

# Misogyny: the manosphere and online content

## Role as Victims' Commissioner.

1. As Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, I welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to this inquiry '*Misogyny: the manosphere and online content.*'
2. My remit is set out in the [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#)<sup>1</sup>. My statutory duties include:
  - promoting the interests of victims and witnesses;
  - taking such steps, I consider appropriate with a view to encouraging good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses;
  - Reviewing the operation of the code of practice issued under section 32.
3. My role is appointed is by the Secretary of State for Justice but is independent of government.
4. As Victims' Commissioner, I am also a statutory consultee for OFCOM, established via the Online Safety Act 2023<sup>2</sup>. I have previously contributed to their consultations on the Illegal harms<sup>3</sup> and Protection of Children<sup>4</sup> Codes of practice. I have also recently submitted a joint letter with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner in response to OFCOM's draft guidance, *a safer life online for women and girls*<sup>5</sup>.

## Defining the Manosphere and Online Misogyny

5. While there is no single definition of misogyny, for the purpose of this response, I define misogyny as a form of hatred, contempt or ingrained prejudice against women.
6. Misogyny normalises and legitimises violence against women and girls and provides a conducive context<sup>6 7</sup> for both 'legal' but 'harmful' behaviours, and illegal harms such as harassment, abuse, and stalking. These harms manifest in both online and offline spaces. Despite the harm associated with misogyny, it is legal and is not included under hate crime legislation<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>: [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Online Safety Act 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> "[Protecting people from illegal harms online \(Ofcom\).](#)" *Victims' Commissioner*, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, Liz. "[Protecting children from harms online \(Ofcom\).](#)" *Victims' Commissioner*, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Letter accessed here: [Ofcom consultation on draft Guidance: A safer online for women and girls - Victims Commissioner](#)

<sup>6</sup> "[The conducive context of violence against women and girls](#)". Discover Society, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> [Liz Kelly - London Metropolitan University](#)

<sup>8</sup> "[Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024](#)". Home Office, 2024.

7. The term 'misogynoir', coined by Moya Bailey<sup>9</sup>, reflects the hate specifically targeted towards Black women. Digital misogynoir involves the continued, and often violent, dehumanisation of Black women on social media, disseminated often through algorithmic discrimination<sup>10</sup>.
8. The online-space facilitates 'echo-chambers' within which male supremacist beliefs proliferate, and resentment towards women is reinforced, normalising gender-based violence<sup>11</sup>. The 'manosphere', is a network of anti-feminist groups with hateful and violent ideologies towards women, and a belief that men are now the underprivileged group<sup>12</sup>. This includes the subgroups: 'Incels (involuntary celibates)', 'Men's Rights Activists', 'Pick up artists', and 'Men going their own way'<sup>13</sup>.
9. Due to the associations between the so-called 'manosphere', 'incel culture' and real-world acts of violence, extreme misogyny is being treated as a form of extremism under new government plans<sup>14</sup>.
10. While online misogyny and the 'manosphere' are not the sole cause of violence against women and girls (VAWG), my response will set out the influence these ideologies have on men and boys, and how they relate to the harm women and girls are disproportionately subjected to. While I do not seek to propose technical solutions to these issues as these fall outside of my expertise, I highlight the issues women and girls are facing and the urgent need to address them.

## Social media and Influencers

11. Social media facilitates the amplification of misogynistic views in the virtual space. The accessibility and abundance of misogynistic and harmful content online contributes to the normalisation of violence against women and girls, and the adoption of extreme ideologies by men and boys. This results in an increase in gender-based harms in both digital and physical spaces.
12. Online networks of misogynistic groups, in particular 'incels', are known to incite, justify and celebrate violence against women and girls, especially rape and other forms of sexual violence, as a form of 'revenge'<sup>15</sup>. This includes promoting the

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<sup>9</sup> Bailey, Moya. [Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women's Digital Resistance](#). NYU Press, 2021

<sup>10</sup> [The Digital Misogynoir Report: Ending the dehumanising of Black women on social media](#). Glitch UK, 2023

<sup>11</sup> Solea, Anda Iulia, and Lisa Sugiura. "[Mainstreaming the Blackpill: Understanding the Incel Community on TikTok](#)". *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2023, p. 311

<sup>12</sup> This is associated with the 'Red Pill' ideology, where those within the manosphere divide men into those who are seen as dominant and those considered inferior under the idea that 80% of women are attracted to 20% of men.

<sup>13</sup> "[What is the manosphere and why should we care?](#)" *UN Women*, 2025.

<sup>14</sup> "[Misogyny to be treated as extremism by UK government](#)" *BBC News*, 2024

<sup>15</sup> Gosse, Meghan, Michael Halpin, and Finlay Maguire. [Stochastic Gender-Based Violence: How Incels Justify and Encourage Sexualized Violence Against Women](#). *Violence Against Women*, 2024.

rape of marginalised women as part of racial/ethnic relations<sup>16</sup>. These groups are often associated with underground forums and Reddit, but have also been found on mainstream social media, including TikTok<sup>17</sup>, and YouTube<sup>18</sup>.

13. Research by Solea and Sugiura found Incels on TikTok use covert language and an 'emotional' and 'pseudo-science' appeal to diffuse their misogynistic and harmful ideals and attract a wider audience<sup>19</sup>. Engagement with misogynistic content on mainstream social media serves as a 'gateway' for 'Incelosphere' beliefs and normalises misogyny and gender-based violence<sup>20</sup>. The increase in users with these views, results in an inevitable increase in misogynistic content, and the harm being caused.
14. In addition, misogynistic influencers, such as Andrew Tate<sup>21</sup>, seek to radicalise young men and boys into misogynistic beliefs and behaviours<sup>22</sup>. Young men and boys are often drawn to influencers because they are perceived as successful and present ideas about gender roles that appeal to their audience, reinforcing any existing prejudices<sup>23</sup>.
15. In their 2024 poll of 2040 16–24-year-olds, HOPE Not Hate found that 41% of young men who had heard of Andrew Tate had a favourable view of him<sup>24</sup>. The research also found that almost two-fifths of young men think that women often claim they have been raped after having sex they regret<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, in a survey of 3,716 adults aged 16+, of those who had heard of Tate, 30% of young men aged 16 to 29 agreed with Tate's views that there are real threats to male identity and gender roles<sup>26</sup>.
16. The promotion of misogynistic content by groups in the manosphere and influencers increases their audience. Nearly three quarters (73%) of Gen Z have encountered misogynistic content on social media and over half of Gen Z users are exposed to misogynistic content at least weekly<sup>27</sup>. A 2024 study on Tiktok found 94.2% of 121 survey participants had seen misogynistic content on the platform, with 97.5% seeing objectifying content about women, 97.5% had seen sexist jokes or memes, 60.3% had seen sexually violent content and 76.9% witnessed harassment or threatening behaviour towards women and girls

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<sup>16</sup> Gosse, [Stochastic Gender-Based Violence](#)

<sup>17</sup> Solea, [Mainstreaming the Blackpill](#)

<sup>18</sup> 'The Incelosphere'. Centre for Countering Digital Hate, 2022. P.23-26

<sup>19</sup> Solea, [Mainstreaming the Blackpill](#)

<sup>20</sup> Solea, [Mainstreaming the Blackpill](#)

<sup>21</sup> "Who is Andrew Tate? The self-proclaimed misogynist influencer." *BBC News*, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> Harrop, Gill. "Under the Influence." University of Worcester, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Harrop, "Under the Influence"

<sup>24</sup> "Plugged in but disconnected young people and hateful attitudes hope not hate". *Hope Note Hate* 2024.

<sup>25</sup> "Women often allege rape after regretful sex, say two in five young men". *The Independent*, 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, R. et al [Emerging tensions? How younger generations are dividing on masculinity and gender equality](#). King's College London, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty International. [Gen Z in the UK: Perceptions and experiences of misogyny on social media](#). Research conducted by Savanta, 2025.

online<sup>28</sup>. Much of this content is 'legal but harmful' as it contributes to the overall normalisation of gender discrimination and acts of violence and abuse.

17. Furthermore, with an increase in misogynistic online content, there has also been an increase in online harm disproportionately impacting women and girls on social media.
18. Around 11 million women have suffered from abuse and harassment on social media<sup>29</sup>. It is important to note that of these women, 16% experienced this abuse from a partner or ex-partner<sup>30</sup>, demonstrating the interaction between online and offline harm. Additionally, Black women are 84% more likely to receive abusive or problematic tweets than white women<sup>31</sup>.
19. Young women are also increasingly being victimised online, with 77% of girls aged 7–21 surveyed by Girlguiding stating they had experienced an online harm in the last year, including increasing incidents of cyberstalking and seeing unwanted sexual images<sup>32</sup>. This is likely due to young people's higher social media usage and digital literacy<sup>33</sup>. The National Police Chiefs' Council raised concerns that misogynistic influencers are contributing to the increase of threats against child victims to share intimate photos or videos<sup>34</sup>.
20. The increasing prevalence of online harm, including a rise in illegal activities, has led to concerns that misogynistic content contributes to the growing victimisation of women and girls, as well as crimes committed against them by men and boys.
21. The misogynistic ideas projected online have also been found to impact young men and boys's perceptions of women and healthy relationships. In a study carried out by Women's aid, their research found that of the young people that were exposed to misogynistic content, specifically Andrew Tate content, held more harmful perceptions of relationships and a greater tolerance of doing harm<sup>35</sup>. This suggests online misogyny can contribute towards the development of unhealthy and abusive relationships amongst young people.
22. These harmful beliefs lead to misogyny being found in schools and girls facing abuse offline. In a survey of 100 secondary school teachers, 76% of teachers reported being extremely concerned about the influence of online misogyny in their schools, noting that boys frequently make misogynistic comments and

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<sup>28</sup> Ornella, Alexander. ["Tate, TikTok and Toxic Masculinity: Is social media to blame for this generations Violence Against Women?"](#) University of Hull, 2024.

<sup>29</sup> ["Unsocial Spaces"](#). *Refuge*, 2021.

<sup>30</sup> ["Unsocial Spaces"](#).

<sup>31</sup> ["Online Abuse."](#) *End Violence Against Women*, 2025.

<sup>32</sup> ["Girls' Attitudes Survey 24"](#). *Girl Guiding*, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> ["Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) National Policing Statement 2024"](#). NPCC, 2024. p.33

<sup>34</sup> ["Misogynist influencers fuelling wave of online abuse against girls, warn police"](#). *The Standard*, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> ["Influencers and Attitudes: How will the next generation understand domestic abuse?"](#). *Women's Aid*, 2023 p. 28-33

exhibit misogynistic behaviours, negatively impacting girls' well-being in the school environment<sup>36</sup>.

23. Overall, the increasing normalisation and popularisation of misogynistic views on social media has an impact on the views and behaviours of men and boys online and offline. While this content may be legal and/ or deemed 'harmless', it leads to harmful and illegal behaviours that threaten the safety of women and girls. The existence of such content also contributes to the decline in girls' sense of safety, with Girlguiding's 2024 survey finding 47% of girls aged 11-21 revealing sexism and misogyny makes them feel less safe<sup>37</sup>.
24. Action must be taken by online platforms to ensure that this content is not readily available to its users, recognising that the freedom to express misogynistic views directly undermines the rights of women and girls.

## Pornographic content

25. Exploring the proliferation and nature of pornographic content online is key to understanding online misogyny and its effect on society. This has recently been explored in Baroness Bertin's Independent Review of Pornography, which highlights how 'mainstream' pornographic content is almost always misogynistic, violent and degrading or dehumanizing of women and found associations between pornography use and violent sexual behaviours<sup>38</sup>.
26. Pornography regularly depicts acts of violence and degradation towards women. Content analysis of best-selling pornographic videos revealed that over 88% of scenes involve acts of physical aggression, with 70% of the aggressive acts being perpetrated by men, and 87% of the acts being committed against women<sup>39</sup>.
27. The use of pornography has been found to be associated with harmful sexual attitudes and behaviours towards women, including the perpetration of sexual aggression<sup>40</sup>. Women in pornography are depicted as objects 'deserving of sexual abuse,' reinforcing the discourse of extremist groups such as incels<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Over H, Bunce C, Baggaley J, Zendle D. "[Understanding the influence of online misogyny in schools from the perspective of teachers](#)". PLoS One. 2025 26;20(2)

<sup>37</sup> "[Girls' Attitudes Survey 24](#)".

<sup>38</sup> Baroness Bertin. [Creating a Safer World – the Challenge of Regulating Online Pornography](#), 2025.

<sup>39</sup> Bridges, A. J., et al. "[Aggression and Sexual Behaviour in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update](#)." *Violence Against Women*, vol. 16, no. 10, 2010, p. 1065–1085.

<sup>40</sup> "[The Relationship Between Pornography Use and Harmful Sexual Attitudes and Behaviours: Literature Review](#)." Government Equalities Office, 2021

<sup>41</sup> Tranchese, A., and L. Sugiura. "[I Don't Hate All Women, Just Those Stuck-Up Bitches](#)": How Incels and Mainstream Pornography Speak the Same Extreme Language of Misogyny. *Violence Against Women*, vol. 27, no. 14, 2021, p. 2709–2734.

Additionally, within pornographic content, Black women are regularly the subject of aggressive acts and further objectified when compared to white women<sup>42</sup>.

28. Research carried out by the Children's Commissioner in 2023 found that 79% of participants had seen pornographic content involving sexual violence before turning 18<sup>43</sup>. 47% of survey respondents, including both boys and girls, also stated that girls 'expect' sex to involve physical aggression such as airway restriction or slapping, a further 42% stated that most girls 'enjoy' acts of sexual aggression<sup>44</sup>.
29. The Children's Commissioner also found girls are significantly more likely than boys to have experienced a violent sex act which could be defined as aggressive, coercive, or degrading<sup>45</sup>. This demonstrates how the aggressive, sexual acts, depicted in pornography contribute to harmful perceptions of women and relationships, leading to the normalisation of sexual violence. This also raises concerns that girls may not recognise sexual abuse if they perceive this as what is expected of them.
30. Many acts depicted in online pornography—such as non-fatal strangulation and incest—are criminal in real life. Much of this material would not receive an R18 classification from the British Board of Film Classification, as it is unlawful to distribute under the Obscene Publications Act. However, it remains freely and easily accessible online.<sup>46</sup>
31. I support calls for the criminalisation of online pornography that depicts illegal and harmful acts to ensure consistency between online and offline regulations.

### The promotion of misogynistic content and profit over safety.

32. While content producers must be held to account for their role in spreading misogynistic ideals, the role of tech platforms in amplifying such content must not be underplayed.
33. Research has found that recommender algorithms used by social media platforms pushed 'manosphere' content on male-identified accounts, within 26 minutes of an account being set up, even if they had not actively sought out such content<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Fritz, N., Malic, V., Paul, B., & Zhou, Y. "[Worse than objects: The depiction of black women and men and their sexual relationship in pornography](#)" *Gender Issues*, 38(1), 2021. P. 100–120.

<sup>43</sup> "[A lot of it is actually just abuse](#)" *Young people and pornography*. Children's Commissioner, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> "[A lot of it is actually abuse](#)"

<sup>45</sup> "[A lot of it is actually abuse.](#)"

<sup>46</sup> "[The Victims Commissioners submission to the Independent Review on Pornography Regulation Legislation and Enforcement](#)". *The Victims' Commissioner*, 2024.

<sup>47</sup> Baker, Catherine et al. [Recommending Toxicity: The role of algorithmic recommender functions on YouTube Shorts and TikTok in promoting male supremacist influencers](#). Dublin City University, 2024.

34. Similarly, a study carried out by UCL and the University of Kent found that after only 5 days of TikTok usage, there was a fourfold increase in the level of misogynistic content being presented on the “For you” page<sup>48</sup>. These misogynistic ideologies are often presented as entertainment through soft or humorous cultural forms, including memes and ‘inspirational’ content. This ‘micro-dosing’ of misogynistic content leads to the ‘saturation’ of extremist misogynistic ideas among young people and influences their everyday interactions.<sup>49</sup>
35. Pornography is similarly promoted to children. The Children’s Commissioner found that 38% of 16-21-year-olds said that they had accidentally come across pornography online. Some young people also discussed how sexualised cartoons, depicting popular children’s characters and which appear in pop-up ads, actively groom young children towards adult pornography.<sup>50</sup>
36. In Ofcom’s Children’s Codes<sup>51</sup>, tech companies only have a duty to remove harmful content when deemed “technically feasible,” automatically creating a caveat that tech companies can utilise<sup>52</sup>. The Online Safety Act 2023, and Codes of Practice must be strengthened to ensure safety measures are effectively and consistently implemented, without room for loopholes.

## Prevention and Accountability

37. The Government aims to halve VAWG within the next decade. Achieving this goal requires tackling the amplification of extreme misogyny online. Online content is currently influencing men and boys’ beliefs and behaviours, at the detriment to the safety and well-being of women and girls in both online and offline spaces, leaving them feeling unprotected and unheard.
38. While addressing misogyny demands coordinated cross-government action—such as promoting education on healthy relationships and media literacy—regulating online platforms is essential to limit access to harmful ideologies and prevent the normalisation of gender-based violence among future generations.
39. The Online Safety Act 2023<sup>53</sup> set out to protect children and adults online, to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. To meet this aim, Ofcom was granted powers as the independent regulator of online safety. This included the responsibility of producing Codes of Practice on Illegal Harms<sup>54</sup> and

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<sup>48</sup> Regehr, Kaitlyn et al. [Safer scrolling](#). UCL and University of Kent, 2024.p.4

<sup>49</sup> Regehr, [Safer scrolling](#) p.4

<sup>50</sup> [‘A lot of it is actually abuse.’](#)

<sup>51</sup> [“Statement: Protecting children from harms online.”](#) Ofcom, 2025.

<sup>52</sup> [“Statement on Ofcom’s protection of children codes”](#). Online Safety Act Network, 2025.

<sup>53</sup> [Online Safety Act 2023](#)

<sup>54</sup> [“Statement: Protecting people from illegal harms online.”](#) Ofcom, 2024.

Children's Safety<sup>55</sup>. Ofcom has also recently released their draft 'VAWG guidance'<sup>56</sup>.

40. Currently, tech companies are putting profit over the safety of its users. The Online Safety Act 2023 does not go far enough in addressing this issue, nor do the current Codes of practice. While I welcome the age assurances seen in the Children's Codes, the Illegal harms codes and Children's codes fail to promote a safety by design approach and prioritise freedom of expression and tech companies' business needs over the rights of women and girls (and other users) not to be abused/ harmed.
41. Similarly, the 'VAWG guidance' is just guidance and is automatically undermined by its lack of enforceability. Government must ensure this guidance becomes an enforceable Code of Practice to ensure that Tech Companies have a duty to actively prevent this harm being proliferated through their platforms.
42. To facilitate effective interventions that prioritise the needs of victims, and address the evolving nature of online harm, government and tech companies must engage with the sector and subject experts to inform their work in this area. As Victims' Commissioner, I support the VAWG Code of Practice produced by the sector<sup>57</sup>, and recommend Ofcom use this to inform their own code of practice.
43. I also support calls from the specialist VAWG sector<sup>58</sup> for government to ringfence tax collected from tech companies to fund preventative online gender-based violence work.
44. Online misogyny and the 'manosphere' endanger women and girls, and fuel harassment and violence in online and offline spaces. Government and tech companies must act now to stop the spread of this harmful content and prioritise the needs of victims over profit.

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<sup>55</sup> ["Protecting children from harms online."](#)

<sup>56</sup> ["Consultation on draft Guidance: A safer life online for women and girls"](#) Ofcom, 2025.

<sup>57</sup> ["Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Code of Practice."](#) End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2022.

<sup>58</sup> ["General Election 2024: VAWG sector's manifesto calls on political parties to end violence against women and girls for good"](#). End Violence Against Women and Girls, 2023.