



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: Children's tv and video content, HC 1338

Tuesday 10 March 2026

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Members present: Dame Caroline Dinenage (Chair); Mr Bayo Alaba; Vicky Foxcroft; Damian Hinds; Dr Rupa Huq; Natasha Irons; Jo Platt; Jeff Smith.

Questions 265 - 400

Witnesses

[I](#): Dr Garth Graham, Director and Global Head of YouTube Health; Mairi Brewis, Head of Media Co and Responsibility Partnerships, YouTube UK; Alex Rawle, Head of Public Policy, YouTube UK.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Garth Graham, Mairi Brewis and Alex Rawle.

Q265 **Chair:** Welcome to this morning's meeting of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee. Today, we are holding our fifth evidence session on children's TV and video content. We are pleased to be joined by the following representatives of YouTube, Dr Garth Graham, Head of Health for YouTube, Mairi Brewis, Head of Media Co and Responsibility Partnerships for YouTube UK—that is a big business card, isn't it, Mairi—and Alex Rawle, who is the Head of Public Policy for YouTube UK. You are all welcome.

Before we start, can I remind members to declare any interests before they ask their questions? I have accepted hospitality from YouTube in the past, thank you for that, but if anyone else has anything else to declare, please make sure you say it at the point that you ask your questions. We will start with Natasha Irons.

Natasha Irons: Thank you very much, Chair. I used to work for Channel 4 and my husband works there, so that is me declaring an interest. And on behalf of parents across the UK, thank you so much for your service to our children during covid. You saved a lot of arguments in my household, so thank you very much.

I will jump right in and ask, who is responsible for the content on YouTube? Maybe I will start with Alex.

Alex Rawle: Who is responsible for the content on YouTube?

Natasha Irons: Yes.

Alex Rawle: YouTube is a distribution platform, so I guess it is worth taking a step back to explain. We are a content distribution platform. We do not produce any content ourselves. We host content. I guess we are the world's largest video library. We work with partners, and Mairi can talk a little bit more about the partners we work with. We value high-quality content and in the context of kids, age-appropriate experiences.

Q266 **Natasha Irons:** So there is nobody responsible for the content on your platform?

Alex Rawle: Ultimately, our leadership team is responsible for the content on the platform. We have developed systems and have processes in place. I do not know, Mairi, if you want to talk more about the high-quality content process.

Mairi Brewis: Yes, of course. My role, with my team, is to partner with the organisations that put the content on YouTube. Decisions about what content they choose to upload to the platform, how they brand it, the editorial choices they make within that, what geographies they make that content available in, and of course, as and when they wish to take it down and if they wish to monetise are all up to them. All of that operates within the framework of YouTube as a platform. We have very strict community guidelines about what kinds of things are acceptable, and we



have mechanisms to make sure that those are in place. However, the editorial vision, I would say, sits with the content partners.

Dr Graham: Let me add something to that. I am Garth Graham, and I lead Health, as you mentioned, on YouTube, which is responsible for a lot of the wellbeing and safety aspects of YouTube. We take this concept of safety very seriously both in terms of our own responsibility and the concept of age-appropriate content. Especially as young prefrontal cortexes are developing, it is important for us to have age-appropriate content. That is why we have YouTube Kids supervised experiences, and experiences for teens, all in that context. There is also an issue around high-quality content, which we will get to during the course of this conversation. You should know that behind that is us being very serious about our systems, our own content quality, and age-appropriate content.

Q267 **Natasha Irons:** So YouTube ultimately is responsible for the content on the platform, which is reassuring to hear. I do not know if you managed to catch our Committee meeting last week. We had Iain Bundred from the BBC in, and there was a question around, "What is YouTube?" For this conversation, it will be good to set the context of what YouTube is. You said right off the bat that it is a distribution platform—that it is the world's biggest content library.

Alex Rawle: Yes, the world's biggest video library.

Q268 **Natasha Irons:** So is that the definition of what YouTube is?

Alex Rawle: Yes. We are not a production company. We do not produce content. We are not really a social media company either. We do not have social functionalities. We are a distribution platform—the world's biggest video library.

Q269 **Natasha Irons:** What makes you different then, just for clarity? What makes you just a distributor and not, say, a streamer?

Alex Rawle: We do not commission content. We do not commission any content at all.

Natasha Irons: Okay. Did anybody else want to come in?

Mairi Brewis: Yes, I can build on that a little bit. I can draw on my experience at Channel 4. The way that Channel 4 or the BBC would commission content is that they would have commissioners whose job it is to select the content that they want to appear on their platform. That is their editorial vision. They may well shape the programming as well. They will decide, say, the casting of the characters or the script and so forth. For YouTube, an organisation such as Channel 4 or BBC would put the content on the platform, they would have a channel within YouTube, and they set the direction, the tone, the editorial, the choices about programming within that channel that appears on YouTube.

Q270 **Natasha Irons:** Going back to the example of Channel 4, Channel 4 commissioned content, yes, but did not make any content itself and was a distributor in its own right. What makes that different is that it is a broadcaster and it is beholden to Ofcom because it editorialises its

schedule. How is your editorial guidance any different from, say, a commissioner saying, "We want to prioritise this content over that content"? Have you not evolved from being a distributor and become more discerning in what you are doing?

Alex Rawle: That is a good question. We fundamentally operate differently from traditional broadcasters. We have 500 hours of content uploaded to YouTube every minute and we operate at a systemic level. We are also user-driven. Our focus is on connecting users to high-quality content that they want to see through a recommendation system. We have seen with safety legislation that a systemic approach is the best way to manage these issues and to manage them at scale. There are significant benefits to that.

YouTube has democratised access to content online. It has been hugely powerful for the UK's creative industries and UK content creators. Fifteen thousand UK content creators on YouTube employ the equivalent of 45,000 people. It is worth about £2.2 billion to the UK economy. Over 80% of YouTube UK channels are viewed outside of the UK. We have created and democratised a huge ecosystem, which has some real benefits.

Q271 **Natasha Irons:** I completely understand that. As I said, we use YouTube in my household and I get it. What I am getting at here is that your platform that started out as a library has essentially changed and shifted because editorial decisions are now being made at a systemic level via your algorithm, whether you intervene on that or not. You are making editorial decisions. Your platform has evolved from just being a library. It is a bit more of a complex landscape.

Alex Rawle: It is different, but ultimately it is about personalisation. Personalisation is what allows us to deliver recommendations to users to make sure that they see helpful content that is relevant to them and also safer for them.

Q272 **Natasha Irons:** It is essentially a personalised TV schedule, isn't it? It is essentially, like the olden days when someone within a broadcaster would say, "At nine o'clock, we are going to play this, this and this." You are doing that algorithmically at scale.

Alex Rawle: I think that is looking at it from a traditional broadcast perspective. I do not think we see it that way. There is a bit of square peg round hole scenario here, because we just do not see it that way. Our distribution does not translate from linear.

Q273 **Natasha Irons:** How is it different? If you are making decisions on behalf of your users, because you are recommending content for them based on whatever is in your ingredients for your algorithm, how is that different from somebody editorialising content in another context?

Alex Rawle: I think an interesting way of looking at it is push versus pull. We are not pushing content to users. Users are pulling content towards them based on their previous watch history and other signals about their behaviour on the platform.



Mairi Brewis: Although, of course, people do find content through recommendations. There are multiple ways to find content on YouTube. Some people, because they have a strong affinity with a channel, might go direct to, say, the Channel 4 channel on YouTube. It could be that people use search to find particular pieces of informational content.

That is part of Alex's point that it is not just all TV-like content on YouTube. People also go there for different reasons; for example, in my case, showing my son how an egg hatches or how a crocodile runs or whatever else. There are quite a few different routes in, which is why it is a resource.

Q274 **Natasha Irons:** In 2025, your CEO said, "YouTube is the new television" in a blog he posted, "Our big bets for 2025". He said that for many people, "watching TV means watching YouTube", and, "TV is now the primary device for YouTube viewing in the US." He also went on to say this year that YouTube TV will become "cable reimaged", so streaming your favourite channel. Basically it is the future of telly. Do you agree with your CEO that YouTube is now TV?

Alex Rawle: I would make two clarifying points. There is TV as in the device. What he was referring to was connected TV. About 50% of viewing is through connected TVs. I would also say the US media market is very different from the UK market. I think he was specifically referring to the US media market in that context.

Q275 **Natasha Irons:** Do you disagree that YouTube is TV?

Alex Rawle: People are viewing YouTube through connected tele-devices, over 50%, but that is not the same as being TV in the sense of being a broadcaster, which we are not.

Mairi Brewis: We do see increasing consumption of premium long-form content on the platform on the television. That is a bigger part of what we do. Around 50% of our watch time is on the TV, and we are excited to see the engagement of some of our partners such as BBC, ITV and Channel 4 finding that to be a useful distribution platform for their content. It is also true that a very large proportion of YouTube is from what we would call digital content creative natives, who have come up through YouTube. Maybe that is through things like "Cosmic Kids Yoga" or Joe Wicks—to hark back to some of the benefits that we all saw in covid—as well as perhaps production companies coming directly. It is broader and certainly not just TV.

Q276 **Natasha Irons:** That is interesting. Out of curiosity, why would you avoid categorising yourselves as TV?

Alex Rawle: I do not think it is about avoiding being categorised as TV. I think it is about looking at the functionality of the platform and the benefits that we provide as a distribution platform, and thinking about how that operates in a different way from, say, social media or traditional streaming services, because we are in our own lane. There is no other service like us. I have watched YouTube this weekend to fix my dishwasher, to watch a previous parliamentary inquiry, and to watch a

music video. That is a diversity of content that you do not necessarily get in other scenarios and settings.

Q277 **Chair:** Why do not we just reclassify what a broadcaster is—forgive me for interrupting you, Natasha—because the difference is becoming so opaque now? Most of us grew up in a world where you turned on the television and you were fed a curated set of content. Then we went through the era of streamers where there was more of what you described as a pull factor, and less what we were being fed. What you are talking about is almost the next iteration of that. There is a lot of user-generated content, but there is also high-quality PSB-generated content that people can pull off as well. Why should we not just reclassify what a broadcaster is in the modern world to reflect what the modern world generates?

Alex Rawle: I do not know whether “broadcaster” is the right terminology, but there is definitely a question for the Committee to consider about terminologies and definitions when we look at different digital services and how they fit into the modern media ecosystem.

Q278 **Chair:** Yes, so if you had to be classified as one, if you had to choose whether you are a broadcaster or a social media company, which one would you prefer to be?

Alex Rawle: Well, we are neither.

Q279 **Chair:** But what if you had to?

Alex Rawle: We do not have social functionality in the way that social media companies do, and we do not commission programming in the way that a broadcaster does so I do think we need our own definition. Often in some of the policy conversations that I have, we do get stuck in between.

Q280 **Chair:** Some of the streamers do not commission stuff. They just buy stuff that has already been made.

Alex Rawle: They do programme it though, in a way that we do not, and they do not do it at the same scale that we do.

Chair: Yes, but that is just semantics, isn’t it?

Alex Rawle: No, I think it is substantive.

Q281 **Chair:** Why can’t we just reclassify what broadcasting is?

Alex Rawle: Yes, there is a conversation about reclassifying and using new terminology for the 21st century media ecosystem, definitely, but I do not think we are a broadcaster. I do not think some of the regulations, requirements for broadcasters—

Q282 **Chair:** What would you be then, if we were reclassifying terminology for the modern world? What would you be?

Alex Rawle: A 21st century distribution platform.

Q283 **Natasha Irons:** Why are we very keen to hold on to the word “distribution”? Why is that the key word?



Alex Rawle: I think it provides clarity for people about what we do and do not do.

Q284 **Natasha Irons:** Does it though, because as a user of YouTube, you do not feel to me like a distribution channel? For users, people are interacting with them on a big screen. It feels just like a space that has filled in traditional media, so why would the organisation really want to hold on to the word distribution?

Alex Rawle: People are interacting with us on TVs. They are also doing it on their mobiles, their laptops and their tablets.

Natasha Irons: They are doing that with the PSBs as well. It is the same.

Alex Rawle: I think it is an important point of clarification. We are a distribution platform that has 500 hours of content uploaded every minute, which democratises access to that content but it just not the same as being a broadcaster.

Q285 **Chair:** If you were a broadcaster or a social media company, do you think that that would come with a bigger level of accountability? Is that why? Is that one of the reasons? Is the accountability one of the reasons?

Alex Rawle: No. We are categorised as a user-to-user service under the Online Safety Act so we have to meet obligations under that Act.

Some of those obligations are applicable to us; it makes sense. Some of the obligations are designed for social services with different functionalities, so the way we are bracketed in that context becomes difficult. I think the same would be the case if we were grouped with a broadcaster.

Chair: It is almost as if you need your own definition; we almost need to create a definition just for you and the people who aspire to be you, that encapsulates what you do in the modern world.

Alex Rawle: Yes, I would agree with that.

Q286 **Vicky Foxcroft:** Following on from Caroline's question, if you had to say which one you were the most similar to, would you say that you are most similar to TV or social media?

Alex Rawle: That is a binary question that we just cannot answer.

Vicky Foxcroft: I am just asking which one you are most similar to.

Alex Rawle: It depends on different people's experience of YouTube. Some people I speak to say, "I was watching YouTube at home on my TV," but someone else would say, "What, you watch YouTube at home on the TV?"

Other people might say, "I was watching YouTube shorts," and someone would say, "What's YouTube shorts?" It depends on the person and the product.

Q287 **Vicky Foxcroft:** I am saying most similar to; I am not saying you are definitely this or that. I am just asking whether you would you say that



you are the most similar to TikTok or more similar to TV.

Alex Rawle: I think it depends on the user and how the user is using the service. I am not trying to avoid answering the question. It just depends on how the user is using the service.

Mairi Brewis: There may something about breaking down the different stages. Garth can talk a little bit about the responsibility that we take how we manage our platform and the responsibilities we take seriously around providing safe, responsible experiences. I wonder if it is perhaps about thinking about the different stages of how people interact with our platform and making sure that—

Q288 **Vicky Foxcroft:** Delving in on that, I think that TikTok at times can be quite irresponsible—social media, generally—and I think TV can be quite responsible about what goes on the platform. So, back to the question; which one would you say you are more similar to even if you are saying, say, 51% versus 49%?

Alex Rawle: The only way I can answer that is to say it depends on how a user is using the service. We have a number of different features and products, we have YouTube shorts—

Q289 **Vicky Foxcroft:** How would you say the majority of users would be using it and therefore define it as?

Alex Rawle: It is a combination and it depends on each family, each individual.

Q290 **Vicky Foxcroft:** Is it 50-50?

Alex Rawle: I do not think it is possible to answer that.

Q291 **Chair:** So, in that case, you would have to be regulated as both a broadcaster and a social media company. Is that what you are saying?

Alex Rawle: One of our concerns is that we get squeezed by regulation on both sides—that we get inappropriate broadcast regulation and inappropriate social media regulation that are not applicable to how our platform operates.

Q292 **Natasha Irons:** What would be inappropriate? When you say “inappropriate regulation” from one end, what do you mean by inappropriate?

Alex Rawle: There are a lot of provisions in the Online Safety Act that relate to social sharing, for example, which are not applicable to YouTube. They were designed with other platforms in mind, yet Ofcom has obligations to implement them so we have to work with Ofcom on the proportionality of the implementation because the features and functionalities of our service just do not operate in that way, for example.

Q293 **Natasha Irons:** What is appropriate regulation of your platform then?

Alex Rawle: Thinking about the features, functionalities, risks and societal considerations that Parliament will consider here, and regulating on the basis of those things, is appropriate. Thinking about what regulation for a distribution platform, the world’s largest video library,

looks like, how we mitigate harms and how we make the most of the opportunities and the benefits of that, is appropriate.

Dr Graham: Taking a step back, I like the way you—

Q294 **Natasha Irons:** Will you answer the question?

Dr Graham: I just wanted to go to where you were going with the issue of responsibility. Maybe you can use that as you think through and go through these concepts and these answers.

Mairi alluded to this, but we take the issue of responsibility very seriously. I am particularly going back to the focus of this Committee and some of the things that you have been talking about, some things you have heard about, such as the issues of quality, kids' information and the kinds of things that kids are interacting with. Our strategy and approach embrace the issue of age-appropriate content. We have YouTube Kids as the app for kids with a curated experience. Then we have age-appropriate experiences for tweens and then for teens. As you think through the broader issues that you are thinking about here as a Committee and then as you all are going back and forth in this debate, part of the concept that is important to us, and important to me as well, is the issue of high-quality kids content and age-appropriate content, especially when we think through kids' developmental aspect.

Chair: We will get to that in a minute.

Dr Graham: Sorry. Okay.

Q295 **Natasha Irons:** So who should be the regulator then? Who should regulate you?

Alex Rawle: We are already regulated under the Online Safety Act by Ofcom.

Q296 **Jeff Smith:** Are you saying that is not appropriate though?

Alex Rawle: No, there are some provisions within the wider Bill where there is discretion for Ofcom to have proportionality but when that Bill was going through, we had to keep reminding people that we do not have social functionality and that we are different. There is a range of different online services.

I would also add two things. Technology is moving quickly in this space and the media ecosystem and users' viewing habits are changing very, very quickly. There is a very competitive dynamic market. When we think about what regulation looks like, I think we need to think about what we are regulating for, what the outcome we are looking for is, and whether indeed there is a need for regulation.

Q297 **Chair:** Whether we need a regulatory regime that is specifically for YouTube and platforms like you?

Alex Rawle: Yes, and I think that is for you to consider. However, I might take a step back and say, what are we regulating for? What is the public policy objective that we would be regulating for?

Q298 **Chair:** I think we will establish that in the questions at the end. Thank

you very much.

I want to talk to you about something a bit closer to home, our British public service media, the public service broadcasters. What is your relationship with those PSBs? Mairi, do you want to answer that?

Mairi Brewis: Yes, I am happy to. My team looks after that relationship and just so you know, I worked at the BBC for a number of years, about 10 years, so I have a very strong love of the public service broadcasters in the UK.

We provide strategic support to those broadcasters, along with other types of partners, production companies and creators, as mentioned. As I referred to earlier, most of the decisions really sit with the broadcasters. They are deciding how much content, what type of content, how to monetise, whether to monetise, and so on, on the platform. We work with them to help them build their strategy and to share with them information and best practice about how to do that well on the platform.

We meet with each of those partners regularly. We develop joint business plans with them. We share benchmarks, case studies and upcoming product features to help them drive their strategy.

Q299 **Chair:** The UK Government has made it clear that it wants YouTube to work with PSBs so that high-quality UK children's TV content is prominent on YouTube. What are your thoughts on that? The Government have even spoken about legislation to ensure that that happens. Where does YouTube stand on that?

Mairi Brewis: Let me take that in two parts. First, we think that there is a lot of high-quality content on the platform that does not come exclusively from broadcasters. I have already referenced some of the creators on YouTube who create fantastic, beloved content, but there are also the production companies. Referring back to the way that broadcasters work, they will commission content from a production company and then after a period, the rights will revert to the production company and often at that point, the production company may choose to use YouTube as a distribution platform and for international reach. There is Blue Zoo, for instance. I think you have already heard from Oli Hyatt from Blue Zoo. He creates the incredible blocks—"Alphablocks", "Numberblocks", "Wonderblocks". The majority of the YouTube content that is associated with that comes to us directly from the production company. So if the goal is to make sure that children have access to high-quality content, it does not all rest on the PSBs because it comes from a variety of different sources.

Q300 **Chair:** What about the visibility or prominence of the PSBs? How would you feel if the Government did legislate to dictate that they should be more visible, more prominent than anything else, or to substantially boost the prominence?

Mairi Brewis: We have been working with the BBC to provide some levers for them to be able to do that. In particular, we have something that essentially allows us, when we have a theme for a period—for



HOUSE OF COMMONS

example, at the moment we are in British Science Week—to elevate particular pieces of content that fit with that theme. We have offered the BBC opportunities to make sure that they have that opportunity. Unfortunately, we are not there yet because the supply is not there yet. At the moment, I think as you heard from the BBC, they are six weeks into their announced strategy, so in the foothills of that, which means that they do not currently have enough content to make use of all the opportunities that we are giving them.

Q301 Chair: It is not just about the BBC. I know that that is quite a new formal relationship, but you have been in partnership with Channel 4 for a long time. Channel 4 told us that they would strongly support the recommendation that the Government should consider legislating for prominence of PSB content on YouTube. Do you agree?

Mairi Brewis: Sorry, I was focusing just on kids. To broaden it out more generally to beyond kids, Alex, do you want to come in?

Alex Rawle: Yes. I would just go back to the point that Mairi was making about supply. We have offered a content shelf within the kids' content experience for the BBC and the BBC are currently not able to fill that shelf with content because they have not pivoted their strategy. I think when they came to see you that the BBC said that they are in the foothills of their pivot.

Q302 Chair: Once they have enough content, you would be happy to make some prominence arrangement.

Alex Rawle: We would need to see whether prominence was even required. If they have high-quality content and they are putting it on the platform, particularly in the kids' environment, we expect that content to rise to the top given our approach to quality and the systems that we have in place. There is no evidence that that is not taking place. We would say this is fundamentally a supply problem, particularly in relation to kids' content.

Q303 Chair: Just talk me through that. How do you ensure that quality content floats to the top? There is no doubt that there is high-quality children's content on YouTube, but where is the evidence, where is the kitemarking, where is the traffic light system, that shows that it is rising to the top?

Alex Rawle: Garth, do you want to talk about our quality process?

Dr Graham: Yes. We state this in our Health centre and a number of different places for creators. As you have heard, we have these high-quality principles that we have developed with outside experts, neurodevelopmental psychologists, media experts and health experts. We have created kids' principles around things like learning, self-efficacy, and showing kids the world. We have applied these principles to the platform. As we have said, what drives our systems, in addition to personalisation, are these high-quality principles for both kids and teens. Building on Alex's point, that helps to drive the content that kids see on the platform.

Q304 Jeff Smith: Can I just ask what you mean when you say that you apply the principles to the platform? What does that mean?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Alex Rawle: Explicitly, that means that the recommendation system for kids and teens is driven by a set of principles that is backed up by an academic advisory committee who help us set those principles, and that drives the algorithm, alongside humans being involved.

Dr Graham: And to be more explicit, the concept of drive means that we elevate the visibility of that content so that kids are more likely to see that content.

Q305 **Chair:** To what extent does content from your own country come into that equation? I am sure that American parents would be keen that their kids see American content. What percentage of the top 10 recommendations for UK users under the age of 13 is UK PSB content?

Alex Rawle: We think that this is an interesting dynamic that is emerging because UK content creators, particularly for kids, are punching above their weight on the platform. UK kids' content creators make up over 10% of the global Made for Kids content corpus. On top of that, over 80% of UK content is seen outside of the UK from UK channels so there is a huge export market. We are really very good at this. We have also seen examples of UK content making up a good proportion of the content that is on the Made for Kids homepage, for example, or the YouTube Kids app.

Q306 **Chair:** What does a good proportion look like? What percentage of the top 10 for under 13s would be PSB content, for example?

Alex Rawle: PSB content is in one of three buckets: UK kids' production content, high-quality UK kids' content and YouTube native content—all three of those make up the UK content bucket. We think there is a good proportion of that on the platform being served to users. We think there is more work to do, particularly with the BBC. We do not have the exact numbers. It would fluctuate depending on what the—

Q307 **Chair:** Roughly, is it half, more than half or less than half?

Mairi Brewis: I would go back to the BBC being still very nascent in their strategy. We think the BBC has a great strategy and we are looking forward to seeing it deliver, but the BBC does not currently have sufficient content.

Q308 **Chair:** You do Channel 5, though, don't you, as well? You have Channel 5 content, and they do a lot of children's content.

Mairi Brewis: For example, "Peppa Pig" is very present on YouTube but provided by the production company, E1, rather than by Channel 5.

To focus on the BBC as the main provider of public service kids' content for the UK, it is still nascent and that means that the volume of content is not currently there.

Q309 **Chair:** Let's take the heat off the BBC for a moment. What about high-quality British content? What percentage of the under-13s content seen in the UK is British?

Mairi Brewis: I do not have the answer to that, I am afraid. We can certainly follow up and look at that. I would come back to Alex's view that the role of our platform is to give everyone a voice and show everyone a



world. It will be that we have a more international offering than the PSBs may have. I think the PSBs also have some of that, too; they do also have some international content. Ours will be more so, but the quid pro quo is that we also provide that international platform and that opportunity.

Q310 **Chair:** You are in a fantastic position of having a lot of young eyeballs on you. For obvious reasons, you would want to see those young people being fed content that is home-grown, and that shows the diversity and talent across the UK as we used to when we were growing up. It is important to drive that sense community and identity. It would be helpful to see what that number looks like and how you are prioritising that.

Mairi Brewis: Can I add one more answer just on that last point?

Chair: You can.

Mairi Brewis: It about is a partnership that we are running with the BBC and with NFTS, in order to help develop high-quality content on the platform. We are providing a training scheme across the length and the breadth of the UK, which will be in six different regional and nations locations, to support 150 content creators who wish to make high-quality content for the digital world.

Q311 **Chair:** Is that just children's content or is it across the board?

Mairi Brewis: There will be 50 for children's and learning, 50 for news and then 50 for more general.

Q312 **Chair:** Remind me, how much did you say you are putting in to do that?

Mairi Brewis: How much are we putting in? I did not say that. We can follow up on that; I will give you that number.

Chair: Okay.

Alex Rawle: That also builds on our Launchpad. We have also worked with YouTube native content creators in the UK through Mairi's team to help them grow and expand their businesses and enter the Made for Kids environment. We are very much committed to fostering UK talent and getting them on to YouTube Kids and on to the Made for Kids experience.

Q313 **Natasha Irons:** Sorry, just replay that for me. You are working with content creators to what?

Mairi Brewis: To help them with their strategies for how to make high-quality content on the platform. They will have a 10-week, mainly virtual, training course, but with in-person meet-ups across the country. There will be opportunities for them to meet each other and to learn from each other, but also to hear from experts, to gain from the expertise of NFTS. YouTube and the BBC will both bring speakers along. It would range from things like how to do the best titling for a digital-first environment and how to use analytics. It will run through, for example, what the high-quality principles are and how to make sure that they are creating content that meets those principles.

Q314 **Natasha Irons:** But categorically not commissioning something?



Mairi Brewis: No.

Alex Rawle: No.

Q315 **Natasha Irons:** But people will be going through this training programme. I think someone mentioned this earlier, but why would you avoid kitemarking content that has gone through, say, at least this process where you are driving high quality? As a parent who sits there with a child on YouTube you can go from an unboxing video—which is honestly, quite frankly, horrendous—to high-quality content. There are very different sets of circumstances. Screen time is not equal, right? There is good quality and there is bad quality. If you are investing in good quality with training, why on earth would you not want to badge that in some way and let people know that you are investing as a platform in high-quality content?

Alex Rawle: I think that is what we are doing. So the Made for Kids Launchpad, which preceded the “Create x Connect” BBC partnership, was us working with UK content creators that we saw had potential to grow and enter the Made for Kids environment, so meeting that high quality threshold. We have worked with them. Once they have done that, they enter the Made for Kids environment and the YouTube Kids environment but that is because we have a high bar to enter into that environment in the first place.

Q316 **Natasha Irons:** I think what I am getting at is about, as a parent, making informed choices for our children. We have to also remember that some of their viewing does not just come from Made for Kids content. It comes from your main platform as well, because children are going on to that in a way that maybe you do not intend, but they are. So badging that content as appropriate for children makes it easier for parents. If you already have this framework in place, I am just wondering why you would not make that a feature of your platform.

Alex Rawle: I think we already essentially do that badging by having a Made for Kids experience, which has a high bar. I wonder if Garth wants to talk about that, because that operates both in the YouTube Kids app, but also in Made for Kids on the main app as well.

Dr Graham: Yes, and just to clarify something that you said, there is YouTube Kids, which is its own stand-alone app, and there is Made for Kids content. When a creator is making content, our systems pick it up as being Made for Kids. Made for Kids content can be on main YouTube, and there is a sub-segment of that that can also be on the YouTube Kids app.

In the YouTube Made for Kids content, when that content is shown, a lot of protections go along with it. There are no personal ads; there is no autoplay. The kinds of ads that would show up on that would not allow ads on, say, unhealthy foods. So there is a difference between the Made for Kids content on YouTube main and YouTube Kids. Does that make sense?

Q317 **Natasha Irons:** I guess what I am getting at is, if I am a creator, and I have done the high bar, and I am in this thing, is there something that I as a creator can say is a badge of honour, or a kitemark from YouTube to



say, "This content has the quality that we expect it to have." Just expecting parents to assume that this is all okay means there is always the danger that something not quite high quality sneaks into that feed and sneaks into that schedule. It makes it difficult.

Alex Rawle: I think being accepted into Made for Kids is that bar, so I think we do have that threshold. There is an advanced vetting process for kids' content that has to meet an extra set of standards and that is the quality content—being accepted into Made for Kids content. It is not that you tick Made for Kids and you are automatically accepted. There are both human and machine classifiers looking for bad content that does not meet that high-quality threshold.

Q318 **Natasha Irons:** How do I stop my kid watching something high quality and suddenly an unboxing video comes up next?

Alex Rawle: I guess it depends on whether it is on YouTube main, on your own account, or on YouTube Kids. There are different viewing environments that would affect the answer to that.

Q319 **Damian Hinds:** I think you just said "looking for bad content", which sounded like things to knock out rather than a positive seal of approval. Can you talk us through how that process works and the extent of automation or active human involvement? Does everything that says Made for Kids have to have been watched in full by a YouTube employee who puts their name to a certification?

Alex Rawle: Again, remember that there is a difference between YouTube Kids and—

Q320 **Damian Hinds:** Can we just deal with this simple question first and then get into the detail? Does every piece of content that says Made for Kids have to have been watched in full by a YouTube employee who puts their name to that certification?

Alex Rawle: Made for Kids and YouTube Kids is different. Remember, we are saying they are two different things. For YouTube Kids and the YouTube Kids app, there is a combination of a machine—

Q321 **Damian Hinds:** My question was a follow-up to Alex's answer about how you certify. The question was about the good housekeeping seal, something that says "Made for Kids". I believe you said you have these processes to search out bad content, which tends to suggest—you may not have meant this and it may not be right—that there is a default that it is okay until it has been proven otherwise. I am asking you very straightforwardly, what is the extent of automation or human reviewing in that process? Has everything that ends up saying "YouTube Made for Kids", been watched in full by a human employee of the company who puts their name to a certification?

Alex Rawle: It will be a mixture of human and algorithmic review based on quality principles.

Q322 **Damian Hinds:** So it has not necessarily been watched by someone. It could say "Made for Kids" without somebody having watched it and said "Yes, this piece of material,"—this programme, this video—"is suitable for

children”?

Mairi Brewis: I can give you an example. The BBC would be greenlisted as a partner for Made for Kids. We would have deemed that the BBC is a responsible editorial partner. We would then not have a human within YouTube sit down and watch everything that the BBC puts up on its channel.

Q323 **Damian Hinds:** If we take the set of things that are not made by, let’s say BBC and Channel 5—I don’t know which other production houses we would want to have on that list—actually, what proportion is covered by the BBC and Channel 5, for a start, as we have talked about them most in this session, within the Made for Kids category?

Mairi Brewis: I can share those answers with you offline.

Damian Hinds: Just give us a rough answer.

Alex Rawle: I think the point that we were making before is that there is a challenge with the supply of content from the BBC. Has the BBC committed to 58? How many channels are the BBC going to launch?

Mairi Brewis: The BBC will be launching 50 channels on YouTube.

Q324 **Damian Hinds:** Just very roughly, you have a ton of content on YouTube. You talked about how many hundreds of hours there are, a thousand hours per minute coming on, and there is global content available on the platform, right? So I am guessing—I may be wrong and you can correct me—that the BBC content is an interesting sideshow for this discussion, but it is not the bulk of what gets branded Made for Kids.

Just to come back to my simple question—and I am happy if you set aside a relatively small number of brands, which the person in the street would say, “Yes, I absolutely accept that if somebody at the BBC or ITV or whatever has viewed a programme and said it is a children’s programme, that it is a children’s programme,” and you set them aside—does everything else have to have been watched by a human being, an employee of your company who says, “Yes, I confirm, I certify, that this is suitable for children”?

Alex Rawle: I think it is a little bit more. We are just talking about kids, right? Because we were talking about the whole of YouTube, but we are just talking now about the Made for Kids and YouTube Kids experience.

Q325 **Damian Hinds:** I was asking you about whether it is on YouTube Kids or the normal platform, and I have asked you a couple of times now, specifically, about things that are branded or marked as Made for Kids.

Alex Rawle: Yes. In that context, as Mairi said, we will look at greenlisting partners. We will also look at previous partner behaviour. If a partner has consistently been uploading high-quality content, we will not.

Q326 **Damian Hinds:** Okay, so here is the short circuit. What proportion of Made for Kids content is from what you have just described as greenlisted partners?

Alex Rawle: I do not have that number available.



Q327 **Damian Hinds:** Roughly: is it virtually all of it or is it a little bit of it?

Alex Rawle: I do not have that information.

Q328 **Damian Hinds:** Come on. This is an inquiry about children's television. You are the largest provider in the world of that service. We are asking how much of the stuff that you brand as content Made for Kids is from brands, companies or producers who we, the people in the street, and you, through your greenlisting process, would say is by default, regardless, high-quality content. You must know roughly the answer to that question.

Alex Rawle: We are looking at it in a different way. We are looking at the quality of the content, not necessarily always the institution that it comes from. There is a mixture—

Q329 **Damian Hinds:** Okay, so we are back to my original question before you started talking about how much is greenlisted. My question is does somebody have to watched that programme. So if I see a thing that says Made for Kids on YouTube, do I know that either somebody at the BBC or Channel 5 or whatever, or somebody at YouTube, has watched it and said, "Yes, that is suitable for a 10-year-old or whatever it might be"?

Dr Graham: There are two separate things. There is not someone who watches every piece of Made for Kids content.

Damian Hinds: Okay. Thank you.

Dr Graham: That is what I was trying to jump in to say.

Q330 **Damian Hinds:** That is all I needed to know. So basically, it is an automated system, presumably, which looks for bad content.

Dr Graham: Or Made for Kids, which looks for good content.

Damian Hinds: Okay, thank you.

Q331 **Jeff Smith:** I think I have probably had hospitality from YouTube as well. I am also the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on the BBC, and I mention that because I want to talk a bit more about the BBC. What is YouTube's motivation for going into the strategic partnership that you have entered with the BBC?

Mairi Brewis: The BBC creates wonderful content, which delivers great value to audiences. From YouTube's point of view, having brilliant content on our platform is good for our users and we are driven by our users.

The BBC has chosen not to monetise its public service content in the UK, which, as I mentioned, is totally its choice. This is not something that drives revenue for us, but it drives user value.

Q332 **Jeff Smith:** We presumably want high-quality, great content to be discovered and prominent, so I will go back to the question about prominence. You said that there is currently not enough supply from the BBC to—

Alex Rawle: That was in relation to kids' content.

Jeff Smith: Yes. So at what point do you expect that to be uploaded and



ready and watched enough so you can make a judgment as to whether it is getting the discoverability and prominence that you would like it to get?

Alex Rawle: That is really in the gift of the BBC and is a question to ask the BBC when they are producing volumes of content and content in the right formats that is YouTube native, and content that our users on YouTube expect to see and value. We do see that that happens when content is created that is YouTube native, that is created at supply, it rises to the top, users find it across the world—not just in the UK—and there are positive outcomes from that.

Mairi Brewis: The advice that we would typically give companies or individuals setting up channels is that having a consistent approach to content is important. That is both about frequency of upload and the nature of the content. The steps that you would go through would be to launch your commissions—which the BBC has done—then the commissions get made and there is probably a little bit of test and learn, so you may put something on the platform and maybe it does not work straightaway and there is a little bit of adjusting because it is slightly different from traditional TV, and then you build up that audience engagement over time.

Q333 **Jeff Smith:** You must have had those conversations with them, though, haven't you, about when it will all be ready?

Mairi Brewis: These things are a journey. It is not like there is a very clear end point where now we are done and we can all go home. What I can say from all my conversations with the BBC is that we know that they are working hard on it and that there are lots of very exciting channels that we anticipate launching soon.

Q334 **Jeff Smith:** Looking at the other public service broadcasters—and I know the BBC is not monetising its content—the Government have called for the relationship between YouTube and the public service broadcasters to be on, in their phrase, fair commercial terms. Do you accept that there is some unfairness in the commercial terms?

Alex Rawle: No, I don't think we do accept that there is unfairness in the commercial terms. I think we are in a process of trying to understand what the public service broadcasters mean in that context and we are working through a process with them to try to better understand some of their concerns. Ultimately, we think that there is fundamentally a supply problem that means that we cannot assess the problem until we have the quality supply of YouTube native content on the platform in the first instance. This conversation feels very premature in a context in which the BBC has said that it is in the foothills of providing content and is only just pivoting its strategy. The idea that there is a discoverability problem or terms issue feels very premature.

Q335 **Jeff Smith:** It is not just the BBC, though. We have had evidence from all kinds of people—for instance, people who make high-quality children's TV who say it is not viable to make that content based on the income from YouTube.



Alex Rawle: In previous evidence sessions, Oli from Blue Zoo, Pact and COBA all talked about the challenges of the funding models for kids' content. We see those challenges across the board. They are exactly the same reasons as the reasons why ITV has stopped commissioning. There are regulatory challenges around the monetisation of that content and the regulatory requirements. Like others, we prioritised meeting those regulatory obligations, which is the right thing to do. So there is a broader conversation here about this. It is not a YouTube-specific issue. This is a broader quality kids' content issue and an ecosystem problem. There is a question about how to fix that and there are various solutions. Different funds have been cited. Can this be built into the industrial strategy in some other way? There are lots of other areas that I think are for the Committee to look at and consider.

Q336 **Jeff Smith:** Doesn't YouTube have a responsibility? It is not just the Government's responsibility or anybody else's. You mentioned Oli from Blue Zoo. Blue Zoo make "Numberblocks" and say that they could not do it if they were relying on their revenue from YouTube. Given that commissioning from public service and other production companies is declining, what can YouTube do? What does it say about your commercial terms if a product like "Numberblocks" would struggle to be economic on just the income from YouTube?

Mairi Brewis: We heard from the BBC last week that it is also not possible to rely on any one revenue stream, whether or not it is a public service broadcaster as well. Maybe the nature of the children's production sector is that they usually do have to put together a number of different forms of revenue to make it stack up. Traditionally, that was maybe that you would have a broadcaster commissioning you and you would maybe look at the international rights; I think the BBC quoted 23% last week.

I think YouTube is a contributory factor to growth. We give a great international platform. To go back to some of the statistics that Alex quoted earlier, 80% percent of watch time comes from abroad for our UK production companies on YouTube. That is a massive increase in their reach and ability to monetise. It is a way to build fandom such that then, if you have a theme park or a toy line or whatever else, you can build on that. While we are not the answer to absolutely everything, I think YouTube provides those partners with several positive things.

Q337 **Natasha Irons:** Picking up on what Jeff Smith said, you are right that the ecosystem is the thing that needs to be fixed in general, and that there are opportunities for content creators to build a brand and to take that globally and your platform allows them to do that, but what is your role in supporting the starting of that? I think the challenge, and the problem, is that it costs far more to create this content, the good-quality content, than producers make back in revenue from your platform. So what is your role in helping creators? Start there.

Mairi Brewis: There was an interesting panel at MIPCOM a couple of weeks ago—MIPCOM is a TV industry event—where the panellists talked about the different funding models. The discussion said that on YouTube, the costs do not need to be nearly as high, whereas in the traditional



world you would have to fund an entire series, you would have to start with eight episodes, you would have to have a set that costs a lot, and things like that. On YouTube, you can test and learn a little bit more. You can make one pilot. You do not necessarily need high up-front investment. You can see how it goes, iterate and build from there. That changes the cost structure as well as providing some of the revenue streams. That is the first thing.

Another difference is that we do not provide up-front funding and we do not commission the content, but equally then the rights, the control, all of those things that I mentioned, sit with the content owner. It was interesting on the panel, because one of the panellists had a more traditional model where he was looking for investment from multiple different production companies. Another panellist said to him, "Oh, you're just a producer on your own show. You're not getting any editorial control, the judgment and things like that." That second panellist said, "What I do is control it all myself and yes, I have to find a budget up front but it's a smaller budget because I'm doing it in this way and solving it for YouTube first. I think that that benefits in terms of the risk and the reward being better." It is a slightly different model but for some people, it is clearly a model that works.

Q338 Jeff Smith: It that not just dumbing down the production values?

Mairi Brewis: I don't think that is the same thing. I do not think that there is a direct translation between the cost of making something and the production values involved.

Q339 Mr Bayo Alaba: Can I come in there? We have heard from the BBC, and I understand what Alex said about the discoverability aspects. What kind of specific IP protections, prominence and guarantees can you provide in this partnership with the BBC? They are handing over a lot of content. What is that? What does it look like?

Mairi Brewis: Specifically within kids?

Mr Bayo Alaba: In your relationship, but yes, let's go with kids for now.

Mairi Brewis: What we have discussed with the BBC is what we call special content deals. That gives them the ability to be featured in each of the different age-category versions of our kids' experience at a certain frequency. We started doing that in February and, as I mentioned, we do not yet have the supply for them to fully take advantage of that, so that is what we will be working with them on.

Q340 Mr Bayo Alaba: I understand about the supply but what about the actual specific protections, whether it is one, two, five, or a thousand pieces of content? What are the protections? What are the guarantees?

Mairi Brewis: There are no guarantees on either side. The BBC is not mandated to put any volume of content on YouTube so this is a voluntary partnership on both sides.

Q341 Dr Rupa Huq: The 2019 figures that came out showed a quite substantial drop in ad revenue for under-13 content, which you recognised at the time would have a significant business impact. A \$100



HOUSE OF COMMONS

million dollar fund was set up in the US to support thoughtful, original children's content. You have acknowledged that there is a shrivelling sector of children's programmes. We have seen it; we have been to BBC and ITV recently. Given that precedent, why could not you do the equivalent thing for the UK?

Alex Rawle: I am not aware of this fund.

Mairi Brewis: Me neither, I am afraid.

Alex Rawle: We stopped commissioning original content a number of years ago because it was not core to our business strategy but that predates—

Q342 **Dr Rupa Huq:** You put it in your own evidence to us. "We are also going to continue"—okay, maybe it has not come on stream but it is happening—"investing in the future of quality kids, family and educational content. We are establishing a \$100 million fund, disbursed over three years".

Alex Rawle: That will be talking about how we are supporting content creators to grow. When we talk about the Made for Kids Launchpad and the "Create x Connect", work that is about us fostering the ecosystem not about us commissioning content and making editorial judgments.

Q343 **Dr Rupa Huq:** True. So that is for the US market. Can we have an equivalent for the UK? For example, the 2016 legislation that stopped unhealthy foods being advertised on commercial channels at the time kids' eyeballs were watching now means that the things that we grew up with—such as "How", which Dame Caroline's father presented for many years—are not happening any more because ITV is not getting the chocolate bar adverts that we all grew up with.

Alex Rawle: Yes.

Dr Rupa Huq: It is not you making the programmes; it is the ecosystem, as you say. Why can't we have an equivalent to what you are doing in America?

Alex Rawle: I should say that growing up, I was huge fan of your sister, as well.

Dr Rupa Huq: That is the interest that I should have said. My sister was a "Blue Peter" presenter for over a decade.

Alex Rawle: I think that fund refers to some of the work that Mairi has set out, both the "Create x Connect" work and Launchpad work. We are trying to foster high-quality YouTube native content creators who can grow their channels and reach global audiences. We have that in the UK with "Cosmic Kids Yoga" and "Matt Green Comedy".

Dr Rupa Huq: Would there be something to help the traditional broadcasters? We have been led to believe—and the Children's Media Foundation put it in their evidence—that it is not just in America; you have done something similar in Australia. Does Skip Ahead in Australia mean anything to you?



Q344 Chair: Picking up on what Rupa said, can you correct the record if this is wrong? I am going back to Rupa's first question. We had evidence from the Children's Media Foundation that in 2019, following a Federal Trade Commission settlement, YouTube created a fund in response to the huge drop in revenue children's content makers experienced. It was aimed at under-13s. YouTube said, "We are also going to continue investing in the future of quality kids, family and educational content. We are establishing a \$100 million fund, disbursed over three years, dedicated to the creation of thoughtful, original children's content on YouTube and YouTube Kids globally." Are you saying that did not happen?

Alex Rawle: I will need to—neither Mairi nor I has any awareness of that.

Mairi Brewis: That was before I worked here. It is not something that I am aware of but we can certainly get back in writing.

Alex Rawle: Let us write to the Committee to clarify.

Chair: Maybe our friend from across the pond can help us?

Dr Graham: No, I am not aware of that so I think we should come back to you and clarify.

Q345 Dr Rupa Huq: What about Skip Ahead in Australia, an initiative between Screen Australia and YouTube that includes funding for production. That is another example from the other side of the planet.

Alex Rawle: I would point to the "Create x Connect" work that we are doing and the investment that we are putting into learning and education launchpads as being very similar to the funds that you are describing. We are investing funds in the UK to help high-quality UK content producers, and also the mixture between the traditional screen sector and the next-gen YouTube-first ecosystem, to grow and thrive in the UK. We are committed to doing that. Mairi has people in her team working on that. We have launched a partnership with the BBC. It is very much part of the ethos. We see ourselves as part of the UK screen sector and supporting the UK screen sector through the development of talent. That is not the same as commissioning.

Mairi Brewis: Perhaps just to add to that, where YouTube can uniquely add value is at the grassroots, by democratising and allowing people to get started. There is no barrier to entry on YouTube. You can be in any part of the country and you can be at the beginning of your career. That is where we can, I think, uniquely help in this ecosystem, so that is where we have focused most of our training and expertise.

Q346 Dr Rupa Huq: People watching will think—I mean, every time you go on YouTube there is the algorithm. There is an accusation of monetising hate—that if you look at these nasty things, the algorithm will show you more sensationalism and clickbait and all that. The latest figures, from February 2026, are that YouTube generated more than \$60 billion in revenue through advertising. That is way more than Netflix, which is \$45.18 billion—people see that as a comparator. The question is: what would stop you? It would be a goodwill gesture to make a fraction of that



HOUSE OF COMMONS

\$60 billion available to fund high-quality educational children's programmes when the market has shrivelled and shrunk because of advertising revenues and all that.

Alex Rawle: I guess what you are referring to is the traditional kids' production ecosystem. As Mairi has set out, there are three different components to kids' content. There are public service broadcasters. There are production companies that sit within that traditional ecosystem and merge into the new media ecosystem. Then there are YouTube native content creators. We are investing in both of those, and partnering with all of those groups. We also need to recognise that there is a transition in viewing habits. There is a transition in what users want to see.

Q347 **Dr Rupa Huq:** I am accepting all that, but there has also been the Young Audiences Content Fund, but for covid reasons, I think, it was discontinued. It never really reached its full potential. I have constituents who work in the industry saying, "Can't we have something like that?" The Government finances are straitened, but you have a \$60 billion profit. A fraction of that could go to something like a Young Audiences Content Fund. I am not arguing about whether you are a platform or a creator or a what, but can you see what I am saying?

Alex Rawle: I can to a degree, but we also have a commitment to our YouTube native content creators to make sure that they are able to thrive.

Q348 **Dr Rupa Huq:** It is not either/or. I don't think it is binary or mutually exclusive.

Alex Rawle: I think it becomes challenging for two reasons. YouTube is the world's largest video library, and you don't ask a library to start paying for the commission of books. It is slightly outside of what we do as a—

Q349 **Dr Rupa Huq:** Because you are known for monetising hate, it would be a goodwill gesture. It would put you in everyone's good books, but you—

Alex Rawle: I hope that we are not known for monetising hate. I would say that we have very strict and strong hate speech policies.

Dr Rupa Huq: I have been on another Committee where we—

Alex Rawle: To come back to the point, I think there is a broader public policy point here. There is clearly an issue and there are a number of different scenarios, but I would just note—as Google as YouTube and YouTube—there are a number of levies, hypothecated taxes, children's media literacy, children's commissioning, supporting SMEs and high streets, and digital skills. It is ultimately for the Government and Parliament to decide what that looks like, but it is an additional tax and a levy that is being proposed in this scenario.

Q350 **Vicky Foxcroft:** How do you choose the YouTube native content creators?

Mairi Brewis: It is an open platform. Do you mean how does their content get—

Q351 **Vicky Foxcroft:** So you invest in the YouTube native content creators?

Mairi Brewis: The ones who come on the training programme?

Vicky Foxcroft: Yes. How do you choose who gets that investment?

Mairi Brewis: NFTS is running the training programme, so I believe it is opening applications on Thursday, and it will review the applicants. It has published some criteria on the kinds of eligible people that it is looking for, but I imagine it will also be looking at how it makes sure it gets good representation across the UK.

Q352 **Vicky Foxcroft:** You commission YouTube native content creators?

Mairi Brewis: We are not commissioning them. We are providing them with a free training skills programme. There are absolutely no commitments for them to put any content on YouTube or anything like that.

Q353 **Vicky Foxcroft:** You choose and select who they are.

Mairi Brewis: The NFTS does.

Q354 **Natasha Irons:** Can I just clarify, to go back to supporting the children's content ecosystem? I appreciate that, of course, you will want to, because you are focused on democratising access to markets—essentially, that is what you are trying to say—so you want to ensure that native creators have the same access to audiences as public service broadcasters, essentially.

Mairi Brewis: Subject to quality; I just want to remind that it is subject to quality.

Q355 **Natasha Irons:** Subject to quality, but ultimately I am sure that, if we spoke to a lot of your native creators, the thing they like is consistency and an income revenue that isn't all over the place. You mentioned earlier about the hypothecated taxes and all the other things that are tied to the digital landscape. Are you saying that, because you are avoiding commissioning content, you do not want to be in that space for whatever reason? Do we need to go into a space where we start recommending that we put a levy on your platform to fund children's content so that your natives can have an income that isn't all over the place, so that the production companies can still survive, and so that we create an ecosystem that is stable again—so that we can have good-quality content on whatever platform young people choose to watch it?

Alex Rawle: I will make two points. The first is that the Committee has not heard from any YouTube native content.

Natasha Irons: Yes, we have. We heard from—

Alex Rawle: Maddie is an absolutely amazing BAFTA winning kids creative, but there are a whole range of other creators that are YouTube only in some cases. I don't think that the Committee has heard from the wide—given there are 15,000—

Q356 **Chair:** Children's content is very difficult, as you said yourself. As Mairi said, it is very difficult to be YouTube only because you have to build a



jigsaw of income, because you do not make enough money from kids' content.

Mairi Brewis: It is not necessarily also TV, though; it could be that you are a YouTube creator and then have a line of physical merchandise or something like that.

Q357 **Natasha Irons:** I think the point is that it is not a stable income, and you do need to diversify. To put the floor back into the market, do we not need to look at how we do that?

Alex Rawle: The second point I would make is that I was at the same kids conference with Mairi, and no one said a bad word about YouTube, and some of the focus and criticism that we have seen in some of the evidence was not reflected in that room. There were four hours of panels and four hours of discussions. I don't know whether the Committee is getting a full, rounded picture of the full commissioning model, and also the people that—

Q358 **Natasha Irons:** Just to be very, very clear, this is not an attack on YouTube, and this is not in any way saying that YouTube is a bad thing. It is not that at all. The reality is you have all stated—as we all know—that viewing habits have changed and the way that people consume content has changed. That means the funding models and the funding streams have to change too. Therefore, if you will not be able to generate the revenue you need from advertising revenue for young people's content on YouTube, we will need to think about how we do this properly. If you have to rely on perhaps getting some sort of merchandise deal, that means we are not democratising this. Essentially, we will create very big winners and very big losers, and we are losing a lot of skill and talent in the middle, aren't we?

Alex Rawle: The other thing I would say is we are looking at this also from a very domestically focused lens. If you look at a YouTube content creator who is then able to grow their audience globally and create fandom, particularly in the US, you do have a sustainable business model. We have heard from creators who are doing that successfully. It is a different model, and it is a transition, but it is not one that isn't available to people.

Q359 **Chair:** We are talking about children. The thing here is we are talking about children, and you have already said, Alex, that within the constraints that you have to operate under, because of all the protections around advertising around children and that sort of thing, it is much harder to make money.

It might have been Mairi who spoke about Oli Hyatt from Blue Zoo, the company that makes "Numberblocks", which is hugely successful. Oli told us that he would have struggled to make the content if he had to rely on the advertising revenue from YouTube because it is very much geared towards very young children. What does it say about the ability for creators to be able to make a sustainable income—to Natasha's point—given the constraints that you have to operate under, if people who produce content like that, which is very well known, are not able to make

a living out of it?

Alex Rawle: I would take a step back and look at the wider frame here and the wider challenges. This is not a YouTube-specific problem. This is one where we have seen—

Q360 **Chair:** I am not saying that it is. This is not a YouTube-specific inquiry. It is a children's television inquiry, so we want to know from you—we are not attacking you—and to pick open your brain and take out your thoughts on how we fund sustainable quality British children's television and video content for the foreseeable future.

Mairi Brewis: I don't think I have a clear answer to that and, I agree, it is a hard challenge. I think we are in agreement that the UK creates fantastic content, so we would love for that to be something that is sustainable.

The way that we try to think about it at YouTube is we think almost about a flywheel of, "How do we make sure that creators and partners make wonderful content, which in turn really pleases users, which in turn drives monetisation?" That is all wrapped around a framework of responsibility as well. You need all of those pieces for it to work, so if you are not getting the wonderful content, the users aren't happy and there is no monetisation.

The problem with children is it is challenging. There are stricter considerations around advertising, which we take very seriously. We don't do targeted ads for children, which reduces the monetisation portion, so it is more difficult. Whatever we think about, we want to make sure that we create those incentives.

Q361 **Chair:** If you cannot commission, it sounds like Natasha's idea of a levy would be the solution to everybody's problem.

Mairi Brewis: We moved out of original commissioning at YouTube because it was not our core competency. I think one thing that we have done, which we hope is a contributor to some of these creators, is something that is called Player for Education. Basically, what that solves is it means that teachers in the classroom can use an ad-free version of YouTube, but there is a payment mechanism. The educational tech platforms pay YouTube for access to the content to provide to teachers, and that money is used to pay back to the creators of the original content.

What we were trying to solve there was if you are creating learning content, but then you cannot have ads around that in the classroom, what is the incentive for those learning creators?

Chair: Could you send us some details on that? That is quite complicated, but it would be helpful if you could update us with some details on that. We need to move on. We have 20 minutes before you guys have to flee, and I am sure you will be very pleased at that point. Bayo, please.

Q362 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** Thank you, Chair. Do you sympathise with parents who

navigate the usability of YouTube for young people?

Dr Graham: Yes. I am not a sympathiser; I am a parent. I love my job at YouTube, but I love my kids even more, so we not only sympathise, but work with parents in general. I think what you are referring to in general are parental controls. You may have seen that we have worked to simplify a lot of those controls, and we announced that recently, in terms of allowing parents to be able to toggle between accounts to set up that age-appropriate experience. To answer your question, we do.

One of the things we have heard from parents—and this was published in a study—is that over 80% of parents in the UK, when their kids are in the supervised experience, believe that their kids are getting an age-appropriate experience. Again, our goal is for kids to have an age-appropriate experience, so we not only sympathise but I think work to do that.

One of the tools that we did most recently is we now allow parents to set a shorts timer for their kid, which is the amount of time their kids view short-form video. They can set it to a lesser amount; they can even set it to zero. That is an important change in our recent appearance.

Q363 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** Thank you for that. When the Committee took some evidence, we spoke to Professor Orben who basically said that for a parent to have high control, they need to be highly educated to navigate the tools on your platform. There was another report in 2024 that found that 16% of parents did not know how to set up parental controls. Again, what you have just conveyed is a parent who is technologically enabled, but we know that is not the case for everybody. This report says 16%, but it may be more in some scenarios. What is your view on that?

Dr Graham: A couple of things. That is why we have a lot of baseline protections for kids. So, for any kid under 18, if the system picks up that you are under 18 via age inference, there are a number of things such as no targeted ads and no autoplay, and wellbeing features that surface. That is a baseline for children.

Q364 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** So no autoplay on YouTube Kids?

Dr Graham: There is no autoplay, not only on YouTube Kids, but if the system infers your age as being under 18, these protections kick in, including no autoplay. This is on YouTube, if it thinks you are a kid. Does that make sense?

Mr Bayo Alaba: Yes.

Dr Graham: I am sorry, I want to get back to your question. That is one aspect, so by default, a lot of those things are occurring in the background. But, as I just mentioned, we work to simplify our parental controls to make it simpler for parents in general. I would venture to say that part of what we are continuing to do is to listen to parents and make those changes. To answer your question more succinctly, a lot of that simplification we just announced in January of this year, and I think we will continue to hear from parents. The third thing—



Q365 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** You said January. Has that taken too long to come about? You have been in operation for some time. We have heard about the profits that you make. We understand you are a well-resourced organisation, so why has it taken that long to make those adjustments?

Dr Graham: I think it is an ongoing evolution. We have been making changes to parental controls. We introduced a supervised kids' experience for younger teens and then for teenagers. This is a continued evolution. What I would say is that this a continuing evolution, especially as we continue to hear from parents.

Alex Rawle: If I could just come in, I think this is about uptake of those tools. We have done research and over 80% of parents who use the tools think they are good and 80% of parents think that they help their kids achieve a more age-appropriate experience. This is a whole of society problem. It is also part of the Government's consultation here. How do we encourage more people to use parental tools, and how do we make it as easy as possible for parents who are juggling lots of things?

Q366 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** I do understand that but, Alex, you mentioned that 500 hours of content are uploaded hourly. Mairi, you spoke about how kids access the channels. There are different platforms: phone, laptop, even on TV and things like that. You have all of these different routes into the platform. You also have YouTube Kids, for example, which does not have an autoplay, but you may have children's content on the main YouTube, which has autoplay. My concern is that, yes, of course there are some parents who are enabled, but the big issue is there are a lot of parents who do not have the skills or the time to protect their kids. Your platform does have an impact, and the penetration of your platform is significant, so I just want to clarify that.

Dr Graham: I want to clarify something you said. For Made for Kids content on YouTube main, autoplay is disabled, so not just in YouTube Kids.

Q367 **Damian Hinds:** It is off by default, not disabled?

Dr Graham: You are right, not disabled—I apologise, that is not the right word. Off by default, thank you; I used the wrong terminology. It is off by default. To your point about the YouTube Kids app and YouTube main, it is off by default in YouTube Made For Kids content. It is off by default in that. Does that make sense?

Q368 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** Yes, but what about children's content on the main channel?

Dr Graham: That is what I am saying.

Mairi Brewis: If you are on YouTube main, and you are watching a lot of "Numberblocks", "Bing" or whatever else—anything else that signals that actually you may not be an adult and you might be a child—the system will pick that up and say, "Right, this is probably a child watching. Let's start treating them as if they were a child, even though they are on YouTube main."



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Alex Rawle: I don't really want to lose the fact that there are a number of default protections, from our community guidelines that remove 98% of content algorithmically at scale, and it does that really well, to our innovative age assurance model that places children in a protected state and age-gates adult content. There are a number of baseline protections that are put in place, even on top of the parental tools.

Q369 **Mr Bayo Alaba:** Okay. Another aspect is obviously the comments section. There are so many ways that our young people are affected, so what are the protections around some of the comments that you find in some of these channels as well?

Dr Graham: The kinds of things that are turned off for younger kids are no targeted ads and also, within that, the comments—the kinds of interactions that may occur—do not happen within that setting. Then there are notifications as well. Those are the kinds of things that we turn off within that system.

Chair: We will keep this moving. Damian.

Q370 **Damian Hinds:** Thank you very much. Just on this thing about the system inferring the age of the child. It is true, though, is it not, that there are literally hundreds of thousands of children in this country who have an apparent digital age higher than their actual age? We know that from Ofcom research and other research.

Can I ask, if you take the younger groups—say, nine to 12-year-olds—they could be watching YouTube normal or they could be watching YouTube Kids. I am sure you have research on what proportion of the time nine to 12-year-olds spend on YouTube versus on YouTube Kids?

Alex Rawle: We have classifiers that look to identify under 13s on the YouTube main app and remove them.

Q371 **Damian Hinds:** Okay. You think there is nobody under 13 watching YouTube regular?

Alex Rawle: There may be, but we have systems in place to try to catch them and remove them. We find the channels, and those channels are frozen for 14 days. People are given an opportunity to verify their age and if they are not able to do that, the channel is removed.

Q372 **Natasha Irons:** The channel or the user?

Alex Rawle: The user's account is removed rather than the channel—sorry, just to be clear.

Q373 **Damian Hinds:** So your clear policy is that there should be literally nobody—no child under the age of 13—using regular YouTube?

Alex Rawle: Using the YouTube main account.

Damian Hinds: Thank you.

Dr Graham: Sorry, I just want to clarify something. They should be in either the YouTube supervised experience or in the YouTube Kids app.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The YouTube supervised experience, between the ages of nine to 12, allows that. I just want to be clear about that.

Q374 **Damian Hinds:** I am sure you do read the data that you see from, for example, the Ofcom research. The BBC has some research that suggests really quite large numbers of children under that age are watching YouTube.

Alex Rawle: I guess are they in the Made for Kids experience.

Q375 **Damian Hinds:** Does that perturb you in any way?

Alex Rawle: We are committed to making sure that kids are having age-appropriate experiences. For under 13-year-olds, we want them to be using YouTube Kids or the Made for Kids experience. For teens, there is a supervised experience, which is important.

Damian Hinds: I am coming to that.

Dr Graham: We are committed to age-appropriate experiences. That also means finding kids who are on the main app and making sure that they are not on the main app because—

Q376 **Damian Hinds:** Okay. For 13 to 17-year-olds—I have children of this age, but I had to look this up—I gather you need a thing called Google Family Link, is that right? Is that the main way that you have some control? What proportion of 13 to 17-year-olds' parents are using Google Family Link set to, I think, "Explore more"? Therefore, what proportion of that teenage group is having that control exerted by a family?

Dr Graham: Meaning within that category, what proportion have it set to that category?

Q377 **Damian Hinds:** No, if you are 13 or over, I am trying to establish whether there is a significant proportion of children for whom parents have set some controls. I will ask you about your shorts; in fact, you might as well answer that at the same time. You talked already about the timer for the shorts feed. How many people have actually done that?

Dr Graham: Well, that is what is coming—

Q378 **Damian Hinds:** First, you would need to know there is distinction between shorts and everything else. Then you would need to know that Google and YouTube are the same company. Then you would need to be taking a break from setting TikTok and Instagram controls to worry about YouTube. Then you would need to work out how you do it. Then you have a toggle for your—what is it called?—"Explore more" and a different toggle for your shorts timer. I am sure it is possible, but what do we know about how many people actually manage to get to like stage 11 in the process?

Alex Rawle: I would say that we have just announced a new family centre to make this easier. That is being rolled out alongside the shorts timer, so the product is evolving to meet the challenges that you have set out.

Damian Hinds: But do we know—sorry, I am being slightly flippant,



obviously, in the way I word it.

Alex Rawle: I understand.

Q379 **Damian Hinds:** Do we know what proportion of families are using some form of these controls, given that it is complicated and there are multiple systems? You might have an Apple device and a Samsung device and a PC, and you might have three children of three different ages and all the rest of it. Who actually manages to do some of this stuff?

Alex Rawle: We do not have the stats, but I am happy to write to you and follow up on that.

Dr Graham: I think the point you are making is that parents' lives are complicated. I think that is the point you are making, and that there are different steps that people have to go through in that. Listen, I will just tell you, I live that complicated parenting life too, so it is not just your constituents. I work within that and live within that scenario too.

I will tell you, when we are talking about the kinds of things we have on default and the kinds of things that kick in, that is why we put a lot of effort into the things that will work by default and the things that work in terms of inferred age. That is why we will continue to work to make these experiences simpler for parents. My dad taught me never to claim perfection, but to continue to work hard. I think that is why we will always continue to work hard to really get that to work.

Q380 **Damian Hinds:** Okay. I do not want to be too pushy here, but I do not think I have heard anybody come up with a number or a rough proportion—is it a tiny proportion? We know it is not most, right?

Alex Rawle: We will write to you.

Q381 **Damian Hinds:** Speaking of writing to us, I do not expect you to have an answer to this one right now but there is an ad campaign that, Garth, you may have seen since you have been in the UK, including in the Westminster underground station of late, which says that something like 83% of parents think that YouTube helps—your PR team will be thrilled that someone has read this back—their kids access educational material or something. It is not the most obvious line to pick out of a survey. My question to you is, I think it is a survey done with Oxford Economics. I do not expect you to have all the data ready for us right now, but will you commit to sending us the full set of survey questions and answers, including the cross tabs?

Alex Rawle: Yes. To the best of the ability that I have control of.

Q382 **Damian Hinds:** I understand. Thank you. Now, there is a lot of great content on YouTube—I think that is unarguable—but it is a bit like saying there is a lot of balanced discussion on social media. It is true, but there is also an awful lot of other stuff, and the great content is not necessarily what you see. We just had a little conversation about education. I am not sure I quite followed the thing about the product for in-class, but you will follow up on that.

I want to talk about education at home and homework, because one of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the big complaints that we as MPs get from parents is, “I can’t avoid approving YouTube for my children because the school keeps setting homework that involves looking at a video on YouTube.” There is a simple way around that, which is to create a walled garden for education content, then a parent could approve the use of YouTube specifically for education content and not for anything else. Will you commit today to doing that?

Dr Graham: I think that is what Mairi described in terms of the product that we offer.

Mairi Brewis: Yes, so that—

Q383 **Damian Hinds:** It did not sound like it; it sounded like an in-school product to me.

Mairi Brewis: Nowadays a lot of the schools work with ed tech providers. I don’t know if you have children yourself going through education, but there are things like Seesaw or Firefly and things like that. What those do is they essentially provide—where you used to just get letters home from the school, now they often all come through that system. That is where you might log in for your parents’ meeting—

Q384 **Damian Hinds:** Why have you not given a plug for Google Classroom, by the way?

Mairi Brewis: Google Classroom is another one, I apologise. Thank you.

Damian Hinds: Come on.

Mairi Brewis: You have done excellent work on behalf of our marketing team.

Q385 **Damian Hinds:** Okay. You are quite right. So Google Classroom, Show My Homework and Satchel One—these are some of the big volume players. They do not direct you to a walled garden. They direct you to a video on open YouTube as a general rule.

Mairi Brewis: The product that I was referring to, Player for Education, would be a way that you can access it within that interface and it would be—

Q386 **Chair:** That is for parents as well as teachers?

Mairi Brewis: The teachers would be able to select the specific videos that feature for the children in their class, “I want them to watch this video, so therefore I’m putting that one into the garden that’s available for that set of children.”

Q387 **Chair:** That would be able to be accessed from home for homework?

Mairi Brewis: I would have thought so. I imagine it slightly depends on the education.

Damian Hinds: I will ask you to write to us because we will be writing to our constituents who will be very interested to hear. Thank you.

Mairi Brewis: Yes.



Chair: Can we squeeze an extra five minutes out of you so we can get to our last two questions? Vicky, can you do yours very quickly, please?

Vicky Foxcroft: I am quite happy to come in on the back of the social media stuff.

Chair: In that case, let's go to Jo.

Q388 **Jo Platt:** The banning of social media for under-16s is a live topic here in the UK, as you know, with the Government launching a three-month consultation to improve children's digital wellbeing. The Government are watching the Australian ban very, very closely. Moving on to that, the eSafety Commissioner in Australia advised that YouTube should be included in the under-16s social media ban, partly based on research that found 37% of young people had encountered harmful content. Does that statistic concern you?

Alex Rawle: Obviously, a statistic like that would concern us, but I think it is about looking at what the UK is doing. We do have a different regulatory environment and also product in the UK. There are a number of benefits to the national conversation and consultation that the Government are putting forward. They are looking at ages zero to 16, which is more comprehensive. They are looking at a wider range of services, including gaming and emerging technology, as well as just social media. Critically, it is looking at features and functionalities, which is a real positive.

We also have with Ofcom a risk-based system that looks at risk and a number of companies have had to provide a huge amount of evidence about the risk profile of their services. I think that any future action in this space that the Government have committed to taking forward should be focused on that risk, and should be focused on features and functionalities linked to that risk.

Dr Graham: If we are hearing about harm, and if we are hearing about the kinds of things that are dangerous, we are always concerned and take that very seriously. We have our community guidelines. We have our removal policies based on those community guidelines, and our system detects about 98% of harmful content—we publish this in our transparency report—of views that are violative or content that is violative. There are the harmful and dangerous policies or the sensitive content policies, and policies about things like spam, and all of that is how we consider removal in our community guidelines, so we take it very seriously.

That reminds me of one thing I want to mention. Thinking about the numbers and things that are important, the Committee heard earlier from some amazing researchers that you have here about the number of kids, between the ages of zero to three, who have age-appropriate experiences on YouTube. They heard that that number was 19%. That was a study that was done, which was published in 2024 but was based on data from 2020 and a small set of 420 individuals. Just so you know, that was before we had our kids' quality principles. That was before we had a lot of



the other things that we use now to improve that. I wanted to say that that study is dated and was taken before we had a lot of the kind of things that we use now to improve our platform.

Q389 Jo Platt: But does it concern you that YouTube is being put in that category of other social media? It goes back to your identity crisis—the first question—doesn't it?

Alex Rawle: I think this comes back to the point that if 50% of people are watching YouTube at home on connected devices, and they have very limited social sharing and functionalities, I think it needs to be based on the risk. I hear concerns about ephemeral messages and location-based services, and I think that someone needs to look at these holistically. Also, the conversation has moved from safety to wellbeing, which is also a really good point. That is why we have introduced the ability to turn shorts to zero, and also why I think this conversation is important.

I would also note with the Australian account-based ban, if you were to lift that and bring it to the UK, it would strip teens in the UK who have accounts of wellbeing features that are currently available. All of the "Take a break" reminders, all of the bedtime reminders would be gone, but they would still have access to YouTube. It is not a particularly effective way of dealing with the solution, and it isn't one that we would want to see modelled in this country.

Q390 Jo Platt: You have just mentioned one aspect there, so what other arguments would you give to Parliament that YouTube should not be included in a similar under-16 social media ban?

Alex Rawle: I think it comes back to the question: is YouTube social media and does it contain risky features and functionalities that are concerning or detrimental to children's wellbeing? What would be the challenges of restricting access to younger users of those services? There is a conversation about short-form content. Lots of my family members, lots of people who I know, use short-form content to learn. We have great short-form content creators who are helping people break down maths, for example. If you took away their ability to use that short-form content, that might harm certain groups.

The other thing for me is a socioeconomic consideration. When we have these conversations, there is often an idea that kids will have immediate access to other options, but actually YouTube is a place for learning. People learn the guitar. People learn how to code. People learn to experience the rest of the world. If we were to ban people from those services, it would have a disproportionate effect on people from more deprived backgrounds. That has not really been a feature of the debate.

Q391 Vicky Foxcroft: Do you think there should be a social media ban for under-16s?

Alex Rawle: I think we are focused on protecting kids in the online world, not from the online world. In a scenario where we will be looking at giving votes to 16-year-olds, totally cutting them off from online activity and access to some of the debate that happens there and then asking them to vote feels very incongruous to us. I do recognise the real



HOUSE OF COMMONS

concerns from parents and society about the digital environment, but I think it needs to be done in a risk-based and an evidence-based way. That is why I think that having a national conversation and a consultation looking at all of these issues is definitely the right way to do this.

Dr Graham: There has been some data published by the London School of Economics here and the American Academy of Pediatrics that talks about allowing kids to develop, giving them the guardrails and then allowing their prefrontal cortex—all these other aspects—to develop over time. With my kids, I allow my 11-year-old to start riding his bicycle a little bit more, then a little bit more, and then a little bit more in the neighbourhood. He understands roles and responsibilities for himself. Therefore, this idea of allowing kids to develop in a digital world—getting all of the good things they can in a digital world and understanding how we help them to navigate harms and challenges—is particularly important.

Q392 **Vicky Foxcroft:** That is a no, is that right?

Alex Rawle: I don't think we think that YouTube should be banned.

Q393 **Vicky Foxcroft:** Okay. It is fine just to say no. Do you worry about the amount of screen time that young people are facing? When I go into schools, I find that teachers are really worried about this.

Dr Graham: Yes. On the concept of screen time, there is a lot of interesting data, and there is something that was recently published by the American Psychiatric Association and others. One of the things to understand—and this goes back to, I think, what the Committee is here to talk about generally—is quality screen time. There is a big difference between the amount of screen time you may spend learning and understanding versus screen time you may spend on less brain-enhancing activities. All time isn't equal. That is why I think a lot of the comments you heard from the experts who came in in January were about parental co-viewing and the kinds of things that enhance it. I would say that the idea of screen time is important, but the concept of focusing on quality time is important as well.

Alex Rawle: Can I make one additional point? It is really clear to understand that we have a differentiated experience for kids and teens. The recommendation system for kids and teens is different from that for adults. We are directing kids and teens towards quality content through the guidelines that Garth has described, and we are committed to high-quality content and age-appropriate experiences.

Q394 **Chair:** Could you ever introduce a kind of traffic light system?

Alex Rawle: What would that look like?

Chair: Where content that you know came from really high-quality sources, so our PSBs in the UK or maybe some of your production partners that you know produce high-quality children's content, would already be marked as green. Then, something that you had not really seen but had effectively passed your algorithmic AI check might be—I mean, what is the—



Dr Graham: I think what we have in our environment is that our recommendation systems prioritise high-quality content and deprioritise low-quality content—some of the content that we just talked about. Again, things around having to see the world, learning, creativity, and the sense of self-efficacy—those kinds of concepts for kids and then similarly for teens—we do think we guide our systems towards that, and I think that is a strategy that we are employing.

Q395 **Chair:** The problem with YouTube is that once you start looking at a certain type of content, it feeds you more and more of the same. What I am interested in from you, Dr Graham, is whether there is any—I am very elderly, so when I was growing up there were only three and then four channels, right. When we came home from school, you would watch a curated section of TV programmes, some of which you loved, some of which you were less interested in, but it was really good developmentally for your brain because you would be watching a buffet of nourishing content. Some of that you would watch thinking, “I’m not sure this is of interest to me,” but suddenly it would spark something in your head that would go on to be a lifelong passion. My concern is about the developmental perspective of children, which is why I am interested in your perspective. If all they are doing is watching endless episodes of something—in my children’s case, they are very keen on watching other children playing video games—what does that do developmentally to a brain?

Dr Graham: Yes. I remember that experience, by the way, where you had to go back and forth between a couple of channels. What we really employ in our systems is this idea, again, of content that allows kids to get more creativity, and information that gives them more of this role model and self-independence concept. That is what our systems drive. To answer your specific question, what we do with this is our systems are really geared towards delivering. Even our roles are geared towards making sure that we continue to deliver high-quality content.

Dame Caroline, within the first year that the YouTube quality principles were published, there was an increase of 45% in views of high-quality content across our platform. What does that show? Going back to the example that you just gave, it is that, once we employ these principles, it actually increases the viewing concept. On what we need to continue to do, thinking through the experiences you and I both had when we were younger, versus the experiences now, that is where it goes back to some of the things that you heard from the other experts who came and spoke about how, as parents, we continue to engage with our kids in terms of their viewing habits as well. I would say that for us, we are still very much committed to this issue of high-quality content.

Chair: Thank you. Two more very quick questions, then we can let you go. Rupa first.

Q396 **Dr Rupa Huq:** Yes. Have you seen this big trial that opened yesterday in California? It is being touted as a landmark trial. Both YouTube and Meta are being taken to court by a plaintiff for draining the brains of children and building “addiction machines”. It has just started off with opening



statements. Apparently they have found documentation from Mark Zuckerberg that there are internal business goals that want to increase the screen time hours that Vicky was just alluding to. I think they have also accused YouTube of “digital babysitting” for parents. How do you think that will go? It has just started, but it is all over the BBC website.

Alex Rawle: I cannot comment on a live legislative trial that is happening in California. I think the lawyers will be watching this.

Q397 **Dr Rupa Huq:** As parents, we do recognise that a digital babysitter is useful as well.

Dr Graham: Given what Alex said, I want to make sure that, from a legal perspective, I don’t step out of bounds, but I will just tell you—and I cannot speak for any other platform—that we are super dedicated to this issue around high-quality content. In the YouTube Kids app, where the youngest of folks are interacting, we have systems, we have people, we have 10 years of experience, we have controls, and we have a large team. We have a lot of things that are dedicated to our kids having that protected experience. I would say, from a YouTube perspective—again, I cannot speak for what is happening in the other platform world—we are very much dedicated to this issue of safety for kids and teens.

Q398 **Natasha Irons:** That leads to my final question. In your professional opinion, and given the amount of work that you put into keeping young people safe on your platform, do you think your competitors are doing enough on their platforms?

Alex Rawle: I will just give one example if that is possible. We have run a very innovative, robust age inference and age assurance process on YouTube for a number of years. When the child safety code from Ofcom came into force, a number of other large services moved towards our system, which gates content and then allows children access to content, rather than allowing children access to content and then gating it. I think there are a number of examples from that to the shorts timer, and the quality principles that drive the recommendation system, that do differentiate us from our competitors and the level of investment that we are seeing.

Q399 **Natasha Irons:** Do you think they are doing enough?

Alex Rawle: I think that, overall, the ecosystem needs to do more and I hope that the Ofcom regime will encourage other people to raise the bar to meet the expectations of citizens and parents in the UK. I think there is an opportunity for that to happen.

Dr Graham: I know you are looking at me—I was going to try to drink as much water to not step into the wrong thing—but here is what I would say. I would just tell you that we are super dedicated to this issue, as both individual parents and professionals. What I hope is that the ecosystem follows a lot of the things that we have done, because what we really care about is kids everywhere getting better, right? It is not just that I want a child who is on YouTube to get better; I want that for children everywhere—for all our kids.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

That is why I love conversations like these. It is probably the perfect way to end this. Your concern and your passion, we share that. We believe that super deeply as well. I hope that we are all pulling everything together for the safety of our kids, because I think that is ultimately what we care about.

Alex Rawle: I was just going to make one broader point, which is, on top of that, we are also really committed to the UK and the UK creative industries, and being a responsible part of the UK creative industry sector and the screen sector. I think some of the passion that you heard from us earlier was because, day in and day out, I see the work that Mairi and her team do to collaborate with partners, whether they are media companies or whether they are content creators in the UK. We really do see ourselves as part of that ecosystem and supporting that ecosystem. I just wanted to make that point as well.

Q400 **Natasha Irons:** What do you think, Mairi?

Mairi Brewis: I agree—keep it short.

Chair: That is a sensible answer. Thank you very much. Everyone else happy? Good. Thank you so much for your time today. We are really grateful for all your evidence, but we would also be very grateful if you could follow up in writing with all the bits and bobs that we missed out there. Thank you for coming all the way from the States to see us.

Dr Graham: I just want to end this by saying thank you to you all as well. We are all striving towards the same goal and working together is important, so thank you.

Chair: Thank you.