

# Children's Coalition for Online Safety

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## JOINT STATEMENT ON THE CHILDREN'S ONLINE SAFETY REGIME

April 2025



**NSPCC**



As organisations advocating for a safer and healthier online world, we believe that the Online Safety Act is an integral first step in ensuring that tech companies are held accountable for the proliferation of illegal content, activity and harm to children which has characterised our digital age. Since it passed into law, we have engaged closely with Ofcom and the Government to offer our support and resources to help build a regulatory regime that delivers on promises made to children, parents and survivors during its passage.

We welcome the work done to deliver enforcement plans ahead of schedule, and efforts to tackle child sexual abuse online. However, it is clear from the outpouring of concern and national discussion around the themes explored in the show *Adolescence* that we need more than the standardisation of places of good practice.

Ofcom's codes of practice – the foundations of the regimes – must, at the very least, address known online harm to children. Despite calls from experts, civil society and parliamentarians for it to be strengthened, the Illegal Harms Codes of Practice, which came into force in March 2025, was watered down from its draft proposals following pressure from the tech industry. Further, we have been concerned by reports that the regulation could be further watered down in international trade negotiations. We

support the Government's commitment to boosting innovation in the UK to grow our economy, but this must not come at the expense of children's safety.

With the Protection of Children Code of Practice due to be published imminently, we are calling for a firm commitment from Government and decisive action from Ofcom to grasp the opportunity to make a meaningful difference to children's safety in the UK.

### **1. Set high expectations for online safety**

The codes of practice must set ambitious standards that go beyond codification of existing industry practices. "Tick-box" solutions are insufficient – Ofcom must focus on measurable outcomes that demonstrably enhance children's online safety. In particular, they must reflect the requirement for safety by design to be delivered throughout the platform, incentivise tech companies to innovate in the name of children's safety by removing safe harbour provisions, and require age-appropriate safeguards.

We urge Ofcom and the Government to adopt the Children's Coalition's recommendations to robustly protect children online.

### **2. Accelerate the development of future codes of practice**

We welcome that Ofcom has met its deadlines for the publication of the codes ahead of schedule, but the delay between producing future codes will not keep pace with emerging threats, or address all of the known and ongoing harm to children. We must see future codes of practice brought forward within twelve months, with equal weight given to the evidence from civil society and views of industry through consultation.

### **3. Establish strong oversight mechanisms**

The online safety regime must be future-proof and responsive to the concerns of Parliament, and the public who use these services. The Government should establish a Joint Committee on Digital Regulation to harness the expertise and concern of parliamentarians to deliver meaningful accountability to decisions made by Ofcom.

Against a backdrop of a constantly changing online world and the growing concerns of children and their parents, it is essential we have in place a robust regulatory foundation which is innovative and agile. Ofcom's approach to date has been to standardise current practice which does not go far enough to keep children safe. The Government and Ofcom must work together and commit to defending and strengthening this crucial regime in order to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

**Signed:**

5Rights Foundation  
NSPCC  
Molly Rose Foundation  
Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH)  
Barnardo's  
Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)  
Anti-Bullying Alliance  
Marie Collins Foundation  
Lucy Faithfull Foundation  
Childnet  
End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition  
UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC)  
South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL)  
Clean Up The Internet  
Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT) UK  
Centre to End All Child Exploitation (CEASE)  
Breck Foundation  
R;pple Suicide Prevention  
Coram Life Education  
Maeve Walsh, Director, Online Safety Act Network  
Sue Jones, Head of Operations, Ditch the Label  
Greg Childs, Director, Children's Media Foundation  
The Bereaved Families for Online Safety  
Ruth Moss  
Amanda and Stuart Stephens  
Lorin LaFave  
Adele Walton  
Ellen Roome  
Lisa Kenevan  
Mariano Janin  
Alice Hendy MBE  
Hollie Dance  
Ian Russell  
Liam Walsh  
Esther Ghey  
Mark and Ros Dowey