



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

Minister for Internet Safety and Security
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100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

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David Austin
Chief Executive
British Board of Film Classification
3 Soho Square
London
W1D 3HD

6 October 2016

Dear David

I would like to thank you for the British Board of Film Classification's continuous help and support in developing the Government's manifesto commitment to introduce Age Verification (AV) checks for online pornography.

As you know, the AV clauses contained in the Digital Economy Bill have been designed to ensure that pornographic material must not normally be accessible online to users in the UK on a commercial basis without appropriate age verification checks. We appreciate BBFC's ongoing support especially in helping develop effective options for Stages 1-3 of the proposed regulatory framework. I understand you have worked with my officials in thinking through these proposals and had a productive meeting on 16 September to discuss your role in more detail.

We are committed to this policy and aim to introduce an effective regulatory framework to enable its smooth delivery. BBFC's experience in making effective editorial judgements is important to the success of the policy. I would like to invite the BBFC to take on a regulatory role within the proposed framework, subject to the particulars of the proposed designation being laid in both Houses of Parliament. In working together, it is our intention that:

- Both DCMS and the BBFC are committed to working openly and transparently to establish an effective regulatory framework for the age verification of pornographic content online;
- That the BBFC will create a proportionate, accountable, independent and expert regulatory function, that would seek among its aims to promote voluntary compliance and advise Her Majesty's Government (HMG) more widely on reducing the risk of pornography being made readily available to children;
- That the BBFC will be responsible for Stages 1-3 of the proposed regulatory framework and that any enforcement function under the current Bill Clauses 20



and 21 will be carried out by another regulator that will have equal status to the BBFC;

- DCMS will fund the BBFC's start up, and those already incurred, subject to final agreement once legislative approvals are in place.

Please note, this letter is nonbinding and constitutes an indication of intent rather than creating a liability or obligation of any nature whatsoever to DCMS or the BBFC.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon and would like to thank you once again for your valuable contribution and ongoing co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shields', written in a cursive style.

Baroness Shields OBE
Minister for Internet Safety and Security



Age Ratings You Trust

British Board of Film Classification

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Baroness Shields OBE
Minister for Internet Safety and Security
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6 October 2016

Dear Joanna,

Thank you for your letter of 6 October and the kind acknowledgement of our support in developing the Government's AV proposals. As you know, our core mission is child protection and we believe that the proposed regulatory structure in the Digital Economy Bill will help to prevent children accessing potentially seriously harmful material online.

I can confirm that the BBFC is willing accept the proposed designation under the terms of the Digital Economy Bill as set out in your letter, subject to the proposed designation being laid in both Houses of Parliament.

As you say in your letter, the BBFC's expertise in this area of policy and our existing role in both the offline and online world will enable us to contribute to the success of this policy. The BBFC is fully committed to working with the Government to promote voluntary compliance and to implement Stages 1-3 of the proposed framework. The BBFC will also continue to advise the Government more widely on reducing the risk of children accessing pornography online. As we both know from our work on the Executive Board of UKCCIS, the internet is constantly evolving and inevitably any initiative in this area needs to be multi-faceted and flexible.

We will continue to liaise with you and your officials and look forward to working closely on this important child protection measure.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David'.

David Austin
Chief Executive
BBFC