

Dame Melanie Dawes
Ofcom
Chief Executive
Riverside House
London
SE1 9HA

Tuesday 4th November 2025

Dear Melanie,

Ofcom's investigation into the suicide forum

We write to you as bereaved families and a survivor of a pro-suicide forum linked to scores of preventable deaths. We have been left dismayed and appalled by Ofcom's inexplicable decision not to proceed with enforcement action against this dangerous and nihilist site. We are now writing to you to understand your position and to appeal to you to urgently reverse this decision.

This appalling pro-suicide forum primarily exists to encourage, instruct and groom people to take their own lives. Lucas was 16. Vlad 17. Aimee 21. Beth 22. Grace 22. Hannah 22. Tom 22. Grace 23. Immy 25. Adam 28 and Claire 41. The youngest person we know of who has lost their life after using the forum was just 13. Each of them was drawn into a dark, nihilistic world that was allowed to exist online and continues to be readily accessible today.

Last month, Ofcom announced that after a six-month investigation it was satisfied by the site's voluntary assurances that it would continue to geo-block its operations for UK users. Ofcom's decision, which many of us first heard about through news reports, flies in the face of the continuing availability of the forum and the harm that it continues to cause.

Ofcom is already aware of the considerable body of evidence that this forum has contributed to countless UK deaths. Even a cursory examination of the site confirms that the forum continues to be readily used UK by users, and that it poses an immediate and ongoing risk to vulnerable lives.

In spite of the voluntary geo-block now being in place, UK users continue to post in threads about how to procure a substance known to have cost at least 133 UK lives. Others are active in threads that encourage people to seek a partner with whom to die. Following the publication of its recent report, Molly Rose Foundation has been contacted by a number of other families about suspected deaths since the voluntary geo-block was introduced, evidence if it were needed that Ofcom appears to have satisfied itself with a technical remedy rather than measures that would meaningfully address the reasonably foreseeable and inherently preventable risks to life.

We ask you to now clarify a number of aspects relating to Ofcom's investigation and response. Section 4 (6) of the Act clearly specifies that a service is in scope of the Act if it is capable of being used in the UK and there are reasonable grounds to believe that it presents a material risk of significant harm to users. Given the evidence set out above, both of these conditions evidently continue to be met.

It should therefore have been readily possible for Ofcom to identify potential breaches of both the illegal and children's safety codes and (assuming that the forum has also failed to submit suitable and sufficient risk assessments) to also identify ongoing enforceable breaches in this respect.

On this basis, why has Ofcom concluded that it would be inappropriate and / or unnecessary to proceed with enforcement action against multiple potential breaches of the Act?

Secondly, we would ask you to set out why Ofcom concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to rely on voluntary assurances from the forum's owners, who as you are aware also operate a range of nihilist sites including incel forums, rather than proceeding to other measures, not least an application for an interim or permanent Service Disruption Order in the UK courts?

The forum has previously used voluntary geo-blocking rather than seeking a permanent remedy as a tactic to diminish regulatory appetite in other jurisdictions, for example Australia. In discussions with Ofcom's teams, it has become apparent that the regulator was entirely unaware of the forum's previous track record in using voluntary geo-blocking as a short-term tactical measure.

Neither had Ofcom seemingly anticipated the entirely plausible scenario that if and when the regulator's investigation is closed, there is nothing to stop the voluntary geo-block from being immediately revoked. We are dismayed that your staff have been unable to provide immediate clarity about whether these circumstances would require an entirely new investigation to be started, presumably because this is something your teams had not yet considered.

With respect to a potential application for an interim or permanent Access Disruption Measure, we would request that you provide clarity on whether Ofcom has so far declined to proceed with this approach because it feels it cannot do so while a voluntary geo-block is in force (which would raise serious questions about the current design and operation of the Act); or because you have determined that a voluntary geo-block is sufficient to discharge your regulatory functions at this stage?

While we recognise that as a regulator there are finite resources, and that prioritisation decisions must be made, it seems incoherent at best that Ofcom has on the one hand decided that this forum presents a suitably grave risk to justify opening such an early investigation, but is then signalling that it is minded to accept a remedy that evidently fails to address the continuing harm that results from its continuing availability to UK users.

Finally, we would ask Ofcom to provide details of what assessment it has made of the ongoing risk of harm when reaching its decision to accept and rely upon voluntary assurances from the owners of this dark and nihilistic site. This includes the potential for future deaths linked to the forum and its promotion of a substance as a suicide method.

We would be grateful if Ofcom would specifically set out how and whether it assessed the human rights impacts of its interim decisions, including confirmation that it believes it has

adequately discharged its functions under the ECHR. We are particularly keen to understand how Ofcom believes this decision is consistent with its obligations in respect of Article 2.

As bereaved parents and survivors of this forum, we have felt consistently let down by Ofcom's failure to grasp the evident urgency of protecting vulnerable children and adults from the horrors of this site and the appalling criminality that it promotes.

Ofcom has previously chosen to disregard the clear will of Parliament and the expert opinion of civil society when deciding not to seek all the powers at its disposal to tackle this and other similarly small but deeply high-harm sites.

While we were encouraged when Ofcom finally moved to open its investigation, we now once again feel that as a regulator you are wholly and unacceptably disconnected from the consequences of how and whether your duties are effectively discharged.

As bereaved families and survivors, we have had to fight every step of the way to shine a spotlight on the appalling and egregious harm caused by this forum. Ofcom has received multiple warnings from coroners about the threat posed by the site, and it can be in no doubt about the strength of feeling across civil society about the urgency of taking swift action to prevent further deaths.

That Ofcom now continues to be unwilling or unable to grasp the severity and urgency of blocking this site and take steps to halt its operations is as bewildering as it is re-traumatising for us. It breaks our hearts that other families are and will continue to experience the grief and despair that each of us has experienced while the regulator chooses to stand back in the face of inherently preventable harm.

Put simply, if the regulator is unwilling to take action against a platform that is responsible for such appalling and continuing danger, we would seriously question how any parent, parliamentarian or citizen can have confidence that Ofcom is capable or willing to protect our children and most vulnerable from any other online risks.

We are grateful that Ofcom has signalled your willingness to engage on these concerns. Our group, Families and Survivors to Prevent Online Suicide Harms, would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this further once we have had received and had time to reflect on your response.

We would respectfully ask that you reply within 14 days and do not mark your reply as confidential, given the public interest issues at stake and our expectation that your response will be of interest to the additional families who may contact us following further and continuing bereavement.

We are copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Digital, Innovation and Technology; the Chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee; and the Chair of the Lords Communications and Digital Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Webb, Lucas' mum

Amanda Aitken, Hannah's mum

Pete Aitken, Hannah's dad
Snezana Nikolin Caisley, Vlad's mum
Graham Caisley, Vlad's dad
Mia-Helena Knight Nikolin Caisley, Vlad's sister
Masha Nikolin Caisley, Vlad's sister
Adele Zeynep Walton, Aimee's sister
Özlem Walton, Aimee's mum
Martin Walton, Aimee's dad
John Lee, Claire's dad
David Parfett, Tom's dad
Louise Nunn, Immy's mum
Ilse, survivor of the forum and poison
Sharon Nevens, Grace's mum
Mary Pritchard, Grace's mum
Bob Pritchard, Grace's dad
Shelley Macpherson, Beth's mum
Dawn Birch, Adam's mum
Sarah Dornford-May, Adam's stepmum
Thomas William Parfett Foundation