

# Protection of Children (Digital Safety and Data Protection) Bill

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[AS INTRODUCED]

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[AS INTRODUCED]

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Make provision for the protection of children accessing digital services and content.

**B**E IT ENACTED by the King’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

**1 UK Chief Medical Officers: advice on smartphone and social media use by children**

- (1) Within 12 months of the passing of this Act, the Chief Medical Officers of the United Kingdom (“the UK CMOs”) must prepare and publish advice for parents and carers on the use of smartphones and social media use by children. 5
- (2) In preparing advice under this section, the UK CMOs must have regard to—
  - (a) the paper published on 7 February 2019 entitled “United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers’ commentary on ‘Screen-based activities and children and young people’s mental health and psychosocial wellbeing: a systematic map of reviews’”, and 10
  - (b) any scientific or other developments since the publication of that paper which appear to the UK CMOs to be relevant.
- (3) For the purposes of this Act, “the Chief Medical Officers of the United Kingdom” means the Chief Medical Officers for—
  - (a) England, 15
  - (b) Wales,
  - (c) Scotland, and
  - (d) Northern Ireland.

**2 Impact of social media use on children: plan for research**

Within 12 months of the passing of this Act, the Secretary of State must publish a plan for research into the impact of use of social media on children. 20

**3 Children’s experiences online and age of consent: assessment**

- (1) On the day on which the plan under section 2 is published, the Secretary of State must publish an assessment of—

- (a) the extent to which the experiences children are having online are age-appropriate, and
  - (b) the appropriateness and effectiveness of the digital age of consent.
- (2) The Secretary of State must consult –
  - (a) OFCOM, and 5
  - (b) the Information Commissionerwhen preparing the assessment under this section.
- (3) The assessment published under this section must contain a statement by the Secretary of State of whether the digital age of consent should be increased.
- (4) For the purposes of this Act, “the digital age of consent” means the age specified in article 8 of the UK GDPR at which a child may give consent to the processing of their personal data in relation to information society services. 10

#### **4 Extent, commencement and short title**

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- (2) This Act comes into force on the day on which it is passed. 15
- (3) This Act may be cited as the Protection of Children (Digital Safety and Data Protection) Act 2025.



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