



Communications Act 2003

2003 CHAPTER 21

PART 1

FUNCTIONS OF OFCOM

Media literacy

11 ^[F1]Duties] to promote media literacy

^[F2](A1) In this section—

- (a) subsection (1) imposes duties on OFCOM which apply in relation to material published by means of the electronic media (including by means of regulated services), and
 - (b) subsections (1A) to (1E) expand on those duties, and impose further duties on OFCOM, in relation to regulated services only.]
- (1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to take such steps, and to enter into such arrangements, as appear to them calculated—
- (a) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media;
 - (b) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public awareness and understanding of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means;
 - (c) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which access to material published by means of the electronic media is or can be regulated;
 - (d) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which persons to whom such material is made available may control what is received and of the uses to which such systems may be put; and

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- (e) to encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for regulating access to such material, and for facilitating control over what material is received, that are both effective and easy to use.
- [^{F3}(1A) OFCOM must take such steps, and enter into such arrangements, as they consider most likely to be effective in heightening the public's awareness and understanding of ways in which they can protect themselves and others when using regulated services, in particular by helping them to—
- (a) understand the nature and impact of harmful content and the harmful ways in which regulated services may be used, especially content and activity disproportionately affecting particular groups, including women and girls;
 - (b) reduce their and others' exposure to harmful content and to the use of regulated services in harmful ways, especially content and activity disproportionately affecting particular groups, including women and girls;
 - (c) use or apply—
 - (i) features included in a regulated service, including features mentioned in section 15(2) of the Online Safety Act 2023, and
 - (ii) tools or apps, including tools such as browser extensions, so as to mitigate the harms mentioned in paragraph (b);
 - (d) establish the reliability, accuracy and authenticity of content;
 - (e) understand the nature and impact of disinformation and misinformation, and reduce their and others' exposure to it;
 - (f) understand how their personal information may be protected.
- (1B) OFCOM must take such steps, and enter into such arrangements, as they consider most likely to encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for supporting users of regulated services to protect themselves and others as mentioned in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e) of subsection (1A), including technologies and systems which—
- (a) provide further context to users about content they encounter;
 - (b) help users to identify, and provide further context about, content of democratic importance present on regulated user-to-user services;
 - (c) signpost users to resources, tools or information raising awareness about how to use regulated services so as to mitigate the harms mentioned in subsection (1A)(b).
- (1C) OFCOM's duty under subsection (1A) is to be performed in the following ways (among others)—
- (a) pursuing activities and initiatives,
 - (b) commissioning others to pursue activities and initiatives,
 - (c) taking steps designed to encourage others to pursue activities and initiatives, and
 - (d) making arrangements for the carrying out of research (see section 14(6)(a)).
- (1D) OFCOM must draw up, and from time to time review and revise, a statement recommending ways in which others, including providers of regulated services, might develop, pursue and evaluate activities or initiatives relevant to media literacy in relation to regulated services.
- (1E) OFCOM must publish the statement and any revised statement in such manner as they consider appropriate for bringing it to the attention of the persons who, in their opinion, are likely to be affected by it.]

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- (2) In this section, references to the publication of anything by means of the electronic media are references to its being—
- (a) broadcast so as to be available for reception by members of the public or of a section of the public; or
 - (b) distributed by means of an electronic communications network to members of the public or of a section of the public.

[^{F4}(3) In this section and in section 11A, “regulated service” means—

- (a) a regulated user-to-user service, or
- (b) a regulated search service.

“Regulated user-to-user service” and “regulated search service” have the same meaning as in the Online Safety Act 2023 (see section 4 of that Act).

(4) In this section—

- (a) “content”, in relation to regulated services, means regulated user-generated content, search content or fraudulent advertisements;
- (b) the following terms have the same meaning as in the Online Safety Act 2023—
 - “content of democratic importance” (see section 17 of that Act);
 - “fraudulent advertisement” (see sections 38 and 39 of that Act);
 - “harm” (see section 234 of that Act) (and “harmful” is to be interpreted consistently with that section);
 - “provider” (see section 226 of that Act);
 - “regulated user-generated content” (see section 55 of that Act);
 - “search content” (see section 57 of that Act).]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Word in s. 11 heading substituted (10.1.2024) by [Online Safety Act 2023 \(c. 50\)](#), **ss. 165(5)**, 240(1); [S.I. 2023/1420](#), **reg. 2(z19)**
- F2** S. 11(A1) inserted (10.1.2024) by [Online Safety Act 2023 \(c. 50\)](#), **ss. 165(2)**, 240(1); [S.I. 2023/1420](#), **reg. 2(z19)**
- F3** S. 11(1A)-(1E) inserted (10.1.2024) by [Online Safety Act 2023 \(c. 50\)](#), **ss. 165(3)**, 240(1); [S.I. 2023/1420](#), **reg. 2(z19)**
- F4** S. 11(3)(4) inserted (10.1.2024) by [Online Safety Act 2023 \(c. 50\)](#), **ss. 165(4)**, 240(1); [S.I. 2023/1420](#), **reg. 2(z19)**

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 11 in force at 29.12.2003 by [S.I. 2003/3142](#), **art. 3(1)**, **Sch. 1** (with **art. 11**)

[^{F5}11A Regulated services: media literacy strategy and media literacy statement

- (1) OFCOM must prepare and publish a media literacy strategy within the period of one year beginning with the day on which the Online Safety Act 2023 is passed.
- (2) A media literacy strategy is a plan setting out how OFCOM propose to exercise their functions under section 11 in the period covered by the plan, which must be not more than three years.
- (3) In particular, a media literacy strategy must state OFCOM’s objectives and priorities for the period it covers.

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- (4) Before the end of the period covered by a media literacy strategy, OFCOM must prepare and publish a media literacy strategy for a further period, ensuring that each successive strategy covers a period beginning immediately after the end of the last one.
- (5) In preparing or revising a media literacy strategy, OFCOM must consult such persons as they consider appropriate.
- (6) OFCOM’s annual report must contain a media literacy statement.
- (7) A media literacy statement is a statement by OFCOM—
 - (a) summarising what they have done in the financial year to which the report relates in the exercise of their functions under section 11, and
 - (b) assessing what progress has been made towards achieving the objectives and priorities set out in their media literacy strategy in that year.
- (8) A media literacy statement must include a summary and an evaluation of the activities and initiatives pursued or commissioned by OFCOM in the exercise of their functions under section 11 in the financial year to which the report relates.
- (9) The first annual report that is required to contain a media literacy statement is the report for the financial year during which OFCOM’s first media literacy strategy is published, and that first statement is to relate to the period from publication day until the end of that financial year.
- (10) But if OFCOM’s first media literacy strategy is published during the second half of a financial year—
 - (a) the first annual report that is required to contain a media literacy statement is the report for the next financial year, and
 - (b) that first statement is to relate to the period from publication day until the end of that financial year.
- (11) References in this section to OFCOM’s functions under section 11 are to those functions so far as they relate to regulated services.
- (12) In this section—

“annual report” means OFCOM’s annual report under paragraph 12 of the Schedule to the Office of Communications Act 2002;

“financial year” means a year ending with 31 March.]

Textual Amendments

F5 S. 11A inserted (10.1.2024) by [Online Safety Act 2023 \(c. 50\)](#), ss. 166, 240(1); S.I. 2023/1420, reg. 2(z19)

Changes to legislation:

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/1900, art. 3(2) by [S.I. 2003/3142 art. 1\(3\)](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 by [S.I. 2004/1492 art. 2](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 by [S.I. 2004/697 art. 2](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 art. 4 Sch. 2 by [S.I. 2004/545 art. 2](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- Pt. 3B inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 48\(1\)](#)
- Pt 4A Ch. 1 heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 37\(2\)](#)
- Pt. 4A Ch. 2 and cross-heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 37\(5\)](#)
- Pt. 4A Ch. 3 inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 5](#)
- Pt. 4A Ch. 4 heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 2](#)
- Pt. 4A Ch. 5 heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 9](#)
- s. 362AZ12(6) applied by 1990 c. 42, s. 18A(5) (as inserted) by [2024 c. 15 s. 19\(3\)](#)
- s. 362AZ12(6) applied by 1996 c. 55, s. 98(2D) (as substituted) by [2024 c. 15 s. 20\(2\)](#)
- s. 124Q(7)(a) words substituted by [2013 c. 22 Sch. 9 para. 52](#)
- s. 148A and cross-heading inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 73\(2\)](#)
- s. 198B(1A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 30\(3\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 198B(3A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 30\(3\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 198AA inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 30\(2\)](#)
- s. 204A-204C substituted for s. 204-206 by [2024 c. 15 s. 32\(2\)](#)
- s. 245(1)(c) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 46\(2\)](#)
- s. 245(3A)-(3C) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 46\(3\)](#)
- s. 264(3)-(8F) substituted for s. 264(3)-(8) by [2024 c. 15 s. 1\(2\)](#)
- s. 264(10A)(10B) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 1\(3\)](#)
- s. 264(11)-(11B) substituted for s. 264(11) by [2024 c. 15 s. 1\(4\)](#)
- s. 264(13)-(16) substituted for s. 264(13) by [2024 c. 15 s. 1\(5\)](#)
- s. 265(6)(7) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 3\(4\)](#)
- s. 266(2A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 4\(2\)](#)
- s. 270(3)(ca) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 6\(3\)](#)
- s. 270(4A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 6\(4\)](#)
- s. 270(7A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 6\(7\)](#)
- s. 277(12A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 8\(9\)](#)
- s. 277(14) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 8\(11\)](#)
- s. 278(1)(1A) substituted for s. 278(1) by [2024 c. 15 s. 9\(2\)](#)
- s. 278(7A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 9\(4\)](#)
- s. 278(12) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 9\(5\)](#)
- s. 278A inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 10](#)
- s. 278B inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 11](#)
- s. 278C inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 12](#)
- s. 285(3)(h) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 13\(3\)](#)

- s. 285(10) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 13\(4\)](#)
- s. 286(1)(a)(aa) substituted for s. 286(1)(a) by [2024 c. 15 s. 14\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 286(3)(a)(aa) substituted for s. 286(3)(a) by [2024 c. 15 s. 14\(3\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 286(8) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 14\(6\)](#)
- s. 288(1)(a)(aa) substituted for s. 288(1)(a) by [2024 c. 15 s. 14\(8\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 288(6) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 14\(10\)](#)
- s. 290(5) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 15\(3\)](#)
- s. 290(6) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 15\(4\)](#)
- s. 315(6)(c) omitted by [2024 c. 15 s. 47\(9\)](#)
- s. 315A inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 44\(9\)](#)
- s. 335B(1A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 12 para. 4\(3\)](#)
- s. 338A338B and cross-heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 18](#)
- s. 351(4)(aa) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 2 para. 58\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 351(5)(aa) substituted for s. 351(5)(a) by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 2 para. 58\(3\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 353(4)(aa) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 2 para. 59\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 359A and cross-heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 45](#)
- s. 368B(A2) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 37\(4\)](#)
- s. 368E(3)(zza) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 12 para. 9\(2\)](#)
- s. 368E(5)(d)(e) inserted by [2017 c. 30 s. 94\(3\)](#)
- s. 368I(1A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 3\(4\)](#)
- s. 368I(8A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 8 para. 8](#)
- s. 368K(1A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 5\(3\)](#)
- s. 368M(2A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 7\(3\)](#)
- s. 368O368OZA substituted for s. 368O by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 11\(1\)](#)
- s. 368AA368AB inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 37\(3\)](#)
- s. 368BB(7) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 8 para. 3](#)
- s. 368IA(8A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 8 para. 9](#)
- s. 368NA(8A)(8B) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 6 para. 10\(3\)](#)
- s. 368OB and cross-heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 38\(1\)](#)
- s. 368QA inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 8 para. 12\(1\)](#)
- s. 392A and cross-heading inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 49\(2\)](#)
- s. 392B inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 49\(4\)](#)
- s. 393(6)(ab) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 38\(2\)](#)
- s. 400(1)(ha) words inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 9 para. 4](#)
- s. 402(2A)(zza) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 46\(4\)](#)
- s. 402(2A)(zzb) inserted by [2024 c. 15 s. 44\(10\)](#)
- s. 402(2A)(za)(zb) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 2](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 21(6) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(5\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 37(3)(aza) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(9\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 84(1)(aza) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 103(1)(ca) inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 70](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 119A inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 72](#)
- Sch. 3A Pt. 4ZA inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 67\(1\)](#)
- Sch. 9 para. 1(1)(ab) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 2 para. 62](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 1(15) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 1\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 7(14) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 2\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 8(7A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 3\(5\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 8(13) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 3\(8\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 10(1)(b) and word inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 4\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 10(4)(h) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 4\(c\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 10(12) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 4\(d\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 4(2A) inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 4 para. 52\(4\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 3(6)-(7B) substituted for Sch. 12 para. 3(6)(7) by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 4 para. 51\(4\)](#)
- Sch. 12 para. 8(1)-(1C) substituted for Sch. 12 para. 8(1) by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 1 para. 3\(2\)](#)
- Sch. 16A inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 10](#)

– Sch. 16B inserted by [2024 c. 15 Sch. 11](#)