

**OFFICIAL**



# The Online Safety Act and the Role of the National Crime Agency

Version 1.0 - 07/04/2026



Protecting the public from serious and organised crime

**OFFICIAL**



# Introduction to the NCA and the Online Safety Act

## The National Crime Agency (NCA):

The NCA's mission is to protect the public from serious and organised crime by targeting and pursuing those criminals who pose the greatest risk to the UK.

## The Online Safety Act (OSA) 2023:

The OSA provides regulatory framework which protects children and adults online. To achieve this, the Act imposes duties on in-scope services to identify, mitigate and manage the risks of harm from illegal content activity, and content and activity that is harmful to children.

Ofcom have been appointed as the regulator for the OSA and have the power to take appropriate action against companies if they do not meet their obligations under the Act.

## The NCA's role under the OSA:

The OSA mandates in-scope service providers to report detected and unreported child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) content on their platform to the NCA. The NCA is the designated body for receiving and actioning these reports from the industry. For a list of CSEA offences which are required to be reported, please read [Schedule 6 of the OSA](#).

## The Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Industry Reporting Portal (CSEA-IRP):

The CSEA-IRP has been designed and established to receive CSEA reports from in-scope service providers.

To submit CSEA reports via the portal, service providers must first register their organisation. For instructions on how to register, please refer to the "How to register an organisation" guide on the [NCA website](#).

# ☰ Requirement to report CSEA to the NCA (1)

The [Online Safety Act \(OSA\)](#) mandates in-scope service providers to report any detected and unreported child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) on their platform to the NCA.

- CSEA content is “**detected**” by a provider when the provider becomes aware of the content. The provider could be made aware by systems, processes or as a result of another person alerting the provider.
- CSEA content is “**unreported**” if the reporting of that content is not covered by arrangements (mandatory or voluntary) with another foreign agency, for example the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

The requirement to report CSEA to the NCA differs to whether the in-scope online service provider is a UK provider, or a non-UK provider.

## UK providers:

Regulated services based within the UK must report all detected and unreported CSEA content on their service to the NCA.

## Non-UK providers:

Regulated services based outside the UK must report all detected and unreported UK-linked CSEA content on their service to the NCA. They should not report CSEA content which is not UK-linked.

CSEA content is “UK-linked” if a provider has evidence of a link between the content and the UK, based on any of the following:

- the place where the content was published, generated, uploaded or shared
- the nationality of a person suspected of committing the related offence
- the location of a person suspected of committing the related offence
- the location of a child who is a suspected victim of the related offence



## Requirement to report CSEA to the NCA (2)

### Regulations about reports to the NCA:

In-scope user-to-user providers are required to report CSEA to the NCA in-line with the Online Safety ([CSEA Content Reporting by Regulated User-to-User Service Providers](#)) Regulations 2026. The Regulations stipulate the how a provider must report to the NCA and includes information on the mandatory data requirements and data retention.

**Please note:** if you are an organisation that is currently reporting CSEA to [The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's \(NCMEC\) CyberTipline](#), you should continue to do so. The CSEA-IRP will not replace NCMEC reporting and you should not submit duplicate referrals.



### Important

The CSEA-IRP must only be used to report CSEA and no other crime type. For a list of CSEA offences which are required to be reported, please read [Schedule 6 of the OSA](#).