West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee

CHILD PROTECTION, INTERNET AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Multi-Agency Guidance for Staff June 2015

Date Approved by CPC: July 2015

Review Date: July 2017

CONTENTS

Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

> Child sex abuse is one of the worst crimes imaginable and while the internet is a very vibrant environment for children and young people, it is also a place where people have to be careful [1]

The internet was created in the 1960s. Initially it was a means of exchanging information between researchers, mainly in the US defence industries and the military. Public awareness of the internet started to develop in the early to mid 1990s following the development of the World Wide Web.

The internet has become central to our everyday lives and those of our children. It can be a positive, fun place to interact with the world, with endless possibilities for learning and socialising. It has become a vital tool for communication, research, entertainment and shopping.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) recognises that being skilled in using information and communications technology (ICT) is essential if children and young people are to be effective contributors able to communicate and interact on a global scale. They need to be equipped with the learning and employability skills required for the 21st century.[2] It also acknowledges that there is a need for children and young people to develop the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe in what is a potentially unsafe environment, with the expectation that all children will achieve the following CfE outcome: 'I am developing my knowledge and use of safe and acceptable conduct as I use different technologies to interact and share experiences, ideas and information with others' (TCH1-08a/ TCH 2-08a)[3]

There are individuals and organisations who take advantage of the relative freedom that the online environment provides. With this freedom comes the ability for irresponsible and inappropriate use of the internet that can often place children and young people at risk of harm.

---

[1] Gamble, J. *Online Reporting Works. CEOP* Press Release, 22 June 2006
http://ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2006/Website-snares-its-first-online-grooming-offender/
[2] http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/all_experiences_outcomes_tcm4-539562.pdf, p.303
[3] http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/all_experiences_outcomes_tcm4-539562.pdf, p.310

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guidance is to provide information and guidance to adults working with children in West Dunbartonshire who are vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation through internet and new technologies.

This guidance relates to the risk of sexual abuse or exploitation of children and young people through the use of internet and mobile technology.

This guidance does not cover other risks for children and young people using the internet, such as cyberbullying. Nevertheless, some of the issues do cross over, and aspects of this guidance may be useful in considering such issues.

Young people in West Dunbartonshire HSCP provided residential care have access to the internet through Netopian. Netopian is a powerful web protection service; especially built to support the needs of looked after young people and their carers. Netopian's web filter and content management system gives carers the power to tailor internet access and controls for each individual they look after.

The guidance does not cover safe use of the internet and social media by adults working with children. This should be covered by individual agency guidance.

Working with children and young people who are vulnerable to this type of exploitation is complex and no single policy or procedure can be expected to cover all eventualities. For this reason it is very important that in every case there is discussion between professionals regarding children and young people who are considered to be at risk.

Definitions

The Child

For the purpose of this Guidance "child" means a person under the age of 16yrs or under 18yrs if remaining looked after and accommodated by the local authority as stated in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (Sect 93 (2) (b). However, it is recognised that there are several young people between the ages of 16 and 17 years who are not on supervision or accommodated, but who are considered to be at significant risk and should be considered under these procedures. Consideration should also be given to invoking these procedures for those young people 18 to 21 years who have previously been accommodated by the local authority.

If a young person is aged between 16 and 21, they may meet the criteria for protection under Adult Support and Protection (ASP) legislation. If this is the case, it should be considered whether it is more appropriate to proceed under VYP or ASP procedures.

You can find out further information about the criteria for ASP on the ASP pages on the West Dunbartonshire HSCP website.

.

Online child sexual abuse

This has been described as:[4]

- The production, distribution, downloading and viewing of child abuse material (both still and video images).

- The online solicitation of children and young people to produce self-generated child abuse material, to engage them in sexual chat or other online sexual activity, or to arrange an offline meeting for the purposes of sexual activity, also known as grooming or luring.

- The facilitation of any of the above.

These activities will often constitute a criminal offence. However, even if an offence is not committed, or there is insufficient evidence to prosecute, a child or young person may be considered to be at risk of significant harm due to the activity.

'Child abuse images' are often referred to as 'child pornography'. Nevertheless, the term 'child abuse image' is preferred. 'Child pornography' can suggest legitimacy, with the child or young person being a willing participant. It can also suggest images of children or young people posing in 'provocative' positions rather than being subject to sexual abuse.[5]

---

[4] Baines, V. (2008) *Online Child Sexual Abuse: The Law Enforcement Response.* ECPAT: London, p2
http://www.ecpat.net/worldcongressIII/PDF/Publications/ICT_Law/Thematic_Paper_ICTLAW_ENG.pdf
[5] Ibid, p47

3. HOW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE USE THE INTERNET

Children and young people may use the internet in a range of ways, including:

- **Social Networking**

  Social Networking websites help connect friends using a number of tools such as blogs, profiles, internal email systems and photos. Well known sites include Bebo, MySpace, Facebook and LiveJournal, which have regulations about age for access. In addition sites such as Twitter offer information networking.

- **Chat and Instant Messaging**

  Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time text-based communication conveyed over a network, such as the internet. Examples include Windows Live Messenger, Jabber, and Blackberry Messenger (BBM). IM technologies often include features that make them even more popular such as having the ability to talk directly for free; to share files; or to view the other party through a webcam.

- **Gaming**

  Video games are amongst the most popular leisure pursuits for young people. These include Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games (MMORPGs) which involve a large number of players interacting with one another in a virtual online world. These games often have a sci fi/fantasy theme. Other sites, such as Moshi Monsters or Club Penguin are aimed at younger children and have a social networking element.

- **Downloading and Uploading**

  Children and young people increasingly access music through sites such as iTunes, and listen to the radio or watch TV online. Sites such as YouTube allow contributors to create video content and upload it. Blogs are a sort of online diary or reflections on a subject. They are usually maintained by an individual or a small group, and readers can comment on entries.

- **Education/Research**

  Increasingly, schools are using websites to manage homework, and support study. Children and young people can also use other public sites such as Wikipedia for research.

Children and young people access the internet at home, in public places such as schools and libraries, and increasingly on mobile phones. The setting itself can add to either risk or protective factors.

4. RISKS OF SEXUAL ABUSE/EXPLOITATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE INTERNET.

4.1 Who is at risk?

> *Action and interaction online may have an impact on children's sense of self and be particular risk to those who are already vulnerable in the offline world.* [6]

All children and young people may engage in risky behaviour when using the internet, whether due to lack of confidence and experience in the online world, or high exposure due to increased accessibility. Parents/carers and others supervising children's online activity should take appropriate measures to create a safe environment, and inform children about safe practices online. There is a lot of information available for children, young people, parents and carers, which can be found in Appendix 2 – Key Safety Messages.

There are specific risks for the most vulnerable children and young people. For example, children or young people with poor parental relationships and lower satisfaction in life may seek out sensation experiences and greater online communication from friends or strangers.

There are other factors that contribute to individual children or young people's abilities to benefit and manage risks from the online world:

- Biological predisposition (neurodevelopmental profiles, temperament) including additional developmental support needs and disabilities.

- Psychological factors (attitudes, thoughts, emotions) i.e. existing issues of self harm behaviours, emotional distress and body image

- Socio cultural context (models of behaviour going on around the child or young person – beliefs, attitudes, ideology) i.e. issues of violence or abuse in the child or young person's world may be validated/normalised by access to inappropriate violent or sexual content or contact. [7]

Whittle et al (2013)[8] identify the following risk factors:

---

[6] Byron, T. (2008) *Safer Children in a Digital World: Report of the Byron Review.* DCSF: London, p33
[7] Ibid, p30
[8] Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A.R., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of young people's vulnerabilities to online grooming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18,* 135-146.

	Individual risk factors	Family factors	Community factors
Offline and online	• Adolescents • Being female • Confusion around sexual orientation • Low self esteem • Mental health problems • Social isolation/ loneliness • Risk taking behaviours • Personality traits • Previous victimization	• Conflict with parents • Single parent or reconstituted family • Low satisfaction with family • Parental substance abuse • Lack of family cohesion • Poor family relationships	• Social isolation • Possibly problems with school • Possibly dissatisfaction with school • Possibly additional support needs • Weak or limited peer support
Online only	• Adolescents • Frequent internet access	• Parental failure to monitor online activity • Lack of parental involvement with the Internet	• Possibly rural location - but largely unknown

However, the online world can also provide significant opportunities for other vulnerable groups of children and young people. For example children with disabilities or those who can be socially isolated may benefit from increased opportunities to build and sustain relationships.

It is important then that we weigh up the risks with the benefits that the online world can bring to children and young people.

4.2 Where does the risk come from?

The risks to children and young people in relation to sexual abuse / exploitation have been categorised as:

- Content – i.e. accessing pornographic or unwelcome sexual content

- Contact – i.e. being targeted by a stranger who develops a relationship with the intent of sexual exploitation

- Conduct – i.e. creating, uploading or seeking out sexually inappropriate material

Content risk

> In a survey of children and young people:
> o 38% exposed to pornographic pop-up advert
> o 36% stumbled on pornographic website
> o 25% receiving unsolicited pornographic material by email or instant messaging
> o 10% purposely sought out pornographic websites[9]

Over half of 9-19 year olds report coming into contact with online pornography or indecent images. A minority of children, particularly boys and older children, seek out sexually explicit material. For a quarter of those surveyed, this is the issue they are most concerned about on the internet.[10] Many children and young people report that they are distressed, disgusted and offended by sexually explicit material, although few report it to parents.[11]

Contact risk

> In surveys with children and young people:
> o 31% of 9-19 year olds with weekly online use report having received unwanted sexual comments via email, chat, instant or text messaging.[12]
> o 12-14 year olds tend to talk to strangers online more than older teenagers[13]
> o 25% of UK children have met someone offline, who they first met online[14]

Children and young people often form relationships online. An abuser will create a persona, often posing as another child or young person, in order to develop a friendship. The abuse may take place online, or the abuser may persuade the child or young person to meet up, and abuse them.

The abuser will take time to build trust and invest in the child or young person. In some cases, when they reveal their true identity the child or young person is so invested in the relationship they will accept this. Alternatively the abuser may have obtained information from the child or young person that they use as a means of coercion. This may include indecent images that the child or young person has given them.

---

9 Livingstone, S. & Bober, M. (2005) UK Children Go Online: Final report of key project findings. ESCR: London, p20
10 Millwood Hargrave, A. & Livingstone, S. (2006). *Harm and Offence in Media Content: A review of the evidence.* Intellect: Bristol.
11 Byron, op. cit., p50
12 Livingstone & Bober, op. cit., p
13 Peter, J., Valkenburg, P. and Schouten, A. (2006) Characteristics and Motives of Adolescents Talking with Strangers on the Internet. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 9 (5), pp. 526–530.
14 CEOP (2007) *Strategic Overview 2006–7*.

Children or young people in foster or residential care may make contact with birth families through social networking, which can be problematic. **If this occurs, the matter should be referred to the child or young person's social worker or carer's supervising social worker.**

Conduct risk

In surveys of children:
  - o Only 40% of children set their social networking profiles to private – leaving 60% with personal information exposed[15]
  - o 27% of children have posted others information or photographs online without consent[16]

Children and young people themselves may take photographs or create videos that they share with other friends. Once this content is on line it can be taken by other people and used out of context. Children and young people need to be aware that indecent images they produce or distribute may be illegal. Such images may also be used by others to bully or exploit them.

Combinations of risk

Content, Contact and Conduct risks are intrinsically linked, and children can behave in different roles at different times. This needs to be considered when undertaking any assessment. In particular the questions should be considered what risks are posed to the child or young person and what risks (if any) the child or young person poses to others.

Hasebrink et al[17] identify the following ways that content, contact and conduct risks may occur:

	Content Child as receiver	Contact Child as participant	Conduct Child as actor
Aggressive	Violent/gory content	Being bullied or stalked	Bullying or harassing
Sexual	Pornography, unwelcome sexual content	Grooming, unwanted sexual comments	Sexual harassment
Values	Racist/hate	Ideological persuasion	Self harm
Commercial	Embedded marketing	Privacy/data abuse	Illegal downloads, gambling, hacking

---

15 Hinduja, S. and J. Patchin, J. W. Personal Information of Adolescents on the Internet: A Quantitative Content Analysis of MySpace. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31 (2008) 125–146, p138
16 Get Safe Online (2007) *Social networkers and wireless networks users provide "rich pickings" for criminals.* (Press release).Available at: http://www.getsafeonline.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1469
17 Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L. and Ólafsson, K.(2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online.* LSE, London: EU Kids Online

4.3 Risk perception of adults

A significant factor in identifying and assessing risk is the different understanding of the use of the internet between children and young people, and adults. Adults have become familiar with using the internet for information gathering and lifestyle support; for example shopping, keeping contact with friends and other recreational interests that supplement their "real life".

This is in marked contrast to how children and young people experience online technology. Children and young people generally do not see a distinction between the online world and real life; the two are more fully integrated. For example, they may form relationships with people they have met through social networking or gaming sites, who they consider to be friends, although they have never met one another. This means they can be very open in sharing personal information, and not consider the need to take precautionary measures when meeting up. In addition, they are more likely to create content and upload it, rather than simply downloading. This distinction in internet use has been described as Web 1.0 and 2.0.

This difference in experience and knowledge can create barriers to understanding, reducing confidence of workers in supporting children and young people to benefit from the Web whilst keeping them safe.

5. RESPONSE

Whenever there is any suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse through the internet, this should be treated as a child protection concern, and progressed under local child protection procedures.

Whenever there is any suspicion that a child or young person may be putting themselves at risk through the internet, they should be treated as a vulnerable young person, and dealt with under VYP procedures.

Where the young person is aged between 16 and 21, and they meet the criteria for Adult Support and Protection (ASP) legislation, it should be considered whether it is more appropriate to proceed under VYP or ASP procedures. You can find out further information about the criteria for ASP on the ASP pages on the West Dunbartonshire HSCP website.

If there is a concern that the child or young person may themselves be posing a risk, or have engaged in illegal activity, this should be considered alongside the question of what protection they may need themselves. Where appropriate, they should be supported to access legal advice.

In particular, in order to preserve evidence:

- Do not delete any information found on computers/mobile phones.

- Take a note of any websites, email addresses or telephone numbers.

- Note any names, addresses or other contact details.

- Print out/take a screen shot of any concerning materials.

It should be remembered that children will often not consider themselves to be a victim of abuse or exploitation, and may well consider their abuser to be someone who loves or cares for them. Adults working with children therefore need to be particularly sensitive in engaging with children or young people where there is a suspicion they are being abused or groomed online.

References

Baines, V. (2008) *Online Child Sexual Abuse: The Law Enforcement Response.* ECPAT: London.

http://www.ecpat.net/worldcongressIII/PDF/Publications/ICT_Law/Thematic_Paper_ICTL AW_ENG.pdf

Byron, T. (2008) *Safer Children in a Digital World: Report of the Byron Review.* DCSF: London.

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/safer%20children%20in%20a%20digital %20world%20the%202008%20byron%20review.pdf

Get Safe Online (2007) *Social networkers and wireless networks users provide "rich pickings" for criminals*. (Press release). Available at:

http://www.getsafeonline.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1469

Hinduja, S. and J. Patchin, J. W. Personal Information of Adolescents on the Internet: A Quantitative Content Analysis of MySpace. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31 (2008) 125–146.

http://sfcs.cals.arizona.edu/azsearch/sites/sfcs.cals.arizona.edu.azsearch/files/Hinduja, %202008.pdf

Livingstone, S. & Bober, M. (2005) *UK Children Go Online: Final report of key project findings.* ESCR: London.

http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/children-go-online/UKCGO_Final_report.pdf

Millwood Hargrave, A. & Livingstone, S. (2006). *Harm and Offence in Media Content: A review of the evidence.* Intellect: Bristol.

Peter, J., Valkenburg, P. and Schouten, A. (2006) Characteristics and Motives of Adolescents Talking with Strangers on the Internet. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 9 (5), pp. 526–530.

Appendix 1 – Legislation

The following pieces of legislation are particularly relevant in relation to internet child sexual abuse and exploitation.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL OFFENCES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/9/contents

Grooming

Section 1 make it an offence for a person (A) to meet, travel to, or make arrangements to meet another person (B) if:
- A has previously met or been in contact with B;
- A intends to engage in unlawful sexual activity with, or in the presence of B; and
- B is under 16 or B is a police officer.

The course of conduct prior to the meeting that triggers the offence may have an explicitly sexual content, though this need not be the case. The evidence of A's intention to engage in unlawful sexual activity may be drawn from the communications between A and B prior to the meeting, or may be drawn from other circumstances, for example if A travels to the meeting with condoms and lubricants. However, the intended sexual contact does not have to take place for the offence of grooming to take place. It is a defence if A reasonably believed B to be over 16

Risk of Sexual Harm Orders

Section 2 introduces the Risk of Sexual Harm Order (RSHO). The police can apply to a sheriff court in respect of a person who has, on at least two occasions, engaged in sexually explicit conduct or communication with a child/children (under 16) and there is reasonable cause to believe that the order is necessary to protect a child/children in the future.

The application may be made in the sheriffdom where the person lives, is believed to be in, is intending to come to; or where the alleged acts are said to have taken place. The application must generally be made within three months of the second incident, though the sheriff may accept an application outwith this timescale.

The sexual conduct may be:
- engaging in sexual activity involving, or in the presence of a child;
- causing or inciting a child to watch a person engaging in sexual activity or to look at a moving or still image that is sexual;
- giving a child anything that relates to, or contains a reference to sexual activity;
- communicating with a child, where any part of the communication is sexual.

The sexual conduct may amount to a criminal offence, but this need not be the case.

CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/45

Indecent Child Images

Section 52 makes it an offence to take, allow, or make any indecent photograph, film or other digital image of a child. It is also an offence to distribute or publish such an image, or to possess one with a view to distributing it.

The image may be a copy, or a file stored on a computer or other storage device. It is a defence if there is a legitimate reason to have the image, or the person in possession had not seen the image and had no reason to suspect it was indecent.

SEXUAL OFFENCES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2009

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/9/contents

Coercing a person into looking at a sexual image

There are three relevant sections for this offence. Section 6 makes it an offence to cause another person, without their consent, to look at a sexual image, if it is done for the sexual gratification of the alleged offender, or to humiliate, distress or alarm the other person. A sexual image is either an image of the sender or someone else engaging in a sexual activity, or an image of the genitalia of the sender or someone else.
Section 23 makes it an offence for anyone to show such an image to a child under 13 years, whether they consent or not.

APPENDIX 2 - KEY SAFETY MESSAGES

Byron recommended that:

"Children and young people need to be empowered to keep themselves safe – this isn't just about a top-down approach. Children will be children – pushing boundaries and taking risks. "[18]

Children and young people need to be able to

- Explore and use the internet and play video games for **fun, creativity and development.**
- Achieve this in an environment where there is **a reduced risk** of coming across harmful or inappropriate material.
- Manage or be able to find the support to manage risks that are age-appropriate should they encounter them.
- Take **ownership** of their own online safety and gaming and be supported to do so in **environments that encourage and promote safe behaviour** and provide user- friendly safety information and tools.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the adults in a child or young person's life to protect them. This will involve both setting boundaries and overseeing the child or young person's internet use; and empowering the child or young person to manage themselves safely and to access help if they need it.

Key safety messages for children are available in age appropriate language on the **ThinkUKnow website** – www.thinkuknow.co.uk These include:

• How to have fun
- o Information about the range of applications and programmes

• How to stay in control
- o Managing your privacy settings
- o Choosing what information to share e.g. personal info, pictures
- o Making contact with people online

• What can go wrong
- o Putting up stuff you wish you hadn't
- o Seeing things you wish you hadn't
- o Talking to people who make you feel uncomfortable
- o Feeling pressured to do things you don't want to

• How to report
- o Talking to a trusted adult
- o Using CEOP Report Abuse Button
- o What will happen next

---

[18] Byron, op. cit., p2

There are many other useful websites available with information for children, carers and professionals. These include:

Get Safe Online provides computer users with advice on using the internet confidently, safely and securely. It covers a wide range of issues, including internet safety for children and young people.

http://www.getsafeonline.org/

Childnet has information for children and young people on how to use the internet constructively and develop "net literacy" skills, as well as information for those working to protect children online.

http://www.childnet-int.org/default.aspx

CEOP is a national police agency, which is engaged in operational police work and intelligence gathering to combat online child abuse and exploitation, as well as training and awareness raising for children, carers and professionals.

http://ceop.police.uk/

APPENDIX 3 – IMPACT OF AGE AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT ON ABILITY TO MANAGE RISK ONLINE

The following table identifies the benefits and vulnerabilities in relation to Internet use at different ages, and highlights particular support needs.

Age	Brain Development – Key Stages	Benefits	Vulnerabilities	Support needs
Pre-school	• Family focused • Forming appropriate adult relationships and developing attachment	• Fun – imaginative and role play • Development of responsibility and routine	• Difficulty defining fantasy from reality • Vulnerable to violent, sexual, emotional content and contact • Mirroring of negative behaviours observed online	• Significant online supervision and restriction to minimise inappropriate exposure.
5-11yrs	• Beginning to develop peer friendships • Learning right from wrong • Beginning to understand social rules and norms • Defining reality from fantasy • Experiences inform development of frontal cortex	• Opportunity to develop critical evaluation and self management	• Impulse controls still inhibited • Immature self regulation • Increasingly pushing boundaries of parental or commercial control • Confusion and emotional harm from poor social judgements • Peak usage age	• Management and regulation alongside discussion that creates opportunities for development of evaluation and self regulation

11-14yrs	• Significant hormonal, physical and mental changes • Drive for external social interaction • Social identity development • Changes in 'reward' network resulting in increased risk taking behaviours	• Opportunity to test behaviours and identity development • Development of peer communication and relationships • Learning opportunities for exploration and experimentation	• Increase vulnerability of mental health and esteem issues • Susceptible to social acceptance demands • Increasing restricted access to outdoor socialisation plus drive for social experiences increases likelihood of creating online experiences.	• Support to take 'safe' risks and development through collaborative management involving discussion and mediation. • Protective measures to manage drive for risk taking and seeking out age restricted content.
15-18yrs	• Near adult brain functioning • Value and belief system development	• Opportunity for autonomous decision making and independence, and for identity construction	• Changes in the structure and function of the brain from reduced development of key skills caused by extensive online and lack of offline activities and skills development.	• Providing opportunity for independent decision making and testing whilst ensuring a supportive and trusting relationship remains available to assist if necessary.