



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2020-0093, 6 October 2020

# Online Harms

## Summary

This pack has been prepared ahead of the Westminster Hall debate on 8 October 2020 on online harms. The debate will be opened by Holly Lynch MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 The Online Harms White Paper (April 2019)

An [Online Harms White Paper](#) was published on 8 April 2019. In a [statement](#) to the Commons, Jeremy Wright, the then Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, gave this context:

...For so many people, the internet is an integral part of daily life; nearly 90% of UK adults are online, and for 12 to 15-year-olds the figure is 99%. As the internet continues to grow and transform our lives, we need to think carefully about how we want it to develop. In many ways, the internet is a powerful force for good; it can be used to forge connections, share knowledge and spread opportunity across the world. But it can also be used to circulate terrorist material, undermine civil discourse, spread disinformation, and to bully or abuse.

Our challenge as a society is to help shape an internet that is open and vibrant, but that also protects its users from harm. There is clear evidence that we are not succeeding. Over 8,000 sexual offences against children with an online element were reported to the police in 2017, and that figure is continuing to rise. Up to 20% of young people in the UK have experienced bullying online...People are closing their social media accounts following unacceptable online abuse. For the vulnerable, online experiences can mean cyber-bullying and the risk of grooming and exploitation. We cannot allow such behaviour to undermine the very real benefits that the digital revolution can bring. If we surrender our online spaces to those who spread hate, abuse and fear, we will all lose.

According to the White Paper, existing regulatory and voluntary initiatives had “not gone far or fast enough” to keep users safe online. The Paper proposed a single regulatory framework to tackle a range of harms. At its core would be a statutory duty of care for internet companies. An independent regulator would oversee and enforce compliance with the duty.

A [consultation](#) on the proposals closed on 1 July 2019.

### **Reaction to the White Paper**

The White Paper received a mixed reaction. Children’s charities were positive. The NSPCC [said that](#) the Paper was a “hugely significant commitment” that could make the UK a “world pioneer in protecting children online”. However, some commentators raised concerns that harms were insufficiently defined and that the Paper blurred the boundary between illegal and harmful content. The [Open Rights Group](#)

and the [Index on Censorship](#) warned that the proposed framework could threaten freedom of expression.

## Interim response to the White Paper consultation (February 2020)

In February 2020, the Government published its [initial response](#) to the consultation on the White Paper. This stated, among other things, that the Government was minded to make [Ofcom](#) the regulator for online harms.

To protect freedom of expression, the new regulatory framework would not require companies in scope to remove specific pieces of legal content. Instead, they would be required to explicitly state what content and behaviour would be considered acceptable on their sites and to enforce this consistently and transparently.

Illegal content would have to be removed “expeditiously”. Robust action would be required in relation to terrorist content and child exploitation and abuse.

## When will a final Government response be published?

On 24 September 2020, Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [said that](#) a final response to the consultation on the White Paper would be published “this year, with a view to having the legislation at the beginning of next year”.<sup>1</sup>

For further background to the White Paper, see the Library Briefing Paper, [Social media regulation](#) (CBP 8743, 26 February 2020).

## 1.2 Offensive online communications: the Law Commission’s review

A range of criminal offences can cover offensive online communications, including sexual offences, public order offences, and stalking and harassment. There are also specific communications offences under [s127 of the Communications Act 2003](#) and [s1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988](#). These prohibit communications that are menacing, grossly offensive, indecent, obscene or false.

The Crown Prosecution Service website provides an overview of the current approach to prosecuting [offensive online communications](#).

However, there are concerns that these offences – which predate the widespread use of social media platforms – are inadequate to deal with online harassment and abuse. There have therefore been calls for the Government to review the current law to ensure it is fit for purpose.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [HC Deb 24 September 2020 c1120](#)

<sup>2</sup> See for example House of Commons Petitions Committee, [Online abuse and the experience of disabled people](#), First Report of Session 2017–19, HC 759, 2 January 2019 and Home Affairs Committee, [Hate crime: abuse, hate and extremism online](#), Fourteenth Report of Session 2016–17, HC 609, 1 May 2017

In 2016 the [Law Commission consulted](#) on whether reform of the law on online communications should be part of its 13th Programme of Law Reform. The project was subsequently commissioned by Theresa May's Government in February 2018, which asked the Law Commission to "review the laws around offensive communications and assess whether they provide the right protection to victims online".<sup>3</sup>

The [Offensive Online Communications](#) project page on the Law Commission's provides full details of the project's progress to date.

In November 2018 the Law Commission published a [Scoping Report on Abusive and Offensive Online Communications](#).<sup>4</sup> The report analysed the current state of the relevant criminal law and concluded that there is scope to improve it:

While we have identified a number of gaps and inconsistencies in the applicable law, we have concluded that in most cases abusive online communications are, at least theoretically, criminalised to the same or even a greater degree than equivalent offline behaviour.

In practice, however, it appears that practical and cultural barriers mean that not all harmful online conduct is pursued in terms of criminal law enforcement to the same extent that it might be in an offline context.

Further, our analysis has revealed that many of the applicable offences are not constructed and targeted in a way that adequately reflects the nature of offending behaviour in the online environment, and the degree of harm that it causes in certain contexts.

Therefore, while we do not consider there to be major gaps in the current state of the criminal law concerning abusive and offensive online communications, there is considerable scope to improve the criminal law in this area. In particular, we consider that reform could help ensure that the most harmful conduct is punished appropriately, while maintaining and enhancing protection for freedom of expression. It is towards these goals that we focus our recommendations for future law reform.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission noted several practical and cultural barriers to enforcing criminal law in this area:

- the sheer scale of abusive and offensive communications, and the limited resources that law enforcement agencies and prosecutors have available to pursue these;
- a persistent cultural tolerance of online abuse, which means that even when reported, it is not always treated as seriously as offline conduct;
- the difficult balance that must be struck between protecting individuals and the community generally from harm, and maintaining everyone's fundamental human rights to freedom of expression;

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<sup>3</sup> Law Commission, [Government asks Law Commission to look at trolling laws](#), 6 February 2018 and the Prime Minister's speech as set out in 10 Downing Street press release [PM speech on standards in public life: 6 February 2018](#)

<sup>4</sup> Law Commission, [Abusive and Offensive Online Communications: A Scoping Report](#), HC 1682, Law Com No 381, 1 November 2018

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p328

- technical barriers to the pursuit of online offenders, such as tracing and proving the identity of perpetrators, and the cost of doing so; and
- jurisdictional and enforcement barriers to prosecution: the online environment is highly globalised, and even when overseas-based offenders have committed an offence in England and Wales, pursuing them may prove practically impossible or prohibitively expensive.<sup>6</sup>

In June 2019 the Government announced that it had engaged the Law Commission to embark on the next phase of the review, with a final report to be published in spring/summer 2021.<sup>7</sup>

The Law Commission launched a full consultation paper on 11 September 2020. Responses are sought by 18 December 2020. The Law Commission set out the following summary of the proposals on which it is seeking views:

- A new offence to replace the communications offences (the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (MCA 1988) and the Communications Act 2003 (CA 2003)), to criminalise behaviour where a communication would **likely cause harm**.
  - This would cover emails, social media posts and WhatsApp messages, in addition to pile-on harassment (when a number of different individuals send harassing communications to a victim).
  - This would include communication sent over private networks such as Bluetooth or a local intranet, which are not currently covered under the CA 2003.
  - The proposals include introduction of the requirement of proof of likely harm. Currently, neither proof of likely harm nor proof of actual harm are required under the existing communications offences.
- Cyber-flashing – the unsolicited sending of images or video recordings of one’s genitals – should be included as a sexual offence under section 66 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This would ensure that additional protections for victims are available.
- Raising the threshold for false communications so that it would only be an offence if the defendant knows the post is false, they are intending to cause non-trivial emotional, psychological, or physical harm, and if they have no excuse.<sup>8</sup>

For the full consultation paper and a summary, please see:

- [Harmful Online Communications: The Criminal Offences - A Consultation paper](#)
- [Harmful Online Communications: The Criminal Offences - Summary of the Consultation Paper](#)

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp328-329

<sup>7</sup> [HCWS1659 Law Commission Review Update](#), 26 June 2019

<sup>8</sup> Law Commission, [Reform of the Communications Offences: Current project status](#) [accessed 2 October 2020]

## 2. Media

### 2.1 Press releases

[Government minded to appoint Ofcom as online harms regulator](#)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 12.02.2020

### 2.2 Articles and blogs

[Caroline Elsom: The Online Harms proposals set us on a course that will threaten freedom, privacy and competitiveness – while being unlikely to make us safer](#)

ConservativeHome, 29.09.2020

[Mitigating Online Social Harm: Why Enterprises Need to Start Prepping for Stricter Age Verification Laws Now](#)

CPO Magazine

[Online Harms White Paper: consultation response](#)

RPC, 02.06.2020

[The Online Harms White Paper: can progress be made during the COVID-19 pandemic?](#)

CMS, 29.05.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: A Tale of Two Committees, Part 2](#)

Inform's Blog, 29.05.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: A Tale of Two Committees, Part 1](#)

Inform's Blog, 28.05.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: Government issues Initial Response](#)

Burges Salmon, 09.03.2020

[UK Government Publishes Initial Consultation Response on the Online Harms White Paper](#)

Inside Tech Media, 25.09.2020

[Britain can't afford to miss this chance to clean up the web](#)

Times, 06.08.2020

[Raising awareness of online harms](#)

Ofcom, 22.07.2020

[Take five: Why we should take online violence against women and girls seriously during and beyond COVID-19](#)

UN Women, 21.07.2020

[We're tackling social media disinformation all wrong – here's how to fix it](#)

NS Tech, 09.07.2020

[UK proposals on online harms miss their mark](#)

FT, 04.07.2020

[Opinion: it's the business of parliament, not Ofcom, to judge what is ok to publish](#)

UCL News, 28.06.2020

[Online Harms bill: Warning over 'unacceptable' delay](#)

BBC News, 29.06.2020

[Why online harms research urgently needs new collaboration, direction and a shared sense of purpose](#)

The Alan Turing Institute, 19.06.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: A Tale of Two Committees, Part 2](#)

Inform's Blog, 29.05.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: A Tale of Two Committees, Part 1](#)

Inform's Blog, 28.05.2020

[Websites to be fined over 'online harms' under new proposals](#)

BBC, 08.04.2020

[Online Harms White Paper - UK government publishes its initial consultation response](#)

A&L Goodbody, 03.03.2020

[Online harms and Caroline's Law – what's the direction for the law reform?](#)

Open University, 02.03.2020

[Ministers must clarify Ofcom's online harms scope](#)

Times, 27.02.2020

[Online child sexual abuse 'not given police priority'](#)

BBC, 26.02.2020

[Online harms: Our View on the UK Government Plans](#)

Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 26.02.2020

[Online harms: the good, the bad and the unclear](#)

Inform's Blog, 22.02.2020

[Online Harms Deconstructed: The Initial Consultation Response](#)

Inform's Blog, 20.02.2020

[Britain's online harms proposals are still lacking](#)

FT, 16.02.2020

[The government should actually understand the internet if it's going to protect kids from online harms](#)

Independent, 15.02.2020

[Online Harms White Paper: The Government's Initial Consultation Response](#)

Inform's Blog, 14.02.2020

[Minister responds to question on online harms legislation](#)

UK Parliament, 13.02.2020

[Ofcom response to Government announcement on online harms regulation](#)

Ofcom, 12.02.2020

[Online Harms: UK Government publishes response to consultation on proposals for internet regulation](#)

Bird & Bird, 12.02.2020

[The proposed online harms regime puts free speech in peril](#)

CAPX, 12.02.2020

[Statement regarding the government's initial response to Online Harms White Paper consultation](#)

ICO, 12.02.2020

[Society of Editors welcomes assurances of protection for a free press in Online Harms statement – but warns against ‘regulatory-creep.’](#)

Society of Editors, 12.02.2020

[What powers will Ofcom have to regulate the internet?](#)

Guardian, 12.09.2020

[More online risks to children, but not necessarily more harm: EU Kids Online 2020 survey](#)

London School of Economics, 11.02.2020

## 3. Parliamentary material

### 3.1 Early Day Motion

#### [Tackling online harm to children with a duty of care regulator](#)

That this House notes the publication of the *Online Harms White Paper* in April 2019 and subsequent assurances by the Government that they will introduce a robust regulator to safeguard children *online*; further notes that over 45,000 people signed the NSPCC's Wild West Web petition calling for statutory regulation so that social networks have a legal duty of care to protect every child from abuse *online*.....

13 Jan 2020 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 57  
(session 2019-21)

**Primary sponsor:** Stevens, Jo

### 3.2 Ministerial statements

#### [Update on Online Harms](#)

12 Feb 2020 | Written statements | HCWS113

#### [Online Harms White Paper](#)

8 Apr 2019 | Oral statements | HC Deb c55-7

### 3.3 Debates

#### [Online Harms Legislation](#)

HC Deb 13 February 2020 cc971-81

#### [Online Harms Legislation](#)

HL Deb 13 February 2020 cc2400-04

#### [Online Harms White Paper](#)

HL Deb 30 April 2019 cc 898-944

### 3.4 Parliamentary questions

[Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government will reconsider implementing Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 in response to the court case brought by several age verification companies, claim number CO/206/2020.

21 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 91002

**Asked by:** Bruce, Fiona | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, further to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75251, what assessment he has made of the level of risk that commercial pornographic websites will cease to allow user generated content if that would bring those websites within scope of a duty of care in potential future online harms legislation.

21 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 90111

**Asked by:** Bruce, Fiona | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75251 on pornography, what plans he has to publish the Government's analysis of pornography sites.

16 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 88858

**Asked by:** Bruce, Fiona | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Internet: Bullying and Harassment](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to strengthen legislation against (a) cyberbullying and (b) online abuse.

11 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 86785

**Asked by:** Mumby-Croft, Holly | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Newspaper Press: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help tackle (a) disinformation and (b) abuse on the commenting forums of newspaper websites.

09 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 83918

**Asked by:** Hardy, Emma | **Answered by:** Mr John Whittingdale |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Social Media: Antisemitism](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle anti-Semitic hate online.

08 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 81792

**Asked by:** Javid, Sajid | **Answered by:** Mr Simon Clarke |  
**Department:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

#### [Internet: Safety](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether racist abuse and disinformation will be within the remit of the Government's planned online harms regulatory system.

07 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 83920

**Asked by:** Hardy, Emma | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Football: Abuse](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to work with the football authorities to help tackle racist abuse of players (a) in person and (b) online; and if he will make a statement.

04 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 78489

**Asked by:** Davey, Sir Edward | **Answered by:** Nigel Huddleston |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Internet: Safety](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children and young people have been identified as victims of child sexual abuse since the Online Harms White Paper was published in April 2019; and what steps her Department is taking to protect vulnerable children from sexual abuse and exploitation online while the

Government produces its full response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

01 Sep 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 77806

**Asked by:** Foy, Mary Kelly | **Answered by:** Victoria Atkins |  
**Department:** Home Office

#### [Social Media: Regulation](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) Google, (2) Twitter, (3) Facebook, and (4) other social media sites, about (a) the action, and (b) the time, those companies take to remove (i) racist, (ii) anti-Semitic, (iii) abusive, (iv) criminal, and (v) illegal, content online.

05 Aug 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL7371

**Asked by:** Baroness Kennedy of Cradley | **Answered by:** Baroness Barran | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether online pornography operators based outside of the UK will be required to meet the requirement to provide a duty of care as proposed in the Online Harms White Paper Initial Consultation Response.

27 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 76618

**Asked by:** Selous, Andrew | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions the Government had with parents before reaching its decision to delay the introduction of statutory age verification for pornographic website by bringing forward new legislative proposals rather than by implementing Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017.

22 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 75249

**Asked by:** Bruce, Fiona | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Pornography: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether online pornography operators will fall within the requirement

to provide a duty of care as proposed in the Online Harms White Paper Initial Consultation Response.

21 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 75251

**Asked by:** Bruce, Fiona | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Social Media: Epilepsy](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the prevalence of the deliberate sharing of material capable of causing an epileptic seizure on social media platforms, and (2) the case for including measures against such behaviour in their forthcoming online harms legislation.

20 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL6584

**Asked by:** Lord Stevenson of Balmacara | **Answered by:** Baroness Barran | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Epilepsy: Internet](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to safeguard people with epilepsy from online harm.

13 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 70944

**Asked by:** Gillan, Dame Cheryl | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Internet: Safety](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to improve accurate reporting of online harms.

09 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 67726

**Asked by:** Elmore, Chris | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Internet: Hate Crime](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on tackling the platforming of far-right hate speech online.

08 Jul 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 64379

**Asked by:** Whittome, Nadia | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Internet: Safety](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect children from online grooming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

23 Jun 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL5252

**Asked by:** Lord Taylor of Warwick | **Answered by:** Baroness Williams of Trafford | **Department:** Home Office

#### [Children: Exposure to Harmful Content](#)

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the research by the British Board of Film Classification on the extent of exposure of children and teens to harmful or upsetting content while in lockdown, published on 4 May.

**Asked by:** Lord Clement-Jones | **Answered by:** Baroness Barran

11 Jun 2020 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | 803 c1839

#### [Internet: Offences against Children and Terrorism](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 May 2020 to Question 42080 on Internet: Safety, when her Department plans to publish the interim voluntary codes on tackling online terrorist and child sexual exploitation and abuse content and activity.

20 May 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 45259

**Asked by:** Zeichner, Daniel | **Answered by:** Victoria Atkins |  
**Department:** Home Office

#### [Internet: Bullying](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to (a) tackle and (b) protect victims of online (i) racist, (ii) transphobic and (iii) homophobic abuse.

12 Mar 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 26908

**Asked by:** Hayes, Helen | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage |  
**Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Sexting](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to sanction online platforms which do not remove sexual content which has not been consented to by people who have been filmed or photographed.

02 Mar 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 18658

**Asked by:** Gill, Preet Kaur | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Internet: Safety](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Government's Online harms white paper: initial consultation response published on 12 February 2020, what the membership of the transparency working group is; and how the members of that group were identified.

02 Mar 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 18396

**Asked by:** Onwurah, Chi | **Answered by:** Caroline Dinenage | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Online Harmful Material](#)

What steps his Department is taking to help prevent the spread of harmful material online.

**Asked by:** Charlotte Nichols | **Answered by:** Matt Warman | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

13 Feb 2020 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 671 c954

#### [Islam: Religious Hatred](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to include steps to tackle Islamophobia in the forthcoming online harms Bill.

22 Jan 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 3767

**Asked by:** Coyle, Neil | **Answered by:** Matt Warman | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### [Football: Racism](#)

My Lords, many acts of racism occur in grounds during matches. However, social media has become a breeding ground and some providers allow the worst abuse to remain posted. Have Her Majesty's

Government considered how the online harms consultation White Paper could be used to look at this form of abuse?

**Asked by: Baroness Grey-Thompson (CB) | Answered by:** Baroness Barran

16 Jan 2020 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | 801 c826

### 3.5 Committee reports

[Government Response to the House of Lords Democracy and Digital Technologies Committee Report on Digital Technology and the Resurrection of Trust](#), CP 285, September 2020

Select Committee on Democracy and Digital Technologies, Digital [Technology and the Resurrection of Trust](#), Report of Session 2019–21, HL Paper 77, 29.06.2020

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [The Online Harms White Paper](#), Twelfth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 2431, 2 July 2019

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [The Online Harms White Paper: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report](#), Tenth Special Report of Session 2017–19, HC 2601, 9 September 2019

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Sub-committee on Online Harms and Disinformation – [oral and written evidence](#)

## 4. Organisations and further reading

Caroline Elsom, [\*Safety without Censorship A better way to tackle online harms\*](#), Centre for Policy Studies, September 2020

[\*Online harms: Supporting young people offline and online to prevent harm and build resilience\*](#), Catch22, 07 August 2020

Alexis Jay, et al. [\*The Internet Investigation Report, Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse\*](#), March 2020

[\*Strategic review of Police Scotland's response to online child sexual abuse\*](#), HMICS, 26 February 2020

DCMS, [\*Online Harms White Paper\*](#), updated 12 February 2020

DCMS, [\*Online Harms White Paper - Initial consultation response\*](#), updated 12 February 2020

[\*Advice to the Gambling Commission on actions to reduce online harms\*](#), Advisory Board for Safer Gambling, 10 February 2020

This paper sets out recommendations on steps the Gambling Commission should consider for making online gambling safer. This builds on previous advice in relation to reducing online harms.

[\*Internet users' experience of potential online harms: summary of survey research\*](#), Ofcom, January/February 2020

Mariya Stoilova, [\*Protecting children online: content regulation, age verification and latest thinking on industry responsibility\*](#), LSE blog, 30 January 2020

[\*Safeguarding people from online harms\*](#), Epilepsy Society

[\*Online Harms & Image Based Sexual Abuse\*](#), End Violence Against Women

Bertie Vidgen, et al, [\*How much online abuse is there? A systematic review of evidence for the UK Policy Briefing –Summary\*](#), The Alan Turing Institute

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