Online Safety
Learning Hub Newsletter: July 2020

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The Hertfordshire Learning Hub

The Learning Hub is an important two-way feedback loop between front line practitioners and the Strategic Safeguarding Partnership/Board, ensuring learning on priority local issues is shared and acted on at all levels in a timely way.

The Learning Hub in September/October 2020 is on the theme of Online Safety, and this newsletter provides key information and research. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview, but it aims to stimulate discussion about the issues, what is working well locally and what could be improved.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all our face to face training has been suspended. The Learning Hubs will be run via live webinar, using MS Teams.

1. Dates/times for Learning Hubs

All sessions will last for 1.5hrs, which a small comfort break.

29 September 2020
1st Session – 10:30am to 12noon
2nd session – 2pm to 3:30pm

6 October 2020
1st Session – 10:30am to 12noon
2nd session – 2pm to 3:30pm

13 October 2020
Session: 3:30pm to 5pm
Average children post to social media 26 times a day – a total of nearly 70,000 posts by page 18 (Children’s Commissioner, 2018)

In 2019, the Children’s Commissioner set up workshops with groups of children from primary and secondary schools. Below are some of their comments:

On school e-Safety Days - “They don’t show us how or where to block. We always do a poster, but it doesn’t really help us!” – Primary school child

On reporting – “Knowing how to respond to toxic comments when reporting doesn’t work or isn’t responded to (which is often)” – Secondary school child

How to interpret T&Cs - “I click everything and don’t read terms and conditions as they are too long, they should make simple rules for children not so long” – Primary school child

2. The Trainers

Claudia Megele and Dr Peter Buzzi

Up until June 2020, Claudia Megele was Head of Service in Hertfordshire for Quality Assurance and Practice and is now an Area Director for CAFCASS. Claudia is also the National Chair for the Principal Children and Families Social Worker (PCFSW)

Dr Peter Buzzi is a Director of Research and Management Consultancy Centre and national research lead for the PCFSW network’s online safeguarding research and practice development project.

3. Online Safety

Internet Safety, or Online Safety, is the knowledge of maximizing the user’s personal safety and security risks on private information and property associated with using the internet, and the self-protection from computer crime in general. As the number internet users continue to grow worldwide, internet safety is a growing concern for both children and adults.

There are lots of benefits for children and young people when using social media e.g. staying connected with friends and family, learning, etc. However, there are risks when children use social media to communication, such as:

- Exposed to upsetting or inappropriate content online, e.g. sexually explicit
- Risks of radicalization and bullying
- Their personal information may be exposed e.g. their homelife, feelings or thoughts
- Information may make them identifiable e.g. locations of events, photographs

Perpetrators of abuse may use this information to groom, abuse or exploit children. Perpetrators may create fake profiles when contacting children for, example, to post as a child. They can also create anonymous accounts to engage in cyberbullying or trolling.

WARNING: people known to a child can also perpetrate abuse.

Across all forms of social media, children and young people can be contacted at any time through private messaging or alerts. This means it is harder for them to escape from abusive messages or upsetting content that they are tagged in to.

NSPCC Website

Based on latest police recorded crime data, it’s estimated an average of 1 online abuse offence against a child was recorded every 16 minutes in England and Wales.

NSPCC estimates are based on the latest police recorded crime figures available (1 April 2019 – 30 June 2019) for England and Wales for Obscene Publication offences and Sexual Grooming offences. The combined average
of 89.8 offences a day was then multiplied by the 282 days between 8 April 2019 (the date the Online Harms White Paper was published) and Tuesday 14 January 2020 to get 25,324 recorded offences.

4. Case Study

Source: Megele & Buzzi (2017)

Tallulah Mary Scarlett Wilson
Died: 14 October 2012, aged 15

Risk Factors: Complex risks including digital self-harm and assumptions about ‘best’ way to minimise online risks.

Identity: Underestimated the importance of online identity.

Being deleted: Consultant psychiatrist gave evidence that, with hindsight, Tallulah may have held felt herself ‘deleted’ in some way when her Tumblr account was deleted. Thousands of people had read her posts and she had gained great satisfaction from that. Her internet provided both positive and negative impact.

Professionals’ lack of good enough understanding of social media: No person who gave evidence felt that, at the time they were looking after Tallulah, they had a good enough understanding of the evolving way that the internet is used by young people.

Claudia and Peter will discuss this case in further detail during the Learning Hubs.

5. References/resources

NSPCC Online safety website

UK Safer Internet website

Internet Matters.org website

Safeguarding Children & Young People Online – The 10Cs Risk & Resilience Typology & CARE Analytics – Dr Peter Buzzi (Dec 2018) – link