

News story: Children to be given extra protection online

The new power will be taken as an amendment to the Data Protection Bill, currently before the House of Lords, with cross party support.

The Government's proposals will require the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to produce a statutory code of practice on age-appropriate website design.

The new code will set standards required of websites and app makers on privacy for children under the age of 16. It will also ensure that websites and apps must be designed to make clear what personal data of children is being collected, how it is being used, and how both children and parents can stay in control of this data.

The amendment has the support of Baroness Kidron and Baroness Harding, who have campaigned for many years to protect the rights and safety of children on the internet. The Government has worked closely with campaigners on the new amendment, to secure these rights around the online processing of a child's personal data in the Bill.

Digital Minister Matt Hancock said:

Our Internet Safety Strategy sets out how we want the UK to be the safest place to be online. To do that we strongly support freedom online, while protecting people, and particularly children, from harm. There is growing evidence on the need for protections for children on social media.

This statutory code of practice will require tailored protections to be built into websites and apps for children under 16. This must be done in a way that protects the wonderful freedom and opportunity of the internet, without jeopardising the future free flow of data between the UK and EU.

The amendment will be debated in the House of Lords today (Monday 11 December).

The new code would have the same enforceability as the government's codes on direct marketing and data sharing. It also has a clear link to enforcement provisions already set out in the Bill. The government expects that non-compliance with the code would play a relevant factor in any ICO decision to bring forward enforcement action against websites that do not comply with the Data Protection Bill – including in determining level of fines up to £18 million or 4% of global turnover.

The government will work in close consultation with the Information

Commissioner's Office and others to ensure that the code is robust, practical, and meets the development needs of children in relation to gathering, sharing, storing and commoditising of their data.

The amendment builds on a number of protections for children's data already in the Bill. This includes the need to obtain parental consent before processing the data of children under the age of 13, the requirement that consent is informed, as well as other new rights including the right to be forgotten.

In addition, through the [Internet Safety Strategy](#), the Government has the ambition to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online and has announced a range of measures including a social media levy, code of practice and annual transparency reporting.