



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Cambridge Analytica

Thank you for contacting me about the alleged privacy breach involving Facebook data.

In an increasingly digital world, people must be able to have the confidence that their personal data is protected. Social media companies are not above the law and will not be allowed to shirk their responsibilities.

Data has an important role to play in good campaigning, but my constituents, and those up and down the country, should be comfortable with how their data is gathered, used and shared. At a meeting with senior Facebook executives, the Secretary of State sought assurances that UK citizens' data was no longer at risk and explained the need for a change in the relationship between government and social media companies. Facebook needs to be less invasive, more transparent, and make sure control of data sits with users rather than the platform.

The Information Commissioner is investigating the allegations as part of a broader investigation into the use of personal data during political campaigns. She has a vital role to play in the regulation of data protection and she must have the enforcement powers she needs. The Data Protection Bill, which is progressing through Parliament, will strengthen data protection laws and give the Information Commissioner tougher powers to ensure organisations comply. For example, she will be given the power to levy fines of up to 4 per cent of global turnover for serious breaches.

Given the seriousness of this situation, it is right that the Government is committed to doing what is needed to ensure that people's data is protected. It is not ruling anything out, including further regulation in the future, and is considering what further powers the Commissioner may need. For example, the Bill already includes the power of compulsory audit, but the Government is, at the request of the Commissioner, considering whether the power to compel testimony from individuals is needed.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP