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TikTok Job Cuts Threaten UK Moderation Roles

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— *Categories: General News*

TikTok has announced plans that could lead to significant job losses among its UK content moderation team, raising concerns about online safety as new regulations take effect.

The company confirmed that several hundred roles in its trust and safety department may be affected as part of a global reorganisation. While some positions will remain in the UK, many responsibilities are expected to shift to other European offices and third-party providers. Similar reductions are planned in South and Southeast Asia.

TikTok stated that the restructuring is aimed at increasing efficiency and will include a greater reliance on artificial intelligence (AI) for moderating content. According to the platform, more than 85% of material removed for breaching its guidelines is now detected and taken down by automated systems.

This announcement comes shortly after the introduction of updated UK online safety regulations, which require platforms to implement stricter age verification measures for users accessing potentially harmful content. Under these rules, companies can face fines of up to £18 million or 10% of their global turnover for non-compliance.

John Chadfield of the Communication Workers Union expressed concerns that replacing human moderators with AI could undermine user protection. “TikTok workers have long been sounding the alarm over the real-world costs of cutting human moderation teams in favour of hastily developed, immature AI alternatives,” he said.

TikTok, owned by Chinese technology company ByteDance, employs over 2,500 people in the UK. Over the past year, the company has made similar cuts in other countries. In September, its entire 300-member content moderation team in the Netherlands was dismissed, and in October, about 500 roles in Malaysia were replaced by automated systems. Recently, staff in Germany staged strikes over layoffs in the same department.

Despite the cuts, TikTok's financial performance in the region remains strong. Latest filings with Companies House, covering UK and European operations, show revenue rose by 38% to \$6.3 billion (£4.7 billion) in 2024, while operating losses fell from \$1.4 billion in 2023 to \$485 million.

A company spokesperson said the reorganisation is part of a long-term strategy: "We are continuing a reorganisation that began last year to strengthen our global operating model for trust and safety. This includes concentrating our operations in fewer locations globally to ensure maximum effectiveness and speed as we evolve this critical function with the benefit of technological advancements."

The changes mean many UK-based moderators now face uncertainty, with unions warning the cuts could weaken safeguards for millions of British users.