

# IAB UK: Response to Online Harms White Paper

## Background

IAB UK is the trade association for digital advertising, representing over 1,200 of the UK's leading brands, agencies, media owners and technology providers. We have a Board<sup>1</sup> comprised of 24 leading businesses in the sector. Our purpose is to build a sustainable future for digital advertising, a market that was worth £13.44bn in the UK in 2018.

The IAB is actively engaged in working towards the optimal policy and regulatory environment to support a sustainable future for digital advertising. We also develop and promote good practice to ensure a responsible medium.

## Consultation response

The White Paper proposes the establishment of a new independent regulator, and as these proposals are being considered the IAB would urge the government to recognise the effectiveness of the existing self-regulation within the digital advertising industry.

The government has championed advertising self-regulation over the years including the world-leading CAP/ASA system and schemes like the European Digital Advertising Alliance framework for online behavioural advertising and the JICWEBS Digital Trading Standards Group Good Practice Principles. Each of these schemes continues to play a unique and crucial role in regulating the ecosystem and helping to provide safe spaces for brands to advertise with confidence.

The IAB would urge the government to ensure any new regulatory framework being proposed as part of its online harms work defends self-regulation and the existing institutional structures that support it, particularly where those structures are pan-European and thus allow for international partnerships and collaboration to exist. We would appeal to the government to ensure that existing regulatory structures are not undermined or co-opted by a new framework for online harms, in the event that any regulatory overlap is created. Undermining or devaluing existing regulatory schemes – many of which are global – would undo valuable work by companies across the industry and would be a retrograde step.

The IAB understands that the subject of digital advertising has been left outside of the White Paper's scope, with it instead being the specific focus of the separate DCMS review expected later this year. We would urge the government to ensure this separation is maintained as its proposals are developed. As set out in our letter of 26 March 2019 to the Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright, the IAB would encourage the government to use this review to bring together the various discussions about advertising regulation currently underway across government, setting aside competing sectoral interests. The review must be informed and led by evidence, and should be managed by an expert group with a remit to consult widely with the full range of players in a complex industry, including advertisers, agencies, media owners and technology providers of all types and sizes.

## IAB UK

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.iabuk.com/member-directory?title=&company\\_type=All&company\\_badges%5Bboard\\_member%5D=board\\_member&sort\\_bef\\_combi ne=title+ASC](https://www.iabuk.com/member-directory?title=&company_type=All&company_badges%5Bboard_member%5D=board_member&sort_bef_combi ne=title+ASC)