

Sarah Owen MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee

25 April 2025

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter and for making the time to attend the NCII Summit hosted in our offices during the UN Commission on the Status of Women. We were pleased to be able to support this important event and to see Members of the Women and Equalities Committee in person in New York.

As you are aware, we take intimate image abuse very seriously, including the creation and dissemination of synthetic non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), and are taking steps to address this across our services in line with our comprehensive NCII policy. In keeping with our risk-proportionate approach, our approach may vary across our diverse online services, but we are striving to reduce harm and to contribute to a safer online ecosystem for women and girls.

You have re-raised concerns about the presence of synthetic NCII content (or non-consensual “deepfake porn”) in Bing’s search results. As you know, as a search engine, Bing strives to deliver high quality and authoritative content by indexing the web to return results that respond to a user’s query.

Where a user query indicates an intent to find adult content (e.g., queries seeking “porn”), Bing will return adult content from the open web. Within the general search features, Bing filters (i.e., removes) adult content from search results when a user is leveraging Moderate or Strict SafeSearch. The Moderate SafeSearch setting is in place for all unauthenticated users by default. Regardless of SafeSearch, Bing may mark some adult sites as lower authority which demotes those sites in the ranking. Bing may also additionally demote or not return adult content when adult queries are made in image or video search.

The key challenge in responding to NCII harms is the need to understand whether an image has been created or shared consensually or otherwise. As outlined in my December letter to the Committee, NCII may be indistinguishable from adult content on the open web without any further information about consent. User reporting therefore plays an important role in helping Microsoft identify and address NCII content. Equally, we have been pleased to partner with StopNCII.org, because it has enabled us to use hashes where a victim has reported their NCII content and to tackle the harm at scale.

NCII content is globally removed from the image and video indexes as soon as we are aware of its existence.

We recognize the concern around highly ranked results in Bing that claim to be “deepfake porn” content of women in the public eye. We continue to take steps to address NCII risks in search, including to mark sites with repeated reports of NCII as low authority, which results in demotion, as well as to demote sites marketed as tools for creating deepfake pornography. Bing is also making changes to comply with its obligations under the UK’s Online Safety Act. Microsoft is in regular contact with Ofcom.

Microsoft has voiced its support for proposals to modernize the UK’s criminal law to help deter and respond to the risk that generative AI is misused to create synthetic NCII and we welcome the UK Government’s efforts in this regard. We have also reviewed the Committee’s report and noted the recommendation to establish a new Online Safety Commission with a focus on support for individuals, including the ability to issue court orders. Subject to due process and human rights considerations, such notice and takedown processes can be effective to help ensure illegal content is addressed swiftly, including in search services. We support processes that make it easier for victims to report, as well as easier for providers to address identified NCII.

Thank you again for your engagement, as well as the Committee’s efforts to understand and provide recommendations to the UK Government to address this harm. Similar to online child sexual abuse and exploitation, we see a need for stakeholders working on this issue to collaborate on a “model national response” to NCII and online gender-based violence, with best practice recommendations for governments, civil society, and online services.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Courtney Gregoire', written in a cursive style.

Courtney Gregoire
Vice President and Chief Digital Safety Officer
Microsoft Corporation