



ent White Paper including plans to impose substantial fines against
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The Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek, who in 2016 launched a campaign ([#liedentity](#)) to encourage a safer online environment, said: “The new plans unveiled today are an encouraging sign that the online world will start to be regulated to protect people like Molly Russell, 14, who tragically took her own life. We know that her family believe that social media was partly responsible for their daughter’s death.

“Research tells us that 4 in 10 people feel that tech firms fail to take their concerns seriously when they complain.

“It’s about time that social media companies are held responsible for their content and are accountable for their actions. No other organisation in the ‘real’ world has that freedom. We manage to regulate electricity, water companies, broadcasters, shops etc through consumer bodies, yet for years social media companies have been allowed to self-regulate. These new clear standards, backed up by enforcement powers will hopefully be the step change to start really protecting our children and young people online.”

[The White Paper](#), which includes plans to hold individual executives personally liable for failings, follows the publication of a House of Lords Select Committee report on Communication.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, who was part of Lords Select Committee on Communications, added: “Treating online platforms as public spaces responsible for the care of those who enter them is one of the things the House of Lords select committee for Communications has asked for in its recently published report on digital regulation.

“This white paper is a big step in the right direction.”

The Bishop of Chelmsford had previously (February) [addressed](#) the House of Lords, calling for the recommendations of the Select Committee report to be brought into legislation.

The Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, [writing](#) in today's *Telegraph*, said that the paper was a ‘vital first step’ in solving the problem of regulation and protecting the vulnerable.

“There was a time when the global nature of the online world made it possible for people to shrug their shoulders and claim that regulation was impossible,” he continued.

“Now, with the tide turning, is the time to put that notion away forever: what we are seeing are global problems that require global solutions.

“We need an international treaty-level approach to defining the moral norms and standards for the online world, because like the sea, the waves of the internet wash up on every continent and we have to regard them as deserving of the same attention if we are to harvest their pearls as well as avoid the sharks.”