

Letter to the Editor as published in *The Times* today regarding the Online Safety Bill. The letter follows in full

24 May 2022

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

The Online Safety Bill offers a unique opportunity to protect children and enable them to flourish online. We support the government's ambition to make the UK the safest place to be online, and we celebrate that the Bill has been introduced into Parliament, bringing that day closer.

Digital technologies have the potential to inspire children, to inform them and unleash their creativity. We do not wish to see them locked out of the digital world but their safety and autonomy online must be protected. The Bill should ensure that the tech sector creates services that are age appropriate by design and default and they must be accountable when they fail to do so.

We urge the government to amend the Online Safety Bill to ensure:

- Protection for children wherever they are online, [covering all services likely to be accessed by children]
- Mandatory standards of privacy, security and efficacy of age checking [that is proportionate to risk and does not allow the sector to check their own homework]
- A standalone set of safety duties to children set out in a single binding, enforceable, code of practice, [based on safety by design principles]
- Explicit mention of children's rights, [including their right to participate and have their voices heard]
- Access to data in the case of a child's death or incapacitation, [to end the horror of bereaved parents shut out of their child's last experiences, and to allow coroners to see material that may hurt other children].

The faith communities and the children's sector are united in supporting a kinder digital world for children. We call on the government to make an early commitment on these matters to ensure the passage of the Bill gives children the digital world they deserve.

Baroness Beeban Kidron, OBE, Founder and Chair of 5Rights Foundation

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

Rt Rev Terence Drainey, Bishop of Middlesbrough and Chair of Caritas Social Action Network

Dr Deesha Chadha OBE, NEC member, Hindu Forum of Britain

Rajnish Kashyap MCICM, General Secretary/Director, Hindu Council UK (HCUK)

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Rabbi at Bromley Reform Synagogue, Clarity Partnership

Dr Penny Duquenoy, Just Algorithms Action Group

Zara Mohammed, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain

Iftikhar Awan, President, Muslims for Britain

Julie Siddiqi MBE, Founder, Together We Thrive

The Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference

Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

Daud Irfan, Methodist Church in Britain Youth President

His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain

Iman Atta OBE, Director -Tell MAMA

Rabbi David Mason, Muswell Hill United Synagogue

Rabbi Charley Baginsky, CEO Liberal Judaism

Rabbis Rebecca Birk and Rene Pfertzel, Chairs of the Liberal Movement Rabbis

Raghad Altikriti, Chair of the Muslim Association of Britain.

Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham

Kirsty McNeill, Executive Director for Policy at Save the Children

John Carr, Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety

Anna Kettley, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy, Programmes and Safeguarding, UNICEF UK

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