

Your response

Question 1: To assist us in categorising responses, please provide a description of your organisation, service or interest in protection of children online.

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Our Centre conducts research on self-harm and suicide, include the impact of viewing images of self-harm/suicide online

Question 2: Can you identify factors which might indicate that a service is likely to attract child users?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Material related to mental health problems in young people. Including self-harm and suicide

Question 3: What information do services have about the age of users on different platforms (including children)?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Unable to answer

Question 4: How can services ensure that children cannot access a service, or a part of it?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Restriction of platforms housing unwanted material

Question 5: What age assurance and age verification or related technologies are currently available to platforms to protect children from harmful content, and what is the impact and cost of using them?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Not my area of expertise

Question 6: Can you provide any evidence relating to the presence of content that is harmful to children on user-to-user and search services?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

See next item

Question 7: Can you provide any evidence relating to the impact on children from accessing content that is harmful to them?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Our systematic review of 15 studies of the impact of viewing images of self-harm online indicates that in all studies harmful effects were found, including increasing self-harm in viewers. However, most participants in these studies had a history of self-harm. We do not know from the research studies in our review what the impact is on individuals without such a history viewing such material, although two studies reported that participants with less experience of self-harm behaviour were more likely to describe the impact of viewing self-harm images as negative.

Question 8: How do services currently assess the risk of harm to children in the UK from content that is harmful to them?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Ideally, when assessing young people potentially at risk (i.e., with mental health problems/ existing self-harm) by clinicians asking about viewing online material and also about its effects. However, I don't know the extent to which this is routinely included in assessments by clinical services.

Question 9: What are the exacerbating risk factors services do or should consider which may have an impact on the risk of harm to children in the UK?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

I am focussing on risk of self-harm:
Existing mental health/emotional problems
Previous history of self-harm
Exposure to self-harm by others, especially peers (our research suggests that this is especially relevant to cutting and in girls)

Question 10: What are the governance, accountability and decision-making structures for child user and platform safety?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 11: What can providers of online services do to enhance the clarity and accessibility of terms of service and public policy statements for children (including children of different ages)?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 12: How do terms of service or public policy statements treat 'primary priority' and 'priority' harmful content?¹

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

¹ See A1.2 to A1.3 of the call for evidence for more information on the indicative list of harms to children.

Question 12: How do terms of service or public policy statements treat 'primary priority' and 'priority' harmful content?¹

Not my area of expertise

Question 13: What can providers of online services do to enhance children's accessibility and awareness of reporting and complaints mechanisms?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 14: Can you provide any evidence or information about the best practices for accurate reporting and/or complaints mechanisms in place for legal content that is harmful to children, or users who post this content, and how these processes are designed and maintained?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 15: What actions do or should services take in response to reports or complaints about online content harmful to children (including complaints from children)?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Rapid investigation of the content, preferably suspending it pending the result of the investigation

Question 16: What functionalities or features currently exist that are designed to prevent or mitigate the risk or impact of content that is harmful to children? A1.21 in the call for evidence provides some examples of functionalities.

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 17: To what extent does or can a service adopt functionalities or features, designed to mitigate the risk or impact of content that is harmful to children on that service?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Question 17: To what extent does or can a service adopt functionalities or features, designed to mitigate the risk or impact of content that is harmful to children on that service?

Not my area of expertise

Question 18: How can services support the safety and wellbeing of UK child users as regards to content that is harmful to them?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Age restrictions on accessibility

Make it easy for individuals to report concerns

Include links to good quality information about access to help/support

Take down material that has been deemed harmful by independent moderators

Question 19: With reference to content that is harmful to children, how can a service mitigate any risks to children posed by the design of algorithms that support the function of the service (e.g. search engines, or social and content recommender systems)?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 20: Could improvements be made to content moderation to deliver greater protection for children, without unduly restricting user activity? If so, what?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

Possible AI methods of identifying inappropriate material to enable its removal

Possible development of system of human moderators (specifically trained, supervised and supported) to advise on potentially harmful material.

Question 21: What automated, or partially automated, moderation systems are currently available (or in development) for content that is harmful to children?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 22: How are human moderators used to identify and assess content that is harmful to children?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 23: What training and support is or should be provided to moderators?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 24: How do human moderators and automated systems work together, and what is their relative scale? How should services guard against automation bias?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 25: In what instances is content that is harmful to children, that is in contravention of terms and conditions, removed from a service or the part of a service that children can access?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

Not my area of expertise

Question 26: What other mitigations do services currently have to protect children from harmful content?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

No

School training programmes for informing children about safety online, and how and where to seek help if they come across harmful material, as well as strategies to cope with seeing harmful material on line.

Accessible information for parents on how to block their children's devices from accessing material not intended for those under the age of 18.

Question 27: Where children attempt to circumvent mitigations in place on a service, what further systems and processes can a service put in place to protect children?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

As above, making sure that parents are aware of how to block devices from accessing material not suitable for those under the age of 18.

Question 28: Other than those covered document (the call for evidence), are you aware of other measures available for mitigating the risk, and impact of, harm from content that is harmful to children?

Is this a confidential response? (select as appropriate)

[Please select]

None specific