

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

6 March 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Online Harms

Thank you for contacting me about the NSPCC's Wild West Web campaign.

The internet has become an integral part of our lives and whilst being online can be a hugely positive experience for children, with amazing access to knowledge and information, we have to be alive to the dangers. I believe it is vital that we do all we can to protect our children when they are online, so that we make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

I know the Government fully recognises the importance of tackling online harms, including harmful content to children on the Internet. That is why the Online Harms White Paper, jointly published by the Home Office and Department of Culture Media and Sport in April 2019, sets out plans for worldleading legislation in this area.

As championed by the NSPCC, that Bill will establish a new duty of care on companies towards their users, which will be overseen by an independent regulator. This will make companies take more responsibility for the safety of their users and tackle harm caused by content or activity on their services. The regulator will have a suite of powers to take effective enforcement action against companies that have breached their statutory duty of care. This will be based on a risk-based approach, prioritising action to tackle activity or content where there is the greatest evidence or threat of harm, or where children or other vulnerable users are at risk.

I also welcome that, as set out in the Online Harms White Paper, the Government will be developing an online media literacy strategy. This strategy will lead to a coordinated and strategic approach to online media literacy education and awareness for children, young people and adults. Online media and digital literacy can equip users with the skills they need to spot dangers online, critically appraise information and take steps to keep themselves and others safe online.

Additionally I've had discussions with technology companies including Google and BT to find ways of ensuring they play their part in educating our young people on staying safe online.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Higginbotham'.

Antony Higginbotham MP
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