

# Report on Online Harms Published by Tech All Party Parliamentary Group ahead of Next Steps on Government legislation

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, November 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Parliamentary Internet, Communications and Technology Forum (PICTFOR), the All Party Parliamentary Group on tech, has today (6th November 2020) published a report titled 'What are the views of the tech industry and civil society groups regarding the upcoming Online Harms Bill?' The report features

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*PICTFOR Co-Chairs*

contributions from BCS, BT, Good Things Foundation, Google, TikTok, Huawei, Internet Association and a number of other tech companies and civil society groups, alongside an introduction by Co-Chairs Darren Jones MP and Baroness Neville-Rolfe CBE and Treasurer Lord McNally.

Contributions highlight how the pandemic has changed the way we engage online as well as offline, meaning that Online Harms policy is more important than ever. Many people now work from home, we socialise virtually, see GPs remotely, and a significant amount of education now takes place online. As our internet dependence has

increased, so has our potential to be exposed to online harm. Protecting freedoms, while protecting us from online harm in the digital world, continues to be important. The intention of the report is to share reflections on these issues and the current context, ensuring that a wide number of organisations and voices are captured, ahead of further progression on legislation.

In addition to the report, PICTFOR held a roundtable on 3rd November where over 100 Parliamentarians, tech industry representatives and civil society groups discussed Online Harms policy. The event was chaired by Lord McNally and speakers included the Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP, former DCMS Secretary and Chair of the Digital Regulation and Responsibility APPG, Jess Phillips MP, Shadow Domestic Violence and Safeguarding Minister, Baroness Kidron OBE from 5Rights, Simon McDougall from the ICO, Seyi Akiwowo from Glitch and Susie Hargreaves of the Internet Watch Foundation. The report, minutes and recording of the event will be shared with Parliamentarians, Government, the Department for Digital, Communications, Media and Sport and No. 10 to feed into policy development ahead of further legislative progress on the Online Harms Bill.

Commenting on their response to the call for stakeholder input, industry organisations said:

- “We share the Government’s vision of making Britain the safest place in the world to be online; and belief in the importance of a vibrant tech sector to drive economic prosperity. As the Online Harms White Paper set out: ‘Innovation and safety online are not mutually exclusive’. We see building trust in the digital economy and new technologies as essential for the UK; but remain deeply concerned that not enough is being done to protect, empower and support people – particularly those with no or limited digital access, skills or confidence.” – Good Things Foundation

- “The scrutiny of lawmakers and others often improves our products and the policies that govern them. It’s sometimes claimed that the internet is an unregulated ‘wild west,’ but that’s just not the case. Many laws and regulations have contributed to the internet’s vitality: competition and consumer protection laws, advertising regulations, and copyright, to name just a few. Existing legal frameworks reflect trade-offs that help everyone reap the benefits of modern technologies, minimise social costs, and respect fundamental rights. As technology evolves, we need to stay attuned to how best to improve those rules.” – Google

- “As legislation will not offer blanket protection–digital literacy and education about appropriate online behaviours and relationships remain essential for all. To truly be the safest place in the world to be online – which is the stated ambition of DCMS – all users, children, teenagers, adults and seniors must have the education, training and skills to enable them to take responsibility for their online lives. This will require a public education campaign – the need of which has been ably demonstrated by the lockdown. Educating families about digital wellbeing has never been more critical, both now and well into the future of the technological family.” – Huawei

- “IA believes that the internet sector needs a balanced policy and regulatory environment to continue, and grow, its contribution to the UK economy, consumers and society in the future. The internet will drive 21st century prosperity, but there is a risk to this potential if policies and regulations are introduced which will damage the ability of the internet sector to: 1) drive UK economic growth; 2) provide services that people value highly; and 3) make a positive contribution to society.” – Internet Association

- “The current system has a flaw that needs to be fixed. In the simplest terms, if a platform looks for harmful and illegal content, it could become liable; if it does not look, it cannot become liable. This acts as a disincentive against platforms that want to invest in and develop techniques to detect, review and remove videos that contain illegal content. That is why TikTok supports the development of ‘good Samaritan clause’ which will give legal clarity to allow and encourage platforms to proactively remove illegal content. We would like the online harms framework to be aligned with this approach.” - TikTok

The full report can be downloaded here: <https://pictfor.org.uk/pictfor-online-harms-stakeholder-input-report/>

ENDS

For further information:

Lodestone Communications is proud to be the secretariat of PICTFOR, for further information contact them directly at [admin@pictfor.org.uk](mailto:admin@pictfor.org.uk)

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Notes to editors

A copy of the report can be found attached.

#### PICTFOR

PICTFOR has continued to provide a forum for discussion for its members, calling for collaboration between the tech sector and government to respond to the difficulties posed by the pandemic. Continuing to operate as a forum for discussion between parliamentarians, industry, academics and other stakeholders on strategic issues facing the tech sector.

The following organisations fed into the report:

PICTFOR members

- BCS
- BT
- Good Things Foundation
- Huawei
- Google
- Internet Association
- TikTok

And contributions from the following non-members

- Antisemitism Policy Trust
- Carnegie
- Internet Watch Foundation
- NSPCC
- Open Rights Group
- Rights Foundation
- Which?

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