



**Adult
Content
Standards**



IWF
Internet
Watch
Foundation

Working together
to stop child sexual
abuse online

EFFECTIVELY TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE:

v3 January 2025

A Standard of **Good Practice** for Adult Services



**Working together to
STOP child sexual abuse
on adult content websites**

Overview

This document sets out the conditions that must be met by adult services who wish to apply for full membership of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). It is based on an approach that allows provisional membership for one year for those companies that meet the **Basic Standard of Good Practices for Adult Services** (as set out below).

Companies would then be eligible for full membership if they reached the additional requirements of the **Higher Standard of Good Practice for Adult Services** (as set out below).

In the case of all applications, the IWF would arrange an independent auditing of individual companies' compliance with the Standard before the IWF accepts or rejects an application. The IWF and its expert advisory board are consulting on third-party auditors, which will be announced in due course. The IWF intends to conduct an annual review of the standard to ensure it is relevant and effective in addressing evolving challenges and changes to the online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) landscape.

A. Principles

The Advisory Board has set out six principles for adult services for tackling child sexual abuse (CSA), to apply in all countries where services are provided, across all sites:

1

Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to child sexual abuse.

2

Ensure transparency, with enforceable terms of service.

3

Operate with accountability, with clear reporting mechanisms.

4

Embrace technological tools and solutions.

5

Collaborate with specialists.

6

Embrace regulatory and safety initiatives, including voluntary principles.

B. Specific steps to achieve good practice

Baseline Standard

- a. Adult services must comply with legislation and regulations.
- b. Adult services must adopt mechanisms to detect and prevent known child sexual abuse material (CSAM), as deemed appropriate by the IWF.
- c. Adult services must be audited by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), who will assess the service's compliance with R18 classification standards and make recommendations for alignment. Significant breaches may result in a recommendation to the IWF that the service be denied membership or that membership be revoked. The following content is not acceptable at R18:
 - Material which is in breach of the criminal law;
 - Material (including dialogue) likely to encourage an interest in sexually abusive activity which may include adults role-playing as non-adults;
 - The portrayal of sexual activity which involves real or apparent lack of consent; any form of physical restraint which prevents participants from indicating a withdrawal of consent;
 - The infliction of pain or acts which are likely to cause serious physical harm, whether real or (in a sexual context) simulated; some allowance may be made for non-abusive, consensual activity;
 - Penetration by any object likely to cause physical harm;
 - And sexual threats, humiliation or abuse which do not form part of a clearly consenting role-playing game.
- d. Adult services must publish transparency reports every six months¹.
- e. Adult services must maintain a portal to provide an accessible and secure way for law enforcement to report and request information from the platform about specific investigations.
- f. Adult services must have a clear reporting function for users to flag harmful content².
- g. Adult services must subject anyone visiting, publishing, or appearing in material on the platform to age verification measures to confirm they are over 18 years old at the time of production before content is permitted to be published³.
- h. Adult services must ensure that consent is secured for all individuals appearing in content. All individuals must be allowed to withdraw consent at any time.
- i. Adult services must not support technologies such as end-to-end encryption that obscure the content of messaging and other communications that would inhibit moderation.
- j. Adult services must not adopt, or encourage the adoption of, technologies that can be used to bypass content filtering and content blocking mechanisms, whether for accessing their services or hosting them.

1. Digital Services Act (Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC) Article 24 (2)

2. Online Safety Act, Part 3, Section 20, Subsection 3

3. Online Safety Act, Part 5, Section 81, Subsection 2



Higher Standard

- a. Human moderators must review all content before it can be published on the platform.
- b. Human moderators must be well-supported.
- c. Adult services must deploy tools and changes on all historical content and accounts, even if this requires removing old content.
- d. Adult services should have a deterrence messaging display if a user attempts to search for words and terms associated with underage content and other types of illegal content. This should be supplemented by a message encouraging users to contact an appropriate support organisation.
- e. Adult services should seek to engage with other relevant organisations to use their tools, participate in initiatives, and seek their expertise.
- f. Adult services should invest in horizon scanning for future issues and share intelligence with other platforms about threats to children on their sites or services.



Working together
to stop child sexual
abuse online

Register your interest

If you are interested in becoming an IWF member and/or would like to find out more information about our Standard of Good Practice, please email members@iwf.org.uk