

Accountability

Recommendation 9: The government should introduce Online Harms legislation within a year of this Report's publication. (Paragraph 84)

Government response:

The government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online and the best place to start and grow a digital business.

We will publish the full consultation response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year, which will be followed by legislation as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Recommendation 10 - The Online Harms work should make clear that platforms' duty of care extends to actions which undermine democracy. This means that the duty of care extends to preventing generic harm to our democracy as well as against specific harm to an individual. (Paragraph 89)

Government response:

The government is undertaking an ambitious programme of wider work on how we govern digital technologies to unlock the huge opportunities they present whilst minimising the risks. Work on electoral integrity and related online transparency issues is being taken forward as part of the Defending Democracy programme together with the Cabinet Office. Our approach recognises the need to promote fair and efficient markets where the benefits of technology are shared widely across communities; ensure the safety and security of those online; and maintain a thriving democracy and society, where pluralism and freedom of expression are protected.

The proposed online harms regulatory approach will be proportionate and risk-based. The duty of care will be designed to ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to improve the safety of their users. Companies and the regulator will be required to prioritise action to tackle illegal content and to protect children online. The government will set out additional information about the duty of care in the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper later this year.

Recommendation 11 - For harmful but legal content, Ofcom's codes of practice should focus on the principle that platforms should be liable for the content they rank, recommend or target to users. (Paragraph 108)