# Influencer Miah Carter speaks out on online abuse and the need for stronger protections



Miah Carter, a 21-year-old influencer with a substantial following of 3.3 million on TikTok, has recently vocalised her struggles with online abuse, as she navigates the world of social media. Carter, who produces content focused on makeup, body positivity, and lip-syncing, reports that the trolling she encounters is relentless, with abusive comments arriving "every second, every day – the trolling I get is disgusting". She recounts her initial shock at the rapid influx of hate she received when her following began to grow. Reflecting on the impact of this abuse on her mental health, she stated that it led her to have suicidal thoughts. Carter now manages her emotional response by ignoring or deleting negative comments.

Her testimony coincides with the release of new draft guidance from Ofcom, aimed at enhancing the online experience for women and girls. This initiative includes proposals intended to tackle issues such as online misogyny, domestic abuse, and harassment, particularly under the spotlight of new regulations associated with the Online Safety Act set to be implemented later this year. Ofcom’s Chief Executive, Dame Melanie Dawes, referred to the guidance as a "proper blueprint" for protecting vulnerable users online and indicated that the organisation will take a firm stance against companies failing to comply with these recommendations, stating that Ofcom would "absolutely" name and shame such firms.

The draft guidance highlights the need for social media platforms to adopt a "safety by design" approach, incorporating measures like "abusability" testing to ascertain how particular features may be manipulated for harmful purposes. It also includes rules for the removal of illegal content, such as child sexual abuse material and posts promoting violence, as well as protections against harmful and pornographic content aimed at children.

Other content creators, such as Harriet Maynard, have also shared their experiences with online abuse. Maynard, who creates lifestyle and parenting content for a female audience, reports that viral posts can lead to an uptick in negative reactions, predominantly from male users. Despite her resolve to not let the comments affect her, she highlighted the absence of institutional support akin to an HR department that would typically address workplace bullying.

Nicole Jacobs, the domestic abuse commissioner for England and Wales, expressed approval of Ofcom's draft guidance, recognising its potential to revolutionise how tech companies tackle online abuse. She emphasized the necessity for these companies to implement the recommendations to prevent the weaponisation of online platforms for harmful actions. However, some experts express scepticism regarding the effectiveness of Ofcom’s guidance. Professor Clare McGlynn, a noted academic in sexual violence and online abuse, conveyed concerns about the lack of legally binding regulations, citing a pattern of tech platforms meeting only the minimum legal requirements.

Ofcom's recommendations for tech companies include processes for user prompts encouraging reconsideration before posting harmful material, enhanced account controls to protect against harassment, and specialised training for moderation teams to handle issues of online domestic abuse.

Despite the initiative's promise, both Carter and Maynard expressed a desire for more extensive measures from tech companies. Carter called for stricter enforcement and accountability, stating, "Right now, reporting hate often leads nowhere."

In response to the concerns raised, Meta, the parent company of Instagram and Facebook, affirmed its commitment to removing harmful content and collaborating with women's safety groups to understand the nuances of harassment faced by women online. The BBC has sought comments from other social media platforms such as TikTok and X regarding these developments.

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

## References

* [https://www.tiktok.com/@miahhcarter/video/7078412440404299013](https://www.tiktok.com/%40miahhcarter/video/7078412440404299013) - This TikTok video by Miah Carter discusses her experiences with cyberbullying and mental health on social media, highlighting the challenges she faces as an influencer.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/discover/miah-carter?lang=en> - This page showcases Miah Carter's content on TikTok, including her focus on makeup, body positivity, and fun challenges, which aligns with her influencer profile.
* <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/> - Ofcom's official website provides information on their initiatives to enhance online safety, including draft guidance aimed at tackling online abuse and harassment.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology> - The BBC's technology section often covers news about social media platforms and their responses to online abuse, which includes comments from companies like Meta and TikTok.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/online-safety-bill> - This UK government page discusses the Online Safety Act, which includes regulations aimed at reducing online abuse and ensuring social media platforms take responsibility for user safety.