

The Rt Hon. Lord Hanson of Flint  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

28<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**RE: TACKLING ONLINE FRAUD – THE NEED FOR A MORE JOINED-UP APPROACH**

Dear Lord Hanson,

The Online Dating and Discovery Association (ODDA) is the global voice for the sector with a mission to create safe, responsible and enjoyable experiences for everyone. Representing nearly 500 brands worldwide, a key priority for the ODDA and its members is to prevent fraud as part of a multi-layered approach to trust and safety.

We recently wrote to Dame Melanie Dawes, CEO of Ofcom to raise concerns about an increased risk of fraud as a result of measures introduced by the Online Safety Act. In the response to our letter, Ofcom acknowledged that they hadn't undertaken a risk assessment on the potential for fraud, but had launched a user awareness campaign ahead of the 25<sup>th</sup> July deadline when in-scope services begin to implement highly effective age assurance. We believe these measures are insufficient and will do nothing to thwart the continued growth of online fraud.

In addition to these concerns, we also gave evidence last month to the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as part of the Constructive Dialogue on Technical Assistance and International Cooperation, which focused on transnational organised crime. In our evidence, we highlighted concerns around the lack of joined up working between international Governments and the barriers to effective information sharing that are making it easy for fraudsters to target people in the UK.

**We believe that the UK Government needs to step up and take a more proactive approach in the fight against fraud, exercising the levers it has available to prioritise international cooperation and stop the growth of large-scale scam centres.**

To achieve this, we call on the Government to:

**Provide Better Access to Government Data and Enable Information Sharing Between Sectors:**

Data captured by law enforcement through organisations such as Action Fraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, provides a valuable source of intelligence about which services are being targeted, by whom and how. Yet, there is often a reluctance to share this data with organisations outside of law enforcement. We ask for this data to be shared proactively with our members so that they can take action more quickly to prevent users from being targeted by fraudsters.

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We also know that a huge amount of data is captured by other sectors, where we face similar barriers, including financial services and big tech firms. While there are several initiatives aimed at sharing data, including the Global Signal Exchange and Stop Scams UK, access comes at a price, which makes it prohibitively expensive for smaller firms who are often hit hardest by fraud.

We believe that the Government has an important role to play in enabling and facilitating cross-sector information sharing and ask for it to step in and lead a top-down approach in partnership with industry that enables real-time information sharing between sectors for free.

#### **More Joined-Up Working with Law Enforcement:**

As fraudsters use increasingly sophisticated technology to target users, awareness campaigns will become less effective. At the end of last month, Interpol<sup>1</sup> released new information on the globalisation of scam centres, recognising that they are now spreading from the Far East into new regions such as West Africa and the Middle East. This growth represents a worrying trend and underlines the urgent need for a more joined-up approach to tackling organised crime at an international level. We ask the Government to prioritise international cooperation to disrupt and bring down these highly disruptive scam centres.

#### **Blocking High-Risk IP Addresses from the UK:**

The ODDA has recently been running a pilot with fraud prevention experts Scamalytics to identify high-risk IP addresses. We are now building a richer picture of where fraudsters are based geographically, with West Africa featuring prominently.

We ask the Government to be more proactive in blocking high-risk IP addresses and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to protect UK users from fraudsters. We note the work NCSC does this in space, but suggest that more needs to be done.

#### **Fraud Prevention Measures the Sector is Implementing:**

Finally, I wanted to bring to your attention some of the things the ODDA and its members are doing to tackle fraud. In the last few years, the sector has invested heavily in innovative new technology as part of its ongoing commitment to trust and safety. The majority of services expect to increase their investment in trust and safety tech this year with over half of new apps integrating solutions at the design phase. Plus, measures such as identity verification, content moderation and giving users more control throughout their online journey are now commonplace across the sector.

Within the ODDA, we've seen a big rise in dating apps seeking advice about solutions and best practice. We've also facilitated working groups - bringing together representatives from the tech

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2025/INTERPOL-releases-new-information-on-globalization-of-scam-centres>

industry, regulators and individual services to support the development of solutions and standards that help the sector deal with evolving risk.

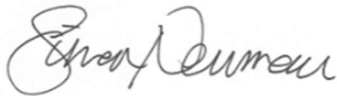
Together, these measures are beginning to make a real difference. Statistically, users are less likely to be a victim of fraud on an online dating or social discovery app than they are on a social media site - but that doesn't mean we can take our foot off the gas. We know that more needs to be done which is why it remains our number one priority.

**In Summary:**

Fraud continues to affect users of all online services. As attackers become more sophisticated, it is essential that Government takes a more proactive approach in using the levers it has available to keep everyone safe from harm.

We would be delighted to share further details about the work our sector is doing to prevent fraud and welcome ongoing engagement with Government to tackle the root causes of the problem and enable better information sharing.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Newman  
Chief Executive Officer

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