



Department for  
Business & Trade

Kevin Hollinrake  
Minister of State

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Mr David Ridley  
Wiltshire & Swindon Coroner's Court  
26 Endless Street  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 1DP

28 June 2024

**Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths sent to the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, the Secretary of State for Business**

Dear Mr Ridley,

I would like to begin by expressing my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Deborah Jane Cooper following her death and the circumstances that surrounded it. I recognise the gravity of the concerns raised in your Report and I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to this Report to Prevent Future Deaths. As we are in a pre-election period, I apologise that I cannot comment on or commit to further actions to prevent future deaths as these will be for the new Government.

The Department for Business and Trade is, inter alia, responsible for consumer protection law, including the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 ("CPRs"), which is shortly to be updated by Part 4, Chapter 1 of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCC Act). The DMCC Act received Royal Assent in May 2024.

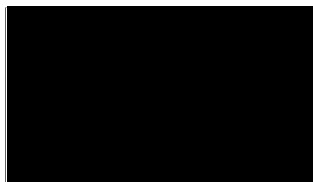
There is limited scope to address the issues raised in your Report through existing consumer protection legislation. For example, while the scope of the protection offered to consumers by the unfair trading legislation (referred to above) is broad, its focus is primarily to protect consumer's economic interests. This legislation does not impose a blanket ban on the sale of the particular products in issue.

However, there is legislation, which falls outside of the scope of my Department's responsibilities, which is more directly relevant including section 2(1) of the Suicide Act 1961 (as amended), which makes it an offence for a person to commit an act capable of encouraging or assisting the suicide or attempted suicide of another person, with the intention that their act will encourage or assist suicide or an attempt at suicide. It is a matter for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service to consider and, where appropriate, pursue prosecutions.

In addition, the new Online Safety Act requires all in-scope services, including in-scope marketplaces, to rapidly remove regulated content, including suicide content, where they have reasonable grounds to consider that it crosses the criminal threshold. I understand that

a letter has been issued in response to your Report from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) regarding the scope of the Online Safety Act in relation to these issues. Ofcom is the independent regulator for the Online Safety Act and is working with the DSIT to implement the Act which received Royal Assent in October.

Yours sincerely,



**KEVIN HOLLINRAKE**

Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business  
Department for Business and Trade