

PRESS RELEASE

The Digital Economy Bill: Protecting our children from online porn

Parent Zone's response to an amendment in the new bill which requires ISPs to crack down on porn sites that do not ask for age verification

24 November 2016: Parent Zone welcomes news that the Government has added an amendment to its new Digital Economy Bill to require Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block pornographic websites that do not ask for age verification.

The move makes good on the Conservative's manifesto pledge to stop hardcore porn being freely available to children, and it also vindicates our response to the Government's 2012 consultation on parental controls.

Our position has always been that it makes far more sense to make age restricted content something that adults can access by easily turning off a content filter than expecting parents to remember to turn it on.

Critics of the proposed legislation have questioned whether such a move would be enforceable for ISPs and others are against any moves to restrict access to online content that is not illegal. We would point to the fact that the 'opt in' approach has been working for years on the mobile network and is the sensible way forward for broadband.

We believe that adults who want to should still be able to access porn online via sites that implement age verification. This is not about banning porn. But we feel the proposal will make it less likely that children and young people under 18 will be able to access it easily online, and this can only be a good thing.

Vicki Shotbolt, Parent Zone CEO and executive board member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety says:

'This is an important step and one we asked for in 2012. Mobile operators have had default filters for age restricted content for years. If we had seen the ISPs adopt a similar approach we could have got here more quickly and in a straightforward way.

'This isn't about reducing anyone's freedom to access porn. It is simply bringing the online world more in line with the offline. That's something that will make life easier for parents and safer for children.'

To read more, check out Vicki's blog, [Protecting our Children from Porn](#).

For expert comment on families and the digital world from Parent Zone, please contact press@parentzone.org.uk or call 020 704 0415.

About Parent Zone:

Parent Zone is the leading organisation supporting parents in the digital age. Our founder and CEO Vicki Shotbolt is the official parents' representative on the government body, the UK Council For Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). Parent Zone works with parents, schools and companies to make the internet work for families by offering expert advice and content.

