

13th May 2026

Alex Hewson
Senior Policy and Communications Officer - Prison Reform Trust

By email

RE: PREVENTING HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS FROM USING ONLINE DATING AND SOCIAL DISCOVERY SERVICES:

Dear Alex,

The Online Dating and Discovery Association (ODDA) is the recognised trade body 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 the risk of harm from individuals who pose a threat to others, including those who have committed serious sexual or violent offences against women.

To achieve this, the sector has worked hard to implement a range of trust and safety measures that include better information sharing between platforms, human and AI content moderation as well as giving users more control over what information they share with others. However, to tackle the problem effectively requires a more joined-up approach with key partners in the criminal justice system.

We know that the majority of individuals released from prison never commit another offence having successfully turned their lives around to live independent, crime-free lives. But we also know that a small percentage reoffend, putting the safety of others at risk.

As an organisation delivering services to users in touch with the justice system, we believe that the Prison Reform Trust has a professional duty to share information with the police where someone poses a serious risk to others. We recognise the decision to share information is a difficult one to make and must be balanced against the rights of the individual. However, cases like Anthony Burns who targeted hundreds of women and girls on dating apps despite already being categorised as a high-risk offender following previous convictions, serves as a reminder of what can happen when the system breaks down.

We have also written to the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Magistrates Association for their support.

In addition to the above, the ODDA has been playing its part by working with Government to explore other ways we can make our sector safer for women and other vulnerable groups. For example, earlier this year we published a form on our website to report convicted sex offenders using publicly available information following discussions with officials at the Ministry of Justice.

www.theodda.org Email: info@theodda.org

A link to the form, which you can find here:

<https://theodda.org/for-consumers/report-a-convicted-sex-offender/>, has now been included in the latest update of the Licence Conditions Policy Framework. We also continue to push the Home Office to expand Clare's Law giving the 'right to ask' and the 'right to know' to users of online dating apps and are actively supporting the Government's Enough! campaign.

I look forward to hearing from you and exploring ways we can work together in reducing the risk of harm to users of online dating and social discovery services.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Newman
Chief Executive Officer
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