



Save the Children oppose Starmer's plan to save the children

Description

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Save the children. Keir Starmer in a room full of children.

On 15 June, [the government announced a social media ban for under-16s](#). Since then, many groups and experts have spoken out, including Save the Children:

This announcement reflects legitimate concerns about children's safety online, but a ban of this scale would change how children access and experience the digital world. The UK Government must ensure that any decisions are informed by children themselves and by independent experts. <https://t.co/HbwviVkGvt> [pic.twitter.com/m655IWUo2y](https://t.co/m655IWUo2y)

Save the Children UK (@savechildrenuk) [June 15, 2026](#)

Save the Children

The above response reads:

This announcement reflects legitimate concerns about children's safety online, but a ban of this scale would change how children access and experience the digital world. The UK Government must ensure that any decisions are informed by children themselves and by independent experts.

We are concerned that a blanket ban may look protective on paper, but instead pushes children into less regulated spaces, where they are less likely to seek help when something goes wrong. Children growing up in poverty are likely to be among those most affected.

If young people use sites like Facebook or TikTok, there are things we can do to push these companies to better regulate. After all, these are businesses, and if they want access to the UK market, they need to play by our rules. If young people instead start congregating on dodgy message boards, there is pretty much nothing we can do besides playing whack-a-mole and banning them as they pop up.

Some of these sites host far, far worse than anything youâ??ll see on Instagram, by the way, and we canâ??t regulate them via [Ofcom](#) because theyâ??re not hosted here:

We've fined 4chan Â£450,000 for not having age checks in place to prevent children seeing porn on its site.

The Online Safety Act is concerned with protecting people in the UK. It doesn't require platforms to restrict what people in other countries see.

<https://t.co/m2QUapVHjv> pic.twitter.com/9rba57bHiq

â?? Ofcom (@Ofcom) [March 19, 2026](#)

Oh, and letâ??s not forget we could also create a national social media option which isnâ??t operating a profit-at-any-cost model. [As whistleblower Frances Haugen revealed at a US Senate hearing](#)

Iâ??m here today because I believe Facebookâ??s products harm children, stoke division and weaken our democracy. The companyâ??s leadership knows how to make Facebook and Instagram safer, but wonâ??t make the necessary changes because they have put their astronomical profits before people.

Back to Save the Children, they finished:

If ministers want to make the online world safer, the answer is not simply keeping children off platforms. The focus must be on providing better support for parents by making platforms safer by design, tackling addictive and high-risk features such as stranger contact, live streaming, nudification tools and unsafe AI systems, so that children are not exposed to harm online.

Tech company failures

The *Canary*â??s Maddison Wheeldon also reported on this topic, [writing](#)

Donâ??t get me wrong: stronger restrictions on social media use by young people have become increasingly necessary given how toxic, abusive, and harmful many platforms have proven to be. But the repeated failure of tech companies to address these problems meaningfully means the dangers will not simply disappear because a ban is introduced.

All these dangers will still be there waiting for young people when they come of age. And it's not like 18-year-olds aren't vulnerable to abuse and harm. So really, all we're doing is kicking the problem down the road.

Wheeldon also wrote:

Harmful content disinformation, and online radicalisation will continue to exist, and young people will often find ways around restrictions. It is important to note, this policy has not been successful in Australia as a whopping 70% of parents in Australia have reported that their children are still on banned platforms – which hardly suggests this will have any impact on children's safety.

In other words, the plan won't address the underlying issue and it won't even keep children out of harm's way. So – save the children – it will not.

Ulterior motives **default watermark**

The purpose of the ban seems to be twofold:

- Giving the impression that something is being done without inconveniencing the social media companies which are responsible for the problem.
- Introducing Digital ID by stealth.

In response, we all need to demand that the government grows a spine and regulates social media companies now.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Willem Moore](#)

[Source link](#)

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