

# The Byron Review Action Plan

June 2008



department for  
**children, schools and families**



**Home Office**

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# Ministerial Foreword

We all recognise that new technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people. In today's society, 99% of all children aged 8-17 say that they use the internet, while two thirds of 5-16 year olds have their own video games console. For younger generations, the internet and video games are as important as television. Our children have become the pioneers of the digital revolution.

With the growth of new technology in daily life comes a wealth of new opportunities. Children and young people are learning new skills, increasing their knowledge and even making new friends. However, with these opportunities come some potential risks. Some of these risks are very real and parents are concerned about the risks their children may be exposed to. Other risks are sometimes exacerbated because of the lack of experience and confidence parents have with using new technology, leaving them feeling unable to deal with any problems.

There are of course a wide range of safeguards already in place and many organisations and businesses are working tirelessly to make the internet and video games safer for children. These include the Internet Watch Foundation, which works with the internet industry to block sites that contain illegal child abuse images, and the Cyberbullying Taskforce which is tackling the growth of bullying online. However, there is much more that we can do that can help us realise our vision to become world leaders in keeping our children safer in our digital world. That is why the Prime Minister asked Dr Tanya Byron to investigate these risks and opportunities further.

Her groundbreaking report, 'Safer Children in a Digital World', published in March 2008, set out a number of recommendations that will establish a new culture of responsibility, where Government, industry, parents and all those who work with children and young people, can work together with the shared purpose of a safer online world. Government accepted all of the recommendations in full and we are now delighted to launch the Byron Review Action Plan which is the first step towards implementing the recommendations. The Plan sets out lead responsibilities across Government in taking this important agenda forward as well as milestones to ensure we deliver them.

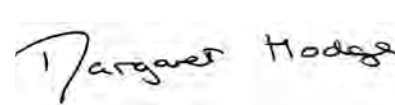
The Government is committed to leading the way on child internet safety and safer access to video games. We look forward to working closely with partners and stakeholders to take forward this Action Plan.



Kevin Brennan,  
Parliamentary Under Secretary  
of State for Children, Young  
People and Families



Vernon Coaker,  
Parliamentary Under Secretary  
of State for Crime Reduction



Margaret Hodge  
Minister for Culture,  
Creative Industries & Tourism

# Introduction

Dr Tanya Byron, in her landmark report 'Safer Children in a Digital World', published in March 2008, set out a challenging agenda for Government, its partners, industry and the third sector, to work together to make children safer when using the internet and video games. Government accepted all of Dr Byron's recommendations in full, signifying our commitment to children's safety when using new technology. To meet this commitment, we will work with our stakeholders and build on the consultative and collaborative approach established by Dr Byron during the course of her Review. Dr Byron recommended a clear set of actions for all these partners to take forward, under the auspices of an overarching Child Internet Safety Strategy and through the reform of the systems and practices for video games.

This Action Plan draws together the work that Government has set in train to ensure the implementation of the recommendations, to the timescales set out by Dr Byron. It outlines the new work that Government Departments and partner agencies will undertake over the coming months as well as how existing programmes can build on Dr Byron's recommendations.

This Plan only provides an overview of the work required to implement Dr Byron's recommendation as much of the detail work will be undertaken by the new UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) whose members will come from industry, the third sector and other key partner organisations. One of the first tasks the Council must undertake is to develop a Child Internet Safety Strategy and this Plan is the first step towards achieving that.

Where possible this Plan sets out estimated costs to Government of implementing the Review's recommendations. Many recommendations will not involve new or discrete action and therefore will not require significant additional funds. In many areas Dr Byron recommended building e-safety into existing and planned activities for which funding has already been agreed. The full costs of implementing the Review's recommendations will become clearer once UKCCIS has developed the Child Internet Safety Strategy in spring 2009.

# Executive Summary

Following her independent Review of the risks children face from the internet and video games, Dr Tanya Byron made a number of recommendations for improving children's safety in the new 'digital world'. Government accepted all of the recommendations in full and this Plan sets out how all of the recommendations will be taken forward.

The recommendations can usefully be grouped under six broad headings and this Plan is organised around these headings (also see Annex A).

Each chapter of this Plan clearly sets out what **actions** Government and its partners are taking to make the recommendations a reality. It also sets out clear, timed **milestones** to ensure Dr Byron's recommendations are implemented in the timescale she set out. Where possible it also sets out the **costs** of implementing the recommendations. This may not be possible in some cases, for example, where the recommendation is to consult on a change in action or direction, and we do not yet know what the recommended course of action will be.

Chapter One outlines how the new **UK Council for Child Internet Safety** – the new forum recommended by Dr Byron to develop and lead a Child Internet Safety Strategy – will look, how it will be supported and how it will work in practice.

Chapter Two focuses on **better regulation** and how we can help facilitate the development of a self-regulatory approach by industry which will make the internet safer for children.

Chapter Three sets out our plans to raise awareness of e-safety issues among children, young people, parents and other adults through a **public information and awareness campaign**. This needs to be more than a one-off advertising campaign and should ensure that e-safety messages are part and parcel of communications to parents, young people and children, which will empower them to keep themselves and their families safe.

The **better education** section at Chapter Four sets out how schools and other services for children and families can help equip and empower children and their parents to stay safe online.

Chapter Five sets out how we propose to address the issue of **reforming the classification system for video games**, which Dr Byron said many parents remain confused about.

Finally, Chapter Six outlines how Government will work with industry to improve **information and support to parents on video games**. This chapter discusses plans to improve information about parental controls and also looks at the role of advertising.

# Chapter 1: The UK Council for Child Internet Safety

## Government lead

UKCCIS will be chaired jointly by Ministers from Home Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). As one of the sponsor Departments for the Byron Review, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will also have an important role.

## Key partners and stakeholders

- The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)
- Devolved administrations
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
- Members of the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet (HSTF)
- Cyberbullying Taskforce
- Ofcom
- others with a key interest across industry, the third sector and children's services

## 1. Introduction

The Byron Review recommended the creation of a UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), established by and reporting to the Prime Minister. UKCCIS will be responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of a Child Internet Safety Strategy. On May 14, the Government announced its intention to launch the Council in September 2008, six months ahead of Dr Byron's recommended timescale. Invitations have been sent to key stakeholders asking them to join the Council.

## 2. Context

The Government envisages that the Council will be a forum enabling Government Departments and stakeholders – including industry and the third and public sectors – to come together and contribute jointly to the development and delivery of the strategy for Child Internet Safety. Reflecting the diversity of industry, third sector and Government interests means that the Council will have a large and broad membership. In order to make this manageable and to ensure that the work of the Council delivers real change, we envisage the following key structures within the Council, building on Dr Byron's recommendations:

- an Executive Board of around 20 members that reflects a wide range of interests and expertise, chaired by Home Office and DCSF Ministers;
- a panel of children, young people and parents that will be represented on the Executive Board;
- an expert advisory group that can bring technical, child development and other expertise to the Council, providing input to the Executive Board as needed;
- a number of standing sub-groups to consider cross-cutting issues, such as the needs of vulnerable children and the evidence base for policy. The chairs of these groups will advise the Executive Board on progress and direction
- a number of independently chaired working groups to take forward delivery of key elements of the new Child Internet Safety Strategy. The chairs of these groups will be called to the Executive Board to account for the progress being made

We expect all members of the Council to take an active part in some element of this structure and we envisage that most will do so through participation in a sub-group or working group, as well as acting as advocates for the shared e-safety strategy. All stakeholders will retain responsibility for delivering 'their' strands of work, for example: Government and its agencies will lead on the development and implementation of better education activities on e-safety, while industry leads the way on better self-regulation. The Council provides the forum for these various strands of work to be brought together into a coherent whole that is informed by stakeholder views, a firm evidence base and the perspective of children, young people and parents.

Building on the successes of the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, Dr Byron recommended that UKCCIS should:

- develop and publish the Child Internet Safety Strategy within six months of its establishment, and thereafter, oversee the delivery of the strategy;
- be chaired jointly by DCSF and Home Office Ministers with roles for other Government Departments, particularly DCMS;
- be supported by a "properly resourced" cross-departmental secretariat;
- be advised by an expert advisory group and children and parents' panel;
- commission independently chaired working groups to deliver specific initiatives, such as industry codes of practice;
- have sub-groups to work on key issues such as research or ensuring a cross-cutting focus on the needs of vulnerable children and young people; and
- report annually to the Prime Minister at the Child Internet Safety Summit.

### **UKCCIS secretariat**

As recommended in the Byron Review, the Government is currently establishing a secretariat, which is to be supported primarily by the DCSF and the Home Office. The secretariat will support the work of UKCCIS and facilitate the development of a Child Internet Safety Strategy.

### **The UKCCIS Executive Board**

The Executive Board, supported by the UKCCIS secretariat, will develop and agree detailed Terms of Reference, governance structure and work plan following its establishment in September.

#### ***Composition of the Executive Board***

The Executive Board will have around 20 members and will include representatives from industry, the third sector, law enforcement, Government Departments, the devolved administrations and other key players. Executive Board members will be individuals with the right skills and expertise who can broadly represent the views of their sector, and will not sit on the Board as representatives of their individual organisations. In order to ensure this, we will want to see evidence of how Executive Board members regularly engage with members of their sector in order to reflect a diverse range of views.

Membership of the Executive Board will be reviewed in autumn 2010.

#### ***Remit of the Executive Board***

Once the Terms of Reference and governance structures of the Council have been agreed, the Board's main task will be to develop the Child Internet Safety Strategy alongside the wider Council, and publish it within six months. Thereafter, the role of the Board will be to make recommendations regarding the direction of the Child Internet Safety Strategy, hold the chairs of the working and



sub-groups to account for delivery of their strands of work, and thereby ensure progress against the strategy is secured.

The Board will need to meet regularly, perhaps once a quarter, depending on the volume of business.

### *Next steps*

As outlined above, the Executive Board needs to be able to represent the views of key sectors. Some of the posts are already a given, due to their crucial role in the Council. These include a representative from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), the Internet Watch Foundation, the devolved administrations, DCMS and BERR officials. The chairs of the standing working and sub-groups will be called to the Board once they are set up.

In order to fill the remaining seats on the Executive Board we will be running a nomination process with members of the Council from the beginning of July 2008. Ministers will write to all Council members inviting them to nominate representatives for the industry and third sector seats on the Board. Further information will be available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview) in July.

### 3. Resources

The work of the Council will be resourced through existing funding streams over the Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008-2011). A significant part of Government investment will be through the provision of a full secretariat to facilitate the work of the Council; the provision of facilities for the Council and its supporting groups; and securing appropriate funding for the production of key products such as the Child Internet Safety Strategy and other publications.

### 4. Actions and Milestones

To ensure that the Government meets its commitment to establish a UK Council and a Child Internet Safety Strategy we will:

- secure membership of UKCCIS by **end July**;
- write to UKCCIS members in **July** inviting nominations to the Executive Board;
- establish a cross-Government UKCCIS secretariat to support the work of the Council by **August 2008**;
- launch the UK Council for Child Internet Safety in **September 2008**;
- work with the Council to publish a Strategy for Child Internet Safety by **spring 2009**;
- hold the first Child Internet Safety Summit hosted by the Prime Minister in **spring 2009**; and
- review the effectiveness of the Council in **autumn 2010**.

# Chapter 2: Better regulation

## Government lead

Once established, responsibility for this activity will rest with the Council. DCMS and BERR will remain closely engaged through sub-group activity. MoJ will have a lead role in clarifying the law in certain areas.

## Key partners and stakeholders

- industry
- Ofcom
- CEOP
- third sector
- parents, children and young people

## 1. Introduction

The internet is a vast global network which makes regulation by individual nations challenging. As the Byron Review identified, if we are really serious about making the internet a safer place for children, we need to secure the co-operation of a wide range of industry players, many of whom are not based in the UK and would be beyond the reach of national jurisdiction.

## 2. Context

The Byron Review states that a priority focus of the Child Internet Safety Strategy will be to work with industry to develop a better regulation framework, which will build on best practice, promote transparency and provide families with the tools and reassurance they need to use the internet safely.

Dr Byron recommended a self-regulatory system for protecting children from potentially harmful or inappropriate material. It is difficult to find a parallel example in another area of industry self-regulation to help define this approach to e-safety, not least because the internet is constantly evolving in how it is used and what it can offer. In many ways we are breaking new ground. We therefore need an innovative, flexible approach that provides the appropriate levels of challenge and support to all stakeholders.

Better self-regulation will take many forms, ranging from codes of practice to minimum standards for products that parents can recognise and trust. These approaches will need to evolve over time as new technologies emerge.

Dr Byron set out an important principle that where companies wish to take credit for having signed up to self-regulatory standards, they should also sign up to processes against which their performance can be independently assessed. All codes of practice will need to set out a process for monitoring signatories' performance including when expectations are not being met. Industry is best placed to determine how this can best be achieved, although the Council will work with them to ensure that the approach delivers transparency for children, young people and parents.

Failing to comply with a code should be damaging to a company's reputation and provide a strong incentive for industry to implement safety measures. The Byron Review is clear that, as with any other self-regulatory arrangement, members of the public should be able to complain if they believe a code is not being implemented. The relevant UKCCIS working groups will need to identify an independent person or body who is competent to hear these complaints.

It will be for the Council to agree where new codes are needed. However, Dr Byron has recommended priority areas where the Council should focus. These include:

- developing an independently monitored voluntary code of practice on the moderation of user generated content;
- encouraging sites to sign up to public commitments on 'take-down' times;
- working to clarify the law around certain kinds of online material;
- joint working between industry and the third sector to improve the support offered to vulnerable groups, including providing links to support services and improving moderation practices where users discuss harmful behaviours;
- promoting responsible advertising to children online;
- rolling out the new Kitemark for parental control software;
- working with search providers to give users the option to lock 'safe search' settings and provide clear links to child safety information from search pages;
- reviewing and disseminating good practice on age verification;
- taking full account of the changing risks to children from mobile internet access; and
- joint working between the online gaming industry and online gaming regulators to identify a single set of standards and good practice for managing the risks of online gaming.

### 3. Resources

The Government will look to industry in partnership with the Council, to take forward its programme of establishing self-regulatory codes of practice that make the internet a safer place for children. The Government will support this process through the secretariat and the provision of facilities as appropriate.

#### **The Digital Media Group (DMG)**

In the UK, all advertising in paid for space on the internet is policed by the Advertising Standards Authority. However, Government fully understands that the rapid expansion of new media has led to the development of new advertising models which are not covered by the current advertising codes. This is an issue which was highlighted by Dr Byron.

The advertising industry are also aware of this issue, and last year the Advertising Association set up a Digital Media Group, which is tasked with proposing measures to extend the remit of the present regulatory system for advertising to all types of online media marketing communications.

In her Review, Dr Byron recommended that the work of the Digital Media Group be assessed in spring 2009, in parallel with the assessment of the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing (see below).

#### **Assessing the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing**

In December 2007, the Government announced in the Children's Plan that it would assess the impact of advertising, marketing and other commercial activity on children and their childhood. This is being led by Professor David Buckingham. The assessment will take account of the Byron recommendations and will report in spring 2009.

#### **The DCMS and BERR Convergence Think Tank (CTT)**

In September 2007 DCMS and BERR launched the Convergence Think Tank to examine the impact of convergence on the UK communications market (broadcasting, telecommunications, online) and the implications for future policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks. It is expected to report early in 2009. The CTT has three overarching objectives: secure open and fair markets; secure universal access to high quality content; and empower consumers and citizens. One of the key areas the CTT is looking at is approaches to content across platforms. The CTT will take full account of the Byron recommendations.

### 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives': a cross government strategy for England

The Government's obesity strategy: 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives' (HWHL) aims to provide everyone in England with information and opportunities to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. It includes a commitment to work with the entertainment technology industry to ensure that tools to allow parents to manage the time that their children spend online and playing video games, continue to be developed.

Whilst the Byron Review focused on child safety, HWHL commitments can also be achieved through its recommendations to provide parents with the tools and support they need to manage their children's access to the internet and video games. The Government will consider the impact of the internet and video gaming on the range of activities that children enjoy, within the scope of UKCCIS.

#### 4. Actions and Milestones

To facilitate the development of better self-regulation by industry to make the internet safer for children, we will:

- announce the conclusions of the Ministry of Justice's review of suicide law by **summer 2008**, as part of our responsibility to help clarify the law around harmful and inappropriate content;
- work with industry, through the Council, to establish working groups which will develop a code of practice for the moderation of user generated content and take forward other priority actions by **end 2008**;
- respond to the Digital Media Group's proposals for a system of self-regulation of all types of online media marketing communications which will be presented to the Advertising Association by **end 2008**;
- publish a report into the impact of the convergence of the UK communications market by **early 2009**, including recommendations on how best to respond to the challenge that convergence presents;
- work in partnership with the Council to publish the strategy for Child Internet Safety in **spring 2009**; and
- publish the assessment of the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing in **spring 2009**.

# Chapter 3: Public information and awareness of e-safety

## Government lead

DCSF will lead the development and delivery of a public information and awareness campaign on e-safety with key partners.

## Key partners and stakeholders

- Home Office
- DIUS
- DH
- DCMS
- CEOP
- Ofcom
- industry
- agencies responsible for education, children's services and adult skills

## 1. Introduction

The Government will implement Dr Byron's recommendations on public information and awareness raising. We need to engage children, young people, parents and other adults about internet safety. This is not about telling people what to do – it's about empowering them to keep themselves and their families safe.

## 2. Context

The Byron Review highlighted that 53% of adults want more and better information about the internet, and that 57% of parents do not know where to get information about how to protect their children online. Delivering a comprehensive public information campaign in this area was a key recommendation of the Review to complement the better regulation agenda. This will mean working with all stakeholders to co-ordinate messages and to reach children and parents in a variety of ways. The new Council will help us achieve that.

The Government is already committed to delivering a major communications campaign on child safety over the next three years, as set out in the Staying Safe Action Plan ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe) and published in February 2008). The Byron Review recommendations on public information will be taken forward as part of that commitment, which will be backed by £9 million of Government funding. It will be crucial for this activity to link with campaigns that are already planned or underway, not only by Government but by stakeholders too.

This 'Staying Safe' activity will also incorporate the development and co-ordination of web-based information sources on child safety for parents on [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk), and will respond to Dr Byron's recommendation that an authoritative online 'one stop shop' is needed to signpost children and parents to the information they need to keep themselves safe. The 'one stop shop' will need to be a trusted and central portal for all high quality internet safety information that currently exists, with signposts to the wide range of support and services provided by Council members. This will be developed in close consultation with the Council.

### Parent Know How

The DCSF has developed the 'Parent Know How' programme which funds a national suite of services offering expert advice and support for parents via telephone helplines, text messaging services and social networking sites, recognising parents' increasing use of varied technologies. The services aim to meet the information needs of parents, including information about internet safety. It will be a key platform of Dr Byron's recommendation to deliver better information to parents.

The programme will also fund print content in magazines and newspapers for parents who do not have access to, or who prefer not to use, the telephone and internet. From autumn 2009 Parent Know How will also provide a national online search facility via 'Directgov' and local authority websites to enable parents and practitioners to find services of interest to them nationally and in their local area.

### 3. Actions and Milestones

To ensure that we raise awareness of e-safety amongst parents, children and others we will:

- include e-safety in the Government's major child safety awareness campaign that will begin in **summer 2008**, supported by £9 million investment and developed in conjunction with the Council;
- work with Council partners to develop an authoritative 'one stop shop' child internet safety website by **spring 2009**;
- ensure that Parent Know How funded helplines are able to signpost parents concerned about e-safety to sources of further information by **autumn 2008**; and
- work with CEOP and other Council members to launch an e-safety week in **2009**.

# Chapter 4: Better education for children and families

## Government lead

DCSF will lead on providing better information for children and families.

## Key partners and stakeholders

- DIUS
- Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency)
- Training and Development Agency (TDA)
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- Ofsted
- Ofcom
- Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)
- members of the children's workforce and third sector partners.

## 1. Introduction

Schools and other services for children and families have a key role in helping equip and empower children and their parents to stay safe online. Dr Byron made a number of specific recommendations that will help increase the resilience of children and parents. These range from providing school staff and the wider children's workforce with the skills and knowledge they need, to asking Ofsted to hold the system to account on the quality of delivery in this area.

## 2. Context

Dr Byron recognised that schools and wider children's services have huge potential to help improve e-safety. This is a complex and wide-ranging area of activity, so it will be important for UKCCIS to use the Child Internet Safety Strategy to pull together the work of our various partners into a comprehensive whole that really makes a difference for safe and beneficial use of the internet by children. In particular we will need to ensure that we are all working towards providing high quality,



consistent support and advice on e-safety to children, parents, teachers and the wider children's workforce.

There are a number of important areas of work that are already contributing to supporting the delivery of e-safety, including in schools. There is also a significant and growing body of materials that exist to support those working with children, parents and teachers, such as those developed through the Cyberbullying Taskforce (see below), all aimed at raising awareness and providing support on e-safety.

However, there is much more we need to do, as outlined in Dr Byron's recommendations. The quantity of material available may itself present a challenge in making it difficult for professionals to judge what they should be using to inform their approach. There are also particular challenges around equipping parents with the skills they need to feel more confident when it comes to new technologies – to help bridge the digital generational divide highlighted by Dr Byron. Extended schools and UK Online centres will have a key role in making that support accessible.

### The Staying Safe Action Plan

Keeping children and young people safe is a top priority. The Staying Safe Action Plan launched on 5th February 2008 sets out work to be undertaken across Government over the next three years to help keep children and young people safe.

The Staying Safe Action Plan contains commitments to address current and emerging threats to children's safety. In relation to e-safety that includes commitments to:

- introduce the new ICT curriculum for Key Stage 3 in September 2008, which will have an increased emphasis on internet safety;
- set up a new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector to provide advice and assistance to all third sector organisations on safeguarding issues such as the use of technology; and
- set up a new child safety education coalition to co-ordinate and encourage the provision of practical safety education for children. The content of this education varies in response to local needs and can include e-safety skills.

The recently announced cross-Government Public Service Agreement to improve children and young people's safety demonstrates the Government's commitment to join up and drive delivery of actions to keep children safe. This will drive forward work in this area and ensure that the effectiveness of policies are monitored at a national level.

### 3. Resources

Implementation of many of the Byron recommendations around improving e-safety through education and children's services will be the responsibility of DCSF and its partners and agencies. Many of the recommendations will not involve new or discrete activity and therefore will not require significant additional funds. Where this may be necessary, scoping work is currently underway. Costs will become clearer once the Child Internet Safety Strategy is launched in spring 2009.

Most of the activities will be funded through existing programmes or through the funding agreements already in place with relevant agencies. Becta, the Government agency responsible for driving the use of technology through all learning, has an annual budget of £43 million, and will play a key role in implementing the Byron recommendations as part of its ongoing responsibilities. Similar provision exists with agencies such as the TDA and Ofsted.

### Cyberbullying Taskforce

In September 2007, the DCSF published guidance for schools on how to deal with cyberbullying and has also developed a curriculum resource pack that helps school staff talk to pupils about cyberbullying. The DCSF's Cyberbullying Taskforce is now looking at the cyberbullying of teachers and the support that needs to be place to tackle this growing phenomenon.

The work of the Taskforce to tackle cyberbullying of children and young people will be brought within the remit of the new Council. The Taskforce will continue to act on cyberbullying of school staff, making links as necessary with the Council so that the benefits of progress on, for example, the moderation of user generated content, can be properly reflected in work to support school staff.

### 'Myguide'

There are 17 million adults affected by digital exclusion, as much by a lack of motivation, skills and confidence as by lack of access. **myguide** ([www.myguide.gov.uk](http://www.myguide.gov.uk)). It provides a simple step-by-step tool for using the internet, offering a free easy-to-use email service and search tool in an uncluttered, ad-free environment. Users can personalise and save their accessibility settings and choose to have the text read to them where appropriate. Guidance modules enable customers to learn about different uses of the internet – how to use online public services for example on Directgov, search for jobs or shop and bank online. Launched following the Review, one of the most popular guidance modules is on internet safety and DCSF will develop a further module on this specifically for parents.

## 4. Actions and Milestones

There is a wide programme of activity that the Government can implement to support sustainable education and children's services initiatives on e-safety.

### To support schools to deliver on e-safety:

- the TDA will promote guidance that has already been given to teacher training providers on e-safety;
- DCSF, drawing on advice from Ofsted, will consider e-safety issues in all new and revised guidance to schools, including, where appropriate, examples of good practice case studies across the curriculum;
- the TDA will assess what changes should be made to the ICT skills test for new teachers to include an e-safety element, and will make recommendations in **summer 2008**;

- e-safety questions will be included in TDA's **summer 2009** survey of newly qualified teachers;
- DCSF will work with the independent Rose Review of the Primary Curriculum to ensure that e-safety issues are properly considered as part of its recommendations, due in **March 2009**; and
- Becta, in partnership with the National Education Network, will develop and promote a National Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) toolkit for schools by **February 2009**.

**To help ensure that children, young people and parents get support on e-safety outside school:**

- DCSF will launch the National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector by **late 2008**, which will provide advice on issues such as the safe use of technology, to third sector bodies working with children and young people;
- Becta will hold regional seminars to assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to develop their e-safety strategy from **July 2008**;
- to build on this work, DCSF and partners will consider what role LSCBs can play in promoting e-safety as part of the forthcoming stocktake of LSCB activity in **autumn 2008**;
- DCSF is working with the Children's Workforce Network (CWN) over **summer 2008** to consider if and how induction, training and workforce development arrangements need to be adapted to meet any gaps in the workforce's knowledge and skills about e-safety;
- DCSF will develop a further internet safety guidance module on 'myguide' specifically for parents with limited confidence in using the internet, to help them support their children to use it safely by **winter 2008**;
- the TDA will collate and circulate examples of good practice to encourage extended schools to signpost parents and other members of the community to UK Online centres; and
- DCSF will encourage extended schools and UK Online centres to work in partnership to support parents on e-safety and to use common tools such as 'myguide' and the 'Directgov Kids' e-safety module.

**To develop a clear picture of how well we are doing:**

- Ofsted will provide a short report of the extent to which schools teach learners to adopt safe and responsible e-safety measures based on school responses to the Self Evaluation Form in **summer 2008**;
- Ofsted will include a statement in the forthcoming subject report on ICT on the state of internet safety training in schools, based on the sample of schools inspected in its ICT subject survey. This will be published in **autumn 2008**;

- for future years, Ofsted will use its **annual** ICT schools survey to evaluate the extent to which schools teach learners to adopt safe and responsible practices in using new technology;
- DCSF will work with the inspectorates to implement Dr Byron's recommendation that the next Joint Chief Inspectors' report on Safeguarding in **2011** covers e-safety; and
- Government will work with partners through UKCCIS to ensure that the Child Internet Safety Strategy, to be published by **spring 2009**, includes measurable ambitions for improving the e-safety knowledge and skills of children, young people and parents.

# Chapter 5: Reforming the video games classification system

## Government lead

DCMS is the lead Department for reforming the video games classification system.

## Key partners and stakeholders

- BERR
- MoJ and DCSF
- regulators
- the video games industry
- retailers
- children, young people, parents and the general public

## 1. Introduction

The UK has a robust classification system for video games which ensures that all games are given an age-related classification either through the BBFC or through the PEGI (Pan-European Game Information) scheme. However, the Byron Review identified that some parents are confused by the rating of video games, compared with, for example, their understanding of the ratings for DVDs. This is an issue the Government is committed to resolving.

## 2. Context

The Byron Review identified that more could be done to simplify and reform the age classification system and to raise awareness of parents about age ratings.

It recommended that future reforms of the classification system should ensure that all games that would otherwise receive a 12+ PEGI rating should be regulated on a statutory basis. It also recommended that games at the younger age range (for example, 3+ and 7+) should be exempted from statutory classification.

To achieve this the Review suggests a hybrid classification system in which BBFC logos appear on the front of all games (i.e. 18,15,12,PG and U) while PEGI continue to rate all 3+ and 7+ games. PEGI's equivalent logos across all age ranges will appear on the back of all boxes.

Dr Byron acknowledged that there are other perspectives, and different possible approaches. On that basis, the Report recommended that the reforms should be subject to a full public consultation, before being implemented. The Government will launch a full public consultation shortly and will carefully consider all the evidence presented, including that from children and parents, as well as from the retail and games industries.

The consultation will make reference to the classification of online gaming so that the results dovetail with the work of the online gaming sub-group of UKCCIS which will be established in autumn this year.

The Government is committed to working with industry to look at ways of clarifying the message and this is dealt with in Chapter Six of this Action Plan.

### 3. Resources

The consultation on reforming the system for classifying video games will be undertaken and funded by DCMS. A full impact assessment will be undertaken which will assess the costs to industry of these reforms.

#### 4. Actions and Milestones

Dr Byron made a clear statement of the need to improve the video games classification system to protect children from potentially harmful or inappropriate video games. In order to meet our commitment to deliver a system that is robust and easier for children and parents to understand:

- DCMS will launch a four month public consultation on reforming the video games classification system in **July 2008**;
- DCMS will publish its proposals for reforming the classification system by **early 2009**; and
- DCMS will work with the games regulators to agree a way forward for classifying online gaming. This will be included in the overall classification consultation to enable the results to feed into the UKCCIS sub-group which will be set up in **autumn 2008**.

# Chapter 6:

## Better information and support to families on video games

### Government lead

Responsibility is shared between DCMS and BERR.

### Key partners and stakeholders

- Home Office
- DCSF
- regulators
- retailers
- 3rd sector
- children, young people, parents and the general public

### 1. Introduction

The video games industry is thriving and developing rapidly across many platforms. Video games are incredibly popular with children and young people, and as addressed in Chapter Five of this Action Plan, we are looking at making changes to the way in which video games are classified.

The Government is keen to support industry's efforts to make clear that while the majority of games are suitable for children and young people, there are a number which have been designed specifically for an adult audience.

Once the proposals for a new classification system are published, we will begin discussions with industry to develop a full public awareness campaign to make sure that parents are provided with enough information to make an informed decision about what is appropriate for their child. We will be working with the games industry, retailers and the regulators to explore how best this can be achieved.

There are other actions, in addition to a new classification system, that can be taken to provide information and support to help parents and children make the most of the opportunities of playing games while managing any risks. Both the video games and the retail industries have already taken significant steps to introduce measures to help parents, including the provision of 'in-store'

information and parental controls on consoles. The Byron Review made clear suggestions for further improvements in these areas and the Government is committed to helping these take shape.

## **2. Context**

Dr Byron was clear that we must step up efforts to ensure age-appropriate gaming, building on the diverse range of measures that industry has already put in place.

Dr Byron stressed that the internet and video games offer a range of opportunities for learning, development and entertainment. She also stated that there may be potential for children and young people to benefit from learning opportunities in games and recommended that Government supports a dialogue between the games industry and the education sector to identify opportunities for the benefits of game-based learning to be evaluated in different educational environments.

Dr Byron also referred to improvements in the system for appropriate advertising of video games to children and made recommendations for further work. The assessment into the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing will take into account Dr Byron's findings where they relate to the wider question of commercialisation. When its call for evidence closes and the literature reviews into children's markets are concluded, we will have a clearer idea of where there are gaps in our knowledge and how they relate to these objectives. In addition, the Advertising Standards Authority will assess the current compliance of video games advertisers with the regulations. We will consider whether further research is required in light of these pieces of work.

DCMS and BERR will develop and lead this work.

## **3. Resources**

The Government will look to work with industry and regulators in establishing a comprehensive public awareness campaign once a new classification system has been published, following consultation. We will then be in a position to establish the full cost of a campaign.

The Government will look to industry in partnership with retailers and regulators to take forward codes of practice or agreed minimum standards that make the playing of video games safer for children. The DCMS and BERR will help support and facilitate this process as part of its ongoing sponsorship responsibilities.



#### 4. Actions and Milestones

In order to help parents manage their children's access and use of video games:

- DCMS will work with key stakeholders on raising awareness about the importance of video games classification by **autumn 2008**;
- DCMS and BERR will take forward, with industry and regulators, proposals for a comprehensive awareness campaign of the new classification system and parental controls in **early 2009**;
- DCMS and BERR will work with the retail industry to work towards an agreed set of standards for in-store information with the aim of raising awareness of consumers and reduce access of video games to people below recommended ages by **November 2008**;
- DCMS and BERR will embark on a series of games industry meetings and agree to develop minimum standards for parental controls, potentially including helping parents manage the time children spend playing games, for all main gaming platforms by **November 2008**;
- Government will work with Trading Standards to scope the need for periodical monitoring by officers of underage games sales by **autumn 2008**;
- Over summer 2008, DCMS will be engaging the advertising regulators and video games industry in discussions about guidance on the advertising of video games. Guidelines will in place by **spring 2009**;
- The Committee on Advertising Practice and the Broadcast Committee on Advertising Practice will undertake a full review of all advertising codes, incorporating a review of the advertising of video games in 2008, which will be subject to consultation, with revised codes in place by **spring 2009**;
- The Advertising Standards Authority will begin an assessment of the compliance of video games advertisers within the current regulations by **autumn 2008**; and
- The Government will consider if further research is required in light of this assessment and the conclusion of the 'assessment into the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing', in **spring 2009**.

# Annex A – Recommendations and activities

Chapter	Key activities	Relevant recommendations from the Byron Review
1. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role, function, and structure of UKCCIS</li> <li>• Establishing a secretariat</li> <li>• Publish a draft strategy</li> </ul>	<p>3.122, 3.123, 3.128, 3.131, 3.133, 3.135, 3.136, 3.137, 3.138, 3.158, 4.38, 4.32</p> <p>3.122</p> <p>3.148, 3.150, 4.12 4.21, 4.19, 3.148, 3.150, 4.12 4.21, 4.19 4.38, 4.73, 4.80, 4.81, 4.83, 4.89, 4.112, 4.113, 5.73</p>
2. Better Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification around law and enforcement issues</li> <li>• Oversee work by advertising industry to future proof the regulatory framework for digital advertising</li> <li>• Develop an independently monitored voluntary code of practice on the moderation of User Generated Content</li> <li>• Encouraging sites to sign up to public commitments on ‘take-down’ times</li> <li>• Joint working between industry and the third sector to improve the support offered to vulnerable groups, including links to support services and improved moderation practices</li> <li>• Rolling out of the new kitemark for parental control software</li> </ul>	<p>3.126, 4.32</p> <p>4.45, 4.51, 4.52, 4.53</p> <p>4.12</p> <p>4.21</p> <p>4.38</p> <p>4.73</p>

Chapter	Key activities	Relevant recommendations from the Byron Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working with search providers to give users the option to lock 'safe search' settings and provide clear links to child safety information from search pages</li> <li>● Reviewing and disseminating good practice on age verification</li> <li>● Taking full account of the changing risks to children from mobile internet access</li> <li>● joint working between the online gaming industry and online gaming regulators to identify a single set of standards and good practice for managing the risks of online gaming</li> </ul>	<p>4.81, 4.83</p> <p>4.89</p> <p>4.112</p> <p>8.43, 8.44</p>
3. Public information and awareness of e-safety		5.46, 5.50 – 5.79, 4.13, 4.38, 4.74, 4.80, 4.106
4. Better Education services for children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide guidance and support to schools on e-safety</li> <li>● Ensure that the Rose Review of the primary curriculum takes account of e-safety issues</li> <li>● Ensure that Initial Teacher Training takes account of e-safety issues</li> <li>● Ensure extended schools support children and families around e-safety and media literacy</li> <li>● Ensure school inspection frameworks support and challenge schools in improving e-safety (Ofsted)</li> <li>● Ensure that children's services are able to contribute to promoting e-safety</li> <li>● Ensure parenting practitioner training takes account of e-safety issues</li> </ul>	<p>4.103, 5.92, 5.105 5.114</p> <p>5.93</p> <p>5.100, 5.100, 5.102</p> <p>5.118, 5.119</p> <p>5.125, 5.126, 5.128</p> <p>5.132, 5.135, 5.136, 5.134</p> <p>5.140, 5.141</p>

Chapter	Key activities	Relevant recommendations from the Byron Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how the recommendations can be applied to education and children services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland</li> </ul>	5.87
5. Reforming the video games classification system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with video games industry and classification bodies to ensure a communications campaign is delivered and support industry in reaching parents through the channels such as Parent Know How</li> <li>Take forward changes to the classification system</li> </ul>	7.32  7.47, 7.34, 7.35, 8.43, 8.43, 8.44
6. Better information and support to families on video games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure retailer trade bodies align codes of practice and take forward recommendations relating to in-store information</li> <li>Provide funding for periodic monitoring of video games sales to underage children by Trading Standards</li> <li>Work with video games industry to ensure minimum standards for parental controls on gaming platforms</li> <li>Ensure information and education strategy for the internet incorporates messages about online gaming</li> <li>Support dialogue between the games industry and the education sector</li> <li>Conduct further research on role of advertising in underage video game play</li> <li>Oversee work by advertising and video games industries to produce clear and consistent guidance on the advertising of video games</li> </ul>	8.43, 8.44  7.63, 7.64  7.99, 7.101, 7.102, 7.103, 7.104  8.44, 8.45  7.114  7.77  7.78, 7.79

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