



Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
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Monika Bickert
Head, Global Policy Management
Facebook
c/o 10 Brock Street
Regent Place
London NW13F

By email

18 May 2020

Dear Ms Bickert,

Oral evidence: COVID-19 Infodemic

I received a letter on 14 May from Richard Earley, Facebook's UK Public Policy Manager, following his oral evidence to the Committee on behalf of Facebook on 30 April.

Mr. Earley's letter does not contain adequate answers to the questions we posed on 30 April, and subsequently followed up in writing. In particular, clearer answers are needed concerning: design decisions for WhatsApp in limiting the spread of false narratives; Facebook's reliance of automated content moderation; and the scope and effectiveness of new 'correct the record' tools. We also raised some specific examples of harmful misinformation in writing that could have given the Committee greater insight into what content triggers Facebook action, but this was not addressed in detail in Mr Earley's responses.

In my letter to Facebook of 4 May, I expressed disappointment with the oral evidence given by Mr Earley on 30 April. The Committee was given pre-prepared answers instead of direct responses to our questions. In my letter, I left open the option of recalling Facebook—represented this time by a senior executive with direct knowledge of, and accountability for, company policy. I regret to say that I now have no option but to do this.

Accordingly, we request oral evidence from you, as a senior executive with sufficient knowledge and authority to give an accurate account of recent events concerning Facebook's response to the infodemic. You gave evidence to our predecessor Committee in February 2018 and again in November 2019 (with our International Grand Committee colleagues) in Dublin, and we are keen to continue that dialogue with you.

We would like this session to take place in w/c 1 June. Committee staff will be in touch to discuss a suitable timeslot, but I would ask that you respond by Wednesday 20 May confirming your willingness to participate.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Knight MP
Chair, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee