

Labour really does need to up its act, and very soon

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I was frustrated listening to Home Office minister Diane Johnson MP talking on Radio 4 this morning.

Her line was twofold. Labour was going to be tough on rioters, and Ofcom was sending a letter to social media companies to remind them of their responsibilities.

I have three reactions.

First, of course Labour is going to talk tough about crime. What else can or should it do? But it is hardly sufficient to do so.

Second, the proposed response to social media companies is not good enough. They have a duty of care as publishers, that they deny. If I try to exercise that duty of care here by reading all comments they can use AI to identify all comments on their sites creating risk. I am quite sure it is not beyond their wit to do so. And that should be enforced by law, personally impinging on the executives of those companies. Elon Musk should not have the right to promote the possibility of civil war in the UK, as he appears to have done. Legislation is required, very urgently.

Third, there was no attempt to discuss the causes of this situation. And that is not good enough.

Labour really does need to up its act, and very soon. The claim that they are only just in office will not wear for long.