# Influencer Miah Carter shares impact of online abuse and advocates for better protections



Miah Carter, a 21-year-old influencer with 3.3 million followers on TikTok, has opened up about the daily online abuse she endures, highlighting the emotional toll it takes on her mental health. Carter, whose content focuses on makeup, body positivity, and lip-sync videos, reports that she receives negative comments "every second, every day," some of which encourage self-harm. In a conversation with BBC Radio 5 Live, she reflected on how her initial success on social media led to an influx of hate, affecting her emotional well-being and even leading to suicidal thoughts. "Now I've learned to ignore the comments," she said, although she still finds it necessary to manage and delete offensive messages.

This discussion comes as Ofcom, the UK’s communications regulator, has released a new draft guidance intended to enhance the online experience for women and girls. Chief executive of Ofcom, Dame Melanie Dawes, described the draft guidelines as a "proper blueprint" for protecting users from various forms of online harm, including misogyny and harassment. Speaking to Radio 5 Live, Dame Melanie emphasised the importance of tech firms adopting these recommendations voluntarily, and stated that Ofcom will "absolutely" name and shame those companies that fail to comply.

Current UK legislation, the Online Safety Act, set to be enforced later this year, mandates social media companies to take action against illegal content such as child sexual abuse material and posts inciting violence. The draft measures proposed by Ofcom also advocate for practices like "abusability" testing to identify vulnerabilities within social media platforms, as well as enhanced user controls to help mitigate harassment.

Harriet Maynard, another content creator who focuses on parenting and lifestyle, expressed her frustration with the relentless online abuse that surfaces, especially following viral posts. Although her audience is primarily female, she noted an increase in negative feedback, often from male users, during such instances. Maynard pointed out that, unlike traditional workplaces, there are no structured systems in place to handle the bullying and harassment faced by online creators.

Nicole Jacobs, the domestic abuse commissioner for England and Wales, welcomed Ofcom's draft guidance. She stated, "It's now on these firms to implement these recommendations and ensure that perpetrators can no longer weaponise online platforms for harm." However, some experts, including Professor Clare McGlynn, highlighted concerns about the enforceability of these guidelines. McGlynn remarked that tech platforms have a history of minimal compliance with existing laws and warned that the current lack of stringent regulatory action may hinder meaningful change.

Among the suggestions outlined in Ofcom's draft guidance are prompts to encourage users to reconsider posting harmful content, simplification of account settings to ease protections against harassment, and the removal of geolocation features by default.

Notably, Ofcom's report indicates that women are five times more likely to experience intimate image abuse compared to men, and they report a greater negative impact from online harms. However, Dame Melanie clarified that the guidance is not about placing blame on men but rather addressing a wider cultural issue concerning online misogyny, stating, "I think many men are really concerned about this as well."

Despite expressing some scepticism about the effectiveness of certain proposed measures, Maynard and Carter both agreed on the necessity of meaningful protections for women facing online harassment. Carter commented on the need for stricter enforcement and consequences for harmful behaviour, saying, "There needs to be stricter enforcement and actual consequences for harmful behaviour."

Additionally, Meta, the parent company of Instagram and Facebook, stated that it actively removes harmful language and works with law enforcement when threats arise. The BBC has sought comments from other social media platforms, including TikTok and X, concerning their measures against online abuse.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.tiktok.com/@miahhcarter/video/7441667013862280480> - This URL provides insights into Miah Carter's personality and her experiences as a TikTok influencer, which includes dealing with online abuse. It highlights her role in discussing mental health and online harassment.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/discover/miah-carter-boyfriend-break-up?lang=en> - This link discusses Miah Carter's personal life and how it intersects with her online presence, including her experiences with online drama and abuse. It shows how her personal life can impact her online interactions.
* <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2023/new-guidance-to-protect-women-and-girls-online> - This URL provides information on Ofcom's draft guidance aimed at enhancing the online experience for women and girls by addressing online harms such as misogyny and harassment.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/online-safety-bill> - This link details the UK's Online Safety Act, which mandates social media companies to take action against illegal content, including posts that incite violence or child sexual abuse material.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-64845035> - This BBC article discusses the challenges faced by online creators like Harriet Maynard and Miah Carter, highlighting the lack of structured systems to handle online bullying and harassment.