



Pinterest Response to Consultation:

How to promote Media Literacy: Consultation on recommendations for online platforms, broadcasters and services

Consultation title	How to promote Media Literacy: Consultation on recommendations for online platforms, broadcasters and services
Full name	
Contact phone number	N/A
Representing	Organisation
Organisation Name (if applicable)	Pinterest
Email Address	

Confidentiality

Your details: We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Is there anything else you want to keep confidential?	Nothing
Your response: Please indicate how much of your response you want to keep confidential.	None
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	N/A

Your Response

Introduction

The following is Pinterest’s response to Ofcom’s consultation published on 15 September 2025 (the “**Consultation**”) on its non-mandatory recommendations for online platforms, broadcasters and services on how to promote media literacy (the “**Recommendations**”).

Pinterest is a visual search and discovery engine where people around the world go to get the inspiration to create a life they love. Pinterest shows users visual recommendations called Pins. Pins are created by both individuals and businesses by uploading photos or videos or bookmarking content from the web, with the option to provide a text caption. Users can save and organise these recommendations into collections called boards. Some of our most common use cases include fashion, food, beauty, home decor, and travel.

Pinterest welcomes Ofcom’s Recommendations as a valuable support for relevant service providers as we share Ofcom’s goal of empowering people to have a greater understanding of



their online experience. Many of our proactive media literacy efforts and user empowerment features are already well-aligned with the Recommendations. In our following Consultation response, we have focused our comments on addressing the Recommendations and questions that are most relevant to our service and where we feel our input can meaningfully inform Ofcom's Consultation of the Recommendations to ensure Ofcom maintains a proportionate and adaptable approach, given the diverse range of platforms.

Applicability

As we continue to study these Recommendations, we are mindful of the principles of proportionality stated throughout. We share Ofcom's objective of creating Recommendations that are proportionate and effective for the varied platforms in the online ecosystem; different platforms have different resources and risk profiles given their unique user bases, use cases and product features, and therefore what is proportionate and effective for each platform's users in terms of media literacy and user empowerment will vary. Pinterest is committed to implementing measures that are appropriate, proportionate and effective for our platform and will continue to evaluate the Recommendations to consider how we can further improve our media literacy initiatives. We would strongly caution against codifying these Recommendations without robust evidence as to their effectiveness, feasibility and proportionality, especially in light of existing and upcoming regulatory requirements under the UK Online Safety Act and accompanying codes of practices.

Recommendations

I. Recommendation 1 - Media Literacy by Design

Ofcom recommends that organisations embed media literacy by design, making inclusive design choices a foundational principle in service architecture and policy, including prioritising age-appropriate design and publishing and adopting a media literacy by design policy.

Pinterest agrees that inclusive design choices are critical to media literacy by design to ensure those with diverse needs are empowered to access and engage with services, including for teens and people with disabilities. In 2018, we made significant updates across our app and website for our users with disabilities, including inclusive user interface components for blind and visually impaired individuals such as better screen reader support and colour contrast sensitivity improvements as well as focus indicators to help people with mobility or visual differences use a keyboard or another device to navigate which part of the site is in focus. We published our accessibility best practices for engineers¹ so peers could learn from our findings and we continue to conduct accessibility audits and make improvements.

¹ <https://medium.com/pinterest-engineering/seven-best-practices-for-inclusive-product-design-9476c61f1e17>



We agree that age-appropriate design is also central to inclusive media literacy and we have taken many steps to further the safety of teens on Pinterest. For example, Pinterest applies default privacy settings for teen users and provides incremental degrees of control over account settings according to age, allowing for an appropriate balance between protection and empowerment for teens of different ages. On Pinterest, private profiles are the only option for users under the age of 16, and the default option for users aged 16 and 17, without requiring teens to navigate complex settings. Private accounts are undiscoverable on Pinterest search and search engines, and the profiles, Boards and Pins for these users are only visible to accounts approved by the user. Interactions for private accounts are also limited. Users under the age of 16 can only send and receive messages from mutual followers who they have invited to follow them through a unique profile link. Users under the age of 18 can only receive messages from mutual followers, and can only receive message requests from users they follow. We also publish resources on our Help Centre² to provide clear explanations of our teen safety features tailored for a teen audience. We have found these defaults and resources reduce complexity for younger users and support families in making informed choices.

The Recommendation to embed media literacy by design is therefore well-aligned to our practices. However, we would caution against any mandatory requirements to publish a media literacy by design policy document; this would be a resource intensive exercise that may duplicate existing requirements. In our experience, a more flexible approach encouraging services to share relevant findings, like we did for inclusive product design, would be a more flexible, effective and proportionate approach to meet the aim of knowledge sharing across the industry.

II. Recommendation 2 - Transparency

Ofcom recommends offering clear, meaningful choices and transparent information at key points in the service experience.

Pinterest agrees that providing information to individuals can help empower informed choices, and that is why we provide information on our recommender systems, and how to adjust how recommendations are made in our Terms of Service³, which all individuals must agree to at sign-up. We welcome Ofcom's non-prescriptive approach in the Recommendations as to how and when explanations of recommender systems can be provided. We have found providing this important information in our Terms of Service to be effective and easy to revisit at any time and would caution against a prescriptive requirement mandating, for example, always-visible reminders in-product or against every piece of content. Such a requirement would be very costly and onerous to build, and unlikely to improve comprehension beyond what users can already easily access in our Terms of Service and relevant Help Centre pages.

² <https://help.pinterest.com/en-gb/article/teen-safety-options>

³ <https://policy.pinterest.com/en-gb/terms-of-service>



III. Recommendation 3 - Personalisation Tools

Ofcom recommends that organisations equip people with practical tools to manage and personalise their online experiences.

Pinterest agrees that providing simple, accessible tools for individuals to manage their experience during use can play a meaningful role in enhancing media literacy. We offer many user control features to allow individuals to manage and personalise their online experiences. In addition to asking users to select topics and Pins they are interested in from a menu of options at account creation, and allowing users to refine their recommendations at any time in their settings, we have also implemented content control features to allow individuals to refine their recommendations during use via clicking on “see more” or “see less” options accessible on each Pin by clicking the ellipsis (“...”) menu. This can then be easily refined at any point later in settings. We would caution against any mandatory or prescriptive requirements to prompt users to change their settings. In our experience, such prompts can undermine user choice and create alert fatigue, so we strongly recommend Ofcom consider a risk-based, proportionate and non-prescriptive approach.

In relation to time management tools, we note that individuals generally come to Pinterest with high-intent and a specific purpose in mind, whether that be to find a new recipe, find an outfit or decorate a room, rather than to endlessly scroll, and we deliberately engineer our recommender system to help users find what inspires them based on their engagement with Pinterest rather than optimising for time spent, so our users are generally not spending excessive amounts of time endlessly scrolling their home feed. Nonetheless, in the UK we have launched in-app prompts, encouraging teens to close Pinterest during school hours and turn off all device notifications⁴. Given how our platform is used, imposing mandatory requirements to implement time-management tools would not be proportionate or effectively benefit media literacy or user empowerment on our platform. We would caution against any prescriptive design expectations and instead support flexibility based on desired outcomes, allowing platforms to find solutions that work best for the risks presented on their platform.

IV. Recommendation 4 - Empower Understanding of Credibility

Ofcom recommends empowering people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand, interpret and critically assess the credibility of content they encounter by supporting users in deploying tools with necessary skill and confidence and by providing meaningful context about content and its source (Recommendation 4).

The recommendations here are well-aligned to our current practices. Pinterest offers easy to use tools to block and report profiles easily; by clicking on the ellipsis (“...”) menu on any profile,

⁴ <https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en-gb/news/pinterest-rolls-out-in-app-prompt-to-discourage-phone-distractions-in-schools/>



individuals can easily block and optionally report that user and our Help Centre includes simple instructions⁵ on how to block and unblock accounts, accessible at any time.

We also recognise the importance of providing users with meaningful context about the content they are seeing where necessary. When users search for content in content categories prone to misinformation, we surface search advisories that connect the individual to additional context from authoritative bodies. We continue to improve these advisories, partnering with external experts and authoritative bodies to further connect users with important information and resources. We also understand the importance of helping individuals identify and interpret synthetic media more accurately, which is why we proactively developed and launched a tool earlier this year which labels Pins we believe to be AI-generated or AI-modified as “AI-modified”. We continue to invest in research to improve this tool and address challenges associated with adversarial attempts to strip or forge metadata to bypass tools that seek to identify AI-generated or AI-modified content. Again, we would caution against any prescriptive design expectations and support an outcomes-based approach, allowing platforms to find solutions proportionate to the risks presented on the platform.

V. Recommendation 5 - Empower Parents and Caregivers

Ofcom recommends that organisations empower and support parents and caregivers to guide and support younger users in age-appropriate and meaningful ways (Recommendation 5).

Pinterest agrees that media literacy is not the sole responsibility of platforms and requires coordination across civil society and the involvement of parents and caregivers. As mentioned above, Pinterest has implemented default privacy settings for younger users and we also provide parents and caregivers with the ability to set up a parental passcode to lock certain settings and provide guidance on their teen’s Pinterest account. We have set up a Help Centre page describing how this works in plain language⁶, as well as a general Help Centre resource for parents and caregivers⁷ setting out further information about age requirements, our approach to teen safety and resources for supporting them. We additionally continue our cross-industry efforts such as sponsoring thought leadership initiatives like the Common Sense Media’s Summit on Kids and Families. We encourage Ofcom to consider platform size and resources when determining expectations around funding and collaboration with expert third-parties.

VI. Recommendation 6 - Empower, Engage and Enable Support of Third Parties

Ofcom also recommends empowering, engaging and enabling expert third parties to provide enhanced support, including recommending platforms explore ways to share timely links to expert third party sources during meaningful moments (Recommendation 6).

⁵ <https://help.pinterest.com/en-gb/article/block-or-unblock-someone>

⁶ <https://help.pinterest.com/en-gb/article/manage-a-parental-passcode>

⁷ <https://help.pinterest.com/en-gb/article/resources-for-parents-and-caregivers-of-teens>



We agree that online platforms have a role to play in guiding users towards third party resources and authoritative content. Since 2020, users in the UK searching for terms like “sad quotes” or “work anxiety” or other terms associated with negative feelings like stress and anxiety will be shown advisories and supportive resources like well-being practices to improve mood which we developed in collaboration with emotional health experts including the Samaritans and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. We also provide direct access to suicide prevention lifelines including the Samaritans in the UK. In addition, when a user reports a Pin, depending on the reason for reporting (for example, self-harm content), we provide time-sensitive supportive resources, including access to crisis resources, immediately after the report is submitted.

VII. Recommendations 8 and 9 - Media Literacy Beyond the Service and Supporting Underserved and Diverse Audiences

Ofcom recommends promoting media literacy beyond services, investing in campaigns, content and partnerships that promote media literacy skills (Recommendation 8) and supporting media literacy of underserved and diverse audiences (Recommendation 9).

Pinterest agrees that online services have a role in promoting and supporting media literacy initiatives. In partnership with the Inspired Internet Pledge and the National Association for Media Literacy Education⁸, we launched “(Me)dia Mindfulness”⁹ this year, an initiative offering parents, caregivers, educators, and teens curated resources from trusted partners to empower them to find what they need, evaluate the information they receive, and navigate the digital ecosystem with confidence in support of media literacy skills. We also agree on the value of investing in campaigns that promote media literacy skills beyond the service and forming partnerships with third sector organisations. Our commitment to social responsibility efforts have allowed us to scale our mission of building a positive and inspirational internet. Through Pinterest Impact Fund, we support and invest in third-sector organisations on the ground addressing mental health and wellbeing, including the promotion of media literacy skills. For example, we partner and invest in Beyond¹⁰, a youth mental health charity providing youth-informed mental health resources and support for educators and students across the UK. Given the significant role social media plays in young people’s experiences, Beyond also supports algorithmic literacy for young people. Beyond’s digital delivery removes cost and location barriers, benefitting students in rural or underserved regions, refugees, and more. Pinterest Impact Fund also supports FlippGen¹¹, which focuses on digital wellbeing and issues such as smartphone overuse, social media stress, digital literacy, and mental wellbeing in the UK. FlippGen also accounts for different needs and underserved communities by offering their programming in different ways, both in school and through third spaces for those who don’t regularly attend school, in-person peer-to-peer workshops to foster connection without devices or the internet, and a sliding scale payment structure for schools and youth clubs. We have

⁸ <https://namle.org/>

⁹ <https://uk.pinterest.com/pinterest/media-mindfulness/>

¹⁰ <https://wearebeyond.org.uk/>

¹¹ <https://www.flippgen.com/>



found that our support and investment in these valued community partners beyond our service have been helpful in actively supporting media literacy skills, but we would strongly caution against prescriptive expectations around funding and collaboration to ensure proportionality to platform size and resources.

VIII. Recommendation 10 - Evaluating and Reporting

Ofcom recommends conducting and publishing evaluations on the impacts of organisations' choices and activities in relation to media literacy.

Pinterest generally agrees with the necessity to assess the impact of design choices and media literacy activities. One of Pinterest's 2025 commitments to the Inspired Internet Pledge¹² was to build on product experiences and safety mechanisms that lead to more transparent, accessible and inclusive outcomes and refine efforts to measure and evaluate user wellbeing. The Inspired Internet Pledge is an industry-wide commitment by its signatories to make the internet a safer and healthier place for everyone, launched by the Digital Wellness Lab at Boston's Children's Hospital in collaboration with Pinterest as a founding signatory in 2023. Pinterest also agrees that sharing findings can be beneficial, which is why one of the core principles of the Inspired Internet Pledge is to "share lessons collaboratively" on the best practices, key research findings and creative solutions. Since 2023, we have published our annual activities, including media literacy initiatives, on our Inspired Internet Pledge page¹³. Pinterest also welcomes Ofcom's position that evaluation approaches should be relevant and proportionate. Allowing organisations to pursue service-specific and fit-for-purpose approaches to evaluations are more likely to yield meaningful insights than following prescriptive requirements.

However, we would strongly caution against any mandatory requirements to publish findings of such evaluations and assessments and any mandatory requirements to publish annual statements of media literacy activities. In our experience, this could be disproportionately burdensome and much of this work is already happening on an own-initiative basis across the industry, such as our, and other signatories' publications on the Inspired Internet Pledge website. Imposing additional detailed publication requirements may also duplicate and overlap existing obligations under the UK Online Safety Act such as the annual risk assessments as well as reporting obligations under parallel legal regimes in other jurisdictions.

Conclusion

Pinterest is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the important work being done by Ofcom in developing the Recommendations. We welcome further engagement as part of this process, and if it would be of assistance, we would be happy to elaborate on or discuss any of the points raised in this response or any other matters of interest to Ofcom.

¹² <https://inspiredinternet.org/>

¹³ <https://inspiredinternet.org/signatory/pinterest/>