

Item 6 (b)

14th May 2026

10 April 2026

Mairi Millar
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Our Ref: MC2025-00012331-PS

Dear Mairi,

Thank you for your letter dated 26 August addressed to the Prime Minister, outlining Glasgow City Council's position regarding the spread of hate and extremism online. I am responding as Minister for AI and Online Safety at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and apologise for the significant delay in replying.

I welcome the Council's stance against discrimination and extremism and the work you have outlined that the Council is undertaking against online hate. This Government takes extremism seriously. Regardless of the worldview it draws from, if an ideology is causing harm by radicalising others into hatred, violence and extremism we will take action to prevent this and to safeguard susceptible individuals. A focus on community cohesion is also a priority for the government, and we are committed to bridging divisions between communities and challenging hatred, continuing to work closely with community groups, charities, and public sector partners to achieve this.

While social media can play an important role in society, it is unacceptable that people use it to spread hate and threaten our communities. Social media companies have a responsibility to keep people safe on their platforms and holding them to account for this is one of the priorities of my department.

The Online Safety Act (OSA) lays the foundation for strong protections against illegal content and harmful material for children online. Social media platforms are required to take proactive steps to tackle certain forms of extremist illegal content, including illegal threats which are likely to stir up hatred based on race, religion or sexual orientation. Companies will also have to act against content, such as online abuse, which can contribute to the toxic public environment you mention in your letter, where it meets the threshold of the new threatening communications offence. This offence criminalises communications that threaten a person with serious harm or death with the intent to cause fear.

The OSA child safety duties came into force in July 2025 and introduce stronger protections for children against hateful content. Services that are likely to be accessed by children need to protect them from content that is legal but nonetheless harmful to children, including content which is violent, abusive or hateful. In addition to this, services have a duty to put simple processes in place to allow parents and children to more easily report illegal or harmful content. Users should expect to see online platforms responding quickly and effectively to reports of this type of content.

This government takes all forms of discrimination seriously and has made tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) a priority, which is why it has announced an ambitious commitment to halve all VAWG in the next decade, including online VAWG. The OSA is my department's main vehicle to tackle online VAWG, as much of the most harmful illegal content

that platforms are required to proactively tackle disproportionately affects women and girls, including harassment. It is also, arguably, the most ambitious legislation globally in tackling this content.

Supporting public education is also a crucial part of our approach to online extremism, as you mention in your letter. We are taking steps to empower users with the skills they need to engage critically with online content. Improved media literacy builds resilience to misinformation, fosters critical thinking, and promotes respectful online behaviour, which can play a role in preventing extremism. We believe that community-led efforts are vital, and we encourage you to champion media literacy in your local area to help build a more informed and resilient society.

My department is developing a holistic approach to digital inclusion that integrates policy on digital skills and media literacy. The Digital Inclusion Action Plan outlines steps towards delivering digital inclusion for everyone in the UK, including supporting community initiatives for boosting digital skills and media literacy. By embedding media literacy within digital inclusion efforts, the government aims to ensure that people have the skills and confidence to keep themselves safe online, fostering a more resilient and empowered society capable of navigating an increasingly complex digital landscape.

Ofcom's ongoing implementation of the OSA represents real progress to address online extremism. We are watching closely to ensure the Act delivers to tackle a range of harms online, including the spread of hate and discrimination, and that platforms are taking steps to comply. Nothing is off the table when it comes to keeping our communities safe.

Yours sincerely,

Kanishka Narayan MP
Minister for AI and Online Safety