

Internet Safety Strategy Response

Organisation: UK Safer Internet Centre

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Contents

- **About the UK Safer Internet Centre**
- **Response**
 - **Principles**
 - **Governance**
 - **Social Media Levy**
 - **Code of Practice**
 - **Schools**
- **Aspects that are missing from the Strategy**
 - **The children's workforce**
 - **Reporting helpline for harmful content**

About the UK Safer Internet Centre:

The UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) is a partnership of three leading charities – Childnet, Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) - with a shared mission to make the internet a better place for children and young people.

The partnership was appointed by the European Commission as the Safer Internet Centre for the UK in January 2011 and is one of the 31 Safer Internet Centres of the Insafe network.

The centre has five main functions:

- 1. Education, training and awareness:** increasing the UK's resilience through innovative tools, services, resources, campaigns and training
- 2. Helpline:** supporting the children's workforce
- 3. Hotline:** disrupting the distribution of child sexual abuse content
- 4. Youth Participation:** giving youth a voice and inspiring active digital citizenship
- 5. Leadership and collaboration:** creating a UK and global eco-system that embeds online safety

The UK Safer Internet Centre is co-funded under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programme of the European Commission. As such we contribute to the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) core service platform to share resources, services and practices between the European Safer Internet Centres and advice and information about a better internet to the general public. In line with the European Commission's Better Internet for Kids strategy, the key vision behind the BIK core service platform is to create a better internet for children and young people.

Response:

All three charities that make up the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) have responded fully to the consultation and this response is specifically on behalf of the UK Safer Internet Centre. We also want to take this opportunity to thank the Government for the numerous references within the paper that highlight the role of the UKSIC and the partners within the UKSIC.

Principles-

The UK Safer Internet Centre is fully supportive of the aims of the Internet Safety Strategy consultation. We support the three principles of the paper and share the aim of making the UK the safest place to be online:

- What is unacceptable offline should be unacceptable online
- All users should be empowered to manage online risks and stay safe online
- Tech companies should have responsibility to their user

Governance-

The UKSIC has some concerns about proposals in the paper to change the name and remit of the UKCCIS Board and to broaden its remit to include adults. Whilst we believe that it is right that adults also have equal rights to support online and removal of harmful or illegal content (e.g. revenge porn), we believe that children should be the overarching priority and we are keen to ensure that any potential broadening of the UKCCIS remit doesn't negatively impact on the effectiveness of the Board.

We believe that Government could either seek to establish a separate board for adults or perhaps establish a separate smaller working group focussed on adult safety online within the remit of the UKCCIS board.

The UKSIC also supports the proposal for a smaller, higher profile executive Board, but we would also be keen to see representation maintained on the Executive Board from CEOP or NPCC, the IWF, UK Safer Internet Centre and representatives of the devolved nations.

We also support the setting of annual priorities for UKCCIS, and the continuation of the working groups, in particular the Evidence, Education and Technical working groups.

Social Media Levy-

The UKSIC is supportive of the proposals contained within the paper to introduce a social media levy as there is and will continue to be a clear need for funding to support education and public awareness. This is particularly important with the potential removal of EU support, we are as yet unclear on how this might work in the future, as the EU are important funders of both research, hotlines, helplines and public awareness and education. For example, the UKSIC is currently funded until December 2018 and after this time there is uncertainty about the UK's access to this funding stream. The UKSIC currently receives £1million per year from the EU (50% of the total project cost). The UK Government could use the levy to support the extraordinary reach and impact of the UKSIC post-Brexit and continue to build upon this work.

Initially the voluntary nature of this make sense, with the option to review other options if it is not functioning. It is worth noting that the industry is already active in this space, and care must be taken for the levy not to impinge on current initiatives, including membership of IWF for example.

Code of Practice-

We support the goal of the social media Code of Practice, outlining agreed safety standards that can drive up standards in relation to online safety, and make an equal market place, and they can also help to raise and help communicate to users what their expectations should be in relation to services. Consistency would be helpful here as well as clear labelling, to better inform the end users.

The effectiveness of the Code relies on monitoring and evaluation, which will need to include an action if a signee has not met their commitments. This needs to be part of an effective Code.

In the review process for this Code, items outlined in previous Codes will need to be included, such as clear prominent safety information and advice for users and clear prominent and accessible safety tools.

We also believe that as part of any Code of Practice, the Government should consider ensuring that social media companies are playing an active role in the UK Safer Internet Centre, by supporting events such as Safer Internet Day, taking services from the IWF or promoting the helpline and online safety advice and support.

Schools and Online Safety-

The UK Safer Internet Centre very much supports the prominence all schools are afforded in the Green paper in their role in both providing children with formal online safety education and supporting them *“when they have suffered online harms”* (page 28). The UK Safer Internet Centre recognises and applauds the priority that all national Governments and Inspectorates have placed on online safety in schools over recent years and remains committed in providing specialist support in the years ahead.

Schools are often at the vanguard of online safety issues and require dedicated support in discharging this critical safeguarding responsibility, provided by the UK Safer Internet Centre Helpline, established to support the entire UK children’s workforce with online safety issues.

Schools also need support in delivering a broad and balanced curriculum to equip children with the digital literacy skills they need. The UK Safer Internet Centre has been proud to lead the contribution to the *“detailed framework for teachers to identify the key learning that pupils should have received at various ages in order to be a good digital citizen”*. Building on this publication the UK Safer Internet Centre is already working on *“developing accompanying resources such as teacher’s activities, and an assessment criteria which will underpin the framework.”*

The UKSIC agree that we need to start building digital literacy skills from a young age, and Childnet have pioneered working to support young users, including Early Years, through the education system and through parents and carers. Resources like Digiduck’s Big Decision, which has been translated and is used around the world, and Smartie the Penguin, have proved very popular, as well as the short guide for parents of 0-5s.

Young people themselves can also play a key role and we agree that *“there will be significant value in DCMS encouraging and supporting peer to peer support programmes like these that are specifically focussed on online safety”*. The Childnet Digital Leaders Programme delivered by the UK Safer Internet Centre, has already trained 4,000 digital leaders right across the UK and there are plans to significantly grow this number.

To deliver effective preventative education, it is essential that teachers and other staff receive high quality training and support. The UK Safer Internet Centre continues to deliver the UK’s largest professional development outreach programme to schools and other agencies via its Online Safety Live programme having welcomed over 13,000 students to over 320 events since 2013.

We also support work outside of schools, developing key partnerships and engaging more actors into the work of empowering children online. Safer Internet Day 2017 was supported by over 1600 organisations from all sectors from right across the UK. Engaging with and helping to mobilise other voices that children listen to, for example, is a powerful way to reinforce learning. Training for social workers has been carried out as part of UKSIC, and more needs to be done to reach other public sectors areas.

We also work supporting parents and carers, as well as foster carers and adoptive parents. Parents and carers have the key role to play, and we support them in our outreach programme, as well as the provision of key online information, and we reached 23% of parents with the Safer Internet Day campaign in 2017.

Aspects that are missing from the Strategy-

These missing areas include:

- The Children's workforce
- Reporting Helpline for harmful content
- Other areas not discussed:
 - o mental health of young people, and we assume this is due to the forthcoming green paper on this issue. We would encourage the results of both consultations to inform each other.
 - o Online child sexual abuse: this is referred to as a Home Office matter, but clearly is part of the discussions that falls under the remit of UKCCIS (reformed or not). Areas relating to radicalisation/violent online extremism are also relevant to UKCCIS too.

The Children's workforce:

Whilst section 7 includes details and recommendations for those supporting children, specifically early years and schools in England, UK Safer Internet Centre would like to see this extended to the entire UK children's workforce. The UK Safer Internet Centre believes that there is potentially gaps in the following areas:

- High quality training for all school staff is needed; there may be opportunities in initial teacher training and CPD.
- Training and support for the wider children's workforce, for example: health professionals (GPs, CAMHS, health visitors, school nurses, community nurses), social services (social workers, foster carers, family support workers, children's homes), early years professionals (children's centres, nurseries, childminders), youth workers, young offending teams.

Reporting helpline for harmful content:

As part of the Social Media Code of Practice, the Green Paper asks if guidance should be issued on "*Reporting mechanism for inappropriate, bullying or harmful content, with clear policies and performance metrics on take-down, including considering the manifesto commitment for content removal on a 'comply or explain' basis;*" (page 15). Looking at examples overseas, especially that in New Zealand, the UK Safer Internet Centre recommends the creation of an independent mediation or complaint process for removal of harmful content.

The UK Safer Internet Centre Helpline has become a world leader in collaborating with providers and through a deep understanding of their terms and conditions. It excels at taking down harmful content, with 95% of its cases escalated to industry being resolved satisfactorily with the removal of content. This is primarily why SWGfL was asked to create the Revenge Porn Helpline for the Government Equalities Office. It has also since supported the Australian eSafety Commissioners Office in establishing their image based abuse Helpline as well as iCanHelp-Line in the US.

It is important that this service would be available to all internet users, not just children and the UK Safer Internet Centre has the necessary skills and capabilities and experiences to play a significant role in this type of service.

