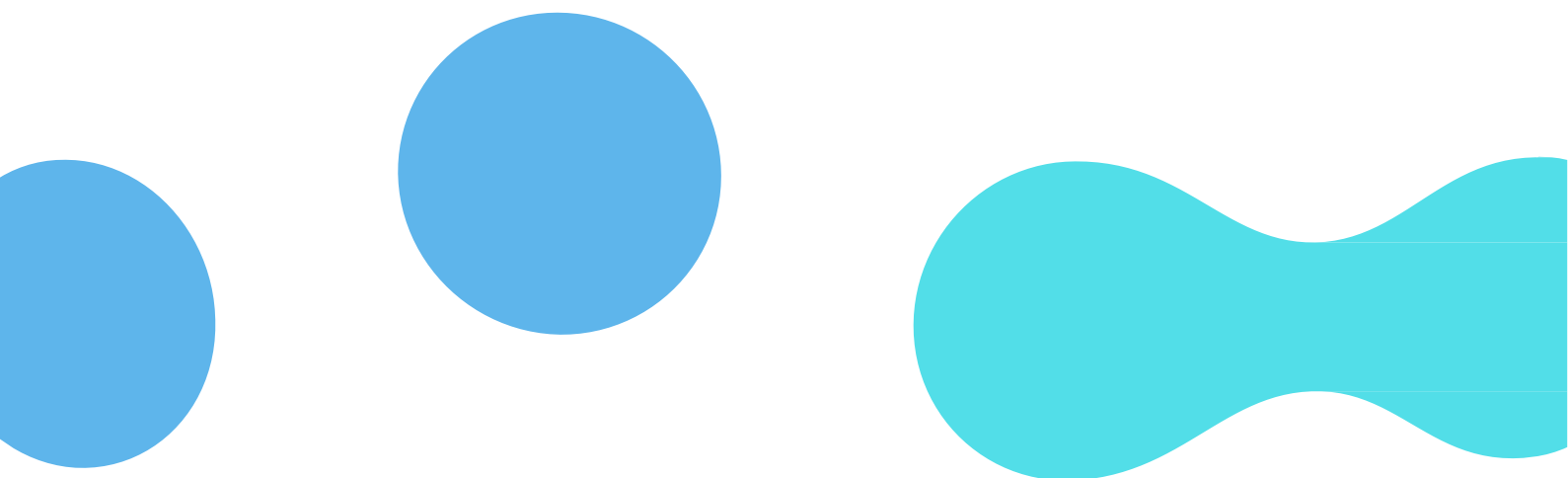




Global
Online Safety Regulators
Network

Position Statement: Age Assurance & Online Safety Regulation



Introduction

The Global Online Safety Regulators Network ('the Network') was launched in November 2022 and is the first dedicated convening forum for independent online safety regulators around the world. The Network enables regulators to share experience, expertise, and evidence, paving the way for coherent international approaches to online safety regulation.

The work of our members shows that in all corners of the world, many people - especially children - continue to face exposure to profound online harm. The importance of robust regulation, ensuring tech platforms make greater efforts to protect the public, and holding them to account for doing so, has never been greater. In May 2024, the Network published a statement affirming our shared commitment to advancing regulatory coherence and coordination, which has been enshrined into the Network's activities and strategy for 2025-2027. The public will benefit from coherent approaches to online safety around the world - and so will industry. Since then, many of our members have begun to implement and see the real-world impact of their regulation - notably in protecting and upholding the rights of children online.

As the only existing global network for online safety regulators, we recognise the value of clearly communicating our aims, objectives, and regulatory expectations. This statement outlines the Network's shared view that the protection of children and their rights online is vital, and requires a common, principles-based and privacy-preserving international approach to age assurance. Greater international coherence in the applicable rules for age assurance will facilitate better protections for children, consistent and effective compliance for services, and greater public trust.

What do we mean by ‘age assurance’?

This statement will use the term ‘age assurance’ to describe **the approaches by which services estimate, infer, or verify a user’s age, in order to prevent children from accessing age-inappropriate content or risky functionalities, and ensure they offer an age-appropriate experience.**¹ We nonetheless recognise that different online safety regulators and regulatory frameworks use slightly different terminologies. The following terms might be used, in different settings²:

- **Age assurance (AA):** an umbrella term used to describe a range of techniques and technologies to determine someone’s age in an online environment, such as age verification and age estimation.
- **Age estimation (AE):** techniques or technologies that provide an approximate determination of someone’s age or age range, such as analysing the feature(s) of a person’s face to estimate their age.
- **Age verification (AV):** techniques or technologies that provide a determination of someone’s exact age, typically by verifying data against an external source like a photo identity document.

The Network recognises that each jurisdiction will have its own approach to determining what content, conduct, and service design is deemed harmful to children. For the purposes of this statement and the Network’s activities, applications for the use of age assurance technologies are discussed in the context of the protection of children from age-inappropriate content, including, but not limited to, pornography. In some jurisdictions, age assurance is being used to enforce minimum age requirements, provide children with an age-appropriate experience, and prevent unsafe interactions between children and adults.

Why is the Network prioritising age assurance?

Age assurance can be an important tool for online service providers in creating safer and age-appropriate experiences for all users. Protection of children and age-appropriate design are a **shared responsibility** of online service providers, regulators, policymakers, civil society organisations, parents, and the broader public. For online service providers to be able to fulfill their role in this shared effort, **they need to know whether and when their service is being used by a child or adult.** This is why an increasing number of regulatory jurisdictions

¹ For the purposes of this document, ‘children’ will refer to individuals under 18 years of age. Some jurisdictions may have a different age at which an individual is considered a legal adult.

² GOSRN Regulatory Index, 2025: [GOSRN-Regulation-Index-2025.pdf](#)

around the world have implemented or are in the process of implementing age assurance requirements for certain online service providers. When an online service provider knows that a user is a child, or under a certain age, services can comply with their obligations to protect those users.

In several jurisdictions where new or renewed age assurance requirements have come into force, there have been examples of both compliance and non-compliance by services, as well as attempts by users to circumvent age assurance systems and rules. To ensure children are protected, **it is important for regulators to set out our common approach and commitment to age assurance and non-compliant companies are pursued with dissuasive sanctions.**

In recent years, growing public concern over children’s safety online has driven an expansion of regulatory requirements for when and where age assurance must be deployed by online service providers. In turn, this has coincided with innovation in safety technology. At a time of such innovation and regulatory acceleration, **we believe that increased public awareness, understanding, and trust in age assurance approaches is essential.** Ensuring all users, including children, have an understanding and awareness of different age assurance approaches supports them to be empowered and to make informed decisions when engaging with age assurance technologies. Overcoming misconceptions and providing transparency about the safety, privacy, and utility of age assurance technologies, will help build trust and increase adoption, securing better outcomes for children’s digital wellbeing.

Advancing common principles for age assurance

As a Network of independent online safety regulators with a mandate to promote online safety for internet users across the world, we are guided in our work by the following overarching principles:

First, children’s rights, safety, and wellbeing should be protected online, and age assurance plays an important role in achieving that goal.

Second, we support a principles-based, evidence-based approach to age assurance. An age assurance process should adhere to the following principles:

- **Accurate:** provide correct and trustworthy outputs;
- **Robust:** correctly determines the age or age range of a user in actual deployment contexts;
- **Reliable:** is reproducible and derived from trustworthy evidence;
- **Proportionate:** is aligned with the scale and impact of the issue age assurance is being introduced to mitigate;

- **Fair and inclusive:** avoids or minimizes bias and discriminatory outcomes and treats users equitably;
- **Non-intrusive:** is intuitive, easy to use, and user-friendly.

These principles are technology neutral, meaning they allow for a degree of flexibility and innovation in the way services secure child safety outcomes. **Approaches should be implemented with attention to accessibility and interoperability**, meaning solutions should work for all users and technological systems to communicate with each other using common and standardised formats. These principles are responsive to the reality that different jurisdictions will require different types of service providers to deploy age assurance at different times and to achieve different safety outcomes. For all approaches, **adhering to applicable data protection laws and upholding users' rights to privacy and expression is non-negotiable.**

Rules are only as effective as their enforcement. Where Network members are responsible for ensuring compliance with relevant statutory age assurance requirements, **we commit to ensuring these rules are enforced fairly, transparently, and proportionately.** This will ensure children are protected and non-compliant services cannot engage in regulatory 'forum shopping', so protections do not stop at our borders.

The Network's activities to pursue coherence, coordination, and recommendations

In its three-year strategic plan, the Network committed to pursuing regulatory coherence and coordination amongst its members. For reasons set out above, there is urgency and value in prioritising age assurance for these ends.

Alongside this statement, we will take several steps to ensure our agreed principles for age assurance deployments are mainstreamed. These steps include:

- Working with respective data protection authorities to ensure age assurance implementations are consistent and coherent with data protection requirements;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of age assurance requirements, risks of circumvention, and compliance of services;
- Continuing to align regulatory approaches amongst members, where possible, to improve regulatory coherence, where appropriate;
- Communicating our shared expectations to industry through further position statements and industry engagements;
- Continuing public-facing communication to enhance awareness and understanding of age assurance;

- Facilitating discussion amongst GOSRN observers, external experts, children and young people, and industry to build a community of practice around age assurance;
- Encouraging evidence-sharing and research cooperation amongst GOSRN members and observers, especially on privacy-enhancing technologies;
- Regularly reviewing and updating this joint statement to address evolving critical challenges and technological developments.
- Promoting the development of better digital parenting tools that will complement online age assurance requirements.

Relevant Publications

- [Joint Statement on a Common International Approach to Age Assurance | ICO](#)
- [Quick guide to implementing highly effective age assurance - Ofcom](#)
- [user mythbusting article](#)
- [Joint statement: Working with other regulators to protect children online - Ofcom](#)
- [Age verification background report: includes evidence and in-depth analysis which supports the assertions, findings and recommendations of the roadmap.](#)
- [Regulatory guidance | eSafety Commissioner](#); [Statement of Commitment to Children's Rights | eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Commission publishes guidelines on the protection of minors – European Commission](#)
- [Statement 1/2025 on Age Assurance | European Data Protection Board](#)
- [edpb_guidelines_202503_interplay-dsa-gdpr_v1_en.pdf](#)
- [Arcom-Referentiel-technique-sur-la-verification-de-age-pour-la-protection-des-mineurs-contre-la-pornographie-en-ligne.pdf](#)

Contact current Chair:

gosrn@cnam.ie

www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/international/online-safety/gosrn

January 2026

