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THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

CHRONOLOGY

NAME OF CORE PARTICIPANT OR OTHER MATERIAL PROVIDER: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

VERSION CONTROL: VERSION 1 DATED 13 June 2025

Date	Event	Category/Categories	Doc description	Reference
29 September 2008	The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) was launched by the then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families The Rt Hon Ed Balls and the then Home Secretary The Rt Hon Jacqui Smith. It was a group of more than 200 organisations drawn from across government, industry, law, academia and charity sectors that work in partnership to help keep children safe online.	N/A	News article	
30 January 2017	House of Commons (HoC) Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee launched an inquiry into ‘fake news’	N/A	'Fake news' inquiry launched - Committees - UK Parliament	
22 March 2017	Publication of the House of Lords (HoL) Communications Select Committee report on “Growing up with the internet”	N/A	House of Lords - Growing up with the internet - Select	

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			Committee on Communications	
11 October 2017	Publication of the Internet Safety Strategy Green Paper by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) by the then Secretary of State The Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP	N/A	Green Paper	
12 October 2017	Publication of the Government Response to the HoL Select Committee on Communications: Growing up with the Internet	N/A	DCMS response to Select Committee Report	
May 2018	Publication of the Government Response to the Internet Strategy Green Paper by DCMS by the then Secretary of State The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP	N/A	Government response to Green Paper	
29 July 2018	Publication of the HoC Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Interim Report on Disinformation and 'fake news'	N/A	Disinformation and 'fake news' Interim Report	
23 October 2018	Publication of the Government Response to the HoC Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's Interim Report on Disinformation and 'fake news'	N/A	Government Response to Select Committee Interim Report on Disinformation and 'Fake News'	
30 October 2018	The then Minister for Digital and Creative Industries Margot James MP created The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) which was successor to UKCCIS, with an expanded scope to improve online safety for everyone in the UK.	N/A	UKCIS Press Release	

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18 February 2019	Publication of the Disinformation and 'fake news' final report by the HoC Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee	N/A	Disinformation and 'fake news' Final Report	
21 February 2019	Publication of Ofcom's Children and parents: Media use and attitudes report 2018	N/A	Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2018 - Ofcom	
8 April 2019	<p>Publication of the Online Safety White Paper, by the then Secretary of State for DCMS Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP and Home Secretary Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP.</p> <p>The foreword recognises harmful online behaviours and content cannot be allowed to undermine the significant benefits which access to digital services can bring. The paper therefore contained plans for a new system of accountability and oversight for tech companies, which would move away from the system of self-regulation.</p>	N/A	Online Harms White Paper - April 2019 - CP 57	
9 May 2019	Publication of the Government Response to the final report of the HoC Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on Disinformation and Fake News	N/A	Disinformation and 'fake news': Final Report: Government Response	
15 February 2020	Publication of the Government Initial response to the Online Harms White Paper by DCMS and Home office (HO).	N/A	Online Harms White Paper - Initial consultation response - GOV.UK	

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	This set out government's initial thinking and the further policy development work it intended to undertake, including the preparation of legislation.			
15 December 2020	<p>Publication of the full Government response to the Online Harms White Paper by DCMS and HO.</p> <p>This set out plans for a new duty of care to make online providers take responsibility for the online safety of their users.</p> <p>The aim of the legislation was to target illegal online activity and prevent children's exposure to harmful material. At the same time the legislation would aim to protect freedom of expression and require companies to have complaint mechanisms in place so that users have redress if they felt content had been removed in error.</p>	N/A	Online Harms White Paper: Full government response to the consultation - GOV.UK	
12 May 2021	<p>Publication of the Draft Online Safety Bill by DCMS.</p> <p>As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement which was published alongside the draft Bill, in line with the full government response published in December 2020, the draft Bill's drafting would place duties of care on companies and gave Ofcom the functions and powers to oversee the regulatory</p>	N/A	Draft Online Safety Bill	

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	<p>framework. The aims of the draft legislation were to ensure online platforms had obligations for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protecting children. 2. Tackling criminal activity. 3. Upholding freedom of expression. <p>The strongest provisions in the draft bill were for children. The Written Ministerial Statement sets this, and the rest of the contents of the draft bill, out in greater detail.</p> <p>From a handling perspective, the draft Bill was published to accommodate productive pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill, and to allow for further parliamentary engagement as key aspects of the Bill were developed. The Written Ministerial Statement which was made alongside the draft Bill’s publication noted the following: <i>‘This Bill is the culmination of years of work and is truly novel. It is vital that we get it right both in order to create a framework that delivers for users and that maintains the UK’s reputation as a tech leader. This balance has been struck. During the pre-legislative scrutiny process, which I hope will start as soon as possible, my department and the Home Office will continue work across both Houses to develop some areas</i></p>			

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	<i>of the legislation. This will include measures on user advocacy, and exempting educational institutions that are already regulated from scope.]</i>			
23 July 2021	Joint Committee on the Draft Online Safety Bill is established	N/A	Draft Online Safety Bill (Joint Committee) Established	
22 July 2021	Publication of the HoL Communications and Digital Committee’s report “Freedom for all? Freedom of expression in the digital age”	N/A	House of Lords - Free for all? Freedom of expression in the digital age - Communications and Digital Committee	
October 2021	Publication of the Government Response to the HoL Communications and Digital Committee’s report “Freedom for all? Freedom of expression in the digital age”	N/A	DCMS response to the House of Lords Communications Committee’s report on Freedom of Expression in the Digital Age	
14 December 2021	Publication of the HoC and HoL Joint Committee report on the Draft Online Safety Bill. The report recommended that the Bill be restructured and set out its core objectives at the beginning, along with further	N/A	Draft Online Safety Bill - Joint Committee on the Draft Online Safety Bill	

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	recommendations, including how to tackle mis and disinformation, platform design and the protection of children.			
17 Marh 2022	Publication of the Government Response to the joint Committee report of the draft Online Safety Bill (DCMS)	N/A	Government response to the Joint Committee report on the draft Online Safety Bill - GOV.UK	
17 March 2022	The Online Safety Bill was introduced in the HoC – First reading	N/A	Online Safety Act 2023 1st reading - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament	
11 May 2022	Online Safety Bill Second Reading in HoC	N/A	Online Safety Bill 2nd Reading	
24 May 2022 to 28 June 2022	Online Safety Bill Committee Stage in HoC	N/A	Online Safety Bill Committee Stage	
12 July 2022	Report stage begins in the HoC. Government amendments were added to the Bill relating to journalistic content, adult safety duties, and illegal content duties	N/A	Online Safety Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament	
6 September 2022	The Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP appointed Secretary of State for DCMS	N/A		

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28 November 2022	<p>Government announced plans to amend the Bill, including the removal of the “legal but harmful” provisions for adults, in order to safeguard freedom of expression. The provisions were replaced by the introduction of transparency, accountability and free speech duties. This included a requirement for Category 1 Services to set out what they ban/restrict access to and activity for which they ban/suspend users. Systems and processes were required to enforce those terms and ensure they don’t remove content beyond this. User redress duties were introduced for flagging of banned content, over-removal of content and non-compliance with duties. The user empowerment duties on Category 1 Services were retained, but with a new list of ‘relevant content’ set out on the face of the Bill, rather than ‘content that is harmful to adults’.</p> <p>This shift aimed to uphold freedom of expression while ensuring platforms maintain transparency and accountability in managing user content.</p>	N/A	<p>News Article Online Safety Bill: Plan to make big tech remove harmful content axed - BBC News</p>	
13 December 2022	<p>Bill re-committed (sent back to committee stage) in HoC to consider new government clauses and any provisions not debated during report stage in July 2022</p>	N/A	<p>Online Safety Act 2023 Committee stage (re-</p>	

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			committed clauses and schedules) - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament	
17 January 2023	HoC Report Stage and third reading of Online Safety Bill	N/A	Online Safety Bill Report Stage Online Safety Bill Third Reading	
18 January 2023	Government published an overview of expected impact of changes to the Online Safety Bill	N/A	Overview of expected impact of changes to the Online Safety Bill - GOV.UK	
18 January 2023	The Online Safety Bill was introduced in HoL and had its first reading	N/A	Online Safety Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament	
1 February 2023	Second Reading in HoL	N/A	HoL Second Reading	
7 February 2023	Machinery of government changes announced. Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) was created. DSIT takes responsibility for online safety policy from DCMS	N/A	Science, innovation and technology takes top seat at Cabinet table - GOV.UK	

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19 April 2023 - 22 June 2023	HoL committee stage of Online Safety Bill	N/A	HoL Committee Stage	
6 July 2023 – 19 July 2023	HoL report stage of Online Safety Bill	N/A	HoL Report Stage	
6 September 2023	HoL third reading of Online Safety Bill	N/A	HoL Third Reading	
12 September 2023	HoC considered Lords amendments to the Bill	N/A	Online Safety Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament	
19 September 2023	The HoL agreed with the amendments made by the HoC on 12 September 2023 and the Bill was passed	N/A	Online Safety Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament	
26 October 2023	The Online Safety Bill gains royal assent and becomes law	N/A	Royal Assent	
05 July 2024	Peter Kyle becomes secretary of state for DSIT	N/A	Peter Kyle appointed	
20 November 2024	The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for DSIT, launches a research project to explore the impact of social media on young people’s wellbeing and mental health as part of the 5 priorities for Online Safety.	N/A	New online safety priorities for Ofcom and launch of study into effects of social media on children - GOV.UK	
20 November 2024	The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for DSIT, published a draft Statement of Strategic Priorities for online safety (SSP) and launched a targeted consultation with	N/A	Draft Statement of Strategic Priorities for online safety - GOV.UK	

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	stakeholders. The draft SSP set out government’s online safety priorities and desired outcomes.			
16 December 2024	The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for DSIT, laid in Parliament Ofcom’s first draft codes of practice for the illegal content duties and draft regulations setting out the threshold conditions for category 1, 2A, and 2B services under the Act. Services had until 16 March 2025 to assess the risk of illegal content on their platforms.	N/A	Online Safety Act 2023: Implementation - Hansard - UK Parliament	
16 January 2025	Ofcom published its children’s access assessment guidance and guidance for pornography publishers on use of age assurance. From 16 January 2025, services had three months to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Determine if it's possible for children to access their platforms. o Assess whether a significant number of their users are children or if the service is likely to attract many children. 	N/A	Statement: Age Assurance and Children’s Access - Ofcom	
24 April 2025	Government publishes an online explainer to the Online Safety Act, setting out how the Act is being implemented (including links to the various statutory instruments which bring various provisions into force), the new offences which the Act has	N/A	Online Safety Act Explainer	

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	created, the type of content which the Act tackles and how the Act will protect children.			
24 April 2025	The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for DSIT, laid Ofcom's Protection of Children's Code of Practice in Parliament. Ofcom's Children's Safety Codes set out over 40 recommended measures that platforms can take to mitigate the risk of harm to children online. Following this publication, Companies have until 24 July to complete children's risk assessment, evaluating the risk of harmful content to children on their platforms.	N/A	Online Safety Act Implementation: Protecting Children - Hansard - UK Parliament	
8 May 2025	The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Secretary of State for DSIT, laid in Parliament government's draft Statement of Strategic Priorities for online safety and government's response to the targeted consultation was published on gov.uk.	N/A	Online Safety: Statement of Strategic Priorities - Hansard - UK Parliament Government response to draft Statement of Strategic Priorities for online safety - GOV.UK	
9 June 2025	The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, Feryal Clark, laid before Parliament the draft Online Safety Super-Complaints (Eligibility and Procedural Matters) Regulations 2025. This statutory	N/A	Online Safety: Super Complaints Mechanism - Hansard - UK Parliament	

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	instrument establishes the eligibility criteria and procedural framework for the super-complaints mechanism under the Act.			