

News story: Home Office announces a new social media hub to tackle gang-related online content

Funding from the government's £40 million Serious Violence Strategy will be used to create a 20-strong team of police staff and officers tasked with disrupting and removing overt and covert gang-related online content.

The social media hub will proactively flag illegal and harmful online content for social media companies to take down. Hosted by the Metropolitan Police, the new capability will also prevent violence on our streets by identifying gang-related messages generating the most risk and violence.

The move follows the Serious Violence Taskforce chaired by the Home Secretary urging social media companies to do more to take down these videos. The Home Secretary invited representatives from Facebook and Google to Monday's meeting to explain the preventative action they are already taking against gang material hosted on their platforms.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Street gangs are increasingly using social media as a platform to incite violence, taunt each other and promote crime.

This is a major concern and I want companies such as Facebook and Google to do more.

We are taking urgent action and the new social media hub will improve the police's ability to identify and remove this dangerous content.

Duncan Ball, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service and National Policing lead for Gangs said:

Police forces across the country are committed to doing everything we can to tackle violent crime and the impact that it has on our communities. Through this funding we can develop a team that is a centre of expertise and excellence that will target violent gangs and those plotting and encouraging violence online.

By working together with social media companies we will ensure that online material that glamourises murder, lures young people into a dangerous, violent life of crime and encourages violence is quickly dealt with to cut off this outlet for gangs and criminals.

Looking to the future we aim to develop a world class capability

that will tackle the type of dangerous social media activity that promotes or encourages serious violence.

The new partnership is being built by the Home Office with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, online content companies, community based charities and the police.

It is already an offence to incite, assist, or encourage violence online and the Home Office is focused towards building on the relationships made with social media providers to identify where we can take action relevant to tackling serious violence.