



Mr Mark Zuckerberg Facebook CEO
Mr Jack Dorsey Twitter CEO
Mr Sundar Pichai Google CEO

Our reference: MCO/00433

5 November 2019

Dear Mark, Jack and Sundar,

The UK General Election campaign starts tomorrow. We must ensure robust debate during the campaign does not mutate into intimidation, harassment and abuse.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental tenet of British democracy, and this includes the freedom to speak without being threatened or abused. We must tackle this worrying trend of abuse of people in public life and that certain groups are not deterred from standing or speaking freely because they fear for their safety.

It is important to distinguish between strongly felt political debate on one hand, and unacceptable acts of abuse, hatred, intimidation and violence.

Chief Constables continue to contact candidates in their force area to re-emphasise the importance of reporting any criminal offences, safety concerns or threats to the police. We know that you have also been working to tackle abusive behaviour on your platforms, including through delivering training on online safety and creating dedicated reporting channels. We welcome these measures - it is right that processes are in place to deal with cases of abuse or intimidation in an appropriate and timely manner.

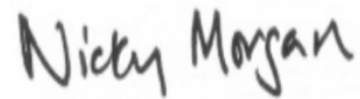
As we enter this election period, we are conscious that there are a large number of new candidates who will be unfamiliar with how to seek help if they believe they are being subjected to abuse, and in some cases, illegal activity online. You will be aware that a number of MPs have also identified the online abuse and threats they receive as a particular concern as we approach another electoral event. Therefore we would encourage you to:

- Work together to provide a one stop shop piece of advice for candidates which will include what content breaches your terms and conditions, where to report where they believe content may be breaching these, and what response they can expect from you.
- Work with officials and the Political Parties to ensure that safety and reporting guidance reach the widest possible audience of candidates and electoral staff as soon as possible.

- Have regular dialogue between you during the campaign to ensure where content or users are breaching your terms and conditions, this information is shared between you to reduce a lag time in action as abusive material or users migrate between platforms.
- Continue to have an open and regular dialogue with the security, policing and electoral authorities. We will ask officials to liaise with you on the best way to take this forward.

Protecting our democracy and ensuring this election is fought fairly and safely is all our responsibilities. We trust that you are taking the necessary steps to ensure this is the case during the forthcoming election period, and look forward to you providing an update on this.

Yours sincerely,



RT HON OLIVER DOWDEN CBE MP RT HON PRITI PATEL MP RT HON NICKY MORGAN MP