

To: Competition and Markets Authority (via email)

17<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**RE: POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS TO PROVIDE MORE CERTAINTY FOR DEVELOPERS ON APP DISTRIBUTION BY APPLE AND GOOGLE.**

The Online Dating and Discovery Association (ODDA) is the recognised trade body for the sector with a mission to create safe, responsible and enjoyable experiences for everyone. Representing nearly 500 brands world-wide, we would like to thank the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed commitments from Apple and Google in relation to the development and distribution of apps on their mobile ecosystems.

The decision to designate Apple and Google as having Strategic Market Status (SMS) under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act (DMCCA) in October 2025 was widely welcomed by our members. The announcement gave our sector confidence that the CMA would enforce stricter rules to promote competition in app distribution. We were therefore disappointed to see the CMA publish a set of commitments it had agreed with Apple and Google as opposed to announcing more formal conduct requirements.

**While the ODDA is encouraged to see many of the concerns raised by our members reflected in the document, we believe that the commitments do not go far enough.**

Our main concern is that the commitments are not legally binding. The CMA argument that it will only pursue conduct requirements where the commitments are not being adhered to or if they are proving ineffective, does not provide sufficient reassurance to app developers.

To underline this point, the CMA attempts to justify its decision in paragraph 10, but then argues against itself by stating that *“some of these processes and procedural safeguards are not sufficiently transparent and many stakeholders that we have spoken and engaged with have told us they do not trust that these processes are being followed”*. It seems odd that despite this, the CMA have decided to adopt a softer approach which does not instil confidence that the desired outcomes will be achieved.

We also draw attention to the action taken by the European Commission in 2025 to force Apple to comply with its interoperability obligations under the Digital Markets Act, which Apple continues to challenge.

On more specific points, the ODDA is concerned about the commitment Apple have made in relation to self-preferencing their apps over those of other developers. We feel that Apple’s commitment to *“conduct its App review process on the basis of the Guidelines”* is too soft. Guidelines are just that and are open to interpretation. We would have liked to have seen the CMA insist on more robust wording with firmer commitments.

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Similarly, on the commitment made by Apple in relation to providing clear expectations for timely app review turnaround times, we are concerned that the wording is too loose. For example, 'seek to provide a rejection or approval decision for 90% of app submissions within 24 hours' is different to 'will provide'. As above, we would have preferred the CMA to secure a firmer commitment that removes any ambiguity.

Interpretation is also an issue in relation to the commitment made by Google about notifying app developers regarding changes to app review processes. In our view, '*reasonable notice*' needs defining further as it is entirely at the gift of Google to determine what 'reasonable' means in practice.

Our main concern however, is in relation to commission fees. The commitments and supporting documents do not make any reference to fees whatsoever. This is one of the biggest issues affecting app developers and we welcome the CMAs justification in excluding this important area from the commitments it has agreed with Apple and Google.

In summary, we hope the CMA will review its approach and reconsider the imposition of conduct requirements on both firms. Given the precedence set in Europe and the impact on the UKs app community, we strongly encourage the CMA to take firmer action rather than adopt a set of non-legally binding commitments which are unlikely to resolve the problems raised by app developers.

We would like to thank the CMA for this opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

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