

MPs take fight for automatic block on web porn to No10 as they hand in petition

By [Daniel Martin](#)

A huge petition demanding an automatic block on online porn was handed in to Downing Street yesterday. Seven plastic boxes containing the 115,000 names were left at Number 10 by Tory MP Claire Perry – leaving David Cameron in no doubt of the strength of feeling on the issue. The Daily Mail is backing their campaign for an 'opt-in' system, with over-18s only able to access adult material if they specifically ask their internet provider to allow them to.

It came as an official government consultation on parental internet controls concluded after ten weeks.

The Department for Education said last night that more than 2,000 people had submitted their response on whether they wanted an opt-in system or a less stringent solution.

Among those who have signed the petition handed over yesterday are 140 MPs.

Mrs Perry, who chaired an inquiry into online safety earlier this year, said: 'Today, the voices of over 115,000 "ordinary people" are being heard loudly and clearly at the heart of Government and they are asking for a simple solution to the problem of keeping our children safe online – an opt-in system for adult material.'

We were delighted that the government listened to us and set up an official consultation on this important issue. 'With that process coming to an end today, it is crucial to make sure that the views of parents across the country are heard.'

Five other MPs, Labour's Fiona Mactaggart, and the Tories' Fiona Bruce, Mark Garnier, Andrew Selous and David Burrowes, were also present when the petition – organised by campaign group Safetynet – was handed in.

They also handed in a letter to new Culture Secretary Maria Miller, who is in charge of internet policy. It makes the point that one in three ten-year-olds have stumbled on pornography online, and that the largest group of internet pornography consumers are aged 12 to 17.

Safetynet is a partnership between Premier Christian Radio and pressure group Safermedia.

Miranda Suit, from the SafetyNet campaign, said: 'Our petition shows that there is a massive groundswell of opinion at all levels that the Government and internet service providers must act on urgently.'

'An opt-in network level filter with the default setting of porn off will provide the best protection.'

Earlier this week the Archbishop of York warned of the 'immeasurable misery and heartache' caused by pornographic sites, which make boys see girls as 'sex objects'.

Dr John Sentamu demanded ministers 'put children first' by standing up to wealthy and powerful internet companies who are opposing moves to protect youngsters.

The warnings come as the number of children calling Childline after seeing hardcore pornography has soared by 34 per cent in a year, with girls reporting feeling pressured to copy violent sexual behaviour.