

The ONLINE SAFETY BILL Explained

& why you shouldn't wait for a law when it comes to online safety for children and young people

The Online Safety Bill is a piece of legislation that aims to reduce or prevent damage and harm coming to people when they are using the internet.

It aims to make the internet safer for all users, including children and young people. The Bill is over 200 pages long and creates new laws around online safety issues, such as child sexual exploitation and abuse, scams and protecting children from pornography.

The Bill is not yet law – it is currently going through the Parliamentary process and could still be changed or even scrapped.

WHO WOULD IT APPLY TO?



The Bill applies to any company that hosts user-generated content (such as images, comments and videos on social media platforms) and sites that allow UK users to talk with other people online (through comments or messages, like on forums), alongside search engines and some online games.

WHAT WOULD IT CHANGE?



Any platform that is likely to be accessed by children will now have a duty of care towards them. That means they must take steps to protect them from accessing content that is illegal and harmful, such as adult pornography, cyber-flashing and racist abuse.

LEGAL BUT HARMFUL



The Bill doesn't just focus on cracking down on illegal content – it also covers material that's 'legal but harmful'. This is likely to include content related to self-harm and eating disorders. It will also help crack down on online bullying, harassment, and abuse.

CRIMINAL CONSEQUENCES



If it becomes law, Ofcom will oversee the implementation and ongoing adherence to the Bill. Companies that don't comply with the new laws will face punishment, such as fines of up to 10% of their annual global turnover or having their site blocked completely. Individuals can also be punished; company executives who fail to cooperate with Ofcom's requests would face prosecution or jail time.



oursafetycentre.co.uk

Use our Safety Centre to learn together how to enable the most appropriate safety settings and use parental controls on apps and platforms that the child or young person in your care uses.

BEFORE THE ACT, TAKE ACTION!

When it comes to online safety, we all have a part to play. Although the Bill will mean the platforms and apps must take more responsibility when it comes to keeping children and young people safe, as parents, teachers and carers and safeguarding professionals, we can all do our bit to ensure a safer online world.



ENABLE SAFETY SETTINGS

Safety settings are there to help protect children and young people from unsolicited contact, harmful content, and unintentional exposure of personal information.



TALK ABOUT ONLINE ISSUES

Have open and honest conversations about what children and young people do online. Building a relationship in which they feel free and safe to talk to you about their 'online world' will make a great foundation should they come across harmful and/or illegal content and want to talk to you about it.



LEARN ABOUT BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Knowing how (and when) to block someone and report a comment or profile is key knowledge for anyone spending time online. Make sure the children and young people in your care know how to block and report.



TEACH DIGITAL RESILIENCE

Children and young people need the tools required to understand risks, make informed decisions, and know how to access support and resources when needed.

By teaching children and young people fundamental skills, such as how to block and report, who their Trusted Adults are and what steps to take when things go wrong, you're providing them with the resilience needed for their digital journeys through life.



GET CYBERSECURE

Reinforce the importance of cyber security. A great place to start is teaching a child how to make a secure password, get creative and remember longer is stronger. Encourage them to use two-factor authentication for extra security - you can also use our Cyber Security Toolkit designed for children to help.

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