

ISBA PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS**December 2024**

Kemi Badenoch was elected as Leader of the Opposition. She appointed **Stuart Andrew** as the new Shadow DCMS Secretary; ISBA met with Mr Andrew on 26 November.

AI

Lib Dem peer Lord Clement-Jones [asked the Government](#) whether it planned to set out a policy position on the relationship between **intellectual property rights** and the training of generative AI models.

The House of Lords heard that the Government will shortly launch a **consultation on the rights of copyright holders and AI**, during a [debate on LLMs and genAI](#) brought by Communications Committee Chair Tina Stowell.

Economy and Business

The Chancellor Rachel Reeves [confirmed in her Budget](#) that the **creative industries** would be a key sector under the Government's new Industrial Strategy.

The **Employment Rights Bill** began its journey through Parliament. The [Business & Trade Select Committee launched an inquiry](#), including looking at the impact the Bill will have on investment and start-up rates, the supply of labour, and employment.

The **Data (Use and Access) Bill** had its [Second Reading](#) in the House of Lords.

Gambling

The Gambling Commission [published](#) its 2024 **Young People and Gambling Report**, its annual study into children and young people's exposure to and involvement in all types of gambling.

GambleAware said that Great Britain ["lags behind"](#) Europe in terms of steps to prohibit **betting ads**. The charity is advocating for a pre-watershed ban on gambling ads, restrictions on gambling content and marketing online, and a blanket ban around sports.

The Government [confirmed](#) via a [Written Statement](#) that it would bring forward a **statutory levy** and online slot stake limits as a first step to strengthening harmful gambling protections.

Health

The **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**, which will have a profound impact on vaping in particular, began its parliamentary passage. Second Reading passed on 26 November by an overwhelming majority (although Kemi Badenoch voted against). DHSC [published an explainer](#) on the Bill.

Media

Meta was [fined over 800m euros](#) after authorities accused it of restricting competition by "tying" its free Marketplace **classified ads services** to the Facebook platform.

The US Department of Justice [proposed major structural changes](#) to **Google** to curb its dominance in the search market, including divesting Chrome, banning Google from paying to be a default search engine, and forcing it to sell Android.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy [announced plans](#) to broaden the scope of the UK's **media mergers regime**, updating it for the digital age to reflect modern news consumption habits and better protect media freedom and plurality.

Media Minister Stephanie Peacock announced that the Government will scrutinise the **future of linear TV broadcasting**, as new research suggested that some viewers could be excluded from the general shift towards online viewership. Senior representatives from broadcasters, infrastructure operators, organisations representing audiences, and Ofcom [will form a new working group](#) – which will consider how all viewers can continue to access content.

The Lords Communications and Digital Committee published a [report on *The Future of News*](#) warning of a potential “two-tier” **UK news landscape**, risking societal divides and a weakened democracy. The report called for action to address challenges posed by AI, declining local journalism and news avoidance, including supporting local media through tax breaks, updating copyright laws, and supporting resilience against misinformation.

Online Safety

The Science and Technology Select Committee pushed for Elon Musk and other tech execs to appear before it to account for social media's role in the **summer riots**. The Committee has [launched an inquiry](#) into the links between social media algorithms, genAI and the spread of harmful content.

The Commons [approved secondary legislation](#) under the Online Safety Act which added new **intimate image offences** to the priority offences list. This would include the sharing of manipulated or deepfake images.

In a Westminster Hall debate on **tackling image-based abuse**, the Government [confirmed its intention](#) to ban the creation of degrading and sexually explicit deepfakes in the current Session.

Labour backbencher Josh MacAlister detailed his **Safer Phones Bill**, which is being brought forward through the Commons Private Member's Bill process. But [plans to ban smartphones in schools were dropped](#) in the face of seeming Government opposition. Mr MacAlister hopes that Ministers will back other measures in the Bill including raising the age of 'internet adulthood' from 13 to 16.

The Australian Government [announced its intention](#) to legislate an **age limit of 16 for social media access**, with penalties to be introduced for online platforms that fail to comply.

The Technology Secretary, Peter Kyle, warned platforms to improve child protection or face similar measures to the Australian legislation. He set **new online safety priorities for Ofcom** and [launched a study](#) into the effects of social media on children and young people.

Ofcom [published an open letter](#) to online service providers about how the Online Safety Act will apply to **generative AI and chatbots**. The letter highlights online harm concerns and the responsibility of user-to-user and search services.

A [Home Office consultation](#) proposed the ability to fine senior social media company executives if immediate action is not taken to tackle the use of **online marketplaces** to sell illegal weapons and glorify violence.