



Department for Culture Media & Sport

Ministerial Support Team
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

T: 020 7211 6000
E: enquiries@culture.gov.uk

Our Ref: 298943

www.gov.uk/dcms

15 March 2017

E. Goodman
25 Middleton Close,
Fareham,
Hampshire
PO14 1QN

Dear E Goodman,

Thank you for your further letter of 13 February to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), regarding the British Board of Film Classification's role as regulator for age verification on pornographic websites. I am replying as a member of the Ministerial Support Team.

Your letter raises concerns over the issue of internet privacy. Technical solutions for age verification currently exist and they are rightly focused on verification rather than identification of individuals. We have no wish to intrude on the privacy of those using the internet for legal purposes.

The Government is intending to introduce a provision in the Digital Economy Bill for the Secretary of State to issue the regulator guidance to which it must have regard. It is expected this will include guidance on age verification arrangements and a number of other areas including how the regulator will report on how it has exercised its functions and their effectiveness. In addition, the regulator will be required to issue guidance on the types of arrangements for making pornographic material available that it will treat as complying.

As you also note, the age verification regulatory framework in the Bill will also apply to 'prohibited material.' The Government has just laid an amendment which defines prohibited material using the definition of extreme pornography in the 2008 Criminal Justice and Immigration Act.

Measures in the Bill require an appeals process to be put in place. As mentioned in our previous letter, non-complying sites will not be immediately blocked if they are found to be in breach of the new age verification requirement. The regulator is enabled to take a proportionate approach and will consider the appropriate action on a case by case basis. In the case of Internet Service provider blocking, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport must be notified by the regulator when they wish to block a non-compliant site.

Encouraging compliance by the industry is a key aim and there has been positive engagement



with major industry organisations so far. However, we recognise this is a challenging area, and we continue to listen to views whilst remaining committed to protecting children online from harmful pornographic content.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Pedro Monteiro
Ministerial Support Team