Twitter Thread by Andy Burrows

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■ So today we've got the Government's vision for online harms legislation. It's a landmark day for all of us who've worked for this for years. Some quick early (personal!) thoughts:

This is a systemic Duty of Care, with a requirement to risk assess - regularly - for reasonable foreseeable harms and to act on them. Supported by Codes but that serve as guardrails, not a prescriptive checklist

There's a broad requirement on all services to tackle illegal content and to take measures to protect children. Worried that age assurance may be expected to do a lot of heavy lifting instead of proper moderation for legal but harmful, but we'll see

The biggest weakness: enforcement measures. Criminal sanctions & named persons have deference value - that's why industry pushed back strongly. But not for at least 2 years and even then only covering failure to comply with the regulator. If Govt thinks this is really enough...



Investigatory powers are OK (particularly pleased to see the inclusion of skilled persons reviews ■). But the balance between investigatory powers and duties isn't where it needs to be to drive culture change

It's a bold and necessary step to have encryption and private messaging services in scope. It reflects the threat vectors for CSA, and regulation wouldn't appropriately tackle child harms otherwise

An intriguing reference to Ofcom co-designating regulatory powers ■ But otherwise the Govt approach to user advocacy - leave it to Ofcom, without creating a funded user advocacy body - isn't a level playing field and needs tightening in the Bill

There’s a MASSIVE gap around arrangements for platforms to tackle the cross-platform nature of risks, and to address material which facilitates CSAM. Regulator needs an approach that recognises the harm ecosystem and adopts an approach earlier in the abuse pipeline

This is an approach which rightly majors on children, but it arguably should have a broader focus for societal harms. We’re getting a real time lesson in disinformation, with the failure of platforms to moderate antivax an emerging and obvious public health risk

Is this world leading? We’ll see the #DSA later today. And on the surface, it has weaker enforcement powers than Ireland. But it’s still an important package, and there’s lots to fight for in the months ahead

One final thought: big shout out to some wonderful people that have worked tirelessly on this in past or current lives: @martha_kirby1 @_rosyrosyrosy @ga_hill @RuschenHannah @CharCallear. Heroes don’t always wear capes, but if you see them, you definitely owe them a pint