

# New 5Rights report exposes how tech companies silence Trust & Safety teams

- Industry voices reveal how Trust & Safety (T&S) teams are beholden to the whims of unaccountable tech leaders.
- Trust & Safety professionals lack authority in product development and corporate decision-making, and safety recommendations are ignored or overruled by executives prioritizing growth and profit.
- The report calls for increased accountability for C-suite executives, whistleblower protections, and a formal role for T&S in governance to ensure user safety is prioritised over corporate interests.

**London, 10 March 2025** – A new report from the 5Rights Foundation, *Advancing Trust & Safety: Systems and Standards for Online Safety Professionals*, launching today, provides a comprehensive look at the state of Trust & Safety (T&S) as a profession. Based on testimonies from current and former T&S professionals including whistleblowers, it examines the structural barriers that limit T&S's effectiveness, from business models that prioritize engagement over safety to the lack of industry-wide standards that leave professionals without real authority.

The report, authored by Alexandra Evans, comes as major tech companies scale back their safety efforts. Just two weeks ago, TikTok laid off global staff in its Trust & Safety unit. This follows similar moves by Meta, which removed proactive content moderation for "lesser policy violations", and widespread Trust & Safety staff reductions at Alphabet, Amazon, Microsoft, X, Discord, and Snap. These changes signal an alarming trend of deprioritising safety measures, despite ongoing risks to users – especially children and vulnerable communities.

## Key findings

- **A lack of accountability at the top** – Safety recommendations are frequently overridden by executives, with no clear mechanisms for tracking, documenting, or challenging these decisions. Meta's recent policy changes, made without input from its teams, illustrate how safety can be deprioritized without transparency.
- **T&S is a multi-billion-dollar industry, but professionals lack a clear mandate** – Despite the scale of Trust & Safety operations, many professionals struggle with job security, mental health impacts, and the inability to enforce safety measures without executive buy-in.
- **No common industry-wide standards** – Unlike fields such as cybersecurity or financial compliance, T&S lacks a recognised professional framework, leaving its workers without clear mandates, protections, or regulatory support.
- **Regulation must evolve** – Governments and regulators must do more to formalise Trust & Safety professionals' role and duties.

## A call for systemic reform

The report makes a series of recommendations to ensure Trust & Safety teams can operate effectively, including:

- **Embedding safety into product development** – T&S must be involved from the outset to ensure products and services are designed with safeguards in place.

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- **Granting T&S professionals real authority** – Safety teams must have the power to challenge unsafe decisions.
- **Improving transparency and accountability** – Leadership must be required to document and justify decisions to override safety recommendations.
- **Developing industry-wide standards** – Establishing clear professional frameworks for T&S would give workers the mandate, protections, and accountability needed to operate effectively.

Baroness Beeban Kidron, Founder of the 5Rights Foundation, commented:

*"Trust and Safety cannot depend on good people alone. Good people need to operate within a good system. Allowing a single CEO focused on shareholder interests to be the sole or determining voice of a company's safety standards is not adequate. Safety must be established in law, in regulation, and in professional standards to ensure it is not sacrificed for scale and profit."*

The report calls on policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders to ensure Trust & Safety professionals have the authority, resources, and independence needed to create a safer digital environment for all users.

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### About 5Rights

5Rights Foundation is an internationally-active non-profit that works with and for children and young people to build the digital world they deserve, based on their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5Rights supports governments, inter-governmental institutions, professional associations, academics, businesses and NGOs, so that digital products and services can impact positively on the lived experiences of young people.

For more information on 5Rights, visit [www.5rightsfoundation.com](http://www.5rightsfoundation.com)  
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