

Dear Mr Kingsbury,

Thank you for your email on 7 January about compliance with the Online Safety Act for small, community web forums.

As you note, all online services [in scope of the Online Safety Act](#) and which operate in the UK are now subject to new duties to protect their users. We recognise the breadth and complexity of the online safety regime and that there are a diverse range of services in scope, including start-ups, community/voluntary services and services that have not been regulated before. We absolutely recognise that navigating these requirements can be challenging.

We want to work with industry to achieve compliance, and while the actions sites and apps will need to take will depend on their size and level of risk, we have developed an extensive range of tools and resources (outlined below and in the attached PDF) to make it easier for online service providers to understand – and comply with – their responsibilities. These resources have all been developed with small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in mind.

We will take a reasonable approach to enforcement with smaller services that present low risk to UK users, only taking action where it is proportionate and appropriate, and targeted only at cases in which action is needed to protect UK users from serious harm. We will also engage with services to explain our concerns and, in most cases, give them an opportunity to remedy our concerns before moving to formal action.

### What service providers need to do

Our [what you need to know](#) page includes the [regulation checker tool](#), where service providers can check if the Online Safety Act applies to them. We have also created a set of accessible guides to help make compliance more easily attainable for services, and we would particularly like to draw your attention to the quick guides for:

- [Illegal content risk assessments](#): service providers must complete their [illegal content risk assessment](#) by 16 March 2025. From 17 March 2025, service providers then need to start implementing safety measures to mitigate the risks they identify.
- [Rules about online pornography](#) From 17 January, service providers that publish their own pornography must implement highly effective age assurance to prevent children from encountering pornography.
- [Children's access assessments](#): From 17 January, service providers must assess whether their service is likely to be accessed by children, by 16 April 2025.
- [Children's risk assessments](#): Service providers that consider their service is likely to be accessed by children will have until July 2025 to carry out the first children's risk assessment.

These guides will provide you with an overview of how to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and lead you to an adequate understanding of risks on your service to implement appropriate safety measures. Please note that if your service allows pornography, it will need to use highly effective age assurance to prevent children from accessing that content. More information about this can be found [here](#).

## Our support for online services

As part of our commitment to support smaller online services, we will be undertaking a digital communications campaign designed to build awareness and understanding of the new rules and signpost these tools. This sits alongside our engagement with industry bodies and open events.

- **This month, we will launch our 'Digital Support Service', which consists of interactive digital tools for regulated firms and are based on their perspectives and feedback.** This will be available on the Ofcom website and accessible to use, providing interactive guidance to help organisations understand and implement the rules. Our first release will provide a four-step process for illegal harms, covering services' risk assessment duties, Codes, and record-keeping obligations.
- **We are arranging a hybrid/virtual Online Safety Conference between 3-5 February 2025.** This conference will include a mix of short practical information sessions and deep dive sessions into topics to support providers on their path to compliance - including a demo of the digital tools mentioned above. You can register your interest for the Online Safety Conference using [this link](#) and we will contact you with more details and information on how to secure your place.

We thank you for your feedback and we would encourage you to sign up for updates about online safety [here](#).

Kind regards,

Online Safety Team