**Online Safety Bill**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

The draft Online Safety Bill establishes a new regulatory framework to tackle harmful content online. It aims to prevent harm to individuals in the UK. It imposes duties of care in relation to illegal content and content that is harmful to children on providers of internet services and on providers of search engines.

The bill focuses on the safeguarding of children and young people online. The laws make it clear that sites have a ‘duty of care’ towards children, and legislation will apply to any site accessed from the UK regardless where the site is based. It is intended to protect children from a range of online harms such as terrorism, racism, abuse, and pornographic content.

The largest sites (known as Category 1 and including common Social Media channels) will be required to take action on harms affecting users over 18.

The Office of Communications (Ofcom) will oversee and enforce the new regulatory regime which will include powers relating to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Ofcom’s powers as regulator will include the ability to block sites and fine companies up to £18 million or 10% of annual global turnover, whichever is higher.

Briefly, providers of user-to-user services are required to:

1. Conduct an illegal content risk assessment and take steps to manage any identified risks. Providers of user-to-user services likely to be accessed by children are also required to conduct a specific children’s risk assessment.
2. Have processes/systems in place that minimise the likelihood of illegal content, reduce the length of time illegal content is present before removal, and take down illegal content when they become aware of it.
3. Publish Terms of Service on how individuals (and if necessary, children) are protected from illegal content and ensure that Terms of Service are clear, accessible, and consistently applied.
4. Protect users’ privacy, as well as users’ right to freedom of expression in safety policies and procedures. (Also refer to the [Age Appropriate Design Code)](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/ico-codes-of-practice/age-appropriate-design-code/)
5. Implement and maintain appropriate reporting systems and complaints procedures, and keep written records.

The draft Bill will be scrutinised by a joint committee of MPs who will report by 10th December 2021. The Government has committed to reviewing the Bill at least every two years once it becomes law.