



Campaigners warn Starmer's social media ban will harm disabled kids

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Social media ban harms disabled children

Charities and campaigners have warned that Keir Starmer's plan to ban under-16s from social media will isolate disabled and LGBTQ+ children.

[This week, Labour prime minister](#) announced new legislation to stop children from accessing apps like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, X and YouTube. The ban will take effect in Spring 2027 and restrict livestreams and "stranger communication" for children, including on gaming sites.

The ban won't help any kids

There are already concerns that, without regulating the tech companies, this will do very little to protect children from the dangers of the internet and punish them instead. The *Canary's* Maddison Wheeldon [argues that](#)

There is every chance this amounts to little more than virtue-signalling: a tokenistic gesture to "protect children" while changing sweet naff all about the very systems causing great harm in the first place.

Girls' rights charity [Plan International UK](#) has also warned that the ban won't keep girls safe. This is because it fails to tackle the underlying causes of [misogyny online](#)

Morgan Griffith-David from Plan International UK [told the Canary](#)

Banning children does nothing to tackle the dangerous misogyny and sexism that has become so rampant across social media.

Harmful gender norms are being constantly reinforced by social media algorithms and addictive features driven by profit, not safety and blocking access for children lets tech companies off the hook by not forcing them to address these issues.

Social media plan will harm disabled kids

Starmer's mission to end violence against women and girls has always felt like a rehabilitation tactic. In December, [he went on Loose Women](#) to talk about it. This happened to be the same week that the [abhorrent treatment of pro-Palestine prisoners on hunger strike](#) came to light.

This now seems like a last-ditch attempt to stop his own party turning against him. But by blanket banning social media instead of making it safer, the prime minister will isolate kids from marginalised communities.

In particular, disabled or LGBTQ+ young people will be affected. Many don't have an in-person community and have found friends on social media.

For many disabled people who can't leave the house, social media is where they find their community. Disability charities for young people have spoken out against the ban, stressing that it would take away lifelines.

Julie Davis, CEO of the Royal Society for Blind Children, [told BBC News](#)

We are mindful that this ban risks cutting off vital routes to connection for children who are already too often excluded. We are actively looking at ways to counter the impact this could have.

Others, expressed the need for better safeguards before taking away disabled kids community. Simon Want, Head of Policy and Influencing at the National Deaf Children's society told *BBC News*:

We want to see action that keeps children safe from harm while still allowing deaf young people to stay connected, express themselves and access support. This means working closely with families, experts and deaf young people themselves to get the balance right.

As disabled and queer campaigner Charli Clement pointed out, marginalised kids only flock to social media because third spaces in the UK – such as youth groups and libraries – have been decimated by successive governments.

Clement said [on instagram](#)

Third spaces in the UK have been decimated to a point that social media is the pseudo third space for most young people. This particularly applies to marginalised young people who are meeting their community and understanding themselves through the digital space.

They continued:

Thereâ??s no longer a youth club, thereâ??s no longer a youth centre, there isnâ??t a place to just go and play basketball with your friends. Joining a group chat or going on snapchat or watching videos with your friends is what is replacing third spaces. If you take away that, where are they supposed to go?

Essentially, Starmerâ??s internet ban wonâ??t help anyone. Yet, while there are no third spaces and no actual regulation of social media, all it will do is harm marginalised kids.

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By [Rachel Charlton-Dailey](#)

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