



UK Mission
Geneva

28 April 2017

**From the Permanent
Representative**

58 Avenue Louis Casar
1216 Cointrin
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 918 2325

Fax: +41 (0) 22 918 2344

David Kaye

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection
of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

OHCHR
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva

Dear Special Rapporteur,

Thank you for your letter of 9 January 2017 to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with regards to Age Verification clauses under Part 3 of the Digital Economy (DE) Bill. The Secretary of State has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The UK Government remains committed to a free, open and secure internet that supports freedom of views, economic prosperity and social well-being. I am pleased to be able to let you know that I expect this Bill to receive Royal Assent in May.

The UK Government is proud to be putting in place robust measures to keep children safe from harmful pornographic content online. The age verification clauses have been designed to ensure that pornographic material must not be made available on a commercial basis online to users in the UK without sufficient age verification controls. This will ensure protections which exist offline are also in place online.

The proposed regulatory framework will allow the regulator to identify non-compliant sites and work with them to comply with UK law. The Bill measures do not give the UK Government access to information about individuals viewing habits or data.


The UK Government is pleased to be working with the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) as the intended age verification regulator subject to Parliamentary approval. The BBFC is an independent non-governmental body that classifies films and videos. They are the experts and we have every confidence in their ability to carry out this role effectively.

The regulator will be required to publish guidance on the types of arrangements for making pornographic material available that it will treat as compliant.

The regulator will be required to maintain arrangements for appeals, including by a person identified as a non-complying person in a notice given to an internet service provider.

Our aim with this legislation is to ensure providers of online pornography are doing so in a responsible manner and that children and young people are protected from potentially harmful material.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JN Braithwaite', written in a cursive style.

JULIAN BRAITHWAITE