[News story: New government action announced to tackle online child sexual abuse](#)

Home Secretary Sajid Javid will travel to Silicon Valley this week to assess the progress tech giants are making in eradicating online child sexual exploitation (CSE).

During a series of meetings with some of the world's biggest technology companies, the Home Secretary will be updated on what has been done to tackle this abhorrent crime and urge companies to do all they can to respond to the evolving threat.

As part of the visit the Home Secretary will also be travelling to Microsoft's HQ in Redmond to convene a 'hackathon', which will see industry experts work together to come up with tools to detect online child grooming.

The Home Secretary has made it his mission to tackle online CSE, which includes looking at all aspects of this crime. In September, he set out a commitment to drive an improved response to the horrifying scale of child sexual abuse online in a speech to the NSPCC.

Today the Home Secretary announced that he has commissioned the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) to look at how advertising is funding CSE activity.

Advertisements for legitimate products, including from well-known brands, are appearing on sites hosting child abuse. The work by the Internet Watch Foundation will help outline the scale of the problem and how government and industry should respond.

The Home Secretary will also chair a new taskforce to bring together representatives from advertising agencies, trade bodies and brands to discuss next steps to ensure criminals don't have access to this funding stream.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

> Keeping our children safe is my mission as Home Secretary and it is vital tech companies take their responsibility seriously.
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> I have demanded action and will be discussing the progress industry has made during my visit to the US – as well as seeing the latest tools being developed to detect online child grooming.
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> This government is leading the response against these sickening crimes. Today, I've commissioned new research to look at how advertising is fuelling the sexual exploitation of children online and I am providing further funding for schemes to tackle the live-streaming of abuse.

Commenting on the commission, Susie Hargreaves OBE, CEO of the Internet Watch Foundation said:

> We are delighted that the Home Office has asked us to provide data to explore how legitimate advertisers are being exploited by offenders, intent on sharing horrific imagery of child sexual abuse online. Using a variety of sophisticated techniques to avoid detection, offenders are exploiting online advertising networks to monetise their distribution of child sexual abuse material.
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> At the heart of all our work, are the child victims of this hideous crime. They range from babies to teens. The abuse itself is horrific, but by sharing the images and videos of these crimes against innocent children, offenders are forcing the victims to suffer the torment of knowing their abuse continues.
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> It is our mission to identify the methods offenders are employing to share this disturbing material, enabling us to most effectively disrupt its distribution. We hope this research will help us in this battle.

On Wednesday the Home Secretary will give a speech at Microsoft's headquarters before the tech hack takes place on the same day. This will see engineers come together to try and come up with solutions for tackling online grooming. Any products will then be given out as a free tool for others to use.

The National Crime Agency estimates that around 80,000 people in the UK present some kind of sexual threat to children online while there has been a 700% increase since 2013 in the number of referrals to the National Crime Agency for child sexual abuse images.

In a further attempt to improve the response, work is being done to develop new tools to improve the capabilities of the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) – the database used by the NCA and UK police forces to search for indecent images of children and increase the ability to identify victims.

Following a call to industry 3 new tools using CAID are being developed:

- a fast-forensic algorithm to rapidly analyse seized devices and categorise against CAID
- a capability to automatically identify and categorise illegal imagery based on UK legislation of classification of A, B, C against the CAID trusted images
- a capability to detect images with matching scenes to help identify locations in common of indecent images of children

Trials to test this newly developed capability with some police forces will begin later this year. Further to this, a £250,000 innovation call has now opened for organisations to bid for funding to assist them in developing innovative solutions to disrupt live streaming of abuse.

Through the competition, led by the Joint Security and Resilience Centre in partnership with Innovate UK, groups are being urged to come up with technical solutions that could be applied by platforms of all sizes, including those with less resource to commit to research.