



Safe Schools Alliance UK



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Response to Online Harms White Paper from Safe Schools Alliance UK

We are a mixed sex group of parents, carers, grandparents, teachers, governors and other professionals.

- We understand gender to be a social construct.
- Our age range is from 20s to 70s.
- Our ethnicity is mixed, and some members are disabled under the EA2010 definitions.

We would like the Government to take into account our views with regards to the online harms consultation, we would also like ongoing involvement in this project to represent parents, carers, grandparents, teachers, governors and other professionals concerned about safeguarding. We are important stakeholders.

There needs to be much better protection of under 18's online. ALL adults should be made aware of the duty of care that we all share towards children. The harms caused to children every day online are wide ranging: sexual content; violent content; confusing information about gender and encouragement to transition as a solution to problems; content around suicide that does not stick to Samaritan guidelines; celebration of young girls' breast binding/getting a double mastectomy/taking testosterone; grooming into CSE and extremism, self-esteem being based on online likes and many more.

There needs to be transparency and accountability relating to the content being hosted on all sites that are accessed by under 18's. How are sites enforcing age limits? How are they checking whether their sites are being used for grooming? What are they doing to openly and honestly communicate the actual content of their sites to parents?

The online harms regulator should be a new public body that should be totally transparent and accountable to the public. Any conflicts of interests individuals may have need to be declared and published: failure to do so should result in immediate removal.

There needs to be transparency about exactly what content is removed and why: there are a lot of concerns about freedom of speech being curtailed online, particularly with regards to women's speech around their rights and male violence.

Expertise and representatives should be drawn from grassroots organisations such as these:

<https://womansplaceuk.org/>

<https://forwomen.scot/>

<https://fairplayforwomen.com>

<https://wgscotland.org.uk/>

<https://www.transgendertrend.com/>



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<https://www.faircop.org.uk/>

<https://www.standingforwomen.com/>

These organisations have a lot of experience and knowledge of attacks on freedom of speech. The policing of gender-critical women's voices on Twitter, in particular, has led to feelings of distrust and has restricted access to the public space for some people, especially women.

Despite our strong belief that safeguarding of children is paramount, Safe Schools Alliance UK are also believers in free speech and debate as cornerstones of democracy.

It is essential that none of the regulations introduced to protect children from online harm should be extended to impinge unnecessarily on the free speech of adults.

Freedom of Speech and privacy should always be held in the highest regard, particularly in regard to private communications. The exception to this would be the safeguarding of children: Anybody contacting under 18's online via direct/private messaging should expect to have their messages scrutinised by law enforcement if there is believed to be a child safeguarding issue.

Yours faithfully,

Safe Schools Alliance UK