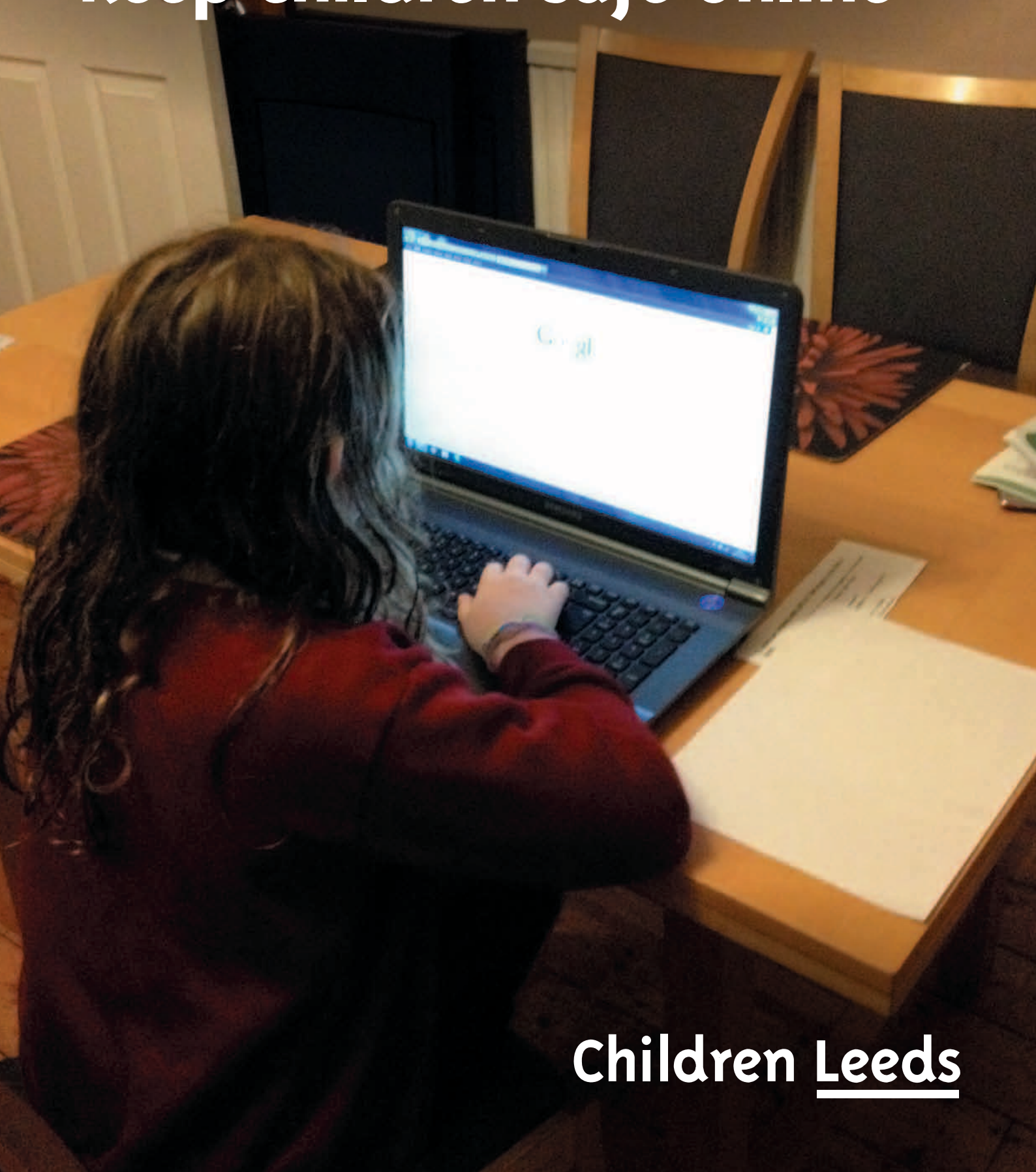Leeds Parenting Unit resource kit

Working with parents to keep children safe online

Children <u>Leeds</u>

Contents

Introduction to Leeds Parenting Unit and Parenting Unit workshops

In Leeds, we know that the vast majority of parents want the very best for their children; and we know that every parent needs help and support from time to time and that's what we, as practitioners, are here to offer….together!

In September 2008, Leeds Parenting Unit was established.

Jonny Cohen (Respect Parenting Practitioner) and Lauren Dunstan's (Senior Parenting Practitioner) job roles involve supporting the delivery of evidence based parenting programmes, engaging with and developing the services of those who work with 'hard to reach families' and those who are resistant to using services.

A consultation exercise took place in September/October 2009 with staff from a number of different organisations: extended services clusters, children's centres and the voluntary sector, to see how the Parenting Unit could support practitioners. A key theme that came out of this was that practitioners would like to know more about different services and what they offer so that if an issue arises for them in their everyday work, they would know who they could contact to access further support and where to refer on to, if specialist help is required. As a result, regular workshops have been established in order to:

• increase practitioners' personal capacity and help them to deal with problematic situations;

• help practitioners to know who to go to for further help on an issue without having to ring round several different people (extremely time-consuming exercise);

• help practitioners to know when to refer on to other specialist services – which will in turn reduce inappropriate referrals;

• share good practice and learn from colleagues in other agencies.

In addition to the workshops Leeds Parenting Unit produce resource kits to give practitioners more information around the chosen subject. These include hints and tips for good practice, local contacts and provision across the city including referral processes and useful links to find out more information. Working with Parents to Keep Children Safe Online is the ninth resource kit in the series. If anyone has ideas for future resource kits, please let us know as the aim of them is to assist you in your work with parents.
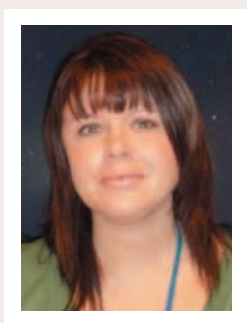
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What are the potential risks to children and young people online?

"...The rapid pace of development and the manner in which young people have responded to the opportunities available to them continue to challenge the safeguarding process."
Online behaviours of adolescents: Victims, perpetrators and Web 2.0: Atkinson and Newton,
Journal of Sexual Aggression, Vol 16, Issue 1, March 2010, Routledge

"While children are confident with technology, they are still developing critical evaluation skills and need our help to make wise decisions."
Byron Review – Children and Technology – Executive Summary

"30% of 7-12 year olds and 11% of 13-16 year olds say that no one has spoken to them about staying safe online." *Ofcom, March/April, 2009*

With all emerging technologies there is the potential for misuse.

The risks that children and young people face from the internet and video games were subject to an independent review during 2008, known as the Byron Review "Safer Children in a Digital World". The government set up the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) to take forward the recommendations of this document and a further progress review, "Do We Have Safer Children in a Digital World?" was conducted in 2010 .

Most children and young people use the internet positively. However, sometimes they behave in ways that may place them at risk. Some risks do not necessarily arise from the technology itself but result from offline behaviours that are extended into the online world, and vice versa. The number of ways that children are able to access the internet has multiplied in recent years to include not just PCs but devices such as mobile phones, personal digital assistants and games consoles (wired and portable). Once connected there are a bewildering array of services which could expose children and young people to the risk of exploitation. These include email, instant chat and messaging services, social network sites such as Facebook and Bebo, blogs,

online gaming, discussion forums, Skype, photo-sharing sites such as Flickr, video sharing sites such as You Tube and many more.

Potential risks can include:

- bullying by peers and people they consider 'friends'

- posting personal information that can identify and locate a child offline

- sexual grooming, luring , exploitation and abuse contact with strangers

- exposure to inappropriate content

- exposure to racist or hate material

- encouragement of violent behaviour, such as 'happy slapping'

- glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking

- physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk taking activities

- leaving and running away from home as a result of contacts made online.

There is also concern that the capabilities of social networking services may increase the potential for sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Exploitation can include exposure to harmful content, including adult pornography and illegal child abuse images. There have also been a number of cases where adults have used social networking and user interactive services as a means of grooming children and young people for sexual abuse.

Children can be protected from sexual abuse if adults are aware of how abusers operate, including those who abuse via the Internet. Adults also need to feel confident about what to do if they are worried that abuse might be occurring. For many adults, part of the challenge when considering safety for children and young people online is the gap between children's knowledge of the technology and their own lack of understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the online world.

This resource kit is intended to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the risks of sexual exploitation and other aspects of staying safe for children online. It provides some ideas about what to look out for, an insight into how potential abusers may seek to groom children and tips for how you can advise parents about how to keep their children safe, including some information about technological safeguards.

Thanks to Chris Pummel and Teresa Hughes from Stop it Now! and Shaun Dowdall from o2 for their assistance in producing this resource kit.

If you want to know more, at the end of the resource kit you'll find a section on useful links and information.

Advice for practitioners

A key part of our roles as children and family practitioners is ensuring that safeguarding is at the forefront of everything we do. It is often a relatively straightforward task to assess any environment for factors which could cause immediate harm to a child, though this is of course not true in all cases. This resource kit is focused on one particular area where risk of harm to children may be easily overlooked by professionals and an area of which parents may potentially be totally unaware.

The vast majority of homes now have access to the internet. However, parents may not always have made the connection between their children's ability to get online and the risks unsupervised access can bring. Often, young people have games consoles (Sony Playstation, Microsoft Xbox, etc) in their bedrooms; handheld consoles (Nintendo DS, PSP, etc) in their school bags; or mobile phones in their pocket. All of these have the capability to access the internet – as, increasingly, do many standard TVs. In order to carry out our duty of safeguarding children it is important that we talk to parents about the risks the internet can pose and highlight the ease of access to the internet that their children have. This is not only particularly true of families where children may have been identified as being vulnerable and at risk of exploitation, but true of all families where there are children present. So what should we do?

The first thing is to recognise that we cannot 'unsee' a danger: if we are aware of the risks posed by unsupervised internet access then we carry that knowledge into our dealings with parents. It is therefore our duty to raise this with parents to ensure that they are also aware of the risks and to be sure that we have taken steps to protect the children in the families we are working with. However, once we have raised the issue of the risks associated with children's use of the internet, what do we actually advise parents to do to ensure that their children remain safe?

The following section looks at some of the ways in which those seeking to sexually exploit children via the internet may go about grooming their victims. This is followed by ten top tips for parents about how to enhance their children's online safety. There are then a further ten top tips for young people. Share these with the families you are working with and use the useful links at the end of this resource kit if you feel that more support, advice or information is required.

Advice for parents

Grooming

Parents need to be aware that there are a wide variety of ways in which adults may target young people for befriending and grooming for purposes which may be harmful to them:

Online grooming techniques include:

- gathering personal details, such as age, name, address, mobile number, name of school and photographs;

- targeting a child found on an open website, such as a sports club or community page;

- entering into email or instant messaging relationship with a child;

- promising meetings with celebrities or famous sports people;

- offering cheap tickets to sporting or music events or merchandise;

- offering material gifts including electronic games, music or software;

- sending a child a prepaid mobile phone in order to keep their contact with the child secret from others;

- paying young people to appear naked and perform sexual acts;

- bullying and intimidating behaviour, such as threatening to expose the child by contacting their parents to inform them of their child's communications or postings on a social networking site, and/or saying they know where the child lives, plays sport, or goes to school;

- asking sexually themed questions, such as 'Do you have a boyfriend?' or 'Are you a virgin?'

- requesting to meet in a private chat room one to one;

- asking to meet children and young people offline;

- sending sexually themed images to a child, depicting adult content or the abuse of other children;

- masquerading as a minor or assuming a false identity on a social networking site to deceive a child;

- using school or hobby sites (including sports) to gather information about a child's interests likes and dislikes. Most social networking sites set a child's webpage/profile to private by default to reduce the risk of personal information being shared in a public area of the site

Children may find it hard to terminate unwanted contact as they may lack the vocabulary or social sophistication to do this. Help create a sentence with your child which allows them to politely terminate any unwanted contact and show them how to block that person.

Parents can help guard against these by taking an interest in their children's internet use and by following the tips on page 8.

Top ten tips for parents

Talk to parents about what rules they have around internet use and share the following tips with them.

1. **Place computers and other internet capable devices in public places where everyone can see what is being viewed**

    Many children and young people have access to the internet in their bedrooms via consoles, TVs and PCs. If this is the case then parents won't be able to monitor what sites they are accessing. If possible, try to bring all internet capable devices into the shared part of the household. If it isn't possible to move all internet capable devices into the shared part of the household, it is still possible to curtail the level of internet access available by installing parental control software or disabling internet access on the device when it is not in a shared space. This can be done via a variety of means depending on the type of device – see the '4.3 Gaming' section of section 4 of this resource kit for more info. There is more information about technological safeguards and online safety guides in the section on technological safeguards below.

2. **Establish rules about internet use**

    Always encourage your child to *ask you before they go online*, so you can help them find something suitable to do. Take an interest in internet use; talk to young people about what sites they are using and what is on them. Contact the Internet Watch Foundation (*www.iwf.org.uk*) if anyone finds any material you believe to be illegal. Make clear that any attempts to disable parental controls or delete browsing history are not acceptable. If your child breaks the rules you have imposed then implement an appropriate sanction (e.g. remove internet privileges for that day: remember, sanctions should always be short-lived, ideally same day, to allow your child a quick opportunity to prove themselves trustworthy again). Likewise, if they abide by the rules, then reward them (e.g. with an extra TV programme at the weekend).

    If you become aware of any suspicious messages or online activities then take a screen shot of the page so you have evidence for this at a later date.

    -   A screen shot for a PC can be taken by pressing the 'Print Scrn/SysRq' button towards the top right of the keyboard. After pressing this, open a new document, right click, then 'paste'. This will paste a copy of the page you were viewing into the new document. This can be saved and/or printed for future reference.

    -   On the Mac operating system Press the Apple key + Shift + 3 all at the same time. This will take a screen shot and save it onto the desktop as a picture which can be viewed at a later date.

3. **Monitor time spent online to ensure it does not become excessive**

    Alongside rules about asking for permission to go online and the type of sites you have agreed to your children accessing, it is important to establish clear rules around how long children spend online (ideally alongside rules relating to general 'screen-time' – games consoles and TV as well). Young people can easily become engrossed in what they are doing and the internet allows for the constant renewal of interest by flicking from one web page to another. It is important to exercise parental control and introduce the concept of 'healthy usage' by putting limits on the amount of time our children sit in front of a computer or other screen. Even if they are using social media to communicate with friends, this can never be a substitute for face to face socialising with friends and others.

4.   Help young people to become critical users; "...is this information true?"

It seems obvious to us, as adults, that not everything you read or hear is true. Yet we know that internet scams, such as phishing (attempts to get users to divulge bank details and secret passwords to enable fraud or identity theft to take place), are going on all the time. Put simply, these scamming attempts continue because they sometimes work.

Children have not yet developed the skills or awareness to be able to detect what is likely to be genuine and what is an attempt to fool them. Whereas adults may be fooled some of the time, children may be fooled far more easily. It is impossible to tell whether the person you meet in an internet chat room is really the person whom they claim to be. You cannot be sure that the 'secret' information or photo you share with them online will really be kept a secret or will be made public via any number of multimedia means including websites like flickr, You Tube, or even by text message. The younger the child, the more support they will require. Very young children should never go online without an adult present to ensure they are okay. The amount of time you spend alongside your child when they go online should be proportionate to their age and will be related to the levels of trust and clarity of rules you have around internet use.

5.   Forewarned is forearmed: Warn young people about unsavoury sites and discuss the issues involved

It may be tempting to avoid talking to our children about the difficult issue of internet pornography and the potential risks posed by other internet users towards children. It may be tempting to follow many of the tips found in this list without addressing the issue directly with our children. However, this will leave them at continued risk of being exposed to such sites and individuals without properly equipping them with the means to protect themselves. They may access the internet outside of the home or see the barriers which have been put in place to prevent full access to the internet as a challenge to be overcome.

Also, there will come a point where children will be old enough to access the internet without parental controls in the family home. Before this point, and almost certainly after, young people, and especially boys, will at some point come across internet pornography – either by accident or intentionally. It is important that parents have the foresight to prepare older children for this. Talk to them about the fact that internet pornography can portray sex in ways which may be harmful or degrading. It may give the young person a skewed perspective on what a healthy sexual relationship is like. The more open and honest you can be with your young person about this, the better equipped they will be to make positive choices and have a healthy attitude about sex. Failure to do so will run the risk that their understanding of sex is taken from the internet with no consideration given to the emotional content of relationships or about choice whether to have a sexual relationship or not.

Internet pornography can also have a significant impact on girls in relation to their understanding of the woman's role in a sexual relationship and with regard to body image. Once again, speak to them before they are likely to access such content; waiting for your older child to go online without parental controls in place and then addressing this, is too late.

6.   Take a child and family centred approach

Your PC can help you do this if you install some parental control software on your PC. There are lots of different programmes available to do this – some of them free, some of them at a cost. They allow you to filter access to the internet. Some will simply do nothing if an attempt is made to access an inappropriate site – but will allow you to check later what this search was. Others will bar access to all suspect websites unless a password is entered. Permission can be given to view sites temporarily or permanently.

In addition, some of the major Internet Service Providers, or ISPs (Talk Talk, Virgin, BT, Sky) are considering allowing their customers the option to bar all explicit content from being available on any device using that connection via an opt-out system (i.e. customers can contact the ISP and say they do not want to receive explicit content).

For mobiles, find out how to disable some of the features on the phone (e.g. Bluetooth, full internet access, premium rate numbers) and find out from the mobile operator who to call should your child receive unwanted or hostile messages (more information about this can be found in the section 'Technological Safeguards' below).

7. Check out the chat rooms your children are using

Access the chat room(s) your children are using (you can do this by checking the internet history) and check if they are moderated (monitored) and by whom. Think about what your understanding of chat rooms is and check out whether this is what your children are actually doing. Consider the following questions:

• Does each chat room have a clear terms and conditions policy?

• Does it have appropriate access control and password verification?

• Does it make clear who the target audience is in terms of age range?

• Does it remind users of safety issues, including reminding users not to post personal info, and provide links to other safety guides?

• Does it have clearly visible and easily accessible block or ignore buttons so that users can stop seeing messages from a particular person if they choose to?

• Does it provide an easy and accessible method for users to contact the chat room host to report unacceptable/harmful behaviour and give guidelines regarding what sort of things this covers?

• Does the chat room give young people genuine opportunities to interact and shape the chat?

• Is the information gathered for registration purposes limited only to what is absolutely necessary?

Remember, social networking sites have a minimum joining age like Facebook and Bebo (13) and Myspace (14). A younger child may bring pressure to bear on their parents if 'all their friends' are using these sites. However, it is important not to encourage children to lie about their age and important not to fall into the trap of sanctioning this, or any other potentially age inappropriate behaviour, just because their friends are doing it already.

8. Help your children guard their privacy

Explain to your child that they should never tell strangers their **name, address, phone number** or where they go to **school**. Remind them that when online it is impossible to be sure that the person they are interacting with is really who they say they are. It is also impossible to be sure what will happen to any information they do share. Encourage them to speak to you before they share their details with anybody so you can check out what they are sharing, who with and why.

Take time to help your children understand the difference between a 'real-life' friend and a 'virtual' friend. This is absolutely vital, especially with older children, as there may be some competition between friends to see who can compile the largest friends list on social networking sites, which will inevitably include many people whom the child does not know in 'real-life'.

9. **Help your child understand the risks of posting or sending photos online**

Explain that they should *never send photos of themselves* to anyone they don't know – and think twice about sending photos even to people they do know. Are they pictures that they are happy for anyone and everyone to see? As with personal info, once information is shared, it can be shared again and again and the person to whom the info, image, etc relates has no control over this process. If there is any question at all in the young person's mind about either the identity or trustworthiness of the person with whom they are interacting or whether they are happy for the picture to be made public then it should not be shared. Once the image is 'out there' it cannot be recalled.

10. **Keep communicating**

All children must be able to tell, to be heard and be protected. Encourage your child to *tell you if they feel at all unhappy* or uncertain about anything online. But also *talk to your child* about the things they do enjoy online. Take an interest; encourage them in the positive aspects of internet use – the learning opportunities and the age-appropriate fun things too. If you create a culture of open communication then your child is more likely to come to you if they are worried.

Parental controls have great protective value but they should never be a substitute for personal involvement in your child's web browsing. Monitor and review what sites are barred over time to take account of your child's maturity and responsibility. Older children and teens need privacy. If you operate a total ban and spy on/monitor all of an older child's internet activity then they will resent this and are likely to go behind your back. Their online safety would be better served by fostering a relationship of open communication and trust. Step in to intervene only when absolutely necessary.

There are also some really useful online resources which will help you talk through the issues with your child. See the useful links and contacts section at the end of this resource kit for further information.

Advice for children

Top Ten Tips for children

To keep children and young people safe online ensure they are aware of safety tips or rules like the following. These tips will also need to be communicated in a way that does not scare children, but encourages them to take responsibility.

1. Never tell anyone you meet on the internet your name, address, telephone numbers, or any other information about your family, where you live or the school you go to.

2. Do not send anyone your picture, credit card or bank details without checking with a responsible adult.

3. Never give out your password to anyone, even your best friends. And always remember to log off when you have finished your session.

4. Do not stay in a chat room if anyone says anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or worried and tell a parent/carer if this happens or if you see anything online which worries you.

5. *Always* tell an adult if you receive a message that is scary, threatening or rude: ***do not respond***. Do not delete the message but show it to a parent, carer or teacher.

6. If you wish to meet someone you have met online. Ask a parent/carer's permission and only meet with them if they say you can and ***only when they can be present***.

7. Always be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not. And remember, other people online may not be what they seem; adults can pretend to be children with similar interests to yours.

8. Always be polite online and treat others with the respect you would like to be shown yourself. If you do send malicious or threatening messages or obscene material, this may not be just dangerous, it could be illegal and you could get into a lot of trouble.

9. Never open attachments to emails which come from people or sources you do not know. They may contain viruses and damage your computer.

10. Finally, enjoy your time on the internet but do not forget about all the other things you can do:
    *   Share time with your family
    *   Read a good book
    *   Play with your friends
    *   Participate in sport

Technological safeguards – home internet, mobile internet, online gaming

Parental controls fall into roughly four categories:

• content filters, which limit access to age appropriate content;

• usage controls, which constrain the usage of devices such as placing time limits on usage or forbidding certain types of usage;

• computer usage management tools, which allow parents to enforce learning time into child computing time;

• monitoring, which can track location and activity when using the devices.

The information you receive about online safety when you buy an internet capable device can vary greatly depending on where you purchase the item and what kind of device it is. Many mobile phone companies state that parental internet controls are already installed on their devices and can only be removed if a credit card number and proof of age (over 18) is provided. However, this does not always happen and parents should check whether the parental controls on the phone are activated at point of purchase. Some stores provide advice for parents at point of purchase; others do not consider this a priority.

Home internet

BT

BT provide broadband customers with an online guide to internet safety and a link to download parental controls software. You can access the guide at this address:
http://www.productsandservices.bt.com/consumerProducts/displayTopic.do?topicId=27269

Orange Broadband

Orange Broadband has parental control software bundled with it which needs to be activated by the user. Contact Orange on the customer services number.

Sky

Sky provide online safety guides on a range of issues such as online safety, PC security, ID theft, etc. These are aimed not just at children or parents but at all internet users. These guides can be accessed at here: *http://www.sky.com/portal/site/skycom/securitycentre/myselfonline*

Virgin

Virgin broadband comes with parental controls included. These are passcode protected and simple to set up via the menu on TV or computer. Virgin are also one of the internet service providers who are considering the introduction of parental controls at source, i.e. the barring of all adult content entering the home. (N.B. This does not remove the risks associated with chat rooms, online grooming, cyberbullying, etc, it only bars access to 'adult' material.)

Additional parental controls for your PC

In addition to the parental controls accessible via your Internet Service Provider (ISP) you can also install software which allows you to establish personalised web filter preferences and closely monitor and control what sites are viewed. Examples of these are K9 web protection, Chatshield and Net Nanny. There are many more available – some free and some at a cost - so if you do choose to install parental control software, shop around and choose one that's best for you and your family.

Mobile phone safety

Many children and young people have their own mobile phone so it is important that parents have an understanding of the technology which their children are carrying around with them.

Know Your Child's Phone's Software

All mobile phones run a specific type of software just like you would find on a PC. It is important to understand what software your child's phone runs and what parental controls can be applied through this. If you are unsure make sure to ask the retailer you purchase your phone from or check with your mobile phone network. The current mobile phone operating systems that are commonly found on mobile phones today are:

iOS
This software can be found on most Apple handheld devices (iPhone, iPods and iPads).
For more info go to *http://www.apple.com/uk/ios*

Android
This software is developed by Google and can be found on a huge range of mobile phones and tablets. For more info go to *http://www.android.com*

Symbian
An older operating system but also one of the most popular amongst mobile phones. This is found on almost all Nokia phones. For more info go to *http://www.symbian.nokia.com*

Windows Phone 7
A relatively new mobile operating system based on Windows for the PC. This can be found on a range of different handsets. For more info go to *http://www.microsoft.com/windowsphone*

Bada
This operating system is only found on Samsung handsets. For more info go to *http://www.bada.com/*

Blackberry OS
This operating system is only found on Blackberry handsets developed by RIM.
For more info go to *http://uk.blackberry.com/*

All the above operating systems allow features such as GPS, full internet browsing and the downloading of applications developed by third parties.

Check What Applications Your Child Is Using

As noted above the majority of phone operating systems allow the user to download third party applications, often at a cost to the user. These applications range from social networking to games and media. Most operating systems have at least 40,000 applications available for download with some offering over 100,000. These are all made readily available to the user through application stores or markets that are pre-loaded onto the mobile phones.

Some applications which use "Location Based Services" allow for users of mobile phones to track each other. Applications such as "Latitude" allow users to create a user name which they can give out to friends who can then send an invite. If this invite is accepted then your location will be shown to anyone in your friends list on a map. This allows for up to date tracking. Other applications such as Facebook and Twitter can upload an individual's location with each post they make showing the users location to anyone in their friends list.

It is important to establish rules with your child so that they understand that they will need to check with you before downloading applications. Most operating systems will allow for you to enter restrictions regarding the downloading of applications which will require a pin code or password from you before an application can be downloaded. If you are unsure how to set these restrictions check with your retailer or network provider.

Stress the importance of keeping personal information safe

It is vital to stress how important it is to keep personal information safe. Remember that if a mobile phone number is given to the wrong person then it allows for direct contact with your child. Most phones will not allow you to block specific numbers and even if you they do allow this, the caller has an option to withhold their number so they cannot be identified. But remember, you can't withhold a number when sending a text from a mobile so any text you send or receive can be traced.

Check what safety features your mobile network provider offers

All mobile phone networks offer a number of different services to keep you safe when using your mobile phones. It is important to check with your provider to find out what they offer and how to take advantage of these safety features. Features you can expect to find from your mobile network include:

1 The ability to turn off GPS and location services
2 Opt in/out of 18+ Content
3 Number barring/Spam filtering
4 User guidance/training

Here is some specific information about the different mobile operators.

Orange
Contract and pay as you go phones include the 'Safeguard' service which blocks content unsuitable for under 18s. It comes pre-installed but needs to be activated by an adult.   Call **07973 100150** to do this.

O2
O2 have 3 levels of internet access: Default (all content is available except for 18+); 18+ (all content is available) and Parental Controls (access only to sites suitable for children under12). Parents can call 61818 from their child's phone to activate this.

O2 produce a leaflet entitled "Child Protection: O2's mobile phone guide for parents". This provides information about how to use your phone safely and how to advise children about some of the risks associated with the technology, like safe camera use, chat room risks, dealing with bullies and unwanted calls/contact. The leaflet is available in-store or via this link: *http://protectourchildren.o2.co.uk/*

TalkTalk

T-Mobile have variable options to restrict content: text MODERATE to 879 to prevent access to adult content unsuitable for under 18s or text STRICT to 879 to add an additional block to un-moderated social networking and chat sites.

TalkTalk provide support to their customers via parental control software called HomeSafe and via a guide for parents covering a range of topics related to online safety. To view links to the different categories go to this address: *http://www.talktalk.co.uk/security/protect-your-family.html*

T-Mobile

T-Mobile produce an online safety guide for parents with links to other websites who provide information about online safety and child protection (see also Useful Links section below).
You can access the T-Mobile online safety page here:
http://www.t-mobile.co.uk/help-and-advice/advice-for-parents/useful-links/

TalkMobile

All TalkMobile phones come with restrictions on accessing 18+ content pre-installed*.

To activate parental controls for mobile phones call **0845 6000 789**

Virgin's online safety guide can be accessed here:
http://www.virginmedia.com/yourspace/guidesandrules/online-safety.php

Vodafone

Vodafone pre-install and activate parental controls on all their phones*. The types of sites blocked include gambling, pornography, dating and games containing violence.

3

3's phones come with a pre-installed programme to filter any websites which have 18+ content*.

*Where phones come with pre-installed parental controls, it is still important for parents and carers to check that these are activated and functioning properly.

Gaming

Some computer games stores, such as the high street gaming store, Game, have a proactive approach to making parents aware of online safety. They will talk to each customer about this when they buy a console or if they buy a game with a restricted age rating. They are also happy to talk to any member of the public about this even if they are not making a purchase. They provide advice either in store or by phone **0871 594 0066** or via the 'Contact Us' tab on line at **http://www.game.co.uk**

If you've lost the instructions for your gaming system, advice for most consoles can be found via this link: *http://www.esrb.org/about/news/downloads/ESRB_PTA_Brochure-web_version.pdf*

This document, entitled "**A Parent's Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and Online Safety**", also contains information about video games age rating systems.

A Day in the life of a helpline operator

The Stop it Now! Helpline is funded by the Home Office.

It is open from Monday to Thursday 9am to 9pm and on a Friday from 9am to 7pm.

It is primarily for three groups of people.

- Those adults who are worried about their thoughts and feelings towards children

- Adults concerned about another adult…be it a partner, relative or friend

- Parents concerned about their children's 'sexualised' behaviour. Is what they are doing 'normal'?

It is operated by sessional staff and Lucy Faithfull Foundation staff. Each shift is of 4 hours' duration. The shifts are: 9am – 1pm, 1pm-5pm and 5pm-9pm.

The staff are from a variety of backgrounds, including police, probation, teachers and health staff. Staff often work on other helplines as well…Samaritans or Childline for example.

The Monday morning shift is usually a very busy one as the line has been closed over the weekend. The calls will start straight away at 9am. There are two workers operating the two main Stop lines.

Both will be in 'action' answering both new calls and 'repeat' calls.

The majority of calls received at the present time are from Internet offenders, i.e. those who have been arrested by the Police in relation to possessing, or distributing or making child abuse images. They are in the process of being dealt with by the Police and are often on bail. This often takes months for such investigations to be concluded during which times callers will ring the Helpline frequently.

The next largest proportion of calls is from partners of Internet offenders, predominantly wives, who are distraught at the intervention of the police and often have children to worry about. Their main concern is about the process that's involved and whether Children's Social Care (Social Services to you and me) will be involved. The overwhelming fear is that if they are involved, then their kids will be 'taken away'.

The calls are usually about an hour in length and operators can expect a range of emotions from both the 'offender' and their partners.

Other callers will be those worried about their children's sexualised behaviour and them wanting to know if what their children are doing is 'normal'. This requires tact and diplomacy by the Helpline operators to find a way to talk through these issues, while being able to make a judgement as to whether children are at risk of significant harm.

All these calls are confidential… to a point. Callers are told that if they identify themselves and they identify children and young people who are at risk of abuse, then we will report this information on to the Police and Social Services.

This does happen in a few cases when the risk identified is such that urgent action needs to be taken.

Managers are on hand to supervise the Helpline operators and to de brief calls.

This is vitally important for all concerned. Operators are told at the beginning of their training that the Helpline is just that…a Helpline and NOT a crisis line…however calls can become very involved and callers' emotions are often 'on the edge'.

There is no set pattern as to how many calls are made during which shifts…each shift can be as busy as the next, including the evening shifts. It is not an exact science to predict when a person is going to pick up the phone and make that call.

All the Helpline operators can do is be there for that caller and talk through some very difficult and distressing issues.

Operators will always encourage callers to call back, and in a lot of cases will refer them on to a 'specialist' colleague from the Foundation for a further callback. Operators are encouraged to put together an 'action plan' with the caller. This doesn't need to be particularly detailed, but is a way of helping the caller to focus on some safe strategies that will help them in the initial stages of the situation that they find themselves in.

The Operators will 'write up' their calls, which will then be entered onto an electronic database.

Enquiries are also received via e-mail to the Stop it Now! Helpline. These e-mails are anonymised, and will cover the same issues as previously mentioned.

A day in the life of a Helpline Operator is never dull, never predictable, but extremely valuable for the public it serves!

Useful internet safety links

www.becta.org.uk
Becta (Bringing Educational Creativity to All) provides advice on all aspects of internet safety for schools and LEA's. It includes advice on internet filtering, the use of chat rooms and e-mail in education, the use of pupil photographs on school web sites and lots of case studies of good practice.

www.ceop.gov.uk
Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) combines police powers with the expertise of business sectors, government, specialist charities and other interested organisations - all focused on tackling child sex abuse.

www.chatdanger.com
Childnet's Chat Danger website gives details about the potential dangers of interactive services site and online media (mobiles, emails, chatrooms, messaging, gaming) and explores the risks in a child-friendly quiz format. Uses imaginary case scenarios to help young people consider the risks and make safer choices.

www.childnet-int.org
Childnet International hosts a multi-media website with portals to many of the websites listed here. As well as information for parents and young people there are resources which can be purchased including materials for schools, like 'Jenny's Story' which deals with online grooming and 'Let's Fight It Together' which deals with cyberbullying. There is also an interactive guide for parents called 'Know IT All for Parents' which can be accessed here: http://www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents/cd/

www.childnet-int.org/sorted
is a link from the Childnet home page which provides important advice about how to make your computer system secure and protecting your data.

www.digizen.org
Digizen is all about recognizing and dealing with online hazards, and about building safe places and communities and learning how to manage personal information. The site also has links to cyberbullying, social networking.

To view Digizen's powerful video on Cyberbullying, 'Let's Fight It Together' paste this link into your address bar: **http://www.digizen.org/resources/cyberbullying/films/uk/lfit-film.aspx**

www.iwf.or.uk
The Internet Watch Foundation is the UK hotline for reporting criminal online content including:
- Child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world
- Criminally obscene adult content hosted in the UK
- Non-photographic child sexual abuse images hosted in the UK

The site offers a step by step process to reporting sites and information can be submitted anonymously.

www.kidsmart.org.uk
Kidsmart is a practical internet safety programme website for schools, young people, parents, and agencies, produced by the children's internet charity Childnet International. There are lesson plans and accompanying resources to help teach KS2 & 3 students about Internet safety across a wide range of potential hazards on the internet (e.g. file sharing, purchasing online, digital footprints, safe searching and so on)

www.safenetwork.org.uk
The Safe Network provides safeguarding information relating to activities outside the home for the community and voluntary sector, including advice to charities, community and voluntary groups. Comprehensive advice and information for organisations working with children and young people in relation to children's safety online, gaming, internet addiction and more can be found via the 'Help and Advice' tab at the top of the home page.

www.stopitnow.org.uk

Stop It Now! campaign against all types of child sexual abuse. Their website provides links to publications and research. They also have a helpline for adults worried about the behaviour of other adults or children and young people, those worried about their own sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children and any other adult with a concern about child sexual abuse.

Stop it Now! Freephone Helpline **0808 1000 900** *(available from 9.00am - 9.00pm Mon - Thu and 9.00am - 7.00pm Fri)*

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Think U Know is a site with areas for children and young people aged 5 - 7, 8 - 11, and 11 - 16 as well as for parents, carers and professionals. There is information and guidance as well as some games demonstrating chat room use.

Anti-bullying websites

www.beatbullying.org

Beat Bullying is a charity which uses a number of means to help bullying victims including a peer mentoring system to help children both in the virtual world (cyber-mentors) and in the physical world (mini-mentors). Go to the website to see all the other projects they have to help victims of bullying.

www.kidscape.org.uk

Kidscape works UK-wide to provide individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. Kidscape equips vulnerable children with practical non-threatening knowledge and skills in how to keep themselves safe and reduce the likelihood of future harm. Kidscape works with children and young people under the age of 16, their parents/carers, and those who work with them. There is a section on the website devoted to the issue of protecting children from cyberbullying.

Key contacts if you believe a child to be at risk of online sexual exploitation or other risk

Children & Young People's Social Care

0113 222 4403 in office hours or 0113 240 9536 (5 p.m. - 8 a.m. and weekends and bank holidays)

Police

If you believe a child to be in imminent danger call **999**. If the danger is not imminent yet you believe a child to be at risk of exploitation or abuse then call **101**.

Childline.org.uk

Childline is a counselling service for children and young people. The website provides information about a wide range of issues which young people may be worried about. Children and young people can contact childline by phone, email or 1-2-1 chat on the website. There are also online message boards.

Tel: **0800 1111**
Email: *via the website*

www.nspcc.org.uk

If you think a child is at risk of or is being sexually abused (or physically abused, emotionally abused or neglected) you can call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000 (or the police or Children and Young People's Social care).

NSPCC also have a list of resources for parents and children which can be accessed here: **http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/reading_lists/keeping_children_safe_wda48888.html**

CROP

CROP works with parents and carers so that they can become active agents in responding to the sexual exploitation of their children. They do this by assisting parents in their fight to free their children from perpetrators; enabling parents to become equal partners with statutory and voluntary agencies; enhancing public awareness and understanding of the complex and changing operation of perpetrators targeting children and young people in England and Wales, including their grooming processes, and trafficking within and between cities; challenging inaccurate stereotyping of individuals (girls and women in particular) who are being or have been sexual exploited; disrupting the activities of perpetrators and pursuing convictions; encouraging parents to work collectively with other parents by offering mutual support and comfort.

Telephone: **0113 240 3040**
Email: **info@cropuk.org.uk**
Website: **www.cropuk.org.uk**

BLAST!

The BLAST! Project supports and works with boys and young men in the Leeds and Bradford area who are:

- Being sexually exploited
- At risk of being sexually exploited
- Selling/exchanging sex
- Being groomed

We can offer:

- 1-2-1 work/support
- Preventative/awareness group work
- Training for professionals
- Various outreach sessions
- Online drop-in
- Partnership working and intelligence sharing
- CSE sub groups
- Open day and presentations
- A confidential service (with safety in mind)
- Emotional support/ tructured sessions
- Free condoms and lubricant
- Sexual health services and counselling

Anyone can refer to BLAST including the young people themselves and referrals can be made via phone, email or fax. BLAST prefer the referrer to be present for the first meeting with a young person although appreciate this may not always be possible.

Tel: **0113 244 4209** or **07921 372896** (Phil) **07407761569** (Cheryl)

Email: **c.laird@mesmac.co.uk**
p.mitchell@mesmac.co.uk
Add us on MSN Messenger: **blast@live.co.uk**
Facebook Search: **blastboys   MESMA**

Genesis

Genesis conduct prevention work with young people to raise awareness of the grooming process, sexual exploitation and internet and mobile phone abuse. Sessions look at specific risks to vulnerable groups, exploring how certain behaviours can affect or abuse us and what safety measures and rights young people should use to protect themselves from these factors. Genesis advocates the needs of young people to be treated primarily as victims of abuse in line with government guidance (DoH, 2000) and support local and national agencies to do so.

Tel: **0113 243 0036**
Email: **info@genesisleeds.org.uk**