

Letter on Age-Assurance (Minimum Standards) Bill

19 November 2021

We have a duty to families, children, and young people to ensure they are set up to thrive in the digital world. As it stands, we are failing this duty. The digital world is working against us, with children on the receiving end of harmful content, commercial surveillance and online abuse.

The UK government has made progress to protect children through regulation such as the Age-Appropriate Design Code, which mandates platforms to ensure children's privacy online, and the upcoming Online Safety Bill. But big gaps remain. Children can still access and be targeted by content and activity designed for adults.

Almost half (42%) of children aged 5-12 are on social media sites, despite most having a minimum age requirement of 13, and over 80% of pornography sites do not have age checks. This is what tech self-regulation age assurance looks like.

Minimum standards for checking the age and ensuring the privacy of the user are urgently needed. The Age Assurance (Minimum Standards) Bill is a unique and immediate opportunity to make effective and privacy-preserving age assurance a reality.

Signed

- Age Check Verification Scheme – Tony Allen, Founder and Chief Executive
- Age Verification Providers Association – Warren Russell, CEO W2 and Co-Chair
- Age Verification Providers Association – Alastair Graham, CEO AgeChecked and Co-Chair
- Barnardo's – Lynn Perry, Co-CEO (Interim)
- Children England – Kathy Evans, CEO
- Children's Commissioner for England – Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner
- Church of England – The Rt Revd Dr. Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford
- Ditch the Label – Dr. Liam Hackett, Global CEO
- ECPAT – Patricia Durr, Chief Executive
- Global Action Plan – Sonja Graham, CEO
- It's a Penalty – Sarah de Carvalho MBE, CEO
- Lucy Faithfull – Deborah Dennis, Chief Executive
- Molly Rose Foundation – Ian Russell, Chair
- NSPCC – Andy Burrows, Head of Child Safety Online Policy
- VerifyMyAge – Andy Lullham, COO
- Yoti – Julie Dawson, Director of Regulatory and Policy
- 5Rights Foundation – Baroness Beeban Kidron, Chair