



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE

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FROM THE LORD LEONG

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Dear Lord Young-

18 September 2025

I am writing to you following my appearance at the Lords Oral Question on virtual private networks (VPNs), on Monday 15 September, where I committed to respond to your question: *When is Ofcom likely to designate providers as Category 1, so that those duties [journalistic content and content of democratic importance] come into force and free speech is better protected?*

I would like to thank you for raising this important issue. Ofcom expects to publish the register of categorised services in the coming months. Ofcom will then consult on the draft codes of practice and guidance for the additional duties on categorised services; we expect this consultation to be launched by early 2026. The duties will not apply to services until the final codes of practice (where relevant) have been laid and passed by Parliament.

The additional duties placed on Category 1 (the largest user-to-user) services to safeguard journalistic content and content of democratic importance will be supplemented by Ofcom's Codes of Practice. Providers will need to put systems and processes in place which ensure they take extra care regarding how they treat such content, particularly when making decisions about moderating this content or about suspending relevant accounts.

Category 1 services will also have new duties around recognised news publishers' content, requiring them to offer news publishers access to an appeal process before enacting any decision to remove these publishers' content or accounts. Ofcom will issue guidance to assist providers in complying with these duties.

I hope this information is helpful. I will place a copy of this letter in the House library.

Yours sincerely,

LORD LEONG CBE