

British Amateur Television Club

Compliance with the requirements of the Online Safety Act, 2023

(An online safety appraisal and risk assessment)

Purpose of this document

This document serves to inform the committee and members of the British Amateur Television Club (hereinafter 'BATC') and other interested parties of certain statutory requirements relating to online safety, and to demonstrate BATC compliance with those requirements to the regulator.

Background

The Online Safety Act, 2023 ('OSA') has the general purpose of making the use of internet services regulated by the Act, safer for individuals in the United Kingdom. The Act imposes duties which, in broad terms, require providers of services regulated by the Act, to identify, mitigate and manage the risks of harm from illegal content and activity and content and activity that is harmful to children (defined as under 18 years).

The regulator for the Act is Ofcom. Ofcom has issued Codes of Practice and several substantial guidance and other documents detailing actions to be taken.

The provisions regarding illegal content risk assessments came into force in March, 2025. The provisions regarding children's risk assessments came into force in April 2025.

The BATC has always endeavoured to operate its online services in a manner that is both helpful and safe for users. Nevertheless, a few changes are required to achieve full compliance.

Applicability

A/ The BATC

The British Amateur Television Club is subject to the provisions of the Act. It is *not* categorised (Cat1, 2 & 2A) as a larger organisation. Severe penalties may be imposed for non-compliance.

The Act addresses online 'User to User' services (abbreviated to 'U2U') and online 'Search' services but excludes search services which are confined to the operator's website. Therefore, search facilities on BATC websites, which perform only internal searching, are not covered by the Act.

BATC U2U services covered by the Act are the Forum, the Wiki, online video streaming, chat facilities and DXSpot.TV (even though the latter is very limited in U2U content).

B/ Individuals and repeater keepers

The law also applies to individuals who run an online U2U service. Sect 3(1) of The Act is relevant here. It is not entirely clear whether an individual or a repeater keeper, who streams video on the BATC streamer, is running an online U2U service or whether that person is simply a user of the BATC online U2U service. It may be that both the 'streamer' and the BATC are running a U2U service.

About the BATC

The BATC is a members' club, run by a committee of volunteers. There are no paid staff and no premises. Consequently, the club's resources are limited. The club is committed to the principles of the OSA and is responding in a manner, proportionate to the club's assessed risks (see later).

The aims and objectives of the BATC are set out in full in the document 'The Constitution of the British Amateur Television Club' (see club website).

Amateur Television is a specialist interest group within the umbrella of amateur radio. UK amateur radio operators are required by law to hold a licence, issued by Ofcom, before they may transmit

radio signals. Licences are only issued to persons who have passed the specified examination of technical and regulatory knowledge.

Amateur radio is largely self-regulating and abusive or illegal behaviour is not tolerated within the community. There is nothing to prevent non-licensed persons from listening to amateur radio or watching amateur television transmissions. Such activity is encouraged by the amateur radio community in order to recruit new members. Accordingly, non-licensed persons may join the BATC and enjoy the benefits of membership.

Non-members of BATC (and non-licensed persons) may access much of the BATC material online, without registering. The ability to post material on the Forum is limited to individuals (who may or may not be members) who have correctly answered an anti-spam question before automatically being granted an account. The ability to post material on the Wiki is limited to individuals who have been granted an account by one of the Wiki Administrators (all 3 Administrators being BATC Committee members).

There are currently 1572 Forum members and about 420 Wiki contributors (June, 2025)

The BATC online 'chat' service, which only serves to accompany and enhance online video streaming and live transmissions from the QO-100 geostationary satellite, may be accessed by anyone from any country, without prior approval.

Membership statistics (June, 2025)

Membership of BATC is international. Total membership stands at 1,430 with approximately 25% being overseas. There are 30 student members under 25, in full time education. Precise age details are not recorded.

Previous abuse of BATC services

The BATC does not hold formal records of abuse or illegal use of its services as there was no requirement to do so prior to the Act. Records will be kept from now onwards, as required.

There was some spam advertising kitchens on the Forum about 10 years ago. This was defeated by changing the anti-spam questions.

There have been about 3 instances where BATC have had to ban people from the QO-100 geostationary satellite online chat service or online TV repeater stream chat services due to unpleasant messages. This was done by blocking their IP address within 24 hours. Therefore, it can be said that abuse is not a big problem and BATC is able to handle it competently.

There have been no instances of any illegal activity nor of child exploitation.

Illegal Content Risk Assessment

Before commencing this assessment, Ofcom's Risk Profiles (84 pages) were consulted - a process described by Ofcom as 'essential'.

Ofcom guidance states, "The purpose of conducting a risk assessment is to ensure you have an adequate understanding of the risks to your users encountering illegal content on your service, and if you have a user-to-user service, the risk that the service may be used to commit or facilitate certain priority offences."

The guidance also states, "When assessing the risk of other illegal content, you should take a reasonable and proportionate approach based on your understanding of your service and any information you hold."

Ofcom documentation includes a template for this assessment. The template has *not* been used in this document as it is unwieldy for a small organisation. Nevertheless, the required content is fully included as Appendix 'A'.

Children's Access Assessment leading to a Children's Risk Assessment

The regulations create a three-step assessment process:

1. Is it possible for children (defined as under 18) to access the service? If so,

2. The service provider then has to consider ‘The Child User Condition’. This condition is met if there is a significant number of children who are using the service and/or the service is of a kind likely to attract a significant number of children. If this condition is also met,
3. The service provider then has to complete a Children’s Risk Assessment.

The BATC U2U online services can be accessed by anyone, including children. However, the Child User Condition is not met because there are not (and have never been) a significant number of children using the services nor is the service likely to attract a significant number of children. This statement is a judgement based on the technical nature of BATC services and the lack of any material remotely likely to appeal to a significant number of children.

On this basis, the BATC does not have to complete a Children’s Risk Assessment.

Ongoing duties under the OSA and Code of Practice

- There must be a ‘Terms of Service’ statement by the U2U Service Provider. The contents of the statement are specified. (ref ‘Illegal Content Codes of Practice for user-to-user services’ pp 46,47,48 - ICU G1 and ICU G3).
- Under section 10(2)(b) of the Act, U2U service providers are required to take or use proportionate measures to ensure that the design or operation of their service mitigates and manages the risk of the service being used for the commission or facilitation of a priority offence. This duty is fulfilled by the BATC through the adoption and implementation of this document.
- As part of the illegal content safety duty at section 10(3)(b) of the Act, there is a duty for a user-to-user service provider to operate the service using proportionate systems and processes designed to “swiftly take down” any illegal content where it is alerted to the presence of such content or is aware of its presence in any other way (the ‘**takedown duty**’).
- There must be a named individual accountable for illegal content safety duties and reporting and complaints duties.
- Records must be kept of all matters relating to OSA issues – to include instances of illegal content being found and action taken to remove it.
- Compliance with The Act and Code has to be reviewed regularly. For BATC it is probably appropriate to perform this annually unless an OSA related incident occurs, in which case immediate action may be required.
- Service providers must have a content moderation function to review and assess suspected illegal content
- Service providers must have easy to find, easy to access and easy to use complaints systems and processes
- Service providers must have appropriate action for relevant complaints about suspected illegal content. Exception: manifestly unfounded complaints
- Service providers must have appropriate action for relevant complaints which are appeals – action following determination
- Service providers must remove accounts of proscribed organisations (thankfully, none on BATC).

Future changes to BATC Online Services

The regulations require that a new risk assessment must be completed before changes to a service or new services are implemented. It is unlikely that minor changes to existing BATC services would affect OSA compliance but this point should be considered, when appropriate.

Actions taken prior to this appraisal and risk assessment process

The BATC forum used to offer users the facility to send private messages (PMs) through the forum. Although there is no evidence that this facility was ever abused, the BATC committee recognised that the PMs could not be monitored and thus constituted a vulnerability in the club’s compliance with the OSA. Consequently, the PM facility was permanently disabled.

Recommendations arising from this appraisal and risk assessment process

(not necessarily in order of execution)

1. The committee should discuss, amend as necessary and then approve this document.
2. The approval should be formally noted in the committee minutes.
3. The committee should consider and agree a stance on streaming by individuals and repeater keepers (Are these 'Users' or 'Service providers'? Can BATC lawfully divest itself of responsibility by delegating?). A published statement will be required.
4. Following that, this document should be referenced (not verbatim) in the club's 'CQ-TV' journal (short article). In the article, members should be made aware that they are responsible for the legality of the content of their video streams.
5. Members' responsibilities should be reinforced in an all-members e-mail.
6. OSA should be a standing item on committee agendas (on the basis of experience, it is envisaged that this will normally be a 'nothing raised' outcome)
7. BATC 'Terms of Service' should be prepared (as per code) and formally agreed.
8. The issues of *moderation, take-down and complaints* should be formalised.
9. There should be a dedicated 'Online Safety Issues' banner on the club website. This will include the required 'Terms of Service' statement together with this document and other relevant material – perhaps incorporating item 10, below.
10. The club website and forum should clearly signpost a procedure for informing/complaining about illegal content and other matters on the forum and chat services (OSA requirement)
11. The club secretary should be identified as the 'Nominated Individual' accountable for illegal content safety duties, reporting and complaints duties and for maintaining a formal record of OSA breaches and action taken. (Record keeping is a requirement of OSA and the record will be an important part of subsequent assessments.)
12. It is envisaged, on the basis of past experience, that negligible work will be generated by these additional duties. Should that not be so, a designated person should be nominated.
13. **Stream Chat.** The facility for guest access to stream chat should be disabled on all accounts. Administrators should be able to enable guest access on a limited time basis for special events when the chat will be closely monitored for illegal activity.
14. **Forum Access.** Currently forum access is open to anyone who can answer the anti-spam question and is not banned. Given that we have a number of the Committee monitoring the Forum posts (as they happen) by an RSS feed, the potential for illegal/harmful content to go un-noticed is very small. Taking down content is a quick process, so retaining this level of forum access appears to fall within the 3rd bullet of Ongoing duties.
15. **Wiki Access.** There is no continual monitoring of Wiki entries, so the number of Wiki contributors should be purged down to a trusted group.

Approval of this document

The committee of the BATC discussed and agreed this document in entirety at a meeting on 3rd August, 2025. This fact is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

Disclaimer

This document was produced by Russell E Tribe, G4SAQ on behalf of the BATC committee. Please note that I am not a lawyer and this document represents my best lay-person's interpretation of the legislation and codes.

6th August, 2025 Fourth released draft. Formatted for Publication by David Crump, G8GKQ