



**The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP and
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport**
By email: secretary.statesoffice@dcms.gov.uk

15 July 2021

Dear Mr Dowden,

I am writing as CEO of CEASE, the [Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation](#), to highlight to you our new report, [#ExposeBigPorn: Uncovering the online commercial pornography industry and the urgent need for regulation](#).

The report exposes how, after decades without regulation, the business model of the online commercial pornography industry - or 'Big Porn' - has been honed to maximise profit over peoples' safety and wellbeing, whether users or those featured in videos, adults or children. It details how illegal, non-consensual, and abusive material can be uploaded and disseminated on a global scale and highlights research showing broader negative impacts of the pornography industry, such as the normalisation of sexual violence, misogyny and racist abuse.

New public opinion polling published in the report showed that more than 80% of the public want laws to ensure people featured in pornography have given their consent before videos can be uploaded. 86% of adults support strict laws to stop children viewing pornographic content online. These are essential and long overdue safeguards, necessary to stop vast quantities of videos being uploaded without the consent of the people featured and to protect children from viewing pornography.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your officials to discuss the regulations that are required, and could be brought in through the Online Safety Bill, to make the internet safer for children and victims of online sexual abuse. Our key recommendations are:

1. Mandate the use of Age Verification for all pornographic websites, regardless of their size or functionalities. This should be brought in immediately through the powers of the Digital Economy Act 2017 and then further strengthened through the Online Safety Bill.

2. Introduce regulation to ensure that pornography websites either remove user generated content (UGC) functionality or implement robust age and consent verification processes to ensure that all those featured in video uploads are consenting adults.

3. Identify pornography websites as providers of Category 1 services, introduce relevant Codes of Practice and designate a specific regulator to ensure compliance. Big Porn must be made to stop hosting illegal “extreme” pornography and the “legal but harmful” content prohibited by its own terms of service.

I would be grateful if your office could let me know when you or your officials could meet to discuss the findings of the report and these key recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

VANESSA MORSE
Chief Executive



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