Notes from meeting of the UKCCIS Executive Board
17 December 2012 – 14.30-16.30
Home Office, London SW1

Attendees:

Jeremy Browne MP chair	Minister for Crime Prevention and meeting
Edward Timpson MP	Minister for Children and Families
Ed Vaizey MP	Minister for Culture and the Creative Industries
Claire Perry MP	MP for Devizes [Invited to part of the meeting]
Joe Godwin	BBC
Julian Ashworth	BT
Peter Davies	CEOP
John Carr	CHIS
Simon Milner	Facebook
Susie Hargreaves	IWF
Sonia Livingstone	LSE
Scott Dodds	Microsoft
Donna Ruddy	Northern Ireland Executive
Peter Liver	NSPCC
Mike Short	02
Claudio Pollack	Ofcom
Vicki Shotbolt	Parentzone
Elizabeth Kanter	RIM
Will Gardner	Safer Internet Centre
David Happy	Samsung
Dido Harding	TalkTalk
Andrew Uden	Tesco
Jo Twist	UKIE
Lindsay Harvey	Welsh Government
Judith Grant	DfE
John Hubbard	DfE

Apologies received from:

Sue Warrington	Chace Community School

Observers:

Louise Woodward	DfE
Steve Creed	DfE
Katie Laws	DfE
Gillian Machin	DfE
Michael Mensah	DfE
Bill Johnston	IWF
Jo Trapp	DCMS
John Sexton	DCMS
Jon Williams	HO

Item 1 - Welcome, introductions, new members and declaring interests

1. New members were welcomed:

   - Peter Liver of NSPCC;
   - Claudio Pollack of Ofcom; and
   - Julian Ashworth of BT.

2. Apologies were received from Sue Warrington of Chace Community School.

3. John Carr declared that he works for a company which sells age verification products.

Item 2 - Parental controls presentation

4. John Hubbard gave a presentation of the parental controls consultation findings, see Annex; points included:

   - of the three options, none had a majority response
   - people who responded were self-selecting
   - some responses were generated by campaigns: Open Rights Group and SafetyNet - Protecting Innocence Online
   - BeatBullying submitted a survey of its own
   - 61% of parents said it was their responsibility to keep children safe online; 37% said it was a shared responsibility with businesses
   - of the 757 parents who responded, not everyone answered every question
   - there were three separate questions inviting views on different forms of parental controls, and it is not statistically correct to add together all the percentage of 'yes' responses from each question; and
   - parents wanted more awareness and education about internet safety.

Item 3 - Initial parental controls discussion

5. Discussion points included:

   - the consultation questions were confusing and the process had been poor

- the consultation responses were not a representative sample, and the Government response had not mentioned the petion signed by 115,000 people in support of 'opt-in' which Ms Perry handed in to 10 Downing Street
- the invitation to take part in the consultation was primarily through UKCCIS members and their constituencies, and as such could not be naturally representative
- the consideration should not be about the majority response; the board should act in the interests of children
- the responses from parents cannot be taken to be representative; other sources suggest that parents do want action
- just because parents say they do not want the three options consulted on doesn't mean they do nothing (the consultation indicates they take other approaches such as supervision)
- other surveys broadly corroborate the findings, that parents think it is their responsibility; there is no majority support for default blocking
- if we can have a proper discussion about age verification, we will be in a good place: it is the most important issue to take forward; and
- if we can adopt the Government's response to the consultation it will put the UK at the forefront of the world.

6. Other points included:

- the board paper documents are labelled 'confidential' but all are subject to Freedom of Information requests; the parental controls slides are now published
- the board did not meet before the Government issued its response to the consultation: the Coalition Government made this decision; and
- there was general agreement that the language of active choice and opt-in have not been helpful to the debate and should be changed.

Item 4 – Summary and closing (of first part of meeting)

7. Claire Perry MP left the meeting at this point.

Item 5 – Consultation discussion continued

8. Discussion about implementing the Government's response to the consultation included:

- children's charities welcomed the move forward
- TalkTalk is trialling an 'interruption of service' process for antivirus alerts that could be extended to include set-up of parental controls

(670,000 customers already use TalkTalk's Homesafe network filtering)

- BT has mailed its customers to notify them of available parental controls
- all four major ISPs should be able to collaborate on the broader awareness of parental controls to customers, and to some extent on the technical solutions
- new and existing customers should be offered parental controls
- the Safer Internet Centre has made a video with each of the four ISPs to show parents how their parental controls work
- there should be a marketing campaign to let parents know that parental controls exist, and greater clarity when explaining to parents what parental controls do and do not cover, and what their weaknesses are; Vodafone's Digital parenting magazine is a good example.
- parents should know that parental controls will not solve all internet safety issues (such as bullying), and there needs to be more communication on behavioural issues
- every part of the internet ecosystem needs to put a safety net in place so that they overlap
- there is a need for manufacturers to ensure that there are device-level parental controls available as the default position
- Blackberry has a new model with parental controls and an app for existing customers; fixed games consoles have parental controls but manufacturers must do more on the issue of parental controls for mobile consoles
- it will be important to ensure that those setting up the parental controls are over 18, and age verification needs to be robust; and
- we need to segment the industries to tackle the issues for each device type – a broad brush approach will not work.

Action points:

- Ministers to write to CEOs of four ISPS (BT, TalkTalk, Sky, Virgin) to request collaboration and progress on the Government's position on parental controls, and with timescales for action, by 11 February 2013 [Secretariat to action].

- John Carr to set up a Board level discussion to look at the issue of age verification – specifically in relation to internet service providers checking that the person setting up parental controls is 18.

Item 6 – Data indicators report

9. This item was discussed under the Chatham House rule due to commercial sensitivities.

10. Sonia Livingstone explained the pilot project which has looked at whether companies can/will make available data on services children use. The pilot found that it is challenging to make this data available, for example some companies do not know which of their customers are children and there are issues with commercial sensitivity. The outcome is therefore a proposal for a common framework across industry members with the focus being on comparable, transparent and useful information regarding company policies, processes and partnerships.

11. Comments about the pilot included Ministers expressing their support for the direction of travel, together with other board members, and an indication that this project signals the limits of what can be achieved by self regulation – because the data will not voluntarily be made available.

Action points:

- Sonia Livingstone and Simon Milner to convene a group to explore the common framework for making data collection and use policies, processes and partnerships more accessible to parents, to report back to the next UKCCIS board meeting on 11 February 2013

- Officials to advise Ministers of the options for improving the information companies publish about their policies, processes and partnerships

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Item 7 – Awareness and education update

12. Peter Davies explained that the Advice 1.0 was an excellent piece of work in drawing together internet safety messages (for providers of services used by children) but that it was not being used as much as it should. He appealed to board members to use it; an offer to improve the messages for parents was made and accepted.

Action point:

- Peter Davies to write to board members, with the support of Ministers, asking for better support and take-up of the Advice.

Item 8 – Communications review update

13. Ed Vaizey pointed out that the Communications White Paper would be published in the spring, he indicated that the approach is very much one of self regulation and he offered to meet board members to discuss it further.

Action point:

- John Carr to arrange a group of board members to meet Ed Vaizey to discuss.

Item 9 - AOB

14. This item was taken in correspondence as no time remained to discuss it

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 11 February 2013 at the Department for Education from 15.00-17.00