

Legislation to permit providers of internet access services to offer a filtered internet access service

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

RPC rating: validated

Description of proposal

Family-friendly filters are a tool primarily aimed at parents, to help protect minors when they are using the internet. Internet service providers (ISPs) and mobile network operators already provide filters, having been encouraged to do so by the Government. However, the EU open internet access regulations have now come into force and the Government believes that it would be prudent to clarify in UK legislation that providers can continue to offer filters without being in breach of the EU regulations as there is currently no domestic legislation explicitly allowing filtering. The main aim of the EU regulations is to ensure that consumers have access to the open internet and all its content, and to prevent ISPs from blocking or slowing certain internet traffic.

Impacts of proposal

The proposal will ensure that filters already offered to customers can continue to be deployed. It will remain up to providers themselves to decide whether to offer filters. The IA, therefore, states that this is a permissive measure that will not impose any costs on business. This appears reasonable. The proposal will also avoid imposing potential costs on business by removing uncertainty over whether filters are allowed under the EU regulation.

In addition, the Department believes that parents may benefit from an increase in certainty concerning the use of filters and the Government's support with regard to child online safety. The Department has not monetised either the benefits to parents or the benefits to companies.

The RPC verifies the equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB) of zero. This is a qualifying regulatory provision.

Quality of submission

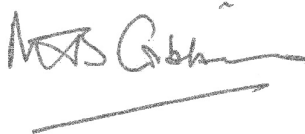
The Department has provided sufficient information for the RPC to confirm this as a permissive measure. Since the Department has been unable to monetise the benefits, the RPC validates an equivalent annual net direct cost to business of zero.

Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
Equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB)	Zero
Business net present value	Zero
Societal net present value	Not quantified

RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
EANDCB – RPC validated	Zero
Business impact target score	Zero
Small and micro business assessment	Not required (fast track)



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman