudinal data

In the context of media literacy, longitudinal data is evidence collected over a period of time; for example, by asking the same questions. It allows you to track change in responses to those questions over time. It can be qualitative (narrative) or quantitative (numerical).

Outcome

An outcome is the change that happens as a result of an activity or programme of work. It is usually finite and measurable.

Persuasive designs

Persuasive designs aim at changing the attitudes or behaviours of users. Online services are often characterised as persuasive technologies as they are designed to influence users' decision-making.

Process evaluation

Process evaluations will focus on asking how you delivered your project, how far the way in which the project was delivered affected the final outcomes and how you might approach delivery differently in the future.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data is information that can't be counted: it is descriptive, and often for a media literacy initiative or research it will be narratives or quotes from participants. It is usually collected through interviews, focus groups, observations, case studies or open-ended survey questions. It 'gives voice to experience' and can be used to understand how people think or feel about something, and why they think or feel that way. It can be combined with quantitative data for deeper understanding.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is information that can be counted. In the context of media literacy, it is usually collected through surveys. It can be used to understand what people think about something (from a limited range of options), and whether something has changed in their attitudes. Quantitative data can be gathered over time to produce longitudinal evidence. It can be combined with qualitative data for deeper understanding.

Tracking Surveys/Trackers

Tracking Surveys or trackers are surveys that are repeated at intervals over a period of time, in order to measure changes and trends.