

# New smart devices cyber security laws one step closer

- Second reading of landmark Product Security and Telecoms Infrastructure Bill will prohibit UK sales of connectable digital products with poor cyber security
- Bill will speed up roll out of better mobile and broadband coverage by encouraging fairer and faster deals between landowners and mobile operators

MPs are set to debate a new world-leading law to keep consumers' phones, tablets, smart TVs, fitness trackers and other devices secure from cybercriminals.

It will place new cyber security requirements on the manufacturers and sellers of consumer tech which can connect to the internet or other devices.

Under the bill, easy-to-guess default passwords which come programmed into digital devices and present an easy target for cybercriminals will be banned.

Manufacturers will have to be more transparent to customers about the length of time products will receive security updates for connectable products and create a better public reporting system for vulnerabilities found in those products.

Failure to uphold the measures could result in fines of up to £10 million or four per cent global turnover, plus up to £20,000 per day in the case of an ongoing breach.

Ahead of introducing the bill in the House of Commons, Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Whether it's your phone, smart speaker or fitness tracker, it's vital that these devices are kept secure from cybercriminals.

Every product on our shelves has to meet all sorts of minimum requirements, like being fire resistant or a choking hazard and this is no different for the digital age where products can now carry a cyber security risk.

We are legislating to protect people across the UK and keep pace with technology as it transforms our everyday lives.

The bill will give ministers powers to put new requirements on the manufacturers, importers and distributors of consumer tech devices. They

include:

- Banning universal default passwords which are pre-set on devices – such as ‘password’ or ‘admin’ – and are an easy target for cyber criminals. Any preloaded product passwords will need to be unique and not resettable to universal factory settings.
- Requiring device manufacturers to be transparent with consumers about how long they’ll provide security updates for products so people are clearer when they buy. If a product will not receive any security updates the customer must be informed.
- Ensuring manufacturers have a readily available public point of contact to make it easier for software flaws and bugs to be reported.

□□The bill will also speed up the roll out of faster and more reliable broadband and mobile networks by making it easier for operators to upgrade and share infrastructure. The reforms will encourage quicker and more collaborative negotiations with landowners hosting the equipment with the aim of reducing instances of lengthy court action holding up the construction of infrastructure.

A regulator, to be announced at a later date, will oversee the new cyber security regime and ensure in-scope businesses comply with the measures in place. It will have the power to issue notices to companies requiring they comply with the security requirements, recall insecure products or stop selling or supplying them altogether.

The bill applies to ‘connectable’ products. This includes all devices which can access the internet such as smartphones, smart TVs, games consoles, security cameras and alarm systems, smart toys and baby monitors, smart home hubs and voice-activated assistants, and smart home appliances such as washing machines and fridges.

It also applies to products which can connect to multiple other devices but not directly to the internet. Examples include smart light bulbs, smart thermostats and wearable fitness trackers.

Matthew Evans, Director of Markets, techUK said:

Industry has long supported the shared ambition to improve the cyber resilience of devices and has worked with DCMS across the Secure-By-Design agenda over the last five years.

Most suppliers already adhere to the principles of the legislation and if implemented practically this will both protect consumers and ensure they have access to a wide range of connected devices.

techUK also welcomes the Government’s efforts to reforming the Electronic Communications Code, which is essential to speeding up the rollout of gigabit and 5G infrastructure. Industry looks forward to further clarity on the amendments to the Code to ensure we can deliver the connectivity consumers and businesses need.

Hamish MacLeod, Chief Executive at Mobile UK, said:

Mobile operators need a robust legal framework to meet the UK's connectivity ambitions. The Electronic Communications Code as it stands is not working.

Mobile operators welcome the measures within this Bill that will tackle this and will engage closely with Parliament to ensure that it delivers on this objective.

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Notes to Editors:

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## **Education Secretary leads call to tackle antisemitic abuse on campuses**

Urgent action is required to stop antisemitic abuse on campuses, the Education Secretary has said ahead of a summit he is hosting with vice chancellors, university reps and Jewish rights groups today (26 January).

The antisemitism summit, being held by Nadhim Zahawi ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January), will look at the incidents of antisemitism on campus and discuss measures and commitments that can be taken to ensure Jewish students and staff feel safe in higher education.

This could include working with the Community Security Trust (CST) to improve data reporting from universities to help build a better picture of this issue and sharing cases of best practice. Alongside these discussions, the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) will run a training workshop for attendees about how to improve support for Jewish students who have been victims of antisemitism.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

In November I visited Auschwitz and was humbled by the experience. Seeing first-hand the spectre of a concentration camp which bestowed so many horrors is something which will stay with me for the rest of my life.

It also strengthened my resolve to fight the lingering plague of antisemitism still sadly present in our society. Ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day, today's summit marks a significant step towards that goal.

Education is the vaccine against antisemitism. No Jewish students or staff members should be subjected to antisemitic abuse, and by working together we will send out a clear message that antisemitism – like other forms of racism – will never be tolerated in our classrooms or campuses.

Minister of State for Higher and Further Education Michelle Donelan said:

I am horrified by the very thought of even one incident of antisemitism on campus – it has no place within any of our world leading universities.

I will work hand-in-hand with the sector to take forward commitments agreed to today and ensure providers have the right tools to tackle this issue.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to urge those few universities yet to sign up to the IHRA's definition of antisemitism to follow in the footsteps of many others and do so now. Without a universal recognition of antisemitism, we cannot hope for its abolition.

UJS President Nina Freedman said:

We are so excited to be a part of this campus antisemitism summit. It is great to see the Department for Education taking action on this incredibly important issue. Hopefully this summit will just be the first step in a collaborative plan to combat antisemitism in higher education.

Antisemitism awareness training is a vital and effective tool for rooting out antisemitism in the higher education sector. We hope to empower as many people as possible to recognise and call out antisemitism where they see it in any form.

CST Chief Executive Mark Gardner said:

Record levels of antisemitism have been reported by Jewish students and teaching staff, so this is a vital meeting with the Education Secretary, the Universities Minister and numerous vice chancellors. It is the leadership of the universities who need to take antisemitism seriously and fulfil their duties of care. CST looks forward to working closer with universities in improving both the recording of antisemitic incidents on campus, and in supporting those suffering from antisemitic double standards, exclusion and abuse.

Attendees invited to today's summit will include vice-chancellors from universities across the country as well as sector leaders such as Universities UK and the National Union of Students alongside representatives of key Jewish organisations such as the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) and the Jewish Leadership Council.

Those in attendance will discuss a number of potential actions to help tackle antisemitism:

- The Union of Jewish Students will be delivering a training workshop for providers in order to help them better understand what antisemitism is, and to support students facing it. Details of the free training are available on their [webpages](#).
- Vice Chancellors attending will be invited to share and publicise case studies to help share best practice among the higher education community, following the Office for Student's successful publication of case studies. [Tackling antisemitism – Office for Students](#)
- At the summit leaders will hear from the Community Security Trust which collects data from across the sector, to learn how to build a better picture of patterns of antisemitic incidences, which can help targeted interventions. Open data reporting is an important step in recognising the problem of antisemitism on their campus and is a strong message to Jewish students that their concerns will be listened to. It also allows a picture to be built of patterns of antisemitic incidences, which can help targeted interventions.

The summit builds upon the Department for Education's ongoing commitment to work with Higher Education providers in England to acknowledge and eradicate antisemitism.

Figures published by The Times November last year showed there were 111 antisemitic incidents recorded at British universities in the 2020/21 academic year – a rise of 59 per cent on the previous academic year.

To officially recognise the issue of discrimination towards Jewish people within the sector, last year the Department for Education called upon more Higher Education providers to sign up to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

Following these calls, as of [November 2021](#), more than triple the number of universities have signed up to this definition – up to 95 from 28. Research from Union of Jewish Students showed that this represented a significant increase of 67 universities when compared to figures from September 2020.

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# Genomics Beyond Healthcare: future uses and considerations of genomic science

A new wide-ranging report [Genomics Beyond Health](#) published today by the Government Office for Science investigates how genomics could play a part in our lives in the future, from sport to education and tackling crime.

Until now genomics has mostly been used within healthcare and medical research where it can help provide more precise diagnosis, target better treatments, and help predict the risks of developing certain disease. The UK's use of genomics in healthcare is world-leading and viral genomics has been critical for monitoring COVID-19 and detecting emerging variants.

This report examines how the genome can provide insights into people's traits and behaviours beyond health and how studying our DNA code presents both benefits and challenges to society.

Sequencing the whole human genome, which once took years and cost billions of pounds, now takes less than a day and costs about £800. As the technology continues to mature and its usage widens there must be greater focus on how policy and regulation might adapt to developments in genomic science. The report recommends these rapid technological and scientific advances should be considered when defining policy and regulation that will help shape and ensure the privacy, anonymity, and security of the genomic sequence of UK citizens.

Although in its infancy, genomics technology could in principle be used to predict the traits and behaviours that could determine how expensive our car insurance is, support the academic achievement in children and how decisions are made in the criminal justice system. These concepts clearly raise ethical questions for our society, but by exploring these issues now we will be able to fully consider and widely engage to make informed decisions.

## **Key issues to consider**

- **Sport:** Variants of certain genes have been associated with elite athletic performance. In theory, gene-editing techniques could be illegally used to potentially enhance performance
- **Education:** Over a thousand genes have been identified that relate to educational and cognitive outcomes, potentially being used to help tailor education for pupils with learning disabilities

Sir Patrick Vallance, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, said:

We are still in the infancy of understanding the complexity of genomic data but this is changing very rapidly. Now is the time to

consider what might be possible, and what actions government and the public could take to ensure the widespread application of genomics can occur in a way that protects and benefits us all. This report looks at the current landscape of genomics, investigates how the science is developing, and looks at what is possible now, what might be possible in the future.

George Freeman, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, said:

Since we launched the UK Genomics Healthcare program in 2011, the UK has grown into a global powerhouse in genomic healthcare, from diagnostics to drugs and vaccines. But this is just the start of the genomic revolution. As this timely report shows, our growing understanding of the genetic code of life opens up exciting new opportunities from drought and disease resistant crops to harnessing cells or factories, and new net zero biofuels and marine agriculture. To unlock these opportunities, we need to lead in both the science and the ethics and reputation for consumer confidence and public support.

Professor Ewan Birney, EMBL Deputy Director General and Director of EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) said:

Genomics has the potential to transform the world we live in, and help us tackle some of the greatest challenges facing our species and planet. This report is a timely reminder that policy makers and the public need the right information at the right time, to understand and exploit the insights these new technologies provide.

While some of the potential uses of genomics may not be realised in the short or even medium-term, people are already exploring new ways to use genomic information today. To keep pace with the science, policy will need to consider areas such as data inequality, privacy and regulation.

## **Note to editors**

Thirty subject and policy experts in science and technology across academia and government have contributed to this report. To request interviews or comment from contributors please contact [goscomms@go-science.gov.uk](mailto:goscomms@go-science.gov.uk).

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# UK Minister for Africa statement on Burkina Faso

Press release

UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has issued a statement on the coup d'état by military forces in Burkina Faso.



Minister for Africa Vicky Ford:

The UK condemns the coup d'état by military forces in Burkina Faso.

We call for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all members of the civilian government who have been detained, including the President of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

It is vital that all parties remain calm and respect human rights, and for Burkina Faso to return to democratic civilian and constitutional rule without delay.

Dialogue between all parties is required to tackle insecurity across Burkina Faso, and respond to the needs of the Burkinabe people.

The UK stands with our partners in addressing these developments, including ECOWAS, the African Union and the G5 Sahel.

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## More than 600 organised crime groups disrupted by ADDER projects

Over 600 organised crime groups have been disrupted and more than 13,000 people supported in drug treatment interventions delivered by outreach workers just one year on from the launch of the Project ADDER programme, which was set up to cut drug-related crime and harm in England and Wales.

The Home Office has revealed some early successes of the trailblazing project as the Minister for Crime, Policing and Probation, Kit Malthouse, gathered Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) representing ADDER areas from across England and Wales, at a meeting to underline the importance of cracking down on drug misuse and ensuring this threat receives the resource and focus it needs locally.

The Minister highlighted the successes of the 13 Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) sites, a year after the first projects launched. He urged PCCs to continue to work with local authorities and support police in both cracking down on drugs gangs, rolling up county lines and helping those addicted to drugs with treatment and recovery services.

The Home Office can reveal that between January and December 2021, across all sites, Project ADDER has boosted activity and contributed to:

- over 600 Organised Crime Group disruptions
- over £3.5m in cash seized
- almost 10,500 arrests (including drug trafficking, acquisitive crime, criminal damage/arson etc)
- over 4,300 Out Of Court Disposals started by police
- over 13,400 drug treatment interventions carried out by outreach workers

So far £59m in investment has been committed to Project ADDER until 2023 and the government pledged to extend the funding of the programme to 2025 as part of its flagship Drugs Strategy last month. The strategy will see £300 million invested in pursuing and closing down the ruthless gangs who exploit and threaten our most vulnerable in society for financial gain through the illegal drugs trade and £780 million invested in treatment and recovery.

Crime, Policing and Probation Minister Malthouse said:

Drugs degrade society – they drive crime, destroy families, and their illegal use claims more lives each year than all stabbings and road traffic accidents combined.

This government is committed to eradicating this scourge and I am pleased to see our approach is working, with over 10,000 arrests

and 13,000 people encouraged into treatment in the last 12 months through Project ADDER.

Our 10-year Drugs Strategy will tackle both the supply and demand for narcotics and see the government commit to the largest ever single increase in investment in treatment and recovery.

All Project ADDER sites are now live, spanning across 13 local authorities in England and Wales. These are: Blackpool, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Norwich, Swansea Bay, Bristol, Newcastle, Wakefield, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Liverpool City, Knowsley and Wirral.

The Project ADDER approach combines co-ordinated and targeted law enforcement with expanded diversionary programmes, such as Out of Court Disposal Orders, and enhanced treatment and recovery services, including housing and employment support.

The Drugs Strategy builds on the government's progress in driving down crime and delivering safer streets for all.

So far the government has delivered:

#### A drop in crime

1. Between June 2019 and June 2021, there was an 14% fall in overall crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse). And in the year to June, we saw continuing falls in neighbourhood crime – including robbery and burglary – as well as falls in knife crime (excluding possession) and firearms offences, reflecting the impact of lockdown restrictions.
2. In particular, neighbourhood crime decreased by 31%, homicides were down 7% and knife crime dropped by 10%.
3. Overall crime has been falling in recent years. According to the Crime Survey, between 2009-10 and 2019-20, overall crime fell by 41%, with violence falling by 33% and theft by 34%.

#### More police on the streets

- 11,053 additional officers have been hired across England and Wales – meaning we're 55% of the way towards our target of 20,000 extra officers by March 2023.
- Our police forces are more diverse than ever – we are recruiting more female officers and have the highest number of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic officers since records began.

#### Getting weapons off our streets

- Every knife seized is a life saved, which is why we've given police more stop and search powers. And it's working – last year almost 16,000 dangerous weapons were seized.
- Our Offensive Weapons Act has also banned a wide range of knives,

weapons, and firearms, and the surrender scheme saw almost 15,000 knives and offensive weapons removed from the streets.

#### Safer communities

- We've funded 159 local areas across England and Wales to deliver crime prevention measures through the Safer Streets Fund. This has resulted in increased CCTV, street lighting, and enhanced home security.
- Since 2019, we've invested £242m to zone in on serious violence and homicide hotspots. This includes £105.5m funding for our Violence Reduction Units, which have reached 300,000 at risk young people so far.

You can read the most recent [press release on the Drugs Strategy](#).