

**ISBA PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS****February 2025****AI**

The Government [committed](#) to making the creation of sexually explicit deepfake images a criminal offence.

Ministers [responded](#) to the Science & Technology Select Committee's report on AI governance, confirming that they would consult on proposals to establish binding regulations on the companies developing the most powerful AI models.

The Prime Minister launched the UK [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#), highlighting the technology's potential to transform public services and drive private sector innovation.

**Alcohol**

The Government [responded](#) to the consultation on whether digital ID and tech could play a role in age verification for alcohol sales, saying that this should be allowed for trusted services.

**Food & Drink**

The ASA [issued an interim statement](#) updating advertisers on its progress with publishing guidance on the new 'less healthy' food and drink (LHF) restrictions.

The Government [responded](#) to the House of Lords Food, Diet & Obesity Committee's report, 'Recipe for Health: A plan to fix our broken food system'. Ministers said that they had no plans to exclude food businesses or industry representatives from engagement with government.

**Gambling**

DCMS Ministers [responded](#) to a Written Question on the effectiveness of gambling regulation and advertising, saying that the industry had a clear task to further raise standards.

**Online Advertising**

The CMA [announced](#) its first three major investigations into big tech firms using the powers given to it under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act. Details of the specific digital activities will be confirmed as each investigation is launched. The first was subsequently [confirmed](#) to be an investigation into Google and its alleged dominance in search.

The ICO [said](#) that it was looking into cookie compliance across the UK's top 1,000 websites, and [launched a 2025 strategy](#) to ensure that online tracking gives people "clear choices and confidence in how their information is used". The regulator also [published new guidance](#) on 'consent or pay' models.

## Online Harms

Technology Secretary Peter Kyle [confirmed](#) that the Government has no immediate plans to ban social media for under-16s.

Nick Clegg [stepped down](#) as President of Global Affairs at Meta just before Donald Trump returned to office. He was replaced by his former deputy Joel Kaplan, who was Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush.

Meta [announced](#) its move away from the use of independent fact checkers, replacing them with the X-style 'Community Notes' system.

Ofcom [published](#) industry guidance on online age checks, saying that services which allow pornographic content must introduce 'highly effective' checks to ensure that children cannot access it. They announced three new requirements that online services must fulfil.

The Science & Technology Committee [began public evidence sessions](#) on whether social media promoted misinformation during the summer 2024 riots. \