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Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair of Science, Innovation and Technology Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
United Kingdom

20th October 2025

Dear Chi,

I am writing to you following the open letter you received from the Trade Union Congress and others about changes to TikTok's Trust and Safety teams in the UK.

The letter makes a number of claims about the proposed changes to our teams and the impact on the safety of our users. We reject these claims in their entirety, which are made without evidence. To be clear, the proposals that have been put forward, both in the UK and globally, are solely designed to improve the speed and efficacy of our moderation processes in order to increase safety on our platform.

We are proud that, thanks to our ongoing investments and technological developments, according to findings released under the EU's Digital Services Act, our platform has been found to have the lowest error rates and highest accuracy rates among all major platforms. However, as you know, online safety is never a 'job done', but a constantly evolving effort to make sure that we are making the best possible choices to protect our users. The proposals we are making are entirely in keeping with that approach, and I hope the information below helps provide some reassurance about what we are doing, the rationale, and the impact.

Background

As has been widely reported, in August TikTok made the difficult choice to propose reductions to our Trust and Safety teams, putting at risk over 400 jobs at risk at our Canary Wharf site in London.

It is important to note that the majority of those potentially affected are not in front line moderation roles. For example, roughly a third of impacted roles are in fact from a different business team, AI Data Service and Operations (ADSO), who provide support with services such as data annotation labelling.

The announcement we have made remains a proposal only and no changes have yet taken effect. In line with UK law, we have been engaging in collective consultation with affected teams. Team members affected may be entitled to apply for open roles and we will be engaging in individual consultation with impacted colleagues on means to avoid redundancies.

The proposal is part of a wider set of global changes, affecting other teams in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, to evolve our Trust and Safety processes. The proposal is not a reflection of the hard work done by teams in the Canary Wharf Office, but part of our continuous efforts to improve our trust and safety processes.

What the changes would mean

TikTok takes issues around moderation very seriously. As was discussed when I gave evidence before your Committee, we view ensuring users safety as fundamental to our commercial objectives and our users' ability to enjoy our platform. It is simply not in our business' interest to take decisions that reduce the quality and speed of our moderation. The global changes we are proposing are intended to improve efficiency within our moderation processes in three ways:

1. **Utilising AI** - AI advancements mean that we have seen significant improvements in the efficacy of automated tools to identify and swiftly remove content that breaks our Community Guidelines. As you can see in our most recent Transparency Report, covering April - June 2025, **86% of the content we remove is now removed by automation**. AI presents benefits in speed and consistency on a 24/7 basis. In addition, there is increasing evidence of the value of using AI to remove the risk of human moderators having to deal with potentially harmful graphic content.
2. **Use of third-party specialists** - most platforms use dedicated third-party moderation teams to support in-house capabilities. For certain elements of moderation, these specialist teams can provide greater flexibility and agility compared to in-house teams - for example, having greater ability to rapidly expand in response to new and emerging moderation issues. They can also offer greater levels of language-specific, follow-the-sun coverage. Based on evidence of our use of these third parties, which shows that they significantly improve both the accuracy of moderation decisions and the speed at which these decisions are reached, we are confident that their increased usage, in combination with our in-house teams, will improve safety outcomes.
3. **Bringing teams close together** - many of the most challenging decisions faced by moderation teams are on complex or advanced cases. This may be, for example, on issues like fraud, where criminal intent can be hard to immediately identify. As AI picks up a greater proportion of more day-to-day decision making, our intention is to ensure that we build more focused, dedicated teams dealing with these more complex cases. In order to do that, we are choosing to bring expert moderation teams closer together by working out of fewer sites globally. This enables greater collaboration, shared knowledge building and trust among teams.

TikTok gave prior notice of our proposals and their rationale to Ofcom and are continuing to engage directly with the regulator to explain how these changes will improve safety and ensure that they meet the goals for continuous improvement that underpin the Online Safety Act.

Accusations in relation to union activity

The final accusation made by the TUC, and the Communications Workers Union (CWU) is that our proposed headcount reductions in London are a response to requests to voluntarily recognise the union. This is based on the fact the proposals were announced a few weeks before some of the affected colleagues were due to hold a ballot for voluntary union recognition.

These claims are categorically untrue. As made clear above, the decisions around the proposed moderation changes were made at a global level, affecting multiple markets, based on the desire to improve trust and safety outcomes. Discussions with trade unions, including the ongoing voluntary recognition process in the UK, were not a factor in those deliberations.

We have been engaging on a voluntary basis with CWU for some time through ACAS and recognise it is unfortunate that the proposals have come shortly before the ballot was due to take place. We have made clear in writing to CWU our regret about these timescales. Furthermore, we have explicitly made clear that we are open to re-engaging with them once the consultation process with colleagues is completed. We are disappointed that they have chosen not to disclose this fact when making their claims about the approach of the business.

Our priority during the current consultation processes is engaging directly with the elected employee representatives who are supporting their colleagues with negotiations with the business. This is important both given the processes set out under UK law, but also in ensuring that our HR teams are giving those representatives and their colleagues the full focus of our attention during what is a very difficult time.

I hope the above provides some additional context for the changes we are proposing. However, we would, of course, be happy to meet with you to discuss any questions or concerns you have in more detail should that be helpful.

Yours sincerely



Ali Law

Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Northern Europe, TikTok