

5Rights responds to UK Government Online Harms plans

15 December 2020

The Government has today published its long awaited plans to deal with online harms.

In advance of the statement in Parliament, the Chair of 5Rights Foundation, Baroness Beeban Kidron OBE said today:

“The announcement that the era of self-regulation is over is a welcome step forward.

The Bill must ensure that companies are not allowed to continue to make and deliver risky services to children. Focusing on bullying and bad actors is only the beginning. Minimum standards, safety-by-design and full accountability to an independent and empowered regulator are all necessary elements of an Online Harms Bill worthy of its name.

Ultimately, the real test for this bill will not be who or what is and isn't included in its scope, but whether it actually changes children’s lives. There's still a long way to go, and we look forward to giving the bill the scrutiny it deserves.”

Baroness Beeban Kidron OBE

5Rights published its full priorities for the Online Harms Bill [Building the Digital World that Young People Deserve](#) in October 2020. This blueprint for sensible, proportionate regulation to prioritise young people’s needs and rights in the design of the digital world set out several key demands for children.

- Digital service providers to be required to conduct regular Child Impact Assessments to reveal known harms, unintended consequences and emerging risks their services pose to young people.
- Service providers must be accountable to the new Regulator for the risks their platforms pose, and for the mitigations they put in place.
- The Regulator must have an escalating ladder of enforcement powers. Alongside significant fines for both companies and individual directors, it must have the power to require closure or change of individual features or services which pose a risk to

children (such as services which continue to suggest children as “friends” to stranger adults, or which allow known child sexual abuse imagery to be shared).

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

About 5Rights Foundation

5Rights Foundation develops new policy, creates innovative projects and challenges received narratives to ensure governments, regulators, the tech sector and society understand, recognise and prioritise children’s needs and rights in the digital world. In all of our work, a child is anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our work is pragmatic and implementable, allowing us to work with governments, intergovernmental institutions, professional associations, academics, and young people across the globe to build the digital world that young people deserve.

5Rights is a registered charity. Charity number: 1178581.

Background

Our blueprint for the Online Harms Bill is available [here](#):

<https://5rightsfoundation.com/in-action/building-the-digital-world-that-young-people-deserve-priorities-for-the-online-harms-bill.html>

Spokespeople are available to comment on the Bill and our priorities.

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