

Digital platforms warn social media ban for under-16s risks leaving young people unprepared

HULL, UNITED KINGDOM, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the announcement that the UK will introduce a ban on social media use for under-16s, employability and digital engagement platforms [Startingpoint](#) and [Goald Challenges](#) have warned that any policy focused solely on restriction risks leaving young people unprepared for the realities of a digital world.



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Tom Simpson

The organisations are calling for stronger protections and smarter preparation for young people online. Both work directly with schools, young people, families and communities across the UK, supporting digital skills, resilience and healthy online habits.

Tom Simpson, CEO and Founder of Startingpoint, said: "At Startingpoint, we believe social media is neither inherently harmful nor inherently safe - it is a powerful tool that requires responsible design, education and

guidance.

Young people today are growing up in a digital-first world, and our responsibility as leaders is not simply to restrict access, but to ensure they are equipped with the skills, resilience and critical thinking needed to navigate online spaces safely.

"We support stronger safeguards, age-appropriate experiences and greater accountability from platforms, alongside digital literacy education for young people and parents alike. A ban alone cannot replace education - responsible use must remain the long-term goal."

Echoing this, Matthew McKay, CEO and Founder of Goald Challenges, emphasised the importance of supporting healthy, positive use of technology rather than simply removing access:

"Social media plays a significant role in how young people connect, learn and express themselves. The conversation around a potential under-16 ban highlights the need for a healthier digital environment rather than simply removing access altogether.

"At Goald Challenges, we advocate for responsible engagement encouraging young people to

use technology to build confidence, community and positive habits rather than comparison or dependency. Any future regulation should focus on safer platform design, clearer age protections and empowering families with tools and knowledge; young people must be protected online, but they must also be prepared for the digital world they will inevitably enter, which is why collaboration between educators, organisations, families and technology companies will be essential in creating a safer and more balanced online experience.”

The two platforms are calling on policymakers to:

Mandate stronger age verification and age-appropriate design across all major platforms.

Hold platforms accountable for harmful algorithms, addictive design features and inadequate reporting and safeguarding systems.

Require greater transparency around how content is recommended, moderated and prioritised for young users.

Support nationwide digital literacy programmes so parents, carers, schools and youth organisations are equipped to guide young people effectively.

The organisations added in a joint statement: “Young people deserve online spaces that are safe by design – not safe only after harm has occurred. Regulation must ensure that platforms take responsibility, rather than placing the entire burden on parents, schools or young people themselves.”

Startingpoint and Goald Challenges will continue working with schools, families and communities to promote safe, confident and informed use of digital technologies, and stand ready to support Government in developing evidence-based, youth-centred policy.

Notes for editors:

The ban does not directly affect either platform, as both are private and not open social media networks.

About Startingpoint

Based in Hull, Startingpoint is the employability platform for organisations that are serious about maximising everyone’s potential. It helps young people build the skills, confidence and experiences they need for the world of work, while giving employers a structured way to support and develop future talent.

HETA is a local organisation which has used StartingPoint for three years for young people to showcase their talent during the applications process.

Nationally, The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Barking and Young Enterprise the young entrepreneur charity also used StartingPoint to engage young people.

About Goald Challenges

Also based in Hull, Goald Challenges is the home of challenges – a “challenge app” that lets you challenge anyone, anywhere, anytime, at anything, while raising funds for your chosen cause. It turns positive actions and friendly competition into real-world impact, supporting charities, schools, community groups and workplace wellbeing.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is using Goald Challenges as their app for World Clean Up Day.

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