

Online Safety Bill: Home Secretary's op-ed for The Telegraph

Nothing is more important than the safety of our children and we need to do everything we can to keep them safe online, just as we do in our communities and on our streets.

Child sexual abuse is an unimaginably wicked crime. Tackling this online is a global problem, requiring global solutions. We all need to play our part.

That is why we are joining with countries across the globe to demand tech companies do more. Together with international partners, child safety organisations, and survivors of child sexual abuse, the government is making sure the industry shoulders its responsibility for keeping children safe online.

In 2021, global technology companies reported more than 29 million suspected instances of child sexual abuse material on their platforms, amounting to 85 million images and videos of child sexual abuse.

As a result of these reports, UK law enforcement arrest or interview on average around 800 suspects each month, safeguarding around 1,000 children.

Some of these children are as young as six months old. I have heard in bone-chilling detail the lifelong impact such abuse has on them. It is vital that we do everything we can to stop it.

The Online Safety Bill, new legislation intended to make the UK the safest place to be online, is currently before Parliament. The bill has been designed to protect both the safety of users as well as their right to privacy and freedom of expression. We do not want to censor anyone or restrict free speech, but we must do more to combat these foul, hugely destructive crimes.

Things like end-to-end encryption significantly reduce the ability for platforms to detect child sexual abuse. The Online Safety Bill sets a clear legal duty to prevent, identify, and remove child sexual abuse content, irrespective of the technologies they use. Nobody can sensibly deny that this is a moral imperative.

We intend to amend and strengthen the bill to ensure that the onus is on tech companies to develop or source technology to mitigate the risks, regardless of their design choices. If they fail to do so, Ofcom will be able to impose fines of up to £18 million or 10% of the company's global annual turnover – depending on which is higher. This will therefore support innovation and drive the development of effective safety technologies across the industry, so that offenders have nowhere to hide online.

The UK government wholeheartedly supports the responsible use of encryption technologies. They are widely used by banks to protect financial information

and to stop it being accessed or misused when UK citizens bank or make purchases online. However, the implementation of end-to-end encryption or other technologies in a way that intentionally blinds companies to abhorrent child sex abuse happening on their platforms will have a disastrous impact on child safety.

The National Crime Agency leads the UK law enforcement response to child sexual abuse. By working collaboratively with regional and local police forces, and with technology companies that currently detect and report instances of suspected child sexual abuse on their platforms, the agency relentlessly pursues those who groom and abuse our children.

If end-to-end encryption is implemented without the relevant safety mitigations in place, this will become much harder. It will significantly reduce tech companies' and law enforcement's ability to detect child sexual abuse happening online. This is obviously unacceptable.

We, and other child safety and tech experts, believe that it is possible to implement end-to-end encryption in a way that preserves users' right to privacy, while ensuring children remain safe online.

We have already worked with child protection organisations and technology companies to shape the bill. And we will continue to listen and to engage. But the safety of our children is of paramount importance, and I make no apology for doing whatever it takes.

Our changes to the Online Safety Bill will help to ensure that tech companies, working in partnership with governments, child protection organisations and law enforcement, provide the best possible protections to children from those who prey on them, while maintaining our privacy.

Tech companies now need to stand up and use their resources and engineering expertise to build on the innovation from that fund. The safety of our children from the most evil predators demands it.

New measures will go further in tackling child sexual abuse online than ever before

Greater powers to tackle child sexual abuse online will be introduced through an amendment to the Online Safety Bill, the Home Secretary announced today (Wednesday 6 July 2022).

The amendment will give Ofcom extra tools to ensure technology companies take action to prevent, identify and remove harmful child sexual abuse and

exploitation (CSAE) content.

Ofcom, the UK's regulatory authority for telecommunications, will be able to demand that technology companies such as social media platforms roll out or develop new technologies to better detect and tackle harmful content on their platforms. If they fail to do so, Ofcom will be able to impose fines of up to £18 million or 10% of the company's global annual turnover, depending on which is higher.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

Child sexual abuse is a sickening crime. We must all work to ensure criminals are not allowed to run rampant online and technology companies must play their part and take responsibility for keeping our children safe.

Privacy and security are not mutually exclusive – we need both, and we can have both and that is what this amendment delivers.

The National Crime Agency estimate there are between 550,000 to 850,000 people in the UK who pose a sexual risk to children. In the year to 2021, there were 33,974 obscene publications offences recorded by the police, and although some improvements have been made, it is still too easy for offenders to access harmful content online.

Access to such content online can lead to offenders normalising their own consumption of this content, sharing methods with each other on how to evade detection, and escalation to committing contact child sexual abuse offences.

Digital Minister, Nadine Dorries said:

Tech firms have a responsibility not to provide safe spaces for horrendous images of child abuse to be shared online. Nor should they blind themselves to these awful crimes happening on their sites.

Rob Jones, NCA Director General for child sexual abuse, said:

Technology plays an extremely important part in our daily lives and its benefits are undeniable.

But it is also a fact that online platforms can be a key tool in a child abuser's arsenal. They use them to view and share abuse material, seek out and groom potential victims, and to discuss their offending with each other.

Identifying these individuals online is crucial to us uncovering the real-world abuse of children.

We are taking significant action in this space and, alongside UK policing, we are making record numbers of arrests and safeguards every month.

While this will always be a priority, we need tech companies to be there on the front line with us and these new measures will ensure that.

Sir Peter Wanless, NSPCC Chief Executive, said:

We need urgent action to protect children from preventable online abuse. Our latest analysis shows online grooming crimes have jumped by more than 80% in four years.

The Online Safety Bill is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure children can explore the online world safely.

This amendment will strengthen protections around private messaging and ensure companies have a responsibility to build products with child safety in mind. This positive step shows there doesn't have to be a trade-off between privacy and detecting and disrupting child abuse material and grooming.

The amendment will support innovation and the development of safety technologies across the technology industry and will incentivise companies in building solutions to tackle CSEA which are effective and proportionate.

The government-funded Safety Tech Challenge Fund is demonstrating that it is possible to detect child sexual abuse material in end-to-end encrypted environments, while respecting user privacy.

You can also read the [Home Secretary's op-ed for the The Telegraph](#).

Tax cut worth up to £330 comes in for 30 million workers

- 30 million people across the UK will benefit from the biggest personal tax in a decade from today
- Hard working Brits will save up to £330 per year – 2.2 million lifted out of personal tax altogether
- 70% of UK workers now paying less National Insurance, even after accounting for the Health and Social Care Levy

The £6 billion tax cut will see the level at which people start paying

National Insurance rise to £12,570 – lifting 2.2 million people out of paying any personal tax and ensuring people get to keep more of the money they earn.

The threshold change means that 70% of UK workers will pay less National Insurance, even after accounting for the Health and Social Care Levy that is funding the biggest catch up programme in NHS history and putting an end to spiralling social care costs.

From today the level at which people start paying National Insurance has risen from £9,880 to £12,570.

This change means that millions of people working across hundreds of different industries across the UK will now be better off.

This includes bricklayers who'll save £218, care workers who'll save £324, hairdressers who will get a £118 benefit and nursery assistants who'll get a £343 yearly boost.

Workers can check their salary in the government's [online tool](#) to estimate the amount they could save between July 2022 to July 2023.

The last major personal tax cut of today's magnitude was nearly ten years ago, when the income tax personal allowance increased by £1,100 in 2013. Today's threshold change is more than double that, as working people are now able to hold on to an extra £2,690 free from tax.

Today's change to National Insurance thresholds comes as part of the Chancellor's wider vision for a lower tax economy. At the Spring Statement Mr Sunak announced a 1p income tax cut in 2024 – which will be the first cut to the basic rate in 16 years and will save the average taxpayer a further £175 a year. The Chancellor also committed to cutting and reforming business taxes later this year in the autumn, to help spur business growth and productivity. The government is currently working with industry on how best to do that.

The increase to the National Insurance thresholds will leave around 76% of National Insurance payers in the North East better, 75% in the North West and Merseyside, and 62% in London.

Today's landmark personal tax cut also comes as the government launched new Help for Households campaign designed to raise awareness and signpost people to the £37 billion in support on offer and targeted at those most in need. The support provides millions of the most vulnerable households at least £1,200 of support in total this year to help with the cost of living, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400 to help with their bills.

It also includes a 5p fuel duty cut – the biggest cut ever to fuel duty rates, a rise in the national living wage to give full time workers an extra £1,000 and a cut to the Universal Credit taper rate to provide over 1 million families an extra £1,000.

The NICs threshold change takes effect following the government making tough but responsible decisions to manage the public finances responsibly and

choosing not to saddle future generations with almost £400 billion of debt used to protect jobs and the economy during the pandemic – worth around £5,500 for every person in the UK.

Further information

- Visit the government's [cost of living support website](#)
- Personal Tax [factsheet](#)
- Spring Statement [Tax Plan](#)
- With those with the broadest shoulders bearing the biggest burden, the government is taking decisive action through the Health and Social Care Levy to tackle the NHS backlog and fix the social care crisis – something governments have ducked for decades.
- Over the last decade the government increased the personal allowance people have before they pay any income tax from £6,475 in 2010 to £12,570 today. This has lifted millions of the poorest out of paying any income tax at all, and meant a real terms tax cut of £750 for 27 million people.

Example occupations paying less National Insurance, even after accounting for the Health and Social Care Levy, below (list from [ONS](#) and checked through the government's [online tool](#))

Occupation	Median salary (£)	Calculator result
Hospital porter	19860	£292 less
Shelf stacker	12351	£333 less
Security guard	24814	£246 less
Fork-life truck drivers	25072	£243 less
Van drivers	20250	£289 less
Lorry drivers	30620	£191 less
Construction workers	26619	£229 less
Sewing machinists	16651	£322 less
Tyre fitters	22513	£267 less
Metal workers	22842	£264 less
Retail cashiers and sales assistants	10555 / 12071	£112 less / £298 less
Hairdressers, beauticians and barbers	10608	£118 less
Care workers	16502	£324 less
Nursery assistants	14462	£343 less
Chefs	17906	£311 less
Butchers	22561	£267 less
Fishmongers	18987	£300 less
Bakers	19933	£292 less
Painters and decorators	23224	£261 less
Builders, floorers, wall tilers and plasterers	25030	£244 less
Bricklayers	27756	£218 less
Plumbers	31602	£182 less

Carpenters and joiners	27520	£220 less
Receptionists	14317	£344 less
Youth workers	23136	£262 less

When looking at the combined impact of the Levy and the Health and Social Care Levy, from July, a breakdown is below showing the percentage of National Insurance better off in regions across the UK.

Percentage of NICs payers	Region
76%	North East
75%	North West and Merseyside
76%	Yorkshire and the Humber
74%	East Midlands
74%	West Midlands
67%	East of England
62%	London
65%	South East
73%	South West
77%	Northern Ireland
70%	Scotland
75%	Wales

[Secretary of State for Northern Ireland boosts integrated education in NI with £1.9m funding package](#)

- Northern Ireland Secretary announces new funding package to support greater integration in education in Northern Ireland.
- Funds to raise awareness of and support the transformation process for schools.
- Builds on Northern Ireland Office's work to support reconciliation and build a shared and integrated society.

Secretary of State, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP has made the £1.9m funding announcement during a visit to Lough View Integrated Primary School.

The funding will help support schools through the transformation process as they work towards integrated status.

The £1.9m will go to the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), which work to enable a greater number of children from different community backgrounds to be educated together. NICIE offers advice and support to parents and schools in

the ballot process which sees parents vote on where to transform to an integrated school. The IEF raises awareness of the transformation process and the merits of integrated education.

The Secretary of State today (Wednesday 6 July) visited Lough View Integrated Primary, where he met its Principal, Sean Spillane and discussed the school's work to provide a high quality education to children in an integrated setting.

At the school, he discussed how, as highlighted by the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, greater integration in education is an essential aspect of the reconciliation process and the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society.

Research clearly demonstrates the positive social attitudes instilled by increased integration in education. Schools of all types have been successful in delivering greater integration and instilling the values of acceptance and cooperation that they carry with them into later life, helping to create a more inclusive society.

The Secretary of State, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, said:

Seeing greater integration of education across Northern Ireland is an absolute priority for me.

When a school becomes integrated, children learn, grow and build communities together. Parents get to know each other, and long term friendships develop. This is an essential aspect of the reconciliation process.

My hope is that integration will soon become the norm and not the exception in schools across Northern Ireland. The work done by the IEF and NICIE is essential in helping Northern Ireland's children to grow up in a truly shared society.

Tina Merron, Chief Executive of the Integrated Education Fund said:

The Integrated Education Fund is delighted with today's announcement by the Secretary of State. Integrated Education is a core commitment of the Good Friday Agreement and we remember that the British Government is a co-guarantor of that Agreement.

This is an enormous boost to our charitable organisation as we seek to empower and support parents, schools and local communities who want to see more Integrated schooling.

In the past few years 14 schools across Northern Ireland have held a democratic ballot of their parents in favour of Integrated status and the IEF and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

are now working to support more schools than ever before.

Roisin Marshall, the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education said:

The Council for Integrated Education empowers school communities to deliberately and intentionally attract children, young people and the adults, who identify as coming from both sides of our divided society as well as those from other religions and cultural backgrounds.

This funding will enable NICIE to offer more dedicated support to those school communities who wish to explore, develop and embed their Integrated ethos. We are very grateful for this additional support to help to meet the increase in parental demand for Integrated Education.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) will receive £1,465,000 and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) will receive £435,000 over the next 2.5 Financial Years (2022 – 2025).

Business Secretary selects Professor Dame Jessica Corner as new Executive Chair of Research England

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has selected Professor Dame Jessica Corner as the preferred candidate for the role of Executive Chair of Research England.

As Executive Chair of Research England, Professor Corner will take up responsibility for quality related research funding to English universities, largely informed by the results of the Research Excellence Framework exercise, as well as funding for knowledge exchange activities. She will also lead Research England's role in ensuring the health and stability of English universities in their research and innovation activities.

Professor Corner will also be part of the UKRI senior leadership team working closely with UKRI's Chief Executive, UKRI Board and the other Executive Chairs to collectively oversee UKRI's strategy, funding programmes and

infrastructure.

Professor Corner has an accomplished background as both a trained nurse and academic specialising in cancer palliative care and more recently as a senior university leader in the role of Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange at the University of Nottingham.

Professor Corner was awarded a DBE in 2014 for services to Health Care Research and Education and was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences in 2015.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

I am delighted to name Professor Dame Jessica Corner as preferred candidate to steward Research England through the years to come. I look forward to working closely with her and the UKRI leadership team to ensure the continued success of the world leading research carried out by our universities, building on the UK's reputation as a science superpower.

I would also like to thank Dr David Sweeney for his tireless work for the research sector as inaugural Executive Chair of Research England and previously at HEFCE. I wish him the very best for his retirement.

Professor Jessica Corner said:

I am delighted to be chosen as the preferred candidate for the role of Executive Chair of Research England at this time of huge opportunity for the country's truly outstanding research base. I know I will be building on the immense contribution made by David Sweeney to UKRI, Research England and our research ecosystem over his extensive career. I look forward to supporting our national community of researchers as they continue to explore, discover, and innovate to transform lives across the globe.

UKRI aims to create an outstanding research and innovation system that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and benefit. It is the UK's primary public funding body for research and innovation, with a budget of £25.1 billion over the spending review period of 2022-2023 to 2024-2025.

Professor Corner is due to succeed the current Executive Chair of Research England, Dr David Sweeney, who is due to retire. Professor Corner is expected to start in October.

The post of Executive Chair of Research England is subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee. The Committee have decided to hold a hearing which will take place on 20 July 2022. Further details will be available on the Select Committee

website.