



# TikTok Response to Ofcom's Consultation on Draft Guidance – Protecting Women and Girls Online

## Introduction

TikTok welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Ofcom's consultation on the guidance proposed for tech companies on creating a safer life online for women and girls. TikTok has worked collaboratively with Ofcom since 2020 as one of the few mainstream platforms to have been in scope of regulation under the previous Video Sharing Platform (VSP) regulatory regime. We welcome the work that has gone into moving the regulatory framework forward, particularly the passage of the Online Safety Act and subsequent Codes of Practice and Guidance that Ofcom is developing and are committed to working constructively with Ofcom and the Government more broadly to make the online world a safer environment for women and girls.

TikTok is an entertainment platform with a mission to inspire creativity and bring joy. TikTok operates on a content graph rather than a social graph — meaning the content users encounter is shaped more by their individual interests than by their social connections. This unique design informs our broader approach to safety.

Protecting our users is a top priority, and we recognise that women and girls may face specific risks online. We welcome Ofcom's focus on embedding safety by design across all content areas under the Online Safety Act (OSA) and strongly support this regulatory direction.

We recognise that safety has no finish line. As user behaviors and risks evolve, so too must our systems — including efforts to address violence against women and girls (VAWG). The following sections detail our approach to gender-based safety across the nine action areas outlined by Ofcom, illustrating how we embed safety by design through policy, practice, and platform architecture. TikTok has long invested in systems and safeguards that promote a safe in app experience. We are committed to continuously improving these protections, especially where they help to keep women and girls safer from any types of harm that may have a disproportionate or distinctive effect on them.

We support Ofcom's identification of the following types of online gender-based harms:

- Online misogyny
- Pile ons and online harassment
- Online domestic abuse
- Image based sexual abuse

As Ofcom has rightly noted, these harms do not occur evenly across platforms. On TikTok, we recognise the evolving threat of targeted, gender based abuse. In response, we have built and continue to enhance

robust frameworks to detect, track, and reduce these harms, applying proactive tools and human oversight to protect users before abuse escalates.

Many of Ofcom's proposed measures in the draft guidance reflect our current practices, demonstrating alignment between our platform level innovations and the regulator's vision. We hope our insights contribute meaningfully to Ofcom's work, and we welcome further engagement on how we can collectively drive progress in making the online world safer for women and girls.

## Taking Responsibility

Ofcom sets out three action areas under this theme:

**Action 1: Ensure accountability processes address women and girls' online safety**

**Action 2: Conduct risk assessments that capture harms to women and girls**

**Action 3: Be transparent about action taken to protect women and girls online**

TikTok supports these principles. We recognise that addressing gender-based harm requires evidence-based approaches grounded in both lived experience and expert insight. We take seriously our responsibility to reduce risk and enhance safety for women and girls across our platform.

## Trust and Safety

TikTok is enriched by the diversity of our community and it's a place where people can come and express themselves. Safety and security are a crucial part of that. TikTok's work on safety is guided by our Community Principles. These principles, shape our day-to-day work. TikTok has eight guiding community principles that are grounded in safety and our commitment to respecting human rights.

1. **Prevent harm:** Our primary focus is keeping TikTok safe and a place for creativity and joy. We consider the many ways that content or behaviour may impact our diverse community. This includes individual physical, psychological, financial, and privacy harms, as well as societal harms. To strike the right balance with free expression, we restrict content only when necessary and in a way that seeks to minimize the impact on speech.
2. **Enable free expression:** Creativity unlocked by expression is what powers our vibrant community. We honour this principle by providing the opportunity to share freely on our platform while also proactively addressing behaviour that can inhibit speech of others. However, free expression is not an absolute right – it is always considered in proportion to its potential harm and does not extend to having your content recommended in the For You feed.

TikTok's Community Guidelines outline the range of safety approaches we use to strike the right balance between creative expression and preventing harm in accordance with our Community Principles. Our safety approach is broadly focused on:

1. **Removing content that is prohibited from the platform** - we remove content, whether posted publicly or privately, when we find that it violates our rules.
2. **Restricting content that is not suitable for younger users** - we recognise that content allowed on our platform may not be suitable for all users, and as such restrict some content so that it is only viewed by adults.
3. **Making ineligible content for the For You Feed** - not all content is appropriate to be recommended, and content that does not meet our standards will be ineligible for the FYF.
4. **Empowering users to shape their experience** - we enable users to filter out content and keywords they don't wish to see on their feed, even if it abides by Community Guidelines and our wider eligibility standards.

We do not allow any hate speech, hateful behavior, or promotion of hateful ideologies. This includes explicit or implicit content that attacks a protected group. When there are discussions about social issues on TikTok, we want them to be respectful. Content may be ineligible for the FYF when it indirectly demeans protected groups.

We are committed to providing a space that embraces gender equity, supports healthy relationships, and respects intimate privacy. We do not allow showing, promoting, or engaging in adult sexual or physical abuse or exploitation. This includes non-consensual sexual acts, image-based sexual abuse, sextortion, physical abuse, and sexual harassment.

We proactively evolve our policies to reflect the online threat landscape. In 2022, we explicitly prohibited misogyny in our Community Guidelines. While misogynistic content was previously addressed under policies such as Hate Speech and Hateful Behavior, we recognised the need to signal clearly that misogyny is unacceptable on TikTok to our users and to society at large.

The following content is explicitly prohibited by our Community Guidelines and is removed when identified:

- Non consensual intimate imagery, including AI generated content
- Cyberflashing
- Misogyny
- Hate speech and harassment
- The promotion of violence, discrimination, or dehumanisation based on gender
- Online domestic abuse—including stalking, threats, and digital coercion

We deploy advanced tools to proactively detect and remove this content. Our AI powered moderation systems enable us to identify violations at scale, often before any user has viewed them. In Q4 2024 alone, we removed over 150 million videos globally—around 1% of all videos published in that period. Of these, more than 98% were removed proactively, and over 80% were removed using automated moderation before receiving a single view.

We remain committed to strengthening our transparency efforts. We publish both annual and quarterly enforcement reports on our Transparency Centre, detailing the volume of content removed for breaking our rules—broken down by policy area, including:

- Hate Speech and Hateful Behaviour
- Youth Sexual and Physical Abuse
- Adult Sexual and Physical Abuse
- Harassment and Bullying

These efforts reflect our belief that accountability must be visible and measurable. We remain committed to improving transparency, collaborating with regulators and civil society, and building trust through consistent, data driven reporting.

TikTok has tens of thousands of trust and safety professionals working to protect our community, and we expect to invest more than two billion dollars in trust and safety efforts in 2025. We moderate content in more than 70 languages, with specialised moderation teams for complex issues. TikTok regularly consults with experts and representatives from international organizations and civil society in addressing complex topics relating to integrity and authenticity.

## Preventing Harm

To reduce the risk of online harm, Ofcom outlines three core responsibilities for platforms:

**Action 4:** Conduct abusability evaluations and product testing

**Action 5:** Set safer defaults.

**Action 6:** Reduce the circulation of online gender based harms.

TikTok is committed to making the internet safer for women and girls. We operate a zero-tolerance policy towards hate, harassment, and the sharing of nonconsensual or explicit content. This includes the promotion of coercive or controlling behaviors even, even when they fall short of overtly violent or visual abuse.

While automation plays a key role, we recognise the critical value of human review. Our global moderation teams operate 24/7 in over 70 languages, with specialist training in identifying nuanced and borderline harmful content. Reviewers are equipped to handle complex cases and take swift action, including removal, restriction, or bans.

## Supporting Women and Girls

Ofcom sets out three action areas for platforms specifically focused on empowering women and girls to both control their online experience, to speak up about harm and to receive appropriate action and support in response. These are:

**Action 7:** Give users better control over their experiences.

**Action 8:** Enable users who experience online gender-based harm to make reports.

**Action 9:** Take appropriate action when online gender-based harm occurs.

A vitally important part of our approach to ‘safety by design’ is ensuring that users are given the right tools and controls to manage their experience on the platform. We employ a robust suite of measures that allows users to restrict access to their content - either making their account or specific content on their account (such as a story or post) restricted to selecting users. This allows users to choose how visible they wish to be whilst curating access to their content without, importantly, hiding it from our moderation or wider community safety processes, minimising abuse of the feature. As well as being able to set their profile to private, users can restrict who can comment on their posts, use keyword filters, and limit unwanted direct messages.

Tools such as comment controls are also specifically tailored to prevent certain types of harm that meet the themes identified by Ofcom as disproportionately impacting women and girls. Users are able to prevent pile-ons and harassment by restricting comment access but without being forced to remove or limit their expression on the platform. We continued to make progress in our work to combat hate on TikTok and protect our platform. In December 2023, TikTok launched Comment Care Mode, a new set of comment filters. Comment Care Mode provides greater control over the TikTok experience by applying additional filters to comments on content. When enabled, it automatically filters comments that are inappropriate, offensive, or have been flagged by the creator or other users.

We offer our community easy-to-use in-app and [online reporting tools](#), which allow users to flag any content or account they feel is in violation of our Community Guidelines. We have designed reporting flows not just for accounts and videos, but also for messages, hashtags, comments, sounds, stickers, and other app features. Our in-app reporting tools allow users to flag harassment quickly, with dedicated safety teams reviewing cases and providing support. In Q4 2024, TikTok demonstrated strong responsiveness to user-reported content in the UK. Over 80% of user reports resulting in content removal were actioned within less than two hours. Approximately 5–10% of reports were actioned between 2 and 8 hours, with a similar share resolved between 8 and 24 hours. This reflects TikTok’s ongoing commitment to rapid review and enforcement, helping to ensure that harmful content is swiftly removed in response to user concerns.

## Strategic partnerships with subject matter experts

We have worked closely with researchers, NGOs, and safety experts to better understand and respond to the threats women and girls face online. As part of our long-term strategy to address misogyny on the platform, we formalised a partnership with Women’s Aid this year, strengthening our efforts to create a safer and more inclusive environment. One recent example is our “Speak Up, Call Out” campaign launched in 2025, in partnership with *Women’s Aid*, which tackled online misogyny by:

- Empowering users— especially male users, to recognise, report, and call out harmful behaviour
- Collaborating with high reach creators such as Benedict Townsend to amplify key messages
- Producing educational tools and resources in app to support victims

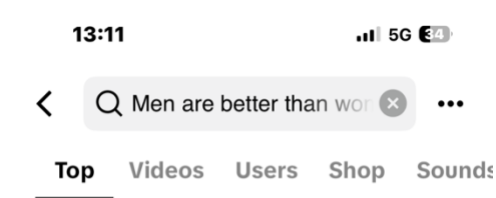
To strengthen impact, TikTok promoted the videos by adding ad credits to the video. This campaign has received over a million views in just 3 months and continues to be meaningful user engagement. This was

due to the fact that we asked male followers to educate and call out misogyny where their followers see it. Furthermore, TikTok donated a sizeable donation in advertising credits to Women's Aid, significantly expanding their reach to new audiences that had not typically engaged with their content.

Please see example of video here: [Benedict Townsend campaign video in partnership with TikTok and Women's Aid.](#)

We will continue to expand the scope and effectiveness of these interventions, ensuring they remain targeted, relevant, and responsive to new risks.

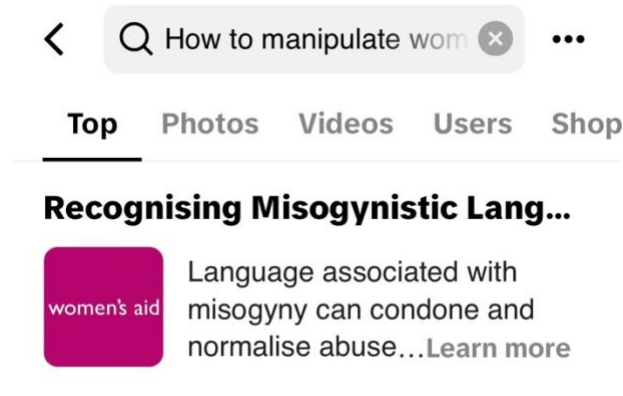
While blocking certain search terms is not new on TikTok, this year we launched a new anti-misogyny search intervention feature. Developed in partnership with experts at Women's Aid, it is designed to disrupt those seeking to engage with potentially harmful or misogynistic content. When users search for terms that reflect or promote gender-based abuse, the search triggers the below intervention, and users are redirected to Women's Aid's 'Respect and Love' online hub. These terms are part of a broader list of misogynistic phrases identified in collaboration with experts at Women's Aid. An example would be '*how to manipulate a girl when texting*'. TikTok also blocks some search interventions all together. See example:



### No results found

This phrase may be associated with hateful behavior. TikTok is committed to keeping our community safe and working to prevent the spread of hate. For more information, we invite you to review our [Community Guidelines](#).

Searching phrases such as how to manipulate women activates an educational search intervention, redirecting users to *Women's Aid's* 'Respect and Love' hub. An example is shown below:



This hub educates users on the real-world impact of even low level misogynistic language, which may be misinterpreted as satire, but in reality fuels the normalisation of violence against women and girls.

Since its launch, this intervention has received thousands of clicks, helping drive audiences to Women's Aid's educational content. Women's Aid has also used the opportunity to promote wider platform tools—such as reporting features and account controls that empower users to protect themselves from online abuse.

We are committed to evolving this feature and will continue reviewing and expanding the list of harmful terms, ensuring the intervention creates meaningful friction and reduces the risk of harmful engagement. We will also explore new ways to build on our content driven model to promote positive behaviour change and reduce harm more broadly.

Beyond this campaign, we continue to partner to amplify and provide a platform for public interest initiatives that address gender-based violence. For example, in recent years TikTok has partnered with the United Nations to promote their 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. We partnered with UN Women and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) NGOs around the world to launch a new in-app information hub to start a conversation about gender-based violence and educate the TikTok community. The campaign garnered 100 million views and featured content from global experts and creators, giving the community an opportunity to hear from survivors, learn about consent, and recognise harmful gender norms.

We know that non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), often referred to as 'revenge porn,' is a common and harmful form of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Anticipating this risk, we took proactive measures to strengthen protections on our platform.

Since 2022, TikTok has partnered with **StopNCII.org**, a global NGO dedicated to combating the spread of NCII, alongside a network of industry partners. Through this partnership, individuals who are threatened with the distribution of non-consensual intimate images can securely generate a hash of the content without needing to upload the image itself. TikTok uses these hashes to identify, block, and prevent the

reposting of such material on our platform. We work closely with external partners like StopNCII to strengthen cross-industry cooperation. This collective effort enhances the ability to respond quickly and consistently across platforms, ensuring a safer online environment. Our goal at TikTok is to foster a safe, supportive community where malicious behaviors like the sharing of non-consensual images have no place.

## Cooperation with Law Enforcement

TikTok takes its responsibility to support law enforcement seriously, while also protecting the privacy and rights of our users. Alongside our Law Enforcement Guidelines, we have also put in place internal processes that guide how we handle requests for user data. These are shaped by legal standards and human rights principles to help us respond appropriately to valid requests, while minimising any potential impact on people's rights.

## Conclusion

TikTok remains committed to reducing the scale of gender based harms online, innovating to reduce the level of violative content that makes it onto our platform and reviewing the tools and protections that we build for users to ensure that they are equipped to identify and report violative content.

TikTok has been, and continues to be, an industry leader in online safety, placing the safety of our users at the heart of our approach and continuously innovating to introduce new safety and user empowerment tools. We will continue to do so - including by playing an active role across Ofcom's industry engagement workstreams.

We are supportive of the OSA, the intent and of the Guidance, and we look forward to continuing to work with Ofcom and the wider Government in pursuit of our shared ambition of a safer world online for women and girls.

