



10 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5DG

23rd July 2018

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
DCMS
100, Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

Dear Mr Wright,

The Government launched its Green Paper on Internet Safety last year with an objective “to ensure Britain is the safest place in the world to be online”.

Since then much thinking has been done by charities, civil society and responsible companies wanting to keep consumers safe online about how we turn this aspiration into a reality. In recent weeks, we have seen a strong consensus develop, all pointing towards the same thing, an accountability framework overseen by an independent regulator underpinned by statute. As Ofcom CEO Sharon White put it last Friday “the argument for independent regulatory oversight... [of online platforms].has never been stronger”.

This is not about censoring the internet but ensuring accountability and transparency of the decisions private companies are already taking. Channel 4’s investigation (*Inside Facebook: Secrets of the Social Network, Channel 4 Dispatches*) was only the latest in a series of disclosures about the often casual, sometimes chaotic way in which platforms decide what content to delete and what to ignore. We need urgently to establish a clearer framework in which parents, children, consumers, indeed all of us can have confidence. That will not be achievable if we continue to rely on voluntary codes with no independent external element to reassure us that the rules are being followed regularly and systematically.

As you take forward your work on a White Paper, we urge you to put a new accountability framework with independent oversight at its heart. It will be important that the process for creating this regime is collaborative to restore the public’s faith in the internet companies that have become central to their lives. We stand ready to work with you to make this a reality

Yours sincerely,
(signed)

John Carr OBE
Secretary
Children’s Charities’ Coalition on Internet Safety

Danny Stone MBE
Director
Antisemitism Policy Trust

Fiyaz Mughal OBE
Founder
Tell Mama