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Dear Lesley,

Thank you for your letter, providing us with an opportunity to update the Committee on Standards in Public Life on our work.

On Twitter, users should feel safe expressing their point of view with every Tweet - and it is our job to make that happen. Last year, we shared that building a Twitter free of abuse, malicious automation, and behaviour that distorts and distracts from the public conversation is our top priority. Within the last 12 months, we have made substantial strides in tackling abusive content on the platform. There will always be more to do, but we have made meaningful progress. Here are key highlights from that work, which relate to the latest reporting period (January 1 to June 30, 2019) and which we have shared [publicly](#):

- **More than 50% of Tweets we take action on for abuse are now proactively surfaced** using technology, rather than relying on reports to Twitter;
- **105% increase in accounts actioned** by Twitter (locked or suspended for violating the Twitter Rules);
- There was a 48% increase in accounts reported for potential violations of our hateful conduct policies. We actioned **133% more accounts** compared to the last reporting period.
- We saw a 22% increase in accounts reported for potential violations of our abuse policies. We took action on **68% more accounts** compared to the last reporting period.

This is further to the announcements we made in April 2019:

- **16% fewer abuse reports** after an interaction from an account the reporter doesn't follow.
- **100,000 accounts suspended for creating new accounts after a suspension** during January-March 2019 - a 45% increase from the same time last year.
- **60% faster response to appeals** requests with our new in-app appeal process.
- **3 times more abusive accounts suspended** within 24 hours after a report compared to the same time last year.

- **2.5 times more private information removed** with a new, easier reporting process

This November 2019, we [launched](#) the option globally for users to hide replies to their Tweets. Anyone can choose to hide replies to their Tweets. Over 2019, we tested this option in several countries. In Canada, 27% of people who had their Tweets hidden said they would reconsider how they interact with others in the future. People were curious to see how public figures like those in politics and journalism would use this update. So far, they aren't hiding replies very often. In the UK, we have seen support for the move so far, including from [Glitch](#), a not-for-profit organisation that exists to end online abuse and to ensure that the online space is a safer arena for all to use, particularly women and girls.

As Jack outlined recently, Twitter is now prohibiting all political advertising globally from the service. We published [details](#) of the policy on November 15, and began enforcement on November 22. We also we recently [announced](#) our plan to seek public input on a new rule to address synthetic and manipulated media. We've called for public feedback previously because we want to ensure that — as an open service — our rules reflect the voice of the people who use Twitter. We think it's critical to consider global perspectives, as well as make our content moderation decisions easier to understand.

We shared our [approach](#) to the UK election publicly early in November. With every major UK political party, around 90% of MPs, and the majority of candidates present on Twitter, #GE2019 is full of news, views, updates, information, and debate. We've established a cross-functional UK elections team that is proactively protecting the integrity of the election-related conversation, supporting partner escalations, and identifying potential threats from malicious actors. Here are some of the steps we're taking to ensure that debate is healthy, open, and safe:

- To unite people around the UK election conversation on Twitter, we have launched a custom election emoji that will run for the duration of the campaign. The emoji is a visual play on the word 'VOTE' and is activated by the hashtags #GE19, #GE2019, #GeneralElection19 and #GeneralElection2019.
- We have launched a new tool for the UK election that enables people to report deliberately misleading information about the voting process. This specifically relates to:
  - misleading information about how to vote or register to vote (for example, that you can vote by Tweet, text message, email, or phone call);
  - misleading information about requirements for voting, including identification requirements; and
  - misleading statements or information about the official announced date or time of an election.
- The Partner Support Portal (PSP) is a dedicated reporting channel to enable Twitter's partner organisations around the world to expedite emerging issues directly to us.

Dozens of UK partners — including some government departments and the Parliamentary Security Department — are now enrolled in the tool. The PSP has proven particularly effective in highlighting hateful and abusive behaviours that undermine political discourse and harm the civility of the debate, including content directed at candidates and MPs.

- Our UK team has also offered safety and security training to all political parties and candidates, where we are walking them through tools such as mute, block and report, and various security tips and techniques such as two-factor authentication. We have promoted with all MPs and major political parties our dedicated channel for candidates and campaigners to get in touch, and have worked with a number of government departments to further promote our safety advice and resources.

At the beginning of the election campaign, we worked with our counterparts at Facebook and Google to create a 'one-stop shop' advice centre for candidates on the Internet Association website [here](#). This is in addition to sharing our bespoke General Election and safety resources with all MPs, all main political parties, DCMS, NCSC, the Electoral Commission and the Home Office to make available to candidates as widely as possible. We are continuing to engage, speak and meet with the Home Office and DCMS on a weekly basis during the election campaign.

Earlier this year I outlined our approach to supporting politicians in the UK at the Joint Committee on Human Rights. With UK Parliament specifically, we have a partnership with the Parliamentary Security Team - where they access a specific portal to make a wide range of reports that go directly to a dedicated team within Twitter. That process is supplemented by a weekly phone meeting between myself and the Parliamentary Security Department. It is a valuable opportunity to ask any questions, unblock any issues and flag upcoming events, where I can, for instance, subsequently let our Safety Team know we may see higher levels of reports. We are now removing around 90% of tweets being reported to us by the Parliamentary Security Department. We will continue to liaise with safety partners and organisations in the UK, like the Parliamentary Security Department, to ensure online safety for MPs and everyone who uses our service is a priority.

In conjunction with the Web and Social Media Team in the Scottish Parliament, I ran a series of Twitter safety training sessions with MSPs (with my counterpart at Facebook) in July. We have offered to make available the same partnership we have with the UK Parliament to the Scottish Parliament, and look forward to developing our work further in the months to come. We have also committed to delivering safety training as part of the formal induction process for new MSPs following an election. In addition, we delivered trainings at Labour and Conservative Party Conferences in 2019, and have made the same training offer for the Westminster Parliament.

Finally, we welcome opportunities to work with government and civil society partners on these issues. Organisations like Glitch, who provide digital self-defence training for women in public life, and the Jo Cox Foundation, are instrumental in developing a whole-of-society understanding of the issues and solutions. Similarly, working with DCMS, the Electoral Commission and the political parties themselves have provided opportunities to deliver safety training, provide resources and respond quickly to emerging issues.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Minshall  
Head of UK Government, Public Policy and Philanthropy