



Department for
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MC2021/11224/DC

18 June 2021

I am writing with further details on two issues that came up during my recent Committee appearance.

During the Committee hearing, I promised to write with further details of the evidence about children accessing pornography online. The online safety regime will ensure the most comprehensive approach possible to protecting children. Research by the British Board of Film Classification published in 2020 found that 7% of children intentionally accessed pornography through dedicated pornography sites alone. Most children intentionally accessing pornography were doing so across a number of sources, including social media, as well as video sharing platforms, forums, and via image or video search engines, the majority of which will fall within the scope of online safety legislation. In addition, recent research by City University through a survey of over 1000 16 and 17 year olds found that more had seen pornography on social media platforms than on pornographic websites. The online safety regime will capture the most visited pornography sites and pornography on social media, therefore covering the vast majority of sites where children are most likely to be exposed to pornography. As I said during the hearing, if we can find a commensurate way of providing wider protection for children within the Bill, there is a strong case for doing so.

I also wanted to provide further detail on whether the right to recourse will apply to groups under the online safety regime. The user reporting and redress mechanisms that companies will be required to put in place will enable individual users or other affected persons (for example parents, carers or the subject of content) to report harmful content, challenge wrongful takedown, and raise concerns that a company has failed to fulfil its duty of care. However, there are other mechanisms under the new online safety framework where issues can be raised and addressed at a group level. The super-complaints mechanism will enable organisations to submit evidence to the regulator of systemic issues that are causing harm to certain groups across more than one service, or in exceptional circumstances on one service, which Ofcom

will review. Ofcom will also have a statutory duty to establish mechanisms for user advocacy for online harms. This will ensure that it understands the experiences of users and is able to detect and address issues early on. This provision was not included in the draft Online Safety Bill but will be included in the final Bill before it is laid in Parliament.

Thank you for your Committee's continued engagement on the Online Safety legislation. I look forward to discussing the provisions further with you and the Committee's members as the Bill moves towards introduction.

Yours
Oliver

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oliver', written in a cursive style.

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