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Response to Digital Economy Bill – March 2017

Thank you for contacting me about the Digital Economy Bill.

This generation of young people is the first to grow up more technologically literate than their parents and teachers. While the internet provides access to a world of new information and points of view, it also exposes young people to very real harms.

This is why online safety is a top priority for the Government and why action is being taken. In 2013 the Government announced an agreement with the four major Internet Service Providers to offer internet filters to parents, enabling them to select what their children can and cannot view online. The Government is also currently legislating for measures that allow the BBFC regulator to direct Internet Service Providers to block pornographic sites that fail to comply with age verification rules.

On top of protecting children from being able to access inappropriate material, there is more to be done to educate them about the dangers of the internet. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety represents more than 200 organisations committed to protecting children from harm online, and works with Government to provide advice for schools, particularly around issues such as sexting, and to support social media developers in ensuring their products are safe by design. It is currently bringing together individuals from the education sector, parents, industry, expert civil society organisations and children themselves to develop the tools needed to respond to a constantly evolving internet and the threats and harms associated with it.

Although no solution can be 100 per cent effective, rest assured that the Government will continue to do all it can to protect our young people online.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP