



**Joint Committee
on the National
Security Strategy**

Friday 28 March 2025

**Dame Melanie Dawes
Chief Executive, Ofcom**

[By email]

Dear Dame Melanie,

Defending Democracy and the Online Safety Act

In the previous parliament, Ofcom's Director of Online Safety Policy, Jessica Zucker, appeared before the predecessor Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy as part of its inquiry into Defending Democracy.

Ms Zucker told the predecessor Committee that Ofcom was taking a "multi-faceted" approach to addressing online threats, with duties expected to become operational by the end of 2024. Despite these reassurances, a number of duties included in the Online Safety Act (OSA) are not still yet operational.

I would therefore be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions:

1. Under Section 152 of the 2023 Online Safety Act Ofcom is responsible for setting up an Advisory Committee on Disinformation and Misinformation. We understand that the Advisory Committee is not yet operational, despite that statutory provision coming into force over a year ago. When will the Advisory Committee be fully operational?
2. In March 2024 Ofcom told us it would ensure social media companies have sufficiently staffed content moderation teams. Do you believe that all of the firms falling under Category 1 currently meet this expectation? And are you confident you have sufficient powers to require timely compliance?
3. How confident are you that social media companies will be able to take action under the Foreign Interference Offence given the difficulties in establishing a link between producers of mis-disinformation and the 'foreign power' condition?



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4. We note Ofcom's new three-year media literacy strategy. What are the key areas for making progress on media literacy that Ofcom is not able to lead on and require Government to play a leading role. Your strategy cites classroom education, for example. Are there others?

I would be grateful for your response by 23 April. In line with usual practice, I will be placing a copy of this letter and your response in the public domain in due course.

Best wishes,

Matt Western MP
Chair, Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy