Multi-agency E-safety Crime Prevention (MESCP) project

Final Report

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Younger children are found to be less resilient online, in the sense that they are more likely to go offline and experience more harm

Livingstone et al. (2011); O’Neill and Dinh (2015); Munro (2011); Hope (2015); Wespieser (2015)

Younger children were viewed as being more at risk on content-related risk than sexting and contact-related risk
Girls are more susceptible to the harmful effects of sexual risks. However, girls are more talkative than boys, no matter what type of risk they are confronted with, possibly because behaviours and feelings that suggest vulnerability are less acceptable among boys.  

Girls were more likely to experience persistent cyberbullying than boys.

Boys are more likely to have made friends with someone they don’t know online and to meet in real life, mainly through online games.  

Livingstone et al. (2011); Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak (2007); Cross et al. (2009); Munro (2011); Wespieser’s (2015).

Girls are more vulnerable than boys to sexting and sexual content.

Boys are more vulnerable than girls to playing 18+ games and watching violent content on YouTube.  

Göran Svedin (2011); Livingstone et al. (2012); Katz (2012); Cowie (2011); Fostering Network (2011); Simpson (2013); Blum-Ross, (2015); Simpson (2015).

Having parents who themselves are young; older brothers and sisters.

Having parents who both worked and who were less available.

Looked-after children.

Adopted children.

Young carers.

Young people from households with higher SES have been more exposed to unwanted sexual material online than those from lower income families.

Children receiving free school meals are more likely to experience online bullying. SES also plays a significant role in children’s online resilience.

Being in an area of high deprivation with other risks from exploitation.

Parents who themselves are not well educated and who do not understand the impact of their own online behaviour on their children.

Sometimes though, there were cases discussed in the focus groups when it was felt that because the families were always in contact with authorities (resulting from other concerns) that if online risk concerns were raised then the families took those concerns very seriously and were keen to work with the agencies to ameliorate the risk.

Self-efficacy turns out to be an important marker, especially for online bullying: self-efficacious children think more in terms of solving the problem.

Some of the teachers felt that it was the more confident children that could also be a risk than the more cautious children.

Children identifying as LGBTQI are more likely to experience online bullying and become victims of online sexual abuse and grooming.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The introduction of widespread school internet access in industrialised countries has been accompanied by the materialisation of what can be labelled as a national school e-safety agenda” (Hope, 2015:343). This e-safety crime prevention report presents the findings of a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) and focus group research in Suffolk with teachers, parents, children, police, CYP professionals and online safety experts. This work was undertaken as part of the Better Policing Collaboration contract (ID: 2013-050) in support of the development of a multi-agency e-safety crime prevention (MESCP) initiative in Suffolk. This report aims to provide an inclusive approach to online safety in that it considers the role of parents, schools and other professionals as well as children themselves in promoting a community based, collaborative approach to safeguarding children online.

Understanding online risk has attracted considerable academic and media attention in the past few years. This report draws on published research, academic studies, wider online safety literature and the focus group data to consider:

♦ effective strategies that have been developed and implemented for engaging parents in being an integral part of keeping children safe online
♦ and early interventions effective in supporting a child or children where there is an increased concern regarding their online safety and vulnerability.

In line with national evidence, the focus group data suggests that online safety awareness is somewhat ad hoc in Suffolk. While some parents are mediating their children’s online activities, there is considerable concern that many parents are not. While some groups of children may be more vulnerable than others online, vulnerability is not a static concept and can change very rapidly. In responding effectively to online vulnerability, some schools are more proactive and more successful in engaging parents than others but there appears to be confusion between professional organisations, parents and professionals about the roles and responsibilities for online safety in Suffolk. This is in line with the findings nationally. Access to relevant and up-to-date training appears to vary and consideration needs be given to developing a multi-agency training programme in Suffolk.

In summary, focusing on online safety for primary school age children, the REA and stakeholder focus group study found:

THE CONTEXT OF ONLINE RISK

♦ Conceptualised as four C’s (content, contact, conduct and commercial – Livingstone and Haddon, 2009) online risk for children includes: bullying; violent and sexual content; grooming (sexual and extremism); images of child sexual abuse; commercial targeting and data protection. Analysis of the focus group data suggests that these findings are reflected in the views and experiences of all the stakeholder groups in Suffolk we spoke to. There was a lot of concern about children paying 18+ games and this included the conversations with the children themselves; giving away personal details and violent and/or sexual content. The perceptions of sexting as a risk in primary school are varied. While the children’s groups did not allude to it, all professionals recognised it as a problem for older children, though some teachers felt it was not an issue for primary school aged children (and did not let children complete the Suffolk Cybersurvey because it mentioned sexting). However, many primary school teachers felt it was ‘rife’ in Years 5 and 6 and emphasised the importance of educating this age group. This

1 See https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/e-safer-suffolk-cybersurvey/
finding also reflects wider societal tensions identified in the research literature between the debates that young people have rights to sexual expression and that children need to be protected from potentially harmful online behaviours (see for example, Livingstone and Mason, 2015).

- While schools use filters and blacking software, the vast majority of time that children spend online is at home. The age at which children are going online is getting younger and children’s internet use is rapidly diversifying with a wide range of mobile technologies, including tablets and phones, and an ever increasing virtual landscape of apps, games, social network sites (SNS) and platforms (Ofcom, 2015b). The focus group data concurs with these findings and suggests that children do spend the majority of their online time at home. They use a wide variety of devices to use and access games, apps, social network platforms and websites. One of the key findings to emerge from the focus groups was that children are very protected by firewalls, filters and blocking systems when in the school setting but often they go from an “overprotective environment to an unprotected one” at home (CYP professional).

- This diversity of use and access has an impact on the range of risks that children encounter, and while risk is primarily related to child development, other factors of vulnerability interplay. Therefore, risk needs to be understood and contextualised within wider emotional, psychological, socio-economic, technical, and familial environments. Vulnerability is, however, not static and can change all too rapidly. All the focus groups acknowledged that children could get into risky situations very quickly.

- By the time they reach year six, many primary school age children are likely to use a number of different technologies and platforms including: SNS; online games and apps in multi-player environment (including 18+ games); have come across some form of online abuse; seen something that has upset them online, and have had online interaction with strangers (Phippen, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2014, as well as Livingstone and Palmer, 2012). Age is an important factor in going online to access sexual content or experiences and, according to the literature, the 9-12 age range seems to mark an important stage in beginning riskier online behaviour (Livingstone and Mason, 2015). The main risks, which emerged from the focus groups we held, were about 18+ games, inappropriate content and children under 13 being on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The children talked about the importance of “not giving out your details” (Boy, Yr. 5) as they understood this as mitigating risk from both strangers but also from commercial companies.

**ENGAGING PARENTS**

- Information and advice should be targeted at parents as soon as possible and certainly well before children reach year six (Opinion Leader, 2013 and Livingstone et al., 2014a). Giving advice and educating parents of very young children were also highlighted as very important in the focus group discussions. Many groups felt that children themselves should also be educated about online safety from a very young age (reception class onwards) although, as noted elsewhere, there was less of a consensus as to when education about sexting should begin.

- Both the REA and the focus group data suggest that levels of parental knowledge of the internet, risk and mobile technologies varies widely, as does parental supervision according to educational attainment, socio-economic status, age and gender of child, ethnicity, disability, and family structure.
The national evidence suggests that parents’ knowledge of online risk is increasing, but although parents employ a range of behaviours in mediating their children’s internet use (some active but others more restrictive) many parents still do not talk to their children about staying safe online. The focus group research found that some parents do talk to their children about staying safe online and adopt a range of approaches. Other children’s internet access, however, is not monitored or managed by parents. Only 35% of 10-11 year olds who took part in the Suffolk Cybersurvey said their parents limited their time online.

As parents (both mothers and fathers) are the main sources of support when children experience something that upsets them online, improving the dialogue and understanding between parents and children in relation to online activities is vitally important. Parents need a better understanding of the risks while avoiding an alarmist approach.

Parents obtain information and advice about online safety through a wide variety of sources, but their preferred and most trusted information provider is the child’s school. There is little published research evidence that evaluates effective engagement with parents in relation to online safety, although there are a variety of suggestions for developing good practice. We found that parents did get some information from school about online safety, while they also obtained information from the media.

Engaging parents with online safety should not be approached as a ‘one off’. So in order to be both effective and sustainable, schools need to employ a variety of strategies and approaches on an on-going basis and involve children at every opportunity (Corish, 2014 and Avery, 2015). Adopting a proactive programme with a variety of creative platforms will reach a broader spectrum of parents, and when followed up with wider dissemination, is more likely to be successful in the long term. Sharing activities, celebration assemblies and using social media (for example Facebook and Twitter) were highlighted by school as examples of how to engage parents.

Keeping up to date with what children are doing online and the potential risks they are encountering is essential. There needs to be a new focus on promoting awareness raising and support measures designed to suit the needs of these much younger internet users. Primary schools need to develop new ways of reaching younger children and their parents to encourage dialogue and engagement, risk awareness and online resilience, implement a digital literacy and citizenship curriculum, while maintaining an innovative programme of parental engagement throughout.
RESPONDING TO VULNERABILITY ONLINE

♦ Online safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility – children, parents, teachers and school staff, social workers, police, children’s workforce professionals, policy makers, the wider community and, as such, the importance of multi-agency working, information sharing and coordinated intervention cannot be emphasised enough. The focus group data suggested confusion about ‘who does what’ in Suffolk and whose responsibility it is to respond to online risk and vulnerability.

♦ Current service response to online risk and abuse is ad hoc and lacks a UK wide strategy; there is no UK-wide guidance for multi-disciplinary working when investigating cases of online abuse of children and no evidence-based models for assessing online risk and the therapeutic needs of children (Palmer, 2015). This national finding is reflected in the focus group data from Suffolk.

♦ Responding effectively to online risk is essential if potential harm is to be minimised. Effective early intervention relies on the early identification of increased risk and vulnerability, accurately understanding and assessing risk (children can be both victims and offenders) while responding effectively to support the child and their family to ameliorate potential harm. Concerns were raised about schools not responding effectively to online risk, although some teachers similarly raised concerns that safeguarding referrals to Customer First were not being followed up and that the police were too busy to respond.

♦ Providing time and enabling children to discuss their online experiences, including risky behaviours, will encourage the reporting of any incidences, which is fundamental to early identification. The research suggests that developing digital literacy is essential for developing online resilience and responding to risk. There seemed to be varied and ‘ad hoc’ approaches to developing children’s digital literacy in schools as some schools had a clear curriculum but others did not and tended only to respond after a problem emerged.

♦ It is essential that both intervention and prevention work is age appropriate, current and effectively engages all stakeholders in the whole school community. It is also essential that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibility in Suffolk.

♦ Much of the focus to date, especially in primary school, has been on online bullying. There is a lack of evidence around effective practice in online safety education (PSHE Association, 2016:3) but children can develop resilience and effective coping mechanisms through supportive interventions which focus on developing digital literacy and promoting children’s digital rights. The focus group data supports this and the children’s accounts reflect that they had developed coping mechanisms and some digital literacy skills through supportive interventions from a variety of sources, including peers.

♦ More recently, whole school community approaches have been developed which are proving highly effective nationally in engaging children, parents and teachers. These approaches have successfully raised awareness of risk while promoting positive online opportunities through the agenda of digital citizenship and digital rights. While there were no schools who participated in the focus groups who felt they had really managed to achieve this, all felt that this was the best approach and that there was a need in Suffolk to promote a countywide agenda of digital citizenship and digital rights.
Digital citizenship education should be well defined. It should incorporate effective educational strategies such as active learning, target specific educational goals and outcomes, and evaluate its impact on intended behavioural outcomes (Jones and Mitchell, 2016). 360 degree toolkit offers a detailed, supportive, and effective mechanism for evaluation for improving online safety (Phippen, 2015). The schools that had used the 360 degree resources stated in the focus groups that they found them highly beneficial and enabled them to comply with inspection frameworks, and evidence that they had met statutory obligations.

**ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING**

Research suggests that many teachers and professionals working with children lack online safety understanding and training (Phippen, 2015; Bond et al., 2014; and May-Chahal et al., 2014). This national finding was also a serious concern in Suffolk by all focus groups (including, interestingly, the children’s groups). There were misconceptions across agencies in the Suffolk-based discussions about the level of training that other professionals had. Many CYP professionals and parents in the focus groups assumed that online safety training was mandatory for teachers. The focus group data also suggests that some teachers and professionals felt that training was hard to access and that they had not had sufficient training to respond effectively to online risk. Many suggested that the training that was available in Suffolk was expensive, not relevant to primary school issues and was out of date.

From the available national evidence, there are a wide variety of approaches to training professionals on online safety. Some excellent educational training materials and educational resources are widely available from a number of charitable organisations and educational providers. Training approaches include online courses, even though organisational-based professional training is the most commonly available (for example delivered in a school setting). However, there are fewer opportunities to access interprofessional training. There is currently little or no evaluation of, nor professional accreditation for training. Few professionals who participated in the focus groups had accessed national training programmes. They said that they would value online safety training, but felt that schools were highly constrained by a lack of financial and practical resources.
THIS REPORT RECOMMENDS THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO:

- Identifying a small, focused team to drive MESCP change forward, manage the project and work collaboratively with the multi-agency Online Strategy group led by LSCB. This team should develop more effective mechanisms to identify, report and respond to online safety concerns, identifying vulnerability, while communicating clear roles and responsibilities for key agencies. This should include a multi-agency response to online vulnerability, an online safety lead in each agency for evaluating referrals, with clear guidance on referral routes that identify points of escalation.

- More effective methods of data collection and recording across agencies are needed, alongside information sharing and discussion of local case studies between agencies to develop best practice examples and ‘lessons learned’.

- Appointing a multi-agency, specialist online safety adviser in Suffolk; to develop and implement the MESPC programme, working closely and coordinating between key agencies and stakeholders to provide oversight of policy and online safety strategy in the county. Such a post would be supported by developing further roles for multi-agency Independent Online Safety Advisors, tasked with providing confidential advice and support directly to parents, vulnerable young people and organisations.

- Designing and implementing a virtual, multi-agency digital online safety engagement hub, free at the point of delivery. Its aim will be to address professional aspects of online safety, legal and statutory requirements, while providing access to high quality educational resources and learning materials, best practice guidance, as well as training opportunities at national and county level. It will also have accessible and up-to-date information for parents and children, while offering an anonymous reporting and advice mechanisms for self-referrals. It should exploit the use of targeted social media for sharing current trends, best practice and knowledge exchange about ‘what works’ in engaging parents and protecting vulnerable children in online safety.

- Evaluating currently available national online safety educational programmes, resources and educational materials to develop a primary online safety curriculum for Suffolk supported by a practical multimedia programme of parental engagement. These should be designed and implemented to dovetail with each other and use text messaging, social media and digital platforms to complement and reinforce face-to-face approaches including sharing events and parents’ evenings and include resources for supporting especially vulnerable groups of children.

- Undertake a countywide audit of needs across CYP professionals, practitioners and teachers in Suffolk, to develop a state-of-the-art, multi-agency training programme that is responsive, adaptive and relevant, frequently updated and robustly evaluated. Online safety training should be mandatory for teachers and frontline CYP professionals and updated annually. Additionally, more bespoke training options should also be developed to equip front line professionals with the relevant knowledge and resources to best support children identified as having additional vulnerability.

Both online access and the risks children face online are rapidly diversifying, so children’s vulnerability online can change very quickly. Early recognition and intervention are essential in effectively responding to risk, especially where there is an increased concern for children’s vulnerability online.
INTRODUCTION

'The introduction of widespread school internet access in industrialised countries has been accompanied by the materialisation of what can be labelled as a 'national school e-safety agenda' (Hope, 2015:343). This report presents the findings of a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) and focus group research in Suffolk with teachers, parents, children and young people (CYP) professionals and practitioners, police and children, both undertaken as part of the Better Policing Collaboration contract (ID: 2013-050) in support of the development of a multi-agency e-safety crime prevention (MESCP) initiative in Suffolk.

Suffolk Constabulary (SC) and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner (SPCC) commissioned this research using funding awarded through the Home Office Police Innovation Fund 2016/17, 1.2.2. Online Safety continues to be an area of significant concern for Suffolk. There are many providers of generic awareness raising programmes that deliver into schools, but raising awareness of these issues to parents continues to be difficult. An effective strategy is needed to build on this provision through the development of specific, supportive programmes. Current initiatives focus on prevention and there is limited emphasis on early intervention where heightened risk has already been identified. The project aim is to develop a support programme that keeps children at its centre but engages with the child, parents, schools and other appropriate agencies to safeguard and change risky online behaviour.

E-safety is defined by Barnard-Wills (2012:24) as referring to “the way young people are taught about risks online, how they can protect themselves and to whom they should report worrying activity”. The recent documentation from Ofsted (2015a), however, has been
updated and uses the terminology online safety and online bullying and, as such this report also adopts the use of these terms as appropriate. However, it still includes the terms e-safety and cyberbullying when directly quoting from original sources.

The objectives for the multi-agency e-safety crime prevention (MESCP) initiative in Suffolk are:

♦ To change the behaviours of those considered high risk or very vulnerable children at an earlier age regarding personal online safety
♦ To raise awareness and knowledge base with those identified groups, schools and frontline workforce by developing an early intervention model for delivery throughout Suffolk in 2018/2019, to prevent individuals becoming victims and/or perpetrators of online crime
♦ Support and enhance the welfare and safeguarding of identified vulnerable groups, while aiming to reduce the number of victims of online safety related crime in the future
♦ Encourage an open environment between young people, parents/parental groups, schools and authorities, facilitating the reporting of crimes within the digital space.

Having commissioned proof of concept primary research, rapid evidence assessment, good practice review and evaluation to support these objectives, this report is the final output of the study undertaken by the University of Suffolk between August and December 2016. It considers existing models and effective ways of engaging with target groups and makes recommendations for methods of future delivery. Specifically, it aims to provide an inclusive approach to online safety in that it considers the role of parents, schools and other professionals, as well as children themselves in promoting a community based, collaborative approach to safeguarding children online.

The project had the following core deliverables:

**Phase 1 – Academic Research, Review and Evaluation**

This work was undertaken during August and September 2016 and was delivered during September 2016 as specified in the project inception document. Complying with procurement rules, SC commissioned The Better Policing Collaborative to undertake primary research, provide a rapid evidence assessment and evaluation, in line with the project objectives.

The Rapid Evidence Assessment addresses the following questions:

♦ What, if any, effective engagement strategies exist with parents, parental groups, and interaction with agencies regarding the safe use of the internet and digital social media?
♦ Is there research to suggest there is effective provision of service beyond prevention?
♦ What, if any evidence, shows effective engagement with parents/parental groups around issues linked with personal e-safety?
  • What, if anything, has worked elsewhere?
♦ What, if any, early intervention methods exist? And what can be done to move from a position of prevention to a position where early intervention takes place, so that issues relating to child e-safety are swiftly resolved?
  ▪ Are there any coordinated approaches with children, schools and parents?
♦ Is there any research to demonstrate best practice in upskilling frontline staff/organisations who engage with vulnerable groups regarding the safe use of the internet and social media?
Good Practice Review:

♦ Are there any statutory agencies delivering digital awareness programmes? If so, how are they doing this? What approaches for the target audiences have worked?
♦ What models exist and how might these inform the future delivery of a countywide programme to children and young people?

Evaluation:

♦ Which evaluation frameworks support research?
♦ Engage with appropriate agencies, authorities and partners and provide an evaluation report summarising existing research findings, to support the Police Innovation Fund’s objectives.

Phase 2 – Analysis and Proof of Concept Model Design/Planning

This work was undertaken during September-December 2016 and the findings are presented in this document.

The academic professional(s) during this phase undertook:

♦ Qualitative measurement of outcomes from the academic research; working with SC, SCC and partners to engage a series of focus groups across a pilot number of Suffolk schools, to support analysis with a cross section of groups from academies, free and county run primary schools.
♦ Work with partners to engage discussion groups of professionals (working with vulnerable children when parents don’t engage) including partners such as health and social care professionals.
♦ Provide recommendations/options for the design detail of a suitable intervention model and methods of future delivery during year two (2017/18). Stakeholder interaction and consultation are included in terms of design.

While it was intended that the Cybersurvey questionnaire undertaken in autumn 2016 would be evaluated in this report, the data was not available when the report was completed. Therefore, outcomes of key areas from the 2015 Cybersurvey have been considered to support the model design, alongside data from the 360 degree safe toolkit and the annual statutory 175/571 safeguarding assessment.

METHODOLOGY

In line with the above, the methodology adopted in this project was twofold:

1) A RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT (REA)

REAs provide a more structured and rigorous search and assessment of the evidence than a literature review, but it should be noted that they are not as exhaustive as a systematic review.

According to the Department for International Development (2015) and Gough et al. (2012) REAs can be used to:

♦ gain an overview of the evidence on a particular issue
♦ support programming decisions by providing evidence on key topics
♦ support the commissioning of further research by identifying evidence gaps.

The REA constituted the first output of the core deliverables of this work, namely Phase 1 – Academic Research, Review and Evaluation. Dr. Emma Bond, Associate Professor, Faculty
Arts, Business and Applied Social Science, University of Suffolk and Vanessa Rawlings, Lecturer, Department of Children, Young People and Families, University of Suffolk, undertook the work during August and September 2016. It was submitted in September 2016 and addressed the following questions, which were stated in the contract ID: 2013-050:

♦ What, if any, effective engagement strategies exist with parents, parental groups, and interaction with agencies regarding the safe use of the internet and digital social media?
♦ Is there research to suggest there is effective provision of service beyond prevention?
♦ What, if any evidence, shows effective engagement with parents/parental groups around issues linked with personal e-safety?
  • What, if anything, has worked elsewhere?
♦ What, if any, early intervention methods exist? And what can be done to move from a position of prevention to a position where early intervention takes place, so that issues relating to child e-safety are swiftly resolved?
  ▪ Are there any coordinated approaches with children, schools and parents?
♦ Is there any research to demonstrate best practice in upskilling frontline staff/organisations who engage with vulnerable groups regarding the safe use of the internet and social media?

For clarity, the key findings from the published literature are presented in this report as excerpts identified in blue boxes like this:

Example of evidence from REA

2) A QUALITATIVE MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES FROM THE ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Work undertaken during September - December 2016 developed Phase 2 of the project – Analysis and Proof of Concept Model Design/Planning. In line with contract ID: 2013-050, we undertook a qualitative measurement of outcomes from the academic research (Phase 1; the REA). Working with Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council, schools and other partners, we facilitated a series of 14 focus groups across Suffolk (including Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds, Lowestoft, Woodbridge and Halesworth) to support the analysis. The focus groups included primary school teachers (n=22); police officers and staff (n=6); parents (n=16); CYP professionals (n=19); leading online safety experts (held as a virtual group, n=8) and children aged between 9 and 12 (n=26). The teachers and professionals came from a range of educational and CYP settings including academies, free and county-run primary schools, independent schools, children’s centres, social care, mental health, multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) and after school clubs.

Recruitment and selection
♦ Online Safety experts: the REA was sent to eight online safety experts from national online safety organisations and charities for their comments and feedback. Due to the wide spread geographic location and time commitments, a focus group discussion was held virtually and feedback and comments on the REA were sent electronically.
♦ Teachers: we emailed 124 primary schools across Suffolk and invited them to attend a focus group to discuss their experiences and views about online safety. After a week of the email being sent out, a letter was posted to the head teachers of the 124 schools, due to an initial poor response. 25 schools eventually responded and 22
teachers attended the focus groups. The REA’s headline findings were shared with
the group for comment and discussion.

♦ Police: Suffolk Constabulary arranged the focus group by inviting appropriate police
officers and members of police to staff to participate. The headline findings from the
REA were shared with the group for comment and discussion. Six police officers and
staff participated.

♦ CYP professionals and practitioners: contacted through Suffolk’s e-safety strategy
groups’ contact with Suffolk County Council and though practitioner networks. The
headline findings from the REA were shared with the group for comment and
discussion. Six police officers and staff participated.

♦ Parents: we wanted the views of parents whose children attended different schools
across Suffolk. So we contacted parents by canvassing parenting networks in Suffolk.
Subsequently, we had 16 parents from different Suffolk schools respond. The
headline findings from the REA were shared with the group for comment and
discussion.

♦ Children: using three schools in Suffolk as gatekeepers, we sought informed consent
from both children and their parents. A sample totalling 26 children aged between 9
and 12 years participated in the focus groups from school years 5, 6 and 7. The
guideline questions were included in the letter for informed consent and can be found
in Appendix 1.

**TABLE 1: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus groups:</th>
<th>Number of focus groups:</th>
<th>Number of participants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYP professionals/practitioners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including mental health team;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social work; family support practitioners; MASH team; learning support and children’s centres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online safety experts (virtual)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the qualitative end of the research spectrum, unstructured focus group interviews were
used to glean information and perspectives on the research topic. “One of the most
consistent threads in focus group literature is the vital importance of using nondirective
questions to elicit spontaneous expression among participants” (Kidd and Parshall,
2000:296). As such, a topic guide was used to prompt discussions, as this approach allowed
the researcher greater flexibility (Coolican, 1996) and provided “rich insights into people’s
experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (May, 1999:109). Although such
interaction may undermine the methodological ideal of reliability and standardisation,
Coolican (1996) suggests that although the use of unstructured interviews can provide
research with high validity, reliability suffers, as it is not easy to generalise. As with all
research methods, the use of focus groups as an investigative tool is not without some
specific limitations. The relatively small number of participants (97) and the opportunistic
recruitment process limits generalisation. And as the participants’ responses are not
independent of one another, this may mask individual viewpoints and further restricts the
generalisability of results (Kitzinger, 1994). Thus the findings from the focus groups are not
intended to provide generalisable data and are not designed to be a representative sample.
However, these interactional and flexible techniques were chosen to portray the depths of
meanings of the participants’ social understandings and thus ensure ‘validity’ of the data (see Hester and Francis, 1994).

Focus group methods developed away from the major methodological traditions of qualitative research and remained largely overlooked in formal academic research until the late 1970’s. Since then, focus group methods have become increasingly popular in the social sciences (Kidd and Parshall, 2000). The concept of knowledge has traditionally excluded children from research, with adults viewed as having greater knowledge and understanding than children. Yet there is increasing recognition that it is the children themselves who are experts in their own lives and not the adults who have previously dominated that role. Furthermore, the globalisation of children’s rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)\(^2\) has had an impact on all aspects of children’s lives, from their relationship with their parents, to their participation in school and other social institutions. Kellett et al. (2004) highlight the importance of the impact of articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC in encouraging children receiving information on, and being involved in and consulted about, all activities affecting their lives. Consequently, we sought to adopt child-friendly techniques to promote children’s participation in the project and focus groups are a valuable method for eliciting children’s views and experiences (Morgan et al., 2002).

Focus group methodology in itself generated awareness and sharing of best practice as well as case studies examples of risk and problems, and we had excellent feedback from the participants of the focus groups:

“I just wanted to write and say thank you for inviting me to the focus group. I learned so much and it was very reassuring to hear that other teachers are as confused as I am!” Teacher.

“Much delayed reply to your focus group which I found really useful. I’ve come away and got the school to join the eCadet scheme and actioned a list of other related jobs. Brilliant!” Teacher.

“I can’t thank you enough for inviting me to the focus group. I didn’t really think it would be of interest to me, as I didn’t really understand the potential problems online. It really opened my eyes and I went straight home and actually talked to [name of child] about what they are doing online and how to stay safe. I looked up Internet Matters too and got loads of information that I’ve shared on Facebook with the school groups and sent to my sister who’s got a child the same age. Thank you.” Parent.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Kimmel (1988) suggests that a detailed reporting of ethical procedures should be required and expected in all published social research. The study was subject to ethical scrutiny from the University of Suffolk and given ethical approval. There are two common issues within the ethical decision-making framework: informed consent and privacy (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). The guidelines suggest access to children involves issues of informed consent, confidentiality and legal issues prior to negotiations to gain access via gatekeepers who, through their relationship with the children, have a protective role. We negotiated access to the children through three schools and sought informed consent from both parents and children (see Appendix 1). As undertaking research with children and young people may give rise to potential ethical issues, aspects of child protection, the role of the researcher and questions of responsibility, confidentiality and how to deal with the potential disclosure of information require special consideration (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998). Participants should be told the aims and objectives of the research, how the data collected from them will be used (especially with regard to confidentiality and anonymity) and how the findings will be

\(^2\) See https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/
disseminated’ (Kellett, 2005:33). Consequently, we explained to the children who participated in the study that we would anonymise the verbatim data in any written outputs but if they disclosed that they, or someone known to them were at risk, we would follow the school’s safeguarding procedure and notify the designated safeguarding lead. To protect the identity of the participants, all verbatim quotes that appear in this report are included anonymously.

For clarity, the key findings from the focus groups are presented in this report as verbatim quotes, identified in boxes with a red outline, like this:

“Example of quote from focus group study.”

The REA and the focus group findings have been evaluated (including stakeholder interaction and consultation) and are set out in this report to provide recommendations for the design of a suitable intervention model and methods of future delivery during year two of the MESCP initiative in Suffolk (2017/18). Considering the outcomes of key areas from the 2015 Cybersurvey, data from the annual statutory 175/571 safeguarding assessment and the 360 degree safe data are also included to support the model design.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the 25 schools in Suffolk, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and the many organisations working with and supporting children and young people in Suffolk, who contributed to this research and participated so generously in the focus group discussions. We would especially like to thank the children and parents who participated in the study, for allowing us valuable insight into their online lives and their views and experiences of online safety. We would also like to thank the following for their advice, comments and feedback at various stages on the research and the development of this report:

Professor Andy Phippen; Professor of Social Responsibility in IT, University of Plymouth.
Professor Tink Palmer; CEO, Marie Collins Foundation.
Dr. Allison Boggis; Senior Lecturer University of Suffolk and Member of CEOP’s education board.
Vicki Green; Director of Education, Marie Collins Foundation.
Rebecca Avery; Educational Safeguarding Advisor (Online Protection), Kent County Council.
Will Gardner; CEO, Childnet.
Laura Higgins; Online Safety Operations Manager, SWGiL.
Karl Hopwood; Esafety consultant, Insafe.
Lucy Porteous and the MESCP project board members.
BACKGROUND

Following on from the Byron Review (2008) understanding online risk has attracted considerable academic and media attention in the past few years. This report draws on, among other published studies, the recent Ofcom studies and the extensive findings of the EU Kids online project. These are the most comprehensive research studies focusing on children and risk online, with the EU Kids online project incorporating a multinational research network led by Professor Sonia Livingstone and Professor Leslie Haddon. Funded by the European Commission’s Better Internet for Kids Programme, the research has provided an extensive and detailed understanding of European children’s online opportunities, risks and safety. It uses several methods to map children and parents’ experiences of the internet, to promote an informed dialogue with national and European policy stakeholders. Online risk is closely associated with what children are using the internet for, how they are accessing it and what social media, websites and apps they are using. The changing technical landscape emerged frequently in the adult focus group discussions and the recognition that children are growing up in a world of hyperconnectivity that is very different to adults’ own experiences of childhood and youth, and had implications for keeping them safe.

According to Ofcom (2014) primary school aged children (8-11 years old) use the internet for entertainment and ‘to have fun’, with games dominating the online activities of both girls and boys, played via apps and websites that were often discovered via friends or family members. The Ofcom (2014) study found that choice of what to play tended to be quite spontaneous, influenced mainly by whichever device they had access to at the time. Most recently, the Ofcom (2016:3) study found that 37% of 3-4s, 54% of 5-7s and 73% of 8-11s watched YouTube with the younger age group consuming traditional ‘TV like’ content but moving quickly to ‘vloggers, music videos, game tutorials and joke or prank videos’. These findings were reflected in the focus group data in our study with 9-12 year olds. Livingstone et al. (2014a) found that touch screen technology which makes devices like tablets and phones very easy to use and navigate enables children to go online from a very young age and parents often have little awareness of what their children are doing and seeing online. Gaming is especially popular with very young children. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS, 2016) suggest that while new technologies inspire children to be creative, communicate and learn and, although the internet is a great resource, it is important that children and young people are protected from the risks they may encounter. Thus ‘children’s use of social media is constantly evolving, and that brings both new opportunities and risks’ (Ofcom, 2016:3).

The research suggests that the likely ages that children encounter known risks is getting younger as more children are online at a younger age, have access to more technology and more mobile technologies in the form of tablets and smart phones (Bond, 2014 and Ofcom, 2015a, 2016). Therefore, educators, parents, professionals and policy makers need to have a clear understanding of the risks that children are more likely to encounter both currently and in the next few years.
The report focuses on risk in relation to children’s interactions online. Yet it should be remembered that recently academic research, policy and practice guidelines have shifted away from only emphasising the risks children face. The current emphasis is to more explicitly celebrate the positive opportunities afforded by online environments, social media and virtual worlds, while acknowledging that to deny children access to the internet and its information has a detrimental effect on their opportunities to socialise, learn and interact.

This view was very apparent in the focus groups with the children who emphasised their very positive online interactions as depicted in the drawing below:

The children’s conversations reflected very positive online interactions and they talked about Skyping their friends, chatting, sharing images, photographs and sharing funny content, as well as learning from educational software and applications. Many of the children were aware of ‘safe places and spaces online’.
“Analysing the flaws of national e-safety policies in terms of the notion of governmentality not only facilitates a critical engagement with the material but also allows these issues to be seen not as shortcomings, but rather as social control strategies that have consequences for children’s learning experiences and their digital rights” (Hope, 2015:350). Any consideration of risk, therefore, needs to be understood in balance with the very positive aspects of children engaging with digital worlds.

The relationship between children’s rights to protection and their rights to participation online is a complex one (Bond, 2014 and Livingstone et al., 2015a). Adopting a more rights based approach to understanding children’s experiences with digital media provides a more balanced view of their everyday encounters and how they can be safeguarded while making the most of the opportunities afforded by media technologies and digital environments (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009a).

**UNDERSTANDING RISK**

Risk and childhood are both social, cultural constructions (Bond, 2010; 2013a; 2014) as such, they will change across time and space and what is understood as risky may not be seen as such to another group, or in another time. The focus of this review is on primary school age children and, as such, it focuses on the risks most likely to impact on this age group. It does, however, also include the risks most likely to be encountered by children up to the age of 13. The children in our study had a broad range of understanding about a variety of online risks and discussed inappropriate (adult) content, ‘stranger danger’, identity theft, bullying and giving out personal details.

“Well, it’s like if I want to look at something on line and I type in pictures of fish then it may come up with pictures of love instead of pictures of fish and some of the pictures of love aren’t very appropriate so you have to be careful what you choose to look at.” Girl, Yr 5.

They were also well aware that people were not always who they said they were online:

“Snapchat kidz is less safe ‘cos not everyone is a kid on it.” Boy, Yr 7.

“Facebook is another one that’s really unsafe as people put stuff on there like I have a son called Charlie and like they’ll say ‘do you want to meet Charlie? And you might say ‘yes’ but then it’s really a big adult who’s pretending to be Charlie.” Girl, Yr 5.
Educational, law enforcement, policy and media debate has focused primarily on addressing the potential impact of online content that may be harmful (Przybylski et al., 2014), yet in order to have an accurate understanding of online risk, we need to understand what primary school age children are actually doing online.

In focus group research with Year 6 pupils, Phippen (2012:2-3) found that:

♦ The vast majority of young people of this age already have active online social lives using a number of different technologies and platforms, including Facebook.
♦ Gaming plays a major role in many boys’ lives, including online multiplayer environments and 18 certificate games.
♦ Most young people of this age have had to deal with some form of online abuse, and they turn to their peer group for help.
♦ Many Year 6 pupils spoken to have received unsolicited contact from strangers, either through social networks or mobile technology. Most will turn to parents for help but subsequently parents will not involve police.
♦ There is little evidence in the groups to suggest that these children were exposed to sexualised content or asked to self-generate.
♦ The Year 6 pupils were more likely to turn to adults than older children if they were upset about things that had occurred online, but still are unlikely to involve a teacher in case they get told off.
♦ At this age, young people are very willing to talk about their online lives, enjoy such discussion and would like to do more of it in school.

The focus groups we held with Years 5, 6 and 7 pupils in Suffolk found some similar results but also some differences with Phippen’s study:

♦ All the children who participated in the focus groups had active online social lives, using a number of different technologies such as tablets, iPads, smart phones, laptops, and games consoles. Some (about half overall but less common in Year 5, rising in Year 6 to being more common in Year 7) used Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook, but they also talked about the age 13 restriction on these social media platforms and some children were not allowed to use them.
♦ Like Phippen’s study, gaming plays a major role in all the children’s lives. But for the boys, the gaming was more likely to take place in online multiplayer environments (girls tended to use tablets or smart phones and either played alone or in paired sharing) and boys were more likely to talk about 18 certificate games.
♦ The majority of the children in our study had experienced something online that they did not like or had upset them in some way. For the most part, they had spoken to their parents about it, although they also turned to their friends, siblings or cousins for help.
♦ Many Year 6 and 7 pupils (and some Year 5) had received unsolicited contact from strangers, either as a friend request or a ‘like’ or ‘comment’ from someone they did not know. Most had talked to their parents who had blocked the unwanted contact but few parents had shown the children how to block the contact themselves.
♦ Many of the children though also talked about being contacted by companies wanting their ‘details’. They all discussed the importance of not giving out their details whether to ‘unknown strangers’ or commercial companies.
♦ Like Phippen’s study, there was little evidence in the groups that the children had been exposed to sexualised content (although some Year 5 boys discussed
CodeBabes\textsuperscript{3}), with none having been asked to self-generate, but many were aware of stories of children who had and that sending an image of your intimate body parts was a ‘stupid’ or potentially dangerous thing to do.

♦ The Year 5 pupils were more likely to turn to their parents if they were upset about things that had occurred online and did discuss telling a teacher. But the older groups were more cautious about involving a teacher in case they got told off or got another child in trouble, for example, for bullying, which could have repercussions on them.

♦ All the young people in all the year groups were very willing to talk about their online lives and they enjoyed the discussions. They said that it was a shame that adults were often reluctant to talk to them about what they liked doing online and they would like to do more of it both in school and at home with their parents.

\begin{itemize}
\item Strategy game apps tended to have strong appeal with this age group. Games such as Angry Birds, Temple Run and Flappy Bird had multiple levels or lives that motivated them to keep playing. Multi-game websites such as MiniClip and Friv were also favoured options as they contain a large number of ‘mini games’ children can dip into for an instant, short gaming session. ‘Virtual world’ gaming websites with a social element were also popular among this age group in this research, with brands such as Club Penguin and Moshi Monsters cited as appealing, together with Minecraft, the current dominant online building blocks game. The ‘craze’ popularity of these games meant that children made a concerted effort to play them more and such titles spanned both app and website formats, helping to maximise appeal and uptake. Overall, app-play tended to feature most strongly given the current dominance of iPods and tablets among this age group (Ofcom, 2014:14).
\end{itemize}

Similarly, in our study, the children talked about the wide variety of devices they used, both those that belonged to them but also ones which belonged to parents, siblings, other family members and their friends. They also discussed the very broad spectrum of communication platforms, websites, social media, apps, games and creative platforms they used in their everyday lives:

\begin{quote}
“I use my laptop, my iPad, my Mum’s tablet, my PS4, my iPod and my brother’s Xbox. I like watching Rubics Cube tutorials on YouTube best. Well actually, I just love YouTube like football challenges and Minecraft videos and watching Minecraft, Roadblocks, Nerf wars. But also I use lots of maths games like Times Tables Rock Stars and MyMaths.” Boy, Yr 5.
\end{quote}

The statement from Ofcom (2014) above and the focus data reflect the diversity in which children connect to and interact online. This is rapidly increasing, and together with the rapid development of apps and online gaming platforms, online risk has also diversified. This has implications for children’s experiences of digital environments.

\begin{itemize}
\item Tablets are the only device, other than TV sets, that are used by a majority of children in each age group – 55% of 3-4s; 67% of 5-7s and 80% of 8-11s.
\item The number of 5-15s with their own tablet had increased since 2015 to 44%.
\item 16 per cent of 3-4s have their own tablet.
\item The increases in smart phone ownership since 2015 are particularly evident for 8-11s (32% vs. 24%).
\end{itemize}

\footnote{\url{https://codebabes.com/}}
Depending on their digital access, children are likely to face differing risks at different ages according to their activities, experiences and skills.

**TABLE 2: RISK RELATED TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT (RUDKIN IN UKCISS, 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Overall development:</th>
<th>Key online activities:</th>
<th>Attitudes to risk:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5 year olds</td>
<td>They can put themselves in others’ shoes, but they are still quite fooled by appearances. Beginning to learn that there are social rules to follow. Starting to build up friendships but peer pressure remains low.</td>
<td>Entertainment, particularly games and TV</td>
<td>They may be unaware of risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 year olds</td>
<td>Play is mainly pretend play/role play, moving towards greater rule-based reality play. Becoming socially more sophisticated; the need to fit in and be accepted by the peer group becomes more important. Learning how to manage their thinking and their emotions. Learning about the complexities of relationships; if they can't manage these it can lead to alienation, bullying and loneliness. At around seven, they undergo a significant shift in thinking to more order and logic. They are now frequent users of the internet but with limited information on staying safe online – which may make them vulnerable.</td>
<td>Entertainment and fun – games, films, TV, video. Communications largely with family only.</td>
<td>Children largely compliant with messages from school/home – although if risks aren't explained clearly, they imagine their own explanations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-13 year olds</td>
<td>Moving towards more adult ways of thinking, though still not making decisions the way adults would. Very aware of social pressure and expectations; will change aspects of themselves in order to fit in and be accepted by peers. Friends are becoming more important. More aware of what's 'cool' or not, including brands. Girls show a decrease in self-esteem as they compare themselves to others around them.</td>
<td>Communications with friends; games (for boys), gossip, TV/films, shopping. Open communication across a range of sites. Visual communication becomes key. Development and honing of self-image</td>
<td>Developmentally, the strong desire for immediate reward triggers risk-taking behaviour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online bullying is now more common than face-to-face bullying (Livingstone et al., 2014b). According to the NSPCC (2015) 7,296 counselling sessions took place with children who talked to Childline about online bullying and safety in 2014. Ey et al.’s (2015) review of online bullying and primary school age children identified that at this age, there is very limited research on children’s understanding of online bullying, the impacts of online bullying and bullying behaviours employed. Children can be involved in online bullying either as victim or perpetrator and the bullying, which may begin at school (via traditional bullying), often continues and escalates outside of school via the internet, mobile phone or tablet (Monks at al., 2012). Vandebosch and Van Cleemput’s study (2009) with 2052 primary and secondary...
school children reveals that online bullying is not a marginal problem. They found that children who had been bullied via the internet or mobile phone during the last three months were more dependent upon the internet, felt less popular, took more internet-related risks and were more likely to also be a bystander and perpetrator of internet and mobile phone bullying.

Peer-on-peer abuse – either through bullying or through sexting behaviour – is often overlooked in educational programmes, academic research and learning resources (Phippen, 2016). Yet it was clear from the focus groups that the police, professionals and CYP professionals felt that bullying and sexting were significant problems in Suffolk.

“Our control room pick up these issues on a daily basis. And our safer Neighbourhood teams pick up those issues with schools on a daily basis – bullying, violent sexual content and sexting. Sexting is a major issue here in schools and the content to do with that as I think the understanding from young people is not that good and neither is the understanding from parents as to what a sexual image might be. I think it is really important that children and young people really do understand what those images relate to, where the law stands in relation to those images as well, and what the consequences can be for those young people and for their development in the future. It is called into us on a regular basis from schools.” Police officer.

“It is becoming more common for the MASH to have referrals in about children and online grooming that have no prior background at all and suddenly ‘Bang’ and you’ve got to deal with it.” CYP professional.

Another significant sex related risk is pornography. Access and exposure to pornography are linked to children and young people's engagement in “risky behaviours” (Horvath et al., 2013:7). Livingstone and Palmer (2012) suggest that young people, mainly boys, are increasingly being affected by adult pornography. As viewing usually starts around the age of 11-12 years, and can result in intimacy deficits, unrealistic expectations of their partners, inability to show empathy, and higher likelihood of relationship breakdown. Horvath et al.'s study (2013) found that there is some evidence that children and young people consider pornography easy to access and culturally prevalent. And yet, contradictory findings exist in relation to age of first exposure, with variations from 10 to 17 years old in research findings. There is, however, a dearth of research on the complex relationship between pornography and children’s expectations, attitudes and behaviours (Horvath et al., 2013).

Given the varied use across many different platforms, diverse opportunities and a changing landscape of risk (Bond, 2010, 2013a, and 2014), the dangers children face online are complex, multi-faceted and are often interrelated. Furthermore, trying to identify which children may be more vulnerable online is also less than straightforward. Although some children deemed as vulnerable offline are more likely to be vulnerable online, it is essential to contextualise when, why and how children may be at risk online, and as such ‘the four Cs’ for potential risks facing children (namely contact, content, conduct and commercialism) come into play at different stages of a child’s development. Therefore, vulnerability is not a static issue but one that needs contextualising within the emotional, psychological and physical developmental stages of childhood” (Livingstone and Palmer, 2012:4).

**Table 3: Classification of Online Risks (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009b)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content: Child as recipient</th>
<th>Contact: Child as participant</th>
<th>Conduct: Child as actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Advertising, spam, sponsorship</td>
<td>Tracking/harvesting personal information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Violent/gruesome/hateful content</td>
<td>Being bullied, harassed or stalked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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MESCP/final report/December 2016
Responding to Risk

As children are involved in a broader range of online activities and, therefore, are able to benefit from more online opportunities, they inevitably encounter more online risks (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009a and Bond, 2014).

Palmer (2015) in partnership with Barnado’s draws on data from the annual survey conducted with Barnado’s child sexual exploitation services and in-depth interviews. Her report makes a number of recommendations to governments across the UK, the police, internet and technology providers, and services that support victims of internet-related child sexual exploitation. Overall, the recommendations in the report which are most relevant to the review here, highlight the need for:

- easier access to existing prevention resources and advice, including age-appropriate healthy relationships and sex education through schools
- training for all professionals working with children and young people so that they feel confident in identifying those at risk of harm online
- assessments carried out by support services to include abuse that relates to online harm only; supporting peer mentoring programmes.

The findings from the focus groups research support Palmer’s recommendations above and all stakeholders wanted clearly signposted and easier access to existing prevention resources and advice. For the adult stakeholders (including the parents) this included age-appropriate healthy relationships. They talked about the confusion around where to go for advice and information on online safety, and many teachers had spent hours searching for appropriate resources, teaching materials, videos and legal advice.

“"We would like the latest, up-to-date information from a ‘one-stop-shop’, that is kept up-to-date daily. We feel jaded as we got told every training session about all these resources but we do not have the resources we need. So we need someone who can give us what we need the moment we need it. We have had an issue with Year 5’s sexting so I need the resource right now – I haven’t got time to trawl through [the internet] looking for a resource as these things go in waves so we need to respond straightaway." Teacher.

Training, or rather a lack of it, was also a major concern for the professionals we spoke to (this is addressed in more detail on page 108 of this report). Overall, the professionals felt that training was very ‘ad hoc’ but was hard to explore and access. They felt training on online safety should be a mandatory part of all safeguarding training and that anyone who worked with children, young people and their families should have a sound understanding of online safety.
“We need much harder hitting training – tougher details about the statistics, what we need to listen out for; grooming and what is involved, and what to look out for to PREVENT... etc. We want the real stuff about what is happening, the local horror stories. Case studies are always the most informative part of any training session as it gets staff genuinely thinking, but we also need this for parents and to relate it to our location that this has happened here in Suffolk. Individual anecdotal stories have a much better impact.”

Teacher.

However, current guidance from Schools’ Choice is that online safety training in Suffolk is identified as ‘Best Practice’ for the e-safety lead every two years and is not identified as ‘statutory’ or even as best practice for other staff, governors or head teachers.

Furthermore, the professional groups we spoke to all talked about the importance of including questions about children’s online lives in assessments carried out by support services. They felt that often opportunities to identify online risk and, sometimes serious harm, were missed and that children presenting for a variety of different reasons may be a victim of online abuse, exploitation or have been exposed to inappropriate content.

“We don’t ask. No one asks the question. Either it doesn’t occur to them to ask, or professionals are frightened that they do not know how to respond to a disclosure, or they are worried that we don’t have the capacity to open the floodgates on this. Many professions lack the simple understanding that this is part of children’s everyday lives and that there will be an online element now to the majority of abuse cases. Look at domestic violence. It’s the same – sexual abuse, grooming, neglect, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, radicalisation and sexualisation, it’s all online but still we don’t ask. Kids present everyday with emotional issues, stress, depression, eating disorders, anxiety and self-harm. It’s costing a fortune but we still don’t ask the question.”

CYP professional.

The concerns raised in the focus groups are borne out by the wider research. O’Neill and McLaughlin (2011), for example, argue that online safeguarding training should be an...
essential component in the teacher training curriculum, because teachers (particularly within the primary sector where it is relatively new) need the skills to support younger children. However, as Woolard et al. (2009) point out, while practitioners and researchers are aware of the importance of online safety, many trainee teachers do not see learning about it as a priority over other learning tasks and commitments.

Online safeguarding is, however, not just an issue for education. Research argues for a greater understanding of everyday online interactions in social work (May-Chahal et al., 2014) and in police practice (HMIC, 2015). Safeguarding children online should be a priority focus for continuing professional development for all professionals working with children and young people (including non-governmental organisations and charities) – as well as school support staff, as they are just as likely to have to respond to disclosures and are in a good position to talk less formally with children about their online activities.


The dangers in the virtual world are now part of the everyday risk to children. There is a lack of recognition that dealing with these risks is already part of everyday policing. More work needs to be done to understand the nature of the risks to children and the scale of offending (HMIC, 2015:40).

Subsequently, online safeguarding should be understood as everyone’s responsibility. As working together and multi-agency approaches are emphasised as good practice in safeguarding children and young people generally, therefore this should also apply to safeguarding children and young people online. As outlined above, children are using the internet at an earlier age through an increasingly diverse array of mobile and personal technologies, and are using an ever expanding range of virtual platforms, apps, games and social media to interact, engage, invent, communicate, explore and publish.
More recently, concerns related to terrorism, radicalisation and risk – all highly contested terms – are presently converging around particular children to construct an emergent or new category of abuse: ‘childhood radicalisation’ (Stanley and Guru, 2015). “In order to stay safe, children and young people need to be informed about both online opportunities and risks and they need to know how to deal with these risks and be empowered to use the internet in a safe and responsible manner” (Ranguelov, 2010:151). Exposure to online risks need not always result in harm (Livingstone et al., 2011) as some children are more resilient, report the risk, seek help, or have better coping strategies than others (for example, knowing how to block contact from someone who is bullying them or to report unwanted requests for information or images). Children are not a homogenous group. Even within the relatively small sample size of the children who participated in our focus groups (n=26) there was considerable diversity of online experience, perceptions of online risk and parental supervision and mediation. There is a tendency in policy discussions of school children and online risk to describe them as either innocent victims or ‘dangerous perpetrators’ (Hope, 2015:346). So ‘children are a population who are constructed as both potential victims and potential offenders in online settings’ (Barnard-Wills, 2012: 240). As such, online safety interventions need to be appropriate and respond effectively to both child victim and child offender, as well as to the reality and the diversity of children’s everyday lives.

However, “the primary subject position that emerges from the threatening, anonymous online environment represented in e-safety texts is the paedophile, online predator or sexual abuser” (Barnard-Wills, 2012:244). But in reality, children often know their abuser. When children are bullied online they often know the person who is bullying them, and children are sexually abused both online and offline by people they know. The making of abusive images, for example, that are published online reflects what we already know – that the principle abusers of children are known to them⁴, the numbers of referrals are increasing and, while it can happen at any age, more images of younger children are being discovered (Livingstone and Palmer, 2012). Furthermore, professionals need to remember that cases involving online abuse are rarely restricted to a single victim and perpetrator and the ability of the internet to connect abusers with both multiple victims and abusers means that reports of online abuse should always be treated as complex cases (NSPCC, 2014).

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⁴ The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children’s data reveals that of the thousands of victims who have been traced, the majority of people who took the abusive photographs were known to the child victim.
The response to online risk from schools to date shows considerable improvements over the past few years. Phippen (2015) draws on the self-review data from 7,000 schools to consider the ‘state of the nation’ related to online policy and practice. However, while there are improvements in many aspects of online safety in schools, other areas still require development and further improvement.

**TABLE 4: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ONLINE SAFETY AND SCHOOLS (PHIPPEN, 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongest aspects of online safety in schools</th>
<th>Weakest aspects of online safety in schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having effective connectivity and filtering in place</td>
<td>Effective engagement with the wider school community on issues related to online safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scope of online safety covered in school policies</td>
<td>The evaluation mechanisms in place to measure the impact of online safety policy and practice in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have effective acceptable usage agreements in place</td>
<td>The effectiveness of training for school governors related to online safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having policy addressing issues around digital images and videos</td>
<td>The effectiveness of training for staff on matters related to online safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an effective online safety policy in place</td>
<td>Having an effective online safety groups comprised of stakeholders across the school setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ONLINE SAFETY IN SUFFOLK**

There are various sources of evidence and data related to online safety in Suffolk. The annual Cybersurvey is carried out by Youthworks Consulting Ltd. The Cybersurvey explores young people’s experiences of online risk and their e-safety education. It currently has over 20,000 respondents from eight local authority areas. However, it should not be overlooked that, although only a few, some of the teachers we spoke to in the focus groups expressed concerns about the topics covered in the Cybersurvey and had had to explain what sexting was to the children in their school. Another teacher commented:

> “I don’t use the Cybersurvey – I mean I think it is useful for seeing various trends so you can get the heads up about what may be coming our way but I don’t allow my pupils to complete it as I don’t think its suitable for primary school age children. It actually introduces them to certain issues like porn and self-harm.” Teacher.

Last year⁵, the Suffolk CyberSurvey (Katz, 2015) revealed that:

- 71 per cent of 10-11 year olds have a smartphone.
- 53 per cent of 10-11 year olds use a social networking site.

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⁵ At the time of writing, the 2016 Cybersurvey was being conducted, and so the results were not available by the time this report was completed.
♦ 76 per cent of 10-11 year olds use a tablet.
♦ Only 35 per cent of 10-11 year olds say their parents limit the amount of time they can spend online.
♦ In open responses about 10-11 year olds’ concerns, 153 included the words ‘bullying’ or ‘cyberbullying’; 53 involved the word ‘hacked’; 27 mentioned ‘personal or credit card details’; 11 included the word ‘tricked’; two mentioned a ‘virus’ and two mentioned ‘strangers’.
♦ In relation to sexting, 21 children aged 10-11 years old said ‘it happened to me’ and 51 children said ‘it happened to someone I know’.
♦ 19 per cent of all 10-11-year-old respondents had been cyberbullied.
♦ At the age of 10-11 years old, 56 per cent of pupils thought that their online safety education was ‘very good’.

The annual statutory 175/571 safeguarding assessment provides further information on online safety. Analysis of this data collected by Suffolk County Council, which relates to online safety incidents, considered returns between December 2015 and October 2016. It found that, of the 391 primary schools who returned the safety report, 129 primary schools reported at least one incident involving their children. Of these schools, 33 per cent (43 schools) reported incidences of online bullying; 31 per cent (24 schools) reported incidents involving illegal images; 10 per cent (13 schools) reported incidences of sexting and seven per cent (nine schools) reported incidences involving online grooming. 64 per cent of those schools who completed the report (250 of the 391 schools) had staff who had accessed e-safety training through e-Safer Suffolk; 30 per cent (117 schools) had staff who had accessed ThinkUKnow training, and 49 percent of schools had run a parent online safety session.

National data from the 360 degree toolkit (https://www.360safe.org.uk/) analysed by Phippen (2016) suggests that Suffolk is slightly above average in relation to online safety generally. For each aspect, the tool provides a numeric rating between one (the strongest rating) and five (the weakest) with a detailed definition for each category to allow schools to determine, for each aspect, how their school performs.

Generally, these levels are defined as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definitions for the 360 degree safe tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is little or nothing in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Policy and practice is being developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Basic e-safety policy and practice is in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Policy and practice is coherent and embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Policy and practice is aspirational and innovative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the toolkit data by Professor Phippen (undertaken 23/08/2016 and summarised in Figure 2 below) suggests that of the 30 schools using the toolkit, none of them have rated themselves as a ‘five’ for parental engagement, but 60 per cent have rated themselves as a ‘three’ or a ‘four’. The contribution of young people is an important aspect of good practice (Ofsted, 2014), but nearly 80 per cent of the schools using the toolkit have only rated themselves as a ‘3’ or a ‘4’ in this category. Additionally, 50 per cent of the schools registered do not have an online safety group, and no school rated themselves as a ‘one’ –

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6 However, it should be noted that the early adopters’ profiles are better than average and only 30 schools are currently registered.
‘policy and practice is aspirational and innovative’ for online safety education. Among other online targets, these would be an obvious priority for schools in Suffolk to improve on.

**FIGURE 2: ANALYSIS OF SUFFOLK SCHOOLS USING 360 DEGREE SAFE TOOLKIT**

If further data sources could be identified and developed with a view to collating and comparing trends and incidents, a richer and clearer picture of online risk for children in Suffolk could be developed (for example, police reports, MASH data, 175/571 safeguarding assessment data and the Suffolk Cybersurvey). This would also enable a more robust evaluation of the effectiveness of any future interventions relating to online safety.
EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING PARENTS TO BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

The focus of the proposed MECSP project is, as noted in the introduction, twofold. This section of the report addresses the aim of identifying effective strategies for engaging parents in being an integral part of keeping children safe online.

It addresses the following questions:

♦ What, if any, effective engagement strategies exist with parents, parental groups, and interaction with agencies regarding the safe use of the internet and digital social media?
♦ What, if any evidence, shows effective engagement with parents/parental groups around issues linked with personal e-safety?
  - What, if anything, has worked elsewhere?

The evidence suggests that some parents in the UK are imposing rules on their children’s internet use. 69 per cent of 9 to 12 year olds say that their parents have put boundaries on their use of social networking sites, only letting them use them under supervision or with permission, or in some cases not letting them use them at all (Livingstone et al., 2010). As reflected in the wider research and in findings from the focus group data, levels of parental knowledge of the internet and mobile technologies vary widely, as do parental supervision and mediation strategies with their children. According to the literature, parental supervision and mediation of children’s internet use also varies with educational attainment, socio-economic status, age and gender of child, disability, ethnicity, family structure and level of parental knowledge about online risk.

Parents obtain information and advice about online safety through a variety of sources, but research to date suggests that parents’ preferred sources of information on online safety are primarily the child’s school, followed by traditional media, other family members, friends, internet service providers and other online sources (Livingstone et al., 2010). Our focus groups suggested that similarly, parents rely on the school for information about online safety and were also informed by what they read in the newspapers. One parent had contacted Sky and had had controls set so that their child could not access adult content. It was felt by both the parental groups and the professionals who participated in the focus groups that often parents either did not know enough about online risk, that they did not think it would happen to their child, that their child was too young for it to concern them or that the dangers ‘were elsewhere’. Many parents and professionals felt that parents had little awareness that it could ‘happen in sleepy Suffolk’.

“I think that one of the problems is that everyone thinks that this scary internet stuff happens elsewhere. No-one actually thinks it is going to happen to them. They don’t think it will happen in their neighbourhood. I think it’s something to do with Suffolk. Where I am it’s a small village school and the parents at my school think – they think, well, it doesn’t happen round here.” Teacher.

“A lot of parents are just overwhelmed or have no idea how to deal with issues like bullying, sexting and the use of inappropriate sites.” Teacher.

“Parents are more worried about worrying their child than making them aware of the dangers and keeping them safe.” Teacher.

“We are the middle of [town] in a really deprived area but our parents still don’t think that it will happen here. They think it is something that happens elsewhere. The horror stories you hear are the ones that happen somewhere else – and that it wouldn’t happen to their children.” Teacher.
The Opinion Leaders Report (2013) based on an online survey with 1,500 parents, found a clear demand from parents for information and advice about online safety, with nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of parents stating that they wanted to know more. In particular, parents requested advice on filtering content or blocking sites effectively (18 per cent); awareness raising and education for parents to keep children safe (15 per cent); and protection against problematic online behaviour (10 per cent). Yet, while there is an increasing amount of information and advice for parents online, the fact that the use of industry tools (safety information, abuse buttons etc.) remains low implies a lack of awareness and/or trust on the behalf of the public (O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:3).

THE NEED FOR RAISING PARENTAL AWARENESS

“Parental engagement – or a lack of it – is a huge, huge problem. It’s got to be everyone’s responsibility but it’s only when there is a problem that they engage with us and that is when the child is in trouble.” Police.

**FIGURE 3: PARENTAL AWARENESS OF ONLINE RISK (EU KIDS ONLINE)**

One important overall finding from the EU Kids Online survey concerns the lack of awareness that many parents have regarding risks children face online (as detailed in Figure 3). However, a significant challenge arises for policy makers in addressing the gaps in understanding between parents and children about young people’s experience online. At the same time, given that the household remains the most prominent location for internet use (87%) parents are best positioned to offer mediation and support for children online (O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:3).

Ofcom (2016) suggests that more parents are concerned about online content than last year (305 vs. 25% in 2015). However, while many teachers report that children have the skills and knowledge to use the internet safely at school, only 58 per cent of teachers in Aston and Brzyska’s (2012) study felt that children have the skills and knowledge to use the internet safely at home. Much of the focus of recent research has been on children's behaviours in relation to online risk. But it is important that parents are better informed about not only what
their children are doing online that could encounter risk but also about how their own behaviours and attitudes to the internet and social networking may also be putting their children at risk. Livingstone et al. (2013) found that among children whose parents impose no restrictions on their internet use, most have a social networking site – including 71 per cent of nine year olds. This is significant, given that the minimum age for most social networks is 13.

The ‘over 13 rule’ for many social media platforms originates from the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) law in America before social media actually existed and, as such, children who engage with social media under the age of 13 are not breaking the law but invalidating the terms and conditions of the online provision. However, children who are using social media under the age of 13 may be at increased risk of exposure to inappropriate content, online grooming and bullying.

In our study, underage use of social networking sites was a frequent topic of conversation that arose in all the focus groups. Some parents, it seemed, were well aware of their child’s use of social media. Others, however, were seemingly not.

Lilley et al.’s (2014:9) study estimates that around half of all the UK’s 11 and 12 year olds (666,000 children) have a profile on a social networking site for which the minimum age is at least 13 and that in ‘many cases parents are aware that their child has a profile, and may have helped them to set it up.’ Many parents do not understand the implications of having a child younger than 13 on these sites, how privacy settings work in relation to age and the additional risks of unwanted contact, potential grooming and targeted advertising.

Similarly, we found that the teachers and CYP professionals felt that parents did not understand the risks of younger children on social network platforms. Often, they would discover children’s use of the sites as the profiles were public and the staff recognised the children by their comments and posts. The professionals discussed conversations that they had had with parents about the issue and felt that in the most part parents were ‘ignorant of the dangers’ or they didn’t realise that the profile was public. Most were aware that their child had a profile and in many cases had helped them set it up. While many parents were unaware of the risks when the schools approached them about their child’s use of social media, many were unwilling to remove them but did say that they would make the profiles private.

“Parents are not aware of the consequences of lying about children’s age on social media and that is the problem as also there is no one for us to go to – no point to refer onto if they persist on their child maintaining the profile on the site and it’s impossible for us to police it ourselves. They have no idea of the consequences.” CYP Professional.

Annansingh and Veli’s (2016) study highlights the need for improved communication between children and parents with regards to internet use, activities and accessibility and
that there is also a need to educate parents to be better online safety champions for their children.

"More information is needed for parents on how to do stuff through joint school and police initiatives. Schools are a good access point to go and get the information. Parents need to be told things by whatever medium – Twitter, Facebook and that – so they feel one step ahead of the latest issues." CYP Practitioner.

The significance of parents being role models for their children also emerged from the focus group data. Many professionals commented on how parents’ behaviour set examples – both positive and negative – for their children.

"I went to a visit only a while ago and there’s a new dating app where you shake your phone and get a random person’s profile and this was a mum teaching her teenage daughter how to use it and that is about appropriateness and I’d never heard of it." CYP Professional.

One Year 6 student also powerfully illustrated the negative impact that parents use of social media could have when asked what she thought would make the internet a better place:

"Get rid of Facebook. That would make the internet a better place. I mean I’m not on Facebook but my Dad... he’s like on it all the time. I am like trying to talk to him and he’s like...Yeah [holds her hands flat under her face and looks down at them]. I mean ‘look at me – I’m more important than a screen’ but he spends all his time looking at his phone and checking his Facebook and never looking at me. I’m just like “Hello! I’m here!! But he doesn’t care, he just keeps on looking at Facebook. He cares about Facebook more than me.” Girl, Yr 6.

In understanding the risk landscape, it is not only children’s behaviours online that is causing concern. Most children in the UK have a digital footprint before they are two years old, some before they are born and these aspects of parental behaviour online are risk related. As well as sharing personal information about themselves and their children online, many parents post images of their children onto public platforms. Brosh (2016) discusses how parents actively share information about their children on Facebook, but little research has explored the extent of this issue of ‘sharenting’. The Nominet Study (2015) highlights how the average parent posts over 200 photos of their children every year, although the majority of parents do not check privacy settings regularly. The study revealed that 17 per cent of parents have never checked their Facebook privacy settings and almost half (46 per cent) have only checked once or twice, despite the social network being the most common platform for photo sharing. Although 70 per cent of parents claimed their main gadget for taking photos was a smartphone, fewer than half (49 per cent) were aware that location data showing where photos were taken could be stored.

With the growing popularity of gaming among young children, parents clearly need to have a good understanding of the range and types of games available (Ofcom, 2014). Yet Wespieser’s (2015) survey of over 14,000 children in London in Years 3-9 found that many children play games deemed as unsuitable for their age (as rated by Pan European Game Information – PEGI). Two-thirds are boys, and the majority of those children who report they play these games also reported that they had parental consent. Clarke et al.’s (2015) study also found underage gaming to be an issue with 13 per cent of primary school age children playing Grand Theft Auto at home in spite of it being rated as 18+ by PEGI. Parents have a poor understanding of what children are actually doing online especially in relation to games (Palmer, 2015). While there is conflicting evidence in relation to societal violence and media violence (Ferguson, 2015), it is clear from both the REA and the focus groups that there is considerable concern in relation to young children accessing and playing 18+ games.
In our focus groups, we found extensive concern regarding these games, and that for some children this caused considerable safeguarding concerns – especially in relation viewing unsuitable content and gaming 18+ games.

“We have sent out PEGI ratings information to parents but they still let their children use Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto – even if we do send them information. And they are savvy – when parents go out, their siblings and friends let them play games.” Teacher.

A number of teachers told us that they had told parents about PEGI7, but that although some parents would then review their children’s use of unsuitable games, others would not. They felt that while some parents were ‘embarrassed when they were caught’ often parents did not see a problem with the games – especially if they themselves were playing it.

“Parents buy and share the games like Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto with their children. When they are ‘caught’ and spoken to by staff, parents [might] feel embarrassed but will usually say what needs to be said. Some will get rid of the game but others don’t do anything.” Teacher.

What is also of concern here is that in four separate focus groups, teachers discussed cases where they had been very worried about a child’s use of inappropriate games, especially playing violent games very late at night that were causing psychological problems for the child, and possible neglect. They had reported their concerns to Customer First but to their knowledge the case had not been followed up.

“For a couple of our children, what they access at home is a real issue. They are accessing sites with very adult content. It is a really serious safeguarding issue. We have brought it up again and again with parents. But they say that he is in bed by seven o’clock. But he tells us a different story and he’s online at midnight. But the parents say ‘Dad plays those games so we have those games in the house’. We notify parents in the newsletter that these games are a safeguarding [issue] for us and when we have had serious concerns about the level and intensity of the gaming and neglect, we have treated it as a safeguarding issue and we have followed it up as a safeguarding issue. But when we referred it – it was like referring it into a black hole and I really think that other professionals need to understand the seriousness of this. They failed to respond at all.” Teacher.

“Parents are not aware of the impact on the child. We had one child at After School Club who had watched Call of Duty and then had a traumatic reaction triggered by fireworks going off nearby.” CYP Practitioner.

From the studies discussed within the scope of this REA and from the focus groups data illustrating the concerns of the vast majority of teachers, police and professionals who participated, many parents are unaware of the potential harm that online behaviour courts. However, online risks can have very serious and tragic consequences as the NSPCC review of case studies states:

7 See http://www.pegi.info/en/index/
According to Ofcom (2016:6) ‘the number of children with a social media profile doubles between the ages of 10 and 11’.

The study by Opinion Leader for Internet Matters (2013) suggests that the ages of 10 to 13 represent a critical moment at which parents feel most concerned about their children’s internet use and are in most need of information and advice. They recommend that in order to help parents prepare for this and develop an appropriate parenting response, information and advice should be targeted at parents some years before their children turn 10, perhaps from the age of six, when their children’s internet use becomes more independent.

The teachers in our study were concerned about children under 13 being on social media and felt that parents were unaware of the risks and in some cases had set up the profiles for their children.

“I’d say most of our Year 6’s and many of our Year 5’s are on social media. Facebook or Instagram and certainly YouTube. Parents don’t think about the consequences and think it’s OK to lie about children’s ages. Either parents know the kids have set them up for themselves [or some] even do it for them. Once they’re on, it’s impossible to persuade them to take them down. Very occasionally parents can be persuaded to but normally that’s only after we are aware that something serious has occurred with their child on social media like a grooming attempt before parents see the danger. Sadly, it’s sometimes too late and children and get into serious trouble online especially lying about their age and people think they are older than they are.” Teacher.

The study by Opinion Leader for Internet Matters (2013) recommends that as there is evidence from parents of children under 10 that social media sites are being used at increasingly early ages (with some children having Facebook accounts from the age of eight) any information for parents will need to be alert to this trend, as the heightened parental concerns around social networking may apply to children younger than 10-13 in the near future. Wespieser (2015) found that the most popular sites are Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+ and Snapchat with Facebook now less popular but that 30 per cent of seven year olds had made friends with people online that they did not know before. Similarly, Clarke et al. (2015) found that 34 per cent of primary school aged children have communicated with people they do not know while gaming and 27 per cent of primary school age pupils in their study had experienced something distressing online. Livingstone (2014) examines the EU Kids online data and suggests that for 9-11 year old children, the main question in relation to social network sites is what is real or fake, but by 11-13 years old, children are more concerned by what is fun. Therefore, she argues that both peer and parental relations shape a child’s changing priorities online and offline, which in turn has implications for their perceptions of risk.

HOW PARENTS MANAGE ONLINE RISK

Research suggests that parents employ a variety of strategies and parenting styles in managing online risk. The most recent Ofcom study (2016:4), for example, states: “parents are continuing to use a range of methods to mediate children’s internet use, with 96% of
parents of 5-15s [in their research] using at least one of technical tools, rules, supervision and talking to their children, and four in ten parents using all four”. A qualitative study with 10 families with at least one child aged 6-7 conducted by Livingstone et al. (2014a), for example, found that parents’ strategies for managing children’s internet use were patchy and that they tended to rely on ad hoc observations or the need to intervene when their child’s lack of skill became apparent. They found that many parents thought that they did not need to have more robust strategies in place until their children were older, despite the fact that some children could already bypass safety settings. The children in their study, however, said that they would actually welcome new ideas or further guidance about how to use both the devices and the apps available to them.

Livingstone et al. (2014a) further established that parents were more worried about their children encountering violence and strong language than they were about unwanted contact. The parents also said that they would welcome advice on promoting their children’s online safety, as the advice from schools was limited. Subsequently, parental awareness of risks and safety online needs to be enhanced and improved. The priority for awareness-raising for parents should be on educating them about the nature and types of risk their child(ren) may encounter online. Professionals highlighted the importance of making parents aware of how data can be easily transferred and the potential risks and consequences from posting materials publically as well as privately.

“There doesn’t seem to be any understanding of the risk, either from the child themselves or from the parent. There’s no understanding that if you put that on here electronically that it could end up over there. There is no understanding. I think the technology has come so quickly and people have raced along with it that they don’t understand, there’s not that understanding of what happens to it. You try to explain to young people that if they put images online that they’re not going to be able to make it go away, they’re always going to be there. They don’t understand it. Or that somebody that’s contacted them and put up a photo might not be that person. So it’s always going to be that young people are quite naïve.” CYP Professional.

It was interesting from the focus groups with the children that they were well aware that different parents had different attitudes to online risk (for example in relation social media) and, as such, some girls aged 10 we spoke to had accounts on social media platforms for over 13s and some did not as the following conversation depicts:

[Instagram] “I look at photos and me and [name of child] are both on it so we can look at each other’s photos and like cute animals photos and I look on [name of child’s] because she’s my best friend and it’s just really nice.” Girl, Yr 5.

“I don’t have Instagram.” Girl, Yr 5.

“No, neither do I.” Girl, Yr 5.

“No I don’t, my Mum won’t let me. I’m not allowed it because it’s thirteen rated so I’m not allowed it.” Girl, Yr 5.

Some parents were managing and monitor online risk for their children who were using social media at a younger age, by being a ‘friend’ on their child’s social media profile.

[Instagram] “We put our Mum’s on so she can see it and she can say what I am allowed to look at and what we are not allowed to look at and she can see it and she can see who I am friends with and set it so I can only be friends with people I know and I’m not allowed to be friends with people I don’t know so she set it like that.” Girl, Yr 5.
The data from the focus groups we conducted suggests similarly that some parents are actively managing online risk through using technical tools, supervision and talking to their children. Some of the children, for example, talked about their parents being able to monitor what they were doing online through monitoring software like Family Share:\(^8\):

“There’s a thing called Family Share – I don’t know if you have seen it but when you use the internet and stuff it comes up on their [parents’] phone and they can see what you have looking at and been doing online and parents can do something on YouTube so they can see what you have been watching or they can block things online so you can’t see them.” Boy, Yr 5.

The parents’ discussions about using technical tools, however, suggested that not parents were aware of the availability of filtering and monitoring and, if they were, that the usability of parental controls varied across platforms and devices:

“….some are easy to set like a Kindle and iPad but YouTube has no controls and on the PlayStation like it’s hidden about how to set it and also there are loopholes as setting may be switched on but in some games there are ways round it for particular games.” Parent.

The majority of the children we spoke to talked about what their parents had told them about potential risks online which focused mainly about giving out personal information, talking to people you did not know and inappropriate content.

“My Mum has told me not to go on websites that give you free stuff because they tell you like you might get a chance to get cool stuff for free but they just want your details …and you have to put in your details and sometimes like you don’t even get anything but they just want all your details and that, like your name, your email address and that.” Boy, Yr 5.

Many of the professionals though felt that while some parents did talk to their children and adopted strategies to actively manage risk online, other parents did not and that some parents, as illustrated in the point above about 18+ games, failed to either recognise the risk or actively decided to ignore it.

Byrne et al. (2014) found that a permissive parenting style, a difficulty communicating with children about online risks, and household environmental variables such as having access to a private computing space play a role in parental underestimation of risky social interactions that their children encounter and experience online.

\(^8\) See https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201084
Improving the dialogue and understanding between parents and children in relation to online activities is vitally important, but parents need to be alerted to the risks involved while avoiding an alarmist approach (O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:3). Kokkinos et al. (2016) found that children of more democratic parents scored higher in safe internet use, internet skills, and parenting communication about internet use. According to Sasson and Mesch (2016) there are very few studies which consider the joint contribution of parental mediation, peer norms and risky online activities to the likelihood of being bullied on the internet. There is some evidence that more parents are talking to their children about risk online and Ofcom (2015b) found that parents of 5-15 year olds are more likely than in 2014 to say they have talked to their child about managing online risks. Four in ten parents of 5-15s say they talk to their child at least every few weeks about managing online risks (Ofcom, 2015b). While this increase is encouraging, however, many parents still do not talk to their children about online risk in spite of being aware that such risks exist and ‘parents struggle to know when the time is right to have conversations with children about complex and adult risks’. As such, many parents lack confidence in their ability to support their children to manage online relationships (Ofcom, 2016:9).

The focus group conversations with teachers and CYP professionals also reflect these findings as the participants felt that often parents of primary school aged children felt that their children were too young to either be at risk online or that they were too young to be exposed to the conversations about online risk. Interestingly some schools had actually received complaints from parents about their children having an assembly about online risk:

“"I've had parents actually complain because of the e-safety work I've done because their child came home and told them what we have been doing at school. But you just have to talk parents though that but it is certainly a concern." Teacher.

Over nine in ten 8-15s have been given information about staying safe online and over nine in ten 8-11s (94%) ‘say they would tell someone if they saw something worrying or nasty online, with this most likely to be a family member’. However, fewer 8-11s report they had
been given information about staying safe by a parent since last year – 92% vs. 96% (Ofcom, 2106:10). Therefore, research suggests that parents (mothers and fathers) are the main source of social support when children experience something that upsets them online. Younger children are more likely to talk to their parents than anyone else, with both girls and boys most likely to seek support from mothers – 65 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively (O’Neill and Dinh, 2015:393).

The children in our focus groups all talked about who they would turn to for support if they needed it. Most would talk to their parents or sometimes their friends and they discussed the issue of trust in relation to seeking support:

“Year 6 might know who to tell if they got scam calls but Year 5 might not and Year 4 downwards they might not be sure even if they say it and if they can... As we get older we start to trust our parents more and more. I’m not saying that they don’t trust their parents, I am saying like with these things it’s kinda a bit – I don’t know really... it’s like I saw this message about winning a million pounds and I kept pressing it then I told my Dad and he told me to [click] off of it and not press it.” Girl, Yr 7.

Some children, however, did talk about the reasons why they would not tell their parents and they were worried that if they talked to their parents about things they had seen or if they had received unwanted contact then their parent would take their phone or tablet away from them rather than teach them how to block content or unwanted contact. Sometimes they also felt that their parents were not able to teach them these digital skills, as they did not know them themselves.

“Adults don’t know as much as kids do nowadays ‘cos they didn’t have crucial crew, online safety, e-safety talks and had flip phones and they couldn’t access the internet on the phone, it wasn’t touchscreen; all they could do was phone, text and play Tetris or something so they had that entertainment but didn’t have Facebook.” Boy, Yr 7.

“I don’t think adults are as aware as they think because they are allowed everything and they can do what they want but the children, they’re more aware because they know what they shouldn’t do because it’s like age restricted and so the adults wouldn’t be as aware because they like have no restrictions so they could be just happily going along ‘blah blah blah... don’t need to be careful of this ‘cos I’m allowed to do it’... and then they get scammed.” Boy, Yr 7.
**FIGURE 4: HOW PARENTS MANAGE ONLINE RISK ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) AND LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (LIVINGSTONE ET AL. 2015A)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower income, less educated</th>
<th>Lower income, more educated</th>
<th>Higher income, more educated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• relatively high device ownership</td>
<td>• a mix of media-rich and media-poor homes in terms of device ownership</td>
<td>• an ethic of expressive empowerment in parenting values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a generation gap in digital media expertise between parents and children, especially in immigrant families</td>
<td>• a variety of domestic circumstances with a high proportion of single parent households</td>
<td>• a wide range of diverse mediation practices, including different strategies to manage restrictions for digital device use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more restrictive parental mediation strategies regarding digital devices, yet parents who are rather ambivalent and worried about digital media</td>
<td>• fairly confident parents in terms of both their digital skills and their ability to prioritise active over restrictive mediation</td>
<td>• efforts to promote offline (non-digital) activities for children while limiting digital activities at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an ‘ethic’ of respectful connectedness in parenting values</td>
<td>• parents who work with media at home, who often find that their own practices undermine their efforts to limit their children’s digital media use</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Drawing on qualitative data as part of the EU Kids online project, Smahel and Wright (2014) investigated the role of parental mediation in children’s online activities and experiences. They found that many of the concerns that parents express about the online world stem from ones they have about media generally or those related to experiences in the offline world (for example, content, the time spent on a particular activity, or talking to strangers). As such, they suggest, even parents who are not so confident online are still usually able to provide some advice to their children.

This was also true of the outcomes of the focus groups with the children in that their parents had talked them about keeping safe – even if they did not use or understand the app or social media platform. However, the teachers and professionals did not share this view and felt predominantly that parents did not sufficiently moderate or monitor children’s online activities. Shin (2015) argues that there is a lack of an in-depth understanding of how parents perceive the internet, its impact on their children and how such perceptions affect the way parents socialise their children as internet users.

> “When we raised the tiredness of this child and we talked to this child and discovered the level of gaming they’re doing with their siblings and that this child was six but was playing an 18+ game, the parent’s response was that it was okay as the game had an historical background and, therefore, was educational. I think that reflects the level that parents perceive in relation these games.” Teacher.

The Opinion Leader report (2013) suggests that the impact of parental awareness and confidence on notions of responsibility is borne out by their analysis which, they suggest, shows that the degree of protective action taken by parents is strongly determined by both their awareness of online risks and levels of technical confidence.
TABLE 6: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS – DEGREES OF PROTECTIVE ACTION
(Opinion Leader, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage in population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ill-equipped worriers</td>
<td>Permissive parents with low technological confidence, who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action and are not confident their children are safe</td>
<td>22 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controllers</td>
<td>Authoritative parents with high technological confidence, high awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take strong protective action and are reasonably confident their children are safe</td>
<td>20 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive Techies</td>
<td>Permissive parents with high technological confidence. They show high awareness of online risks but are not concerned by them. They take limited protective action and are confident their children are safe</td>
<td>18 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protectors</td>
<td>Authoritative parents with reasonable technological confidence and a high awareness of online risks. They take strong protective action and are confident their children are safe</td>
<td>18 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unengaged and overwhelmed</td>
<td>Permissive parents with low technological confidence who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action but are reasonably confident their children are safe</td>
<td>15 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident Techies</td>
<td>Parents with high technological confidence, medium awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take limited protective action due to young age of children</td>
<td>6 per cent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The report states that ‘the table above indicates that certain segments will be more responsive to messages around child internet safety than others, although the most responsive segments may not always be those most in need of support. While some segments need encouragement to take action, others need to be reminded to stay informed and stay ahead of the emerging risks’ (Opinion Leader, 2013:6).

It was interesting from the focus groups that one teacher talked about the importance of parents having a good understanding of not only how to set up parental controls but also why they needed them.
There are various activities that parents undertake to mediate their children’s internet use, and other studies have identified behaviours that constitute active mediation and those that constitute restrictive mediation. Active mediation defined as ‘conversations between parents and children about technology and its content’ (Przybylski et al., 2014:10), is important in parent-child negotiations on online risk. Beyens and Beullens (2016) study with 364 parents of children aged 2–10 years investigated the relationship between parental mediation, children’s tablet use and parent-child conflict. Their results showed that the children who spent more time using the tablet had more conflicts with their parents and that, while children who received high amounts of restrictive mediation had more conflicts with their parents about the tablet, children who co-used the tablet with their parents had less conflict.

Some of the children in our study talked about sanctions imposed on them by their parents if they viewed inappropriate content or adult games:

“For me it’s not just about telling parents that they need to have these controls in place but it’s also about understanding the risks to know why they should have the controls in place, especially for the less well-educated parents – they just don’t get it. You need to keep explaining it to them.” Teacher.

When I am watching an inappropriate YouTuber, my Mum will ban me for a week, and once I have learned my lesson she will let me watch it [YouTube] again.” Boy, Yr 5.

“My Mummy and Daddy sometimes come upstairs and if they see a video that they don’t like they will ban it from me but apart from that I know some swearing already and I usually find some on some videos but it doesn’t matter because I know it already and I’m not going to like do it again so just apart from some things that they don’t like I am pretty free to watch whatever videos I like.” Boy, Yr 5.

Lwina et al. (2008) propose that little academic research has examined how effective safeguards actually are in limiting children’s disclosure of information online. They examine how proposed safeguards may interact with various types of parental involvement in limiting children’s willingness to disclose information online. In their analysis from two studies involving pre-teen and young teens, they illustrate how safeguarding effectiveness depends on both the type of parental mediation and the particular age group. The results showed that
online safeguard effectiveness was dependent on the parental mediation strategy experienced by the children and that the nature of these interactions differed among children of different age groups (Lwina et al., 2008). They argue that their findings support the implementation of safeguards for both pre-teen and younger teenage children in order to reduce the disclosure of personally identifying data, but that unless these safeguards were paired with active parental mediation strategies, their effectiveness was still found to be less than that achieved by active mediation alone.

Vanderhoven et al. (2016) found that whereas parental involvement did not necessarily improve risk awareness, it did change children’s intentions to engage in certain unsafe behaviour, such as posting personal and sexual information on the profile page of a social network site, and in reducing existing problematic behaviour and that the beneficial impacts were particularly evident for boys. They conclude that, “these findings suggest that developing prevention campaigns with active parental involvement is well worth the effort” (Vanderhoven, 2016:247).

**FIGURE 6: THE RANGE OF PARENTAL MEDIATION INTERVENTIONS (SMAHEL AND WRIGHT, 2014)**

Parents adapt mediation strategies based on their children’s age. Younger children often view parental intervention as positive, or at least do not mind it, whereas older children are more ambivalent and often prefer to talk with peers, seeing parents as invading their privacy (Smahel and Wright, 2014). This is an important issue because it can cause tensions and make it less likely that the children will confide in parents when problematic situations emerge. However, “little research has investigated how parental mediation strategies for internet and social media use can influence resilient self-regulation of ICTs [information and communication technologies] or active engagement with these digital contexts” (Przybylski et al., 2014:11).

Furthermore, research from the PSHE Association (2016) found that 78 per cent of parents were either fairly or very concerned about sexual imagery produced by young people, compared to 69 per cent who were concerned about alcohol misuse and 67 per cent who were concerned about smoking. Yet, according to the NSPCC (2015) only 42 per cent parents have discussed sexting with children at least once, while nearly three in five have not discussed it at all, despite nearly three quarters of parents believing it is always harmful. The recent Romeo and Juliet resource launched by the National Crime Agency’s CEOP Command in 2016 encourages parents to talk to their children about sex, relationships and the internet⁹. Effective communication and parental mediation can reduce the risk of harm and Przybylski et al. (2014:4) concluded that, “supportive and enabling parenting has a more positive impact on resilience than parental strategies to restrict or monitor internet use”.

⁹ [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Romeo_and_Juliet/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Romeo_and_Juliet/)

MESCP/final report/December 2016
Although active mediation is known to be more effective than restrictive mediation, Sin (2015) points out that active mediation requires more effort and parents need to have sound knowledge and understanding of the internet.

**Table 7: Four types of parent-child relationship in relation to internet use identified by Paus-Hasebrink et al. (2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Digital Native vs. Digital Immigrant Family – children who are clearly more skilled than their parents and use the internet relatively independently</th>
<th>The parent-child relationships are characterised by a very low level of any kind of parental mediation and a low level of parent–child proximity. This is in line with the fact that this family type includes the oldest group (14.4 years on average) and the highest percentage of boys; the children use the internet very often (similar to Type 3 below) and have high digital skills. They also perform the highest number of risky activities and are more likely to have harmful experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Unskilled Family – children who have just started to use the internet, have very low skills, and get little support from their parents</td>
<td>With 15 per cent of all cases, this type is the smallest one. The parent-child relationships are characterised by low levels of active mediation and a strong tendency to restrictive mediation. Accordingly, children's skills are the lowest. Proximity between parents and children is as low as for Type 1 families. This group includes more girls than boys and slightly younger children, who use the internet less frequently than any other group. Risky online activities and harmful experiences are rather rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Triple C Family – children who use the internet very often and exchange information about it with their parents</td>
<td>Including more than one third of all cases, this type is the biggest. The parent-child relationships are characterised by high levels of active mediation and low levels of restrictive mediation. Children estimate their own skills to be fairly high and parents also consider their children to be competent internet users. Proximity indicators are mostly above average. This type is not characterised by a certain age group or gender. The children are intensive internet users who undertake an average number of risky online activities but are most likely to report harmful experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Protective Family – children who are strongly regulated by their parents</td>
<td>The parent-child relationships are characterised by high levels of active and restrictive mediation, with the latter showing far more frequently than in any</td>
</tr>
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</table>
other group. This goes along with the literature on gender differentiation, as the probability to be in this cluster is higher for girls. Digital skills are rather low, while the indicators for proximity are the highest. Almost 60 per cent of the children are 11 or 12 years old, so this group is the youngest. Their internet use is below the average but not as low as in Type 2 families. Risky online activities are very low. The same goes for harmful experiences

Kalmus et al. (2015) considered the effectiveness of parental mediation and young people’s excessive internet use (EIU). They found that active parental involvement in the child’s internet use (after the child had experienced online harm) and restrictive mediation were associated with lower EIU. While Kalmus et al.’s (2015) study focused on EIU and parental mediation, Vandoninck et al.’s (2013) analysis suggests that more generally parents indeed favour a mediating approach, although it is often combined with some restrictions. They found that being restrictive does not enhance a child’s online resilience (Vandoninck et al., 2013:72). Therefore, while restrictive mediation may curtail some children’s online activities, it does not improve coping mechanisms. As such, more proactive mediation strategies need to be adopted by parents.

Other family members are also important in family mediation practices, as siblings and cousins often provide support to children and serve a protective role, particularly for younger children – sometimes as a result of siblings experiencing online risk themselves.

"My sister had Twitter and then she deleted it as she put this photo on and she didn’t realise and like 100 people saw her photo that she didn’t know so she deleted it and she didn’t know that she had it on ‘not private’." Girl, Yr 5.

Also extended family members like grandparents, aunts and uncles who often provide advice for children, and sometimes children find it easier to talk to them than their parents. Furthermore, with changing patterns of informal childcare practices (Statham, 2011) children are increasingly spending time with other family members outside of school hours.

There was considerable talk in the children’s groups of spending time with other family members sharing online content and also getting help and advice:

"I do. I share a lot with my cousin like links to games or videos and that but she also helps me do stuff online and if I don’t understand how to do something then she’ll help me. She knows more than my Mum so she’ll help me.” Girl, Yr 5.

It is clear from Smahel and Wright’s (2014) study that peers also support each other, including through sharing negative experiences. This information sharing is important as these experiences allow children to learn from their peers’ mistakes and to discuss these risks. This is also an effective mechanism in online safety educational programmes, to encourage children to reflect on the mistakes and risky experiences of others. However, as Smahel and Wright (2014) and Phippen (2016) point out, peers and older siblings might also potentially introduce children to risks as well. This could include, for example, sharing links to pornographic content, and violent content, such as the videos of recent beheadings posted online. This was also found to be a concern among the professionals in our groups who discussed how older children and siblings introduce or allow younger siblings to play 18+ games, set up social media profiles for them or show them inappropriate content.
Therefore, parental mediation and the monitoring of children's internet usage by parents is a strategy that is often suggested to reduce the risk to parents' children, and the literature indicates that the majority of parents do engage in monitoring behaviours at least some of the time (Robinson, 2012). However, it is not always easy for parents to do this as children’s internet access becomes more individualised and mobilised (Livingstone et al., 2014, and Bond, 2014). Furthermore, in Shin's (2015:661) study, parents acknowledged the importance of internet education and updating internet knowledge, but “they did not actively seek a way to increase their internet knowledge. Few had attended workshops or seminars to learn more about trends in children’s internet use, and not many had adequate understanding of government or school-initiated cyber wellness programs targeted to parents and children”.

**EFFECTIVE PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

It is broadly recognised that more work needs to be developed with parents regarding an understanding of what their children are exposed to online; what their children’s harmful behaviours have been online and how they can work in partnership with the staff to better protect their children (Palmer, 2015). This point was clearly apparent in the adult focus group’s accounts with teachers, police and CYP professionals, discussing the importance but also the challenges of educating parents and trying to engage them with online safety.

“Whenever you hear people talking about it though, they talk as if it is one children going online – you never hear about the older brothers and sisters. That’s one thing I really worry about but you never hear it mentioned.” Teacher.

“Yes, it is the older siblings that often can be the problem. They don’t necessarily realise. You know, the parents have gone out and they are looking after a younger one and they want to play the games – you know, like Call of Duty or Grand Theft Auto. They let the young one’s join in and play it and they run some people over and think that’s fun and that’s a problem.” Teacher.

“I’ve also heard of parents who do buy games like that for their children and sit and share the game with them and sit next to them on the sofa and play the game – like Call of Duty – and they think that’s good parenting because they are sharing time with their children and playing the game.” Teacher.

“Yes, that happens loads.” Teacher.

However, as already noted, parents do not always readily understand the importance of online safety and even when opportunities are provided and events organised they do not necessarily attend. The children also felt it was very important for parents to be engaged in learning about online safety:
Livingstone et al. (2015b:4) suggests that for policy-makers and practitioners, it is important to learn whether a generic approach to parental advice and awareness-raising is sufficient, or whether tailored guidance would be more effective for the different target groups of parents being addressed. Helpful questions about engaging parents are posed by Corish (2014):

- How can you empower parents to deal with the complex issues their children may experience online?
- How can you get parents to support and understand the online safety education program the school has adopted?
- How do you build the right mechanisms to support and advise parents facing these issues and build the support structures to escalate incidents that could lead to serious harm?
- Which areas of parental concern can a school focus on to encourage the most effective engagement?
- How do you educate parents to do these things for themselves?
- What are the most appropriate resources to which parents can be directed to manage issues on behalf of their child?

The REA reveals that there is little published research evidence that evaluates effective engagement with parents/parental groups around issues linked with online safety. However, many schools, educators and online safety consultants have commented on poor attendance for online safety evenings and events, apathy in general from parents and that those parents who did attend are those who already practice a high level of mediation in relation to their child’s online activities. However, often parents are hard to engage on online safety awareness initiatives and this can prove challenging for schools.

Mackenzie, (2014) suggests that for a successful parent’s information event on online safety:

- Don’t try to do it all by yourself. Do use the power of your school cluster to spread the message out far and wide.
- Do drip feed interesting facts to parents by whatever communications method you use.
- Don’t fill them with media scare stories, but balance the positives with some of the risks.
- Don’t use the word ‘e-safety’. Invariably parents don’t understand that word, or associate it with something else. Be innovative and use other words.
- Get the students involved; parents are far more likely to turn up to a parents’ evening if their children are a part of it. For example, you could poll the parents about their concerns or misconceptions, and then use the children to help answer these concerns.
♦ Ask the students what their concerns are. Run a poll and develop some of the more popular concerns into a drama/play and get the children to act this out. This has the added advantage of showing that online safety is not a technology issue but one of behaviour and risk.

♦ Involve the PTA if you have one. This is usually an area they are passionate about.

♦ Use your local media; invite them into the school before any event to discuss what you are doing so that they can put the message out for you. Invite them to the evening so that they can write a post-event article.

♦ Use social media such as Facebook. Many schools see this is a risk but Facebook and other social media sites have a bad name simply because you only hear about the bad news stories. There are ways to set up these services so that they can be used as ‘broadcast’ accounts; in other words, a way for you to share information without allowing others to leave comments.

According to our focus groups (including the children’s ones) parents often use Facebook groups to communicate with each other about school matters; to gossip and to discuss everyday school interactions – sometimes in a negative light.

“*Well the parents use Facebook. We are constantly having to deal with problems with parents on Facebook who are complaining about something to do with the school or who are discussing a particular child or teacher. It’s a nightmare. They say things publicly about other children – [x] has been unkind to [y] so I’m going to put that on Facebook so everyone knows about it and children see that.*” Teacher.

However, the focus group conversations also revealed some ideas and suggestions for engaging parents in online safety information and awareness, and all the teachers and professionals commented on the usefulness of the focus groups discussions, which in themselves had enabled the sharing of ideas and suggestions for engaging parents. One school used Facebook as their main engagement tool:

“We have got nearly 300 parents following on Facebook and interacting with our posts. We also know when and how to get reach and their attention. We use YouTube videos and brief headers like ‘have you seen this?’ to get the message home.” Teacher.

Some examples included:

♦ A text messaging system to alert parents to recent real cases and likely risks, given age of child – with links to resources and further information.

♦ Joint school and police initiatives for parents, which included advice and practical tips on setting up filers and parental controls.

♦ Using social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) to get the message out to parents.

♦ Sharing afternoons and activities which make it real and get children to show parents what they do online, what game they like playing and what sites they like using.

♦ Using celebration assemblies and academic parent’s evenings.

♦ Share sessions where parents work with the child in learning activities and also workshops with staff and other professionals (for example, police community support officers, the police, and advisors).

While there is advice available for schools on engaging parents with online safety schools it is widely assumed that schools are conduits for information and other different interventions. In the current educational climate with pressure on achieving academic results and student outcomes, schools are increasingly time pressured. Corish (2014) provides a comprehensive and detailed account for ‘What works’ using data from over 5000 schools who employ a range of online safety strategies.
**Table 8: Strategies for Effective Parental Engagement (Corish, 2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding parental concerns</th>
<th>While research can offer a global view of parental attitude, it is more effective to understand the definitive concerns of your parental community. Creating the right mechanism to canvas those views can be achieved in a number of ways, for example, a parental survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact tools</td>
<td>There is an in-built impact assessment tool in the free, online safety-mapping instrument, Online Compass, from South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL). While Online Compass is intended for children’s settings other than schools, the impact survey is a useful tool to canvass parental opinion, automatically time stamping and collating results back into the tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including parent voice in shaping online safety strategy</td>
<td>Survey results can be effective in informing strategy but engaging parents directly places them at the heart of what can be a complex decision-making process, that not only impacts on the school environment but the now extensive safeguarding environment that included the home and many places between the two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Governor</td>
<td>Many schools employ the services of a parent on their governing bodies who can both ratify and challenge school policy and strategy. Encouraging parent governors to contribute an external perspective on online safety matters can be powerful, especially if combined with the obligations and expertise of the safeguarding governor. It is a worthwhile investment to provide additional training for a governor who is keen to contribute to this role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-safety Group</td>
<td>Online safety requires successful leadership and schools who manage this aspect of safeguarding effectively, often have an e-safety lead group who are both influential and accountable. Having a parent member not only allows an external perspective but broadens the stakeholdership of the group away from a purely technical focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering opportunities to educate parents</td>
<td>Schools often act as learning hubs for the wider community; their facilities and expertise are a valuable asset and are often employed to provide a rich resource for families in the local area, particularly so when it comes to technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-safety evenings</td>
<td>Getting parents along to any school event can often be a difficult task and certainly when it comes to less ‘sexy’ subjects like ‘safety’. Branding can be the key to success: ‘Digital Parenting’ ‘Online Parenting’ ‘21st Century Parenting’ can often be more persuasive titles than ‘E-safety’ or ‘Cyberbullying’. All parents understand ‘parenting’ but not all think their child is cyberbullied. Advertise the event clearly and keep promoting through the usual communication channels but particularly Twitter and Facebook. Use an external expert speaker who can not only communicate key messages and advice but can also provide an interesting and entertaining event that parents will remember and disseminate. It may represent an investment, but will be effective in ensuring your strategy is promoted to best effect.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Expert technical sessions**

Capitalise on internal expertise and resource (Subject Leader, Network Manager/Technician/Child Protection) to run 30 minute after-school/ in-school power sessions on areas that may well be a concern for parents; even more relevant if the survey reveals what those concerns are in the first place. These might include:
- How to make YouTube safer
- Understanding gaming consoles and parental controls
- Managing access on an iPad
- Monitoring a mobile phone
- Facebook for Dummies

**Incidental education through bring-your-own-device, or 1-to-1 roll-outs**

Never miss the opportunity to get parents on-board with supporting your mobile device strategy by insisting that before deployment of devices, parents must attend an online safety update session where they will be required to sign up to the initiative. £450 worth of mobile device is a great incentive for parents to attend and gives the school a unique and focused opportunity to not only communicate its expectations around device use but to educate parents to be aware of potential risk and accept joint responsibility for dealing with harm that may arise.

**Entrapment**

Parent’s evenings, assemblies, school events are often times when parents will freely congregate to see their children perform or check on progress. If you have them all together in the one room, pounce! Even a well-structured five-minute ‘download’ of information can provide a useful and effective punch.

Use the time before the start of a school sport’s day, concert or nativity to educate and inform parents of your expectations around the taking and distribution of digital image and video. Include the advice in the programme they take home with them:

“We think you should be able to celebrate your child’s performance by taking photographs to remember the event. If you do, then we ask that if you share them on social media, then only do so with immediate family and not publicly.

If you don’t know how to do this, then contact XXXX and we’ll be happy to show you how.

We will challenge any public publishing of our students’ images that comes to our attention, if we feel it doesn’t meet our safeguarding obligations”

**Encouraging child/parent dialogue**

A few years ago, the US psychologist Marc Prensky referred to the perceived gap between parents and their children when it came to technology. He used the phrases ‘Digital Natives’ and ‘Digital Immigrants’: ‘natives’ have grown up with technology and have a whole language and culture based around it, while ‘immigrants’ struggle to learn the language, the rules… what is cool, what is safe, what is right and what is wrong.

In many ways, parents can use that argument as an excuse for not becoming more involved than they do in their child’s online life. “Oh he/she knows much more than I do. What chance have I got?”

And that takes dialogue. But where do you start? How do you begin that conversation when parents’ own experience of online life may be limited? There are some great resources for starting these conversations from SWGfL, Childnet, Internet Matters, CEOP, and the UK Safer Internet Centre
| Online safety curriculum that includes parent contribution | Since September 2014, Ofsted have included clear references to both e-safety and cyberbullying in Schedule 5 Inspections for English schools and there is an expectation for schools to include online safety as part of their wider safeguarding brief. All Ofsted HMIs and Registered Inspectors (including social care inspectorate) are being trained to look for features of effective practice, including what questions to ask if there are concerns |
| Drip feeding | Drip-feeding latest information through a range of existing communication routes. While parent events are useful in signalling school expectations, the most effective way of changing culture and attitude is by building it into the very fabric of what the school does. The drip-feeding of messages affects change and is a key way to raise awareness of issues and the school’s expectations |
| Clearly signposted resources that do not overwhelm | There is wealth of resource out there that can often cloud where a parent might go for advice and support. A quick list for your own website might be the following:  
UK Safer Internet Centre’s Parents’ Guide to Technology  
Vodafone Digital Parenting and Parent Zone  
Childnet’s Know IT All for Parents  
Internet Matters  
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)  
NSPCC’s Online Safety  
It’s good for parents to know that if a school can’t resolve issues itself, it does know how to signpost advice and support. Schools can get unique advice and support for free from the UK Safer Internet Centre’s Professionals Online Safety Helpline |
| Valued and effective reporting routes for parents to contact the school | How can we keep young people safe if we don’t know what is going on? Monitoring mechanisms provide a line of intelligence to understand behaviour, but also is a platform to alert schools and parents to potential issues.  
Other ways this can be achieved are through:  
1) Active reporting  
Those organisations with effective safeguarding mechanisms often have reporting routes that are varied, valued, trusted and used. Peer escalation routes are valuable and so too are anonymous online reporting routes which take advantage of the technology young people use to pass on intelligence, whether that is from a victim or a bystander.  
2) Passive reporting  
There is a lot of information openly available in online social media chatter that could be instrumental in identifying a child at risk. The problem is the volume of material can be too vast for any manual searching. Alerting mechanisms are available that place an electronic ear to the ground for mentions of a specific name and trigger word that can be directed to an interested professional. It can’t pick up private conversation, but very little self-harm content is private because of the need to publicise and engage. |
Develop a reputation as a single point of coordination and expertise for online safety

A robust online safety strategy signals a school’s commitment to protecting children. Using it to forge parental engagement only serves to strengthen those links between school and home.

When an online incident escalates to a crisis within the school community, a school’s ability to intercede and support is paramount; not only in meeting its safeguarding obligations, but in maintaining its reputation with that community. In past incidents, there is clear evidence that a school that fails to respond or support in an effective way often becomes a focus for negative parental (and in many cases press) commentary, indeed anger.

Raising staff awareness is a starting point but developing pools of expertise across key staff members is vital, particularly SLT, Governors, Child Protection, etc. This ensures a cohesive and sustainable response structure when an incident occurs.

While few published studies focus on parental engagement in relation to online safety initiatives, Campbell’s (2011) study on engaging ‘hard-to-reach’ parents may be helpful to the analysis presented here. She defines ‘hard-to-reach’ parents as those who:

♦ have very low levels of engagement with school
♦ do not attend school meetings or respond to communications
♦ exhibit high levels of inertia in overcoming perceived barriers to participation.

These high levels of inertia, Campbell (2011:10) suggests, could be prevalent among hard-to-reach parents as a result of low parental self-esteem and previous personal bad experiences of school, as well as socio-economic factors. Self-efficacy (also noted in Table 13 as a vulnerability factor for children) is identified as a key factor in parental involvement, as parents with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to be more closely involved in their children’s education. Campbell (2011) points out that when considering levels of parental engagement in children’s education, there is often a significant amount that remains hidden from schools. As such, Campbell (2011) suggests that it is important to recognise that parental involvement takes place beyond school boundaries and to consider how to develop, strengthen and support these home practices.

Home learning, or the promotion of families learning together, is also seen as a positive engagement strategy (Campbell, 2011:10).

Therefore, homework talks based on online activities and safety promotion may be a way for involving parents in their children’s learning and also in their everyday online activities. Using good quality resources available from internet safety organisations, WebQuests, homework tasks, quizzes and problem solving activities for parents and children can easily be incorporated into homework schedules. These can be fun as well as educational and engaging for both parents and children. However, many of the teachers in our study felt that not all parents are ‘tech savvy’ and often feel foolish, as they do not understand technology and do not know how to do even basic things online. Some of the teachers in our study also discussed the additional difficulties of engaging with parents who had low levels of literacy or poor educational attainment themselves.
Campbell (2011) suggests that for parents who have low self-esteem and whose own educational experience was negative, homework tasks can pose a real challenge to parents. As such, it is important that school staff are mindful when setting homework tasks that they should be achievable, fun and time-managed so that the tasks, certainly initially, are not too daunting or off-putting for parents. Using video material and online resources that are accessible and task specific are more likely to be effective for parents who have low levels of literacy.

There are additionally gender-based differences in parental engagement that need to be considered in any school-based strategy, as Campbell's (2011:12) study identifies in Table 9 below. With these points in mind, schools need to ensure that online safety initiative are sensitive to the complexity of children’s everyday lives and that the diversity in family relationships is respected.

**TABLE 9: BARRIERS IN SECURING GREATER INVOLVEMENT FROM FATHERS (CAMPBELL, 2011)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Absent fathers who do not regularly see their children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fathers who only see their children at weekends and therefore do not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come into contact with the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fathers who do not pick their children up, or drop them off at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men entering into home-learning practices that have already been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established by mothers; for example, reading, or helping with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender role modelling due to a majority of women staff in primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>schools</td>
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</table>

In promoting parental engagement with hard-to-reach parents, Campbell (2011:19) suggests:

- implementing training programmes for parents, where they learn to communicate and work directly with their child
- enabling parents to recognise that they are partners and consumers in the educational process, and providing them with suitable arenas to critique and formulate agendas
- making it easier for parents to participate by giving them meaningful roles in school decision making
- emphasising to parents that their involvement and support makes a considerable difference to their child’s performance
- school leaders need to foster an ethos of communication with all their parents and focus on the need to reach those groups who are hard to engage.

Another parental engagement study, in the use of technology to support parental involvement with schools and children’s learning by Lewin and Luckin (2010) concludes that technology can help to support increased parental involvement and this is beneficial for both learners and teachers. However, they also concluded that the needs of parents are complex and they highlight that consideration needs to be given to:

“Parents do not like to come along if they have low academic skills themselves (reading, writing, numeracy and IT skills) so it is really important to think carefully about how we provide for them so they don’t feel overwhelmed by expectations.” Teacher.
carefully designed, parent-focused support
understanding what parents really need in order to help them get involved
recognising that activities designed for school are not necessarily transferable to the home context and vice versa
ensuring that learners’ and parents’ uses of technology at home are purposeful
avoiding technological determinism and developing mechanisms that allow the nature of the technology and the ways in which it is used to evolve alongside growing family engagement, knowledge and expertise
acknowledging that the use of technology to develop working relationships between schools and families is an on-going enterprise that needs to be nurtured in order to develop sustainable solutions
ensuring that continuity between in school and outside school is built, e.g. through carefully designed activities that aim to make work done at school relevant to the home context.

Interestingly, Campbell’s study also included a focus group with hard-to-reach parents themselves. One of the most compelling messages was:

Their desire to know and understand what is going on in schools... parents who feel cut off from school are prepared to believe the worst and be the most critical. It is with these parents that school leaders need to work the hardest to make the shift from purely critical to the critical friend (Campbell, 2011:19).

While not focused specifically on online safety, Education Scotland (2015) also provide useful considerations on developing healthy partnerships with parents and suggest the following reflective questions to identify and encourage healthy partnerships with parents. These questions are also relevant for considering developing online safety strategies and initiatives:

- How are parents involved in deciding what the topics are?
- How do parents choose topics that are most important to them? Are all parents involved in this process in ways that are accessible and inclusive?
- What other ways are parents made aware that they can raise matters that are of concern to them?
- In what ways are all parents given the opportunity to contribute?
- What information is available in the languages used by parents of the children and young people and/or those living in the community?
- How are parents made aware that they can get access to supports such as translators to help them be involved?
- What arrangements are there to include parents who live a distance away or in a rural setting?
- How are parents made aware that they can they can contribute in many different ways – such as text, email, phone, leaving comments and suggestions at the school or setting, as well as through meetings?
- How are people who are less confident or less experienced encouraged to take part?
- How will people know if their ideas and views have led to changes?
- How are community groups involved?

However, Barnard-Wills, (2012:247) argues that online safety information, cascaded to parents through their children’s schools and online safety initiatives make both children and their parents or guardians responsible. Although, both adults and children are constructed as able to take steps to increase their own safety, “adults are, however, granted a more significant role, which relates to the traditional, non-digital practices of interpersonal surveillance characteristic of parenting”. While parents may be aware that schools run online
safety programs, they also need to be mindful of, and engage in discussion with children about the ways in which they can practice these skills online (Robinson, 2012). It is, therefore, interesting to note from Third et al.’s (2013) suggestion that experiential learning models that promote intergenerational conversation can help parents to guide their children to engage online in smart, safe, responsible and respectful ways, and that parents actually learn from the conversations with their children and their understanding is enhanced. Children are often very enthusiastic about helping their parents to learn more about why they use technology; they enjoy helping them to develop their technical skills and the parents themselves value having a safe space to experiment with technology and learn about what their children were doing (Third et al., 2013).

Intergenerational activities, engagement and communication have been the focus of a number of annual Safer Internet Days (SID). “Awareness-raising is a central focus of the EC’s Safer Internet Action Plan and this is implemented across Europe through the Insafe network of national awareness-raising nodes. Thus a Safer Internet Day (SID) is organised by Insafe each year to promote safer use of online technology and mobile phones” (Davidson et al., 2011: 23). Led by Childnet, as part of the UK Safer Internet Centre, SID in 2016 reached 2.8 million children and 2.5 million parents, 1140 organisations (including schools, charities, businesses, government departments and police) were involved (UK Safer Internet Centre, online).

Robinson (2012) proposes that parents can be encouraged to inquire about the strategies that schools undertake to educate children about online safety and online bullying. The ways in which schools involve parents in awareness-raising initiatives and in developing policies is, therefore, fundamentally important. Rebecca Avery, E-safety Officer for Kent County Council (2015), recognises that often parents/carers can be a very hard-to-reach audience due to a number of reasons, so it is important that schools/settings and professionals explore a number of options when raising the profile of online safety within the community. She makes the following suggestions for engaging parents:

"Share afternoons could be a good idea – make it a way to get parents in to share and talk with their children about online safety because the parents will usually go in there for their child." Parent.

"Make it real in sessions where teachers ask the child to go online and find things and then parents can see what the children can actually do – really get through to parents what kids can do already.” CYP Practitioner.

"Finds parents who will be online safety champions or ambassadors. You know, like role models for other parents and who can talk to other parents.” Teacher.
TABLE 10: SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGING PARENTS (AVERY, 2015)

| Parental awareness sessions and face-to-face training sessions | Events for or by children regarding online safety. Turnout to online safety sessions or presentations have been noticeably improved by involving children, (such as a play/event) or by encouraging the children to present themselves to parents (such as via a whole school/setting assembly). Some schools and settings find inviting parents to attend children's lessons or workshops to help improve parent/child learning can also increase attendance at events. These sessions could be led by the school/setting and supported by other professionals, but sessions that are led by the children can often have a greater impact (as well as improved attendance) |
| Online safety links on school/setting websites and/or learning platforms. School/setting websites can be great communication tools for busy parents/carers and can be used to highlight new resources and information for parents to use at home with their children. Schools/settings can access a number of free downloads which can be added to websites, providing users with a one-click route to advice, guidance and, if required, an ability to report online crimes or concerns | Including online safety at open evenings or well-attended events. Many schools and settings have found that opening up the school/setting or other community venues to parents/carers for a day or an evening has increased the number of families engaging in e-safety. Schools and settings have offered open ICT Suite sessions where parents can drop in (alone or with their children) to explore useful websites or explore resources used with children. Highlighting online safety at other events can also help to reinforce that this is about safeguarding and not ICT |
| Regular communication with parents/carers. Use regular communication channels e.g. newsletters, emails, texts or letters home to ensure online safety messages are clear and shared with all members of the community. This could include "top tips" or references to new and useful resources. This can also be a great way of engaging with parents before offering e-safety specific events | Home School/Setting Agreements. Many schools/settings ask parents to sign consent forms or Acceptable Use Policies before letting children use computer systems. While these are an excellent idea, they can often be hard to manage and to ensure they are returned to the school. An alternative is to add a reference to the schools/settings online safety policy and procedures in the Home School Agreement – which all parents/carers MUST sign before a child can join the school. This can then be discussed as part of transition or new entry to the school to help share the school/settings ethos at an early stage |
| Using social media. Many schools/settings are now using social media tools as an extended communication approach. When appropriately risk-assessed and carefully managed, social media can offer school/setting useful ways of communicating and engaging with families in a popular medium that is easily accessible. It is important that schools/settings use this in combination with other traditional communication channels | Questionnaires/online polls. This can be a useful way of seeing when and where a school or community may need to focus its delivery or awareness-raising. Questionnaire/polls designed by children themselves to highlight popular apps or worries can be very effective. A good idea is to send questionnaire or online polls to parents and then compare these with answers given by children to highlight any gaps or concerns |
| Linking in with other school/setting or community events. Attendance for specific online safety parental awareness sessions can often be low or | Involve parents/carers via forums and groups. If your school/setting has an active parent or friends’ association, then they can be great ways |
may not always engage with the most vulnerable families. It can sometimes be more useful to highlight online safety when parents would already be coming into the school/setting. Some events that may work well are school discos, plays (a large and captive audience!), transition events, fetes (e.g. summer, Christmas) etc. One setting found that the online safety stand was very popular when it was placed next to the queue to see Father Christmas!

| **Sharing the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) or School Online Safety Policy for use or adaptation in the home and inviting feedback and discussion from parents/carers. Use school/setting parents’ groups/associations to help raise awareness and they can be a great place to talk about ways to engage with parents** |
| **Think outside the box! Screens (TV, computer) around school or the community can also be a good way of getting parents more engaged with online safety by using a rolling presentation at parents evenings, fetes, or other times when visitors are in the building, such as school opening and closing times. One setting reported great success by pitching parents/carers versus children by playing an online safety game at the school fete! Some settings have made a computer with internet access available to parents/carers (with AUPS) so that those without internet access at home can still access important emails and messages. One setting used an online safety storybook as part of transition to engage parents/carers in the early years with online safety messages** |

Practical, manageable collaborative strategies are more effective for schools, settings and parents. While the reality of achieving 100 per cent of the target audience is unrealistic, adopting a variety of creative approaches which may reach a broad spectrum of parents that can be followed up with wider dissemination may be more successful in the longer term.

The role of parents in providing internet safety support is central, reinforced by the fact that the majority of internet use is at home and hence parents are the potential first point of contact when children experience difficulties online. In order to assist them in this respect, emphasis should be given to the pre-eminent role parents occupy in supporting safer internet use for children (O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:3).
**Table 11: Aspects of specific advice that are important for parents**

*O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:9*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As they are not always available or able to supervise their children’s online activities, parents should seek to promote self-management skills for their children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents should discuss issues of excessive internet use with their children and agree limits of screen time and internet use at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a significant proportion of children (26 per cent) reporting that their social networking profile is public, parents should discuss privacy settings with their children, being respectful of their children’s privacy while being alert to the risks involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face meetings with online contacts have been a matter of policy concern. In the EU Kids Online survey, 11 per cent of children who had gone on to meet new people offline were bothered by the experience. Significantly, 31 per cent of 9-10-year-old children were bothered or upset by some aspect of it. This suggests that, despite the relatively low occurrence of such meetings, contact risks should remain a priority in child safety strategies and parents, teachers and other responsible adults should be made alert to the risks involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents should encourage their children to experience positive content online and to develop digital skills through participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Models of learning need to be effective in safeguarding children online and increase parents’ digital literacy, their familiarity with using online safety controls and parents’ understanding about the benefits of active online engagement (Third et al., 2013). Furthermore, strategies for engaging parents in online safety advice and information and encouraging them to become more actively involved in their children’s online activities vary widely and are often ad hoc. They tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

A suggestion that was frequently put forward in the focus group was using ‘real life’ examples from Suffolk to inform school and parents about the reality of what was happening to children in Suffolk. Many professionals and teachers felt that the information about online safety parents received from nationally produced educational resources and films and the knowledge they obtained from newspaper headlines produced an ‘it won’t happen in Suffolk’ type of attitude from parents. There needs to be an ‘it’s on your doorstep’ approach and the teachers discussed the difficulty of getting parents to take online safety seriously without scaring them. The adult groups, including the parents’ group, felt strongly that information sharing from Suffolk Constabulary through anonymised case studies would be a very effective way of getting parents to take the risks more seriously.

“There are some horror stories around about children online, and if you get to know about what can happen from real life examples then maybe people will understand the dangers better. I mean, it’s not like we don’t want children to have fun, it’s because there’s a real danger out there.” Police.

“I think that there is a perception amongst parents that it won’t happen to their child. It won’t happen in Suffolk and it won’t happen to their child.” Teacher.

Livingstone et al. (2015b:6) found that for all parents – but especially those who lack confidence, experience or expertise in relation to digital media – there was a need for policy and practitioner support in relation to:

- Knowledge of the benefits of internet use, including lists of recommended, imaginative, creative and educational sites and apps, along with public discussion of the criteria by which parents can evaluate these, and tips on how to find them
- The use of technical tools to manage children’s internet use for safety purposes; for example, digital safety settings, best practice for passwords, privacy protection and content filters
Many parents welcoming support for easy ways to increase their own digital skills and knowledge beyond technical tools; and since parental digital competence and confidence results in more enabling efforts in relation to their children, the benefit of parental skills is felt among the whole family.

Communication strategies to facilitate shared activities using digital devices, and parent–child discussions about preferred values and practices and how to address problems. To include guidance to parents on how to mediate digital media for children of different ages, and how they can also play a guiding role in sibling conversations, since older siblings have a major influence on the play and learning of younger children.

Providing much of this guidance and support parents, who said they would prefer to receive it from schools or nurseries. Yet it was striking how little parents said they received in terms of guidance from schools, and how little they even know (or are told) about their children's digital activities at school or nursery.

The considerable potential to benefit domestic (as well as school) settings, since these institutions are publicly funded and can communicate with nearly all parents.
EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION WHERE THERE IS AN INCREASED CONCERN RE ONLINE SAFETY AND VULNERABILITY IN RELATION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Effective timely intervention relies on identifying increased risk and vulnerability early, accurately assessing the risk and responding appropriately to ameliorate the potential harm, while supporting the child and their family. Smahel and Wright’s (2014) study found that the involvement of different schools in mediation varies considerably, largely based on the school’s environment. While some schools provide children with strategies for dealing with online risks, others do not do very much, or scare children about the dangers of online activities.

Research on characteristics and circumstances can provide an understanding of the issues affecting/underlying children’s online vulnerability, which can enable the early identification of risk. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS, 2016) model of risk assessment (related to sexting guidance) provides a step-by-step process for CYP professionals to evaluate the potential harm to the children and whether to refer the case onto the police and other agencies. The importance for collaborative multi-agency working is emphasised in safeguarding policy and research in order to effectively respond to online risk, support the child(ren) and their family and enable children to develop resilience and coping strategies. Enabling children to discuss risky behaviours and experiences and report any incidences is fundamental to early identification. The research shows that developing digital literacy skills is essential in effectively responding to risk. This section addresses the following questions:

- Is there research to suggest there is effective provision of service beyond prevention?
- What, if any, early intervention methods exist and what can be done to move from a position of prevention to a position of early intervention and resolution of issues, as it relates to e-safety and children?
  - Are there any coordinated approaches with child/children, schools and parents?

FIGURE 8: MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION
UNDERSTANDING VULNERABILITY

In developing effective responses and effective intervention strategies, it is important to recognise that children can be both victims and offenders in relation to the construction of online risk; for example, in cases of online bullying or the sharing of violent or sexual content. This is an important consideration as both child victims and child offenders require support. However, the binary categorisation of victim/offender may also be unhelpful in understanding children’s online experiences, in that it masks the wide spectrum of children’s characteristics, competencies, vulnerabilities, contexts, family circumstances and the wider socio-economic, political and cultural environment. The Byron Review (2008) discussed vulnerability online but did not define what is actually meant by vulnerability (Livingstone and Palmer, 2012) and in practice concepts of harm and ‘vulnerability’ are rarely defined and tend to be implicitly understood (Millwood Hargrave and Livingstone, 2009).

Livingstone and Palmer (2012) highlight the importance of understanding vulnerability online in the broader context of children’s lives with a focus on building protective environments and resilience. However, they suggest that there are many unresolved questions still to address which include:

♦ implications for children with disabilities
♦ impact of cultural context on behaviour
♦ risk
♦ aspiration
♦ vulnerability
♦ young abusers (we know peer-on-peer abuse is an increasing problem)
♦ impact of pornography – both solicited and unsolicited (starts at 11-12 years)
♦ risk/resilience factors leading to sexual abuse and exploitation
♦ what works in reducing harm/risk?

“Just feeling lonely, feeling left out – it’s the alienation stuff. It’d be the children who struggle to maintain friendships person-to-person in school that then seek it out online.” Teacher.

“Because the children’s worlds are very small. They go to school and the children who live on their street go to their school or perhaps a school very nearby and if they struggle to have friendships in that particular cluster then they will go online. It’s an obvious outlet from that small closed environment and then they are more likely to be able to find friends online. That’s one of the best things about the internet – no matter how weird your interests are, you will find people online who share your interests and primary school children are working that out.” Teacher.

“It’s important to remember though that tech-savvy children are also really vulnerable, as they do well in lessons and find lots of ways to speak to new and interesting people because they have more confidence online as opposed to in real life.” Teacher.
The factors that lead to online sexual abuse are complex and intertwined. The EU Kids online study identifies how children whose parents lack education or internet experience tend to lack digital safety skills, leaving them more vulnerable to online risk. The analysis by Göran Svedin (2011) indicates that teenage girls with sexual abuse history and depressive feelings, who have poor relationships with their parents and where there is weak parental monitoring, are more at risk of internet-related sexual abuse. The most important and also most examined risk factor is young people’s risk-taking behaviour online. It is apparent that the more young people are open to online sexual activities (especially flirting and having sexual conversations with strangers) the more probable it is that they may become victims of sexual harassment, solicitation or grooming (Göran Svedin, 2011:49). Whittle et al. (2013) found that behaviours specific to vulnerability to online grooming include engaging in risk-taking behaviour online, high levels of internet access, and lack of parental involvement in the child’s internet use.

Carrick-Davies’ (2012) work with vulnerable, excluded young people questioned what can make these children vulnerable online. He found that they had low self-confidence and so their identity was that of ‘outsiders’. Fluid learning environments, as well as gaps in their education and induction also contributed to them being very vulnerable online. Moreover, they are more likely to have experienced abusive relationships or environments. These children are also more likely to be influenced by alcohol, drugs and gang culture, and they are considered to be both risk takers and at risk. Plus, they have more unsupervised time, fewer structures and boundaries and a lack of supportive adults in their lives. Cranmer’s study (2012:72) further supports these findings and she suggests that there is a “need for further interventions to foster and develop these young people’s strategies to avoid online risk as part of more general initiatives to develop digital literacy”.

Furthermore, children with psychological difficulties tend to encounter more risk online and be more upset by it (Day, 2016). Children with disabilities tend to have more digital skills but encounter more risk online and often lack peer support, and minority children also have more digital skills and encounter more risk but their parents are keen to help them (Livingstone et al., 2012). It is important to remember that the absence of vulnerability is not fixed, but is a variable that can change very quickly (Carrick-Davies, 2012).

Vulnerable children and young people are not a self-contained or static group. Any child/young person may be vulnerable at some time depending on any one, or a combination of, the risks or challenging life events they face and their resilience (Cross et al., 2009:9).

Therefore, an understanding of online vulnerability is particularly important for those working with groups of children who are understood to be more at risk than others as they can
specifically benefit from improvements in self-protection (Ainsaar and Lõöf, 2011). However, although some studies have identified specific characteristics associated with online vulnerability (see Table 12 on the next page), the relationship between online and offline vulnerability is a complex one. While children who are more vulnerable offline are also likely to be more vulnerable online, some children may appear highly resilient offline but can be highly vulnerable online and vice versa. Furthermore, what might be labelled as an online safety issue for a 5-year-old child could be perceived as unproblematic for a 15-year-old (Hope, 2015:345). However, it would be dangerous to stereotype and presume that because a child does not appear to ‘fit’ with a risky profile that they are safe. Many children who have been victims of online grooming, for example, do not have a ‘troubled’ background nor did they appear vulnerable previously but had strong friendships, good relationships with their parents and had a high level of educational attainment (Livingstone and Palmer, 2012). This suggests that online risks can manifest in unexpected ways (Day, 2016:9). Furthermore, there is very little research in relation to sexual abuse online among children up to nine years old relating to online activities leading to offline abuse (Ainsaar and Soo, 2011:5) and further research is required to enhance understanding of effective service responses to reduce the number of children suffering harm as a result of online activities (Munro, 2011 and Palmer, 2015).

While there is some evidence to suggest that some children may be more vulnerable than others in relation to certain risks, Livingstone and Palmer (2012) found that vulnerability to grooming, the impacts of adult pornography and displaying risky and/or harmful behaviours online appear to be less about being a vulnerable child offline and more about the child’s stage of development – namely pubescent – starting around 11 to 12 years of age. They observe from practice findings that for many of these child victims, there are few common indicators of vulnerability. The impact of these abusive behaviours on child victims, however, appears to be universal, and being made the subjects of abusive images may affect children of any age, sex and ethnicity. Yet little is known about the demographics of these children.

The Internet Watch Foundation’s 2015 annual report (2016) reveals a large increase in the number of illegal child sexual abuse images and videos reported. 68,092 reports were positively identified as containing illegal child sexual abuse imagery and taken down. This is a 417 per cent increase in online confirmed reports over two years and a 118 per cent increase in illegal child abuse imagery over the previous year. The report also looks at trends emerging from the 2015 data. It found that 69 per cent of victims were identified as aged 10 or under; 1,788 victims were assessed as aged two or under; and 34 per cent of images were category A – which involved the rape or sexual torture of children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12: Factors Associated with Online Vulnerability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Findings from REA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic status (SES)</strong></td>
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confronted with online bullying

families were always in contact with authorities (resulting from other concerns) that if online risk concerns were raised then the families took those concerns very seriously and were keen to work with the agencies to ameliorate the risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Self-efficacy turns out to be an important marker, especially for online bullying: self-efficacious children think more in terms of solving the problem</th>
<th>Livingstone et al. (2011); Vandoninck et al. (2012)</th>
<th>Some of the teachers felt that it was the more confident children that could also be a risk than the more cautious children</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>Children identifying as LGBTQI are more likely to experience online bullying and become victims of online sexual abuse and grooming</td>
<td>Stonewall (2012); Livingstone and Palmer (2012); Natcen (2014)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Being of Black ethnicity was identified as a risk factor (among others) for receiving a request for a sexual picture. Gypsy-Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage, European, East European, Chinese and those children of mixed ethnicity were more likely to be persistently cyberbullied, compared to White British young people</td>
<td>Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak (2007); Cross et al. (2009); Munro (2011)</td>
<td>Traveller children were seen to be especially vulnerable as they can miss out on online safety education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience of abuse (domestic abuse or sexual abuse)</td>
<td>The likelihood of receiving online sexual solicitations increases substantially if the person has been physically or sexually abused in their lifetime</td>
<td>Lööf (2011); Mitchell et al. (2007); Noll et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Exploitation; previous abuse and neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Children with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) encounter a heightened level of risk and harm online. However, these young people are typically more isolated and marginalised in offline social contexts and can benefit from the safety and control afforded by online communication Studies have shown that children with some form of disability are exposed to more sexual abuse offline than other groups</td>
<td>Good and Fang (2015); Livingstone et al. (2012); Munro (2011); Pinar et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Children with learning disabilities (as well as children with ADHD or autism) were seen as especially vulnerable as they could not differentiate between fantasy and reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with emotional/</td>
<td>These children may present with differing symptoms or have a</td>
<td>Livingstone et al. (2012); Munro</td>
<td>Children who were isolated for a number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>behavioural difficulties</strong></td>
<td>diagnosed mental or behavioural condition</td>
<td>(2011)</td>
<td>of possible reasons (including bullying) seeking reassurance and friendship online. Also includes those who were coping with other emotional issues, for example, parents separating</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Children who experience 'exclusion of access'</strong></td>
<td>These children experience 'system neglect' in the sense that they are unable to access services that are universally available to other children. They belong to the more marginalised groups within society such as travellers, asylum seekers, trafficked and migrant communities</td>
<td>Livingstone et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Traveller children. Home-tutored children left unsupervised downloading and using online activities for hours on end. Also hard to engage parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children in Pupil Referral Units and those with chaotic lives. There are a number of challenges, which these vulnerable young people face and have to overcome</strong></td>
<td>An absence of supportive adults in their lives More unsupervised time and less regular routines or directed activities Staggered entry to learning environments, potentially missing online safety advice A tendency to crave group identity and be viewed as ‘outsiders’ and/or ‘risk-takers’ Likely to experience abusive environments, including being on the receiving end of anger and violence Greater exposure to influences of alcohol, drugs, early sexual experience and gang culture</td>
<td>Carrick-Davis (2012); Livingstone et al. (2012); Cranmer (2012)</td>
<td>Chaotic lives and living in an area of high deprivation, where exploitation was recognised to be a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of parental educational attainment</strong></td>
<td>Children with a more educated parent (or some other household member) were less likely to be victims of sexual solicitation</td>
<td>Göran Svedin (2011); Livingstone (2015a)</td>
<td>Parents who had learning difficulties themselves or who had a low level of educational achievement Children whose parents spoke English as an additional language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers and professionals in the focus groups expressed concern about specific groups of children as more vulnerable to risks online due to cultural isolation and differing practices at home:
The focus groups also highlighted characteristics related to vulnerability. It was generally felt that boys, especially primary school boys, were vulnerable from exposure to violent content and that girls were more vulnerable to engaging in sexting behaviours.

While individual risk factors, such as those outlined above, do not independently lead to vulnerability, accumulation of these or in combination are considered to increase a young person’s vulnerability towards online grooming (Whittle, 2014) and online risk. From interviews with eight young people who had been groomed online, six had separated parents (often acrimoniously) and/or came from a reconstituted family and they described fights at home and difficult family relations, including issues with step-families (Whittle, 2014:1188). From the analysis of the data, three scenarios were identified which led to the young people becoming vulnerable:

- **Multiple long-term risk factors;** young people who have increasing risk factors in day-to-day life, with few protective factors, and so take increasing risks online. These young people will be considered vulnerable offline.
- **Trigger events;** young people who have some risk factors but are initially protected, until a trigger event or events result in the loss of those protective factors. These young people will be considered vulnerable offline, but only at a certain point in time.
- **Online behavioural risks;** young people who have few risk factors and many protective factors but engage in risk-taking behaviour despite warnings. These young people will not be considered vulnerable offline.
Specifically focused on online grooming, The Robert Project review (Göran Svedin, 2011:49) identifies the reasons why some children are more vulnerable than others and concludes:

It is difficult to compare the results of studies across countries and cultures when different questions are asked of different age groups. Despite this, some of the observations from the available literature seem rather consistent –

♦ The probability that a child receives unwanted sexual contacts through the internet vary between six per cent (Mitchell et al., 2011) and 59 per cent in relation to girls, (Brå, 2007)
♦ Girls are more exposed to risks of receiving an offer for sexual activities than boys. The sex ratio seems to be 2-4 girls for every boy, which is almost the same ratio that is reported in relation to the children who are sexually abused
♦ There are many different kinds of exposures to sexuality that a child can experience through the internet; from rude sexual language, to being encouraged to act sexually in front of a webcam or send sexually explicit photos or suggestions to meet off-line
♦ Exposure to pornography on the internet can be described as a normative experience, even if some children, especially girls, can find it both embarrassing and disgusting
♦ Children with a risk background tend to be both at risk for sexual solicitation on the internet and exhibit sexually aggressive behaviour on the internet.
EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF RISK

Many of the signs that a child is being abused are the same no matter how the abuse happens.
A child may be experiencing abuse online if they spend lots, much more or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- are secretive about who they’re talking to and what they’re doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet (NSPCC, online)

The Livingstone and Palmer (2012) report emphasises the difference between discovery and disclosure in abuse. Children rarely disclose online abuse; it is more likely to be discovered. This makes it even more important to provide time and space to talk about online activities and for children to be listened to. The evidence suggests that often children are upset by something online but they may not disclose it (as highlighted by Livingstone and Palmer, 2012). Lilley et al.’s (2014:6) study for the NSPCC concludes ‘almost a quarter (23 per cent) of 11 and 12 year olds who have a profile on a social networking site say that they have been upset by something on it over the last year. These experiences range from trolling, to online stalking, to being asked to send a sexual message. While most of these children were able to quickly recover from what they encountered, around one fifth felt upset or scared for weeks or months after the incident occurred. A fifth of those who experienced something that upset them told us that they felt upset every day or almost every day. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that these upsetting and frightening experiences are not merely an extension of what is happening in the playground. Worryingly, children reported that strangers, people they only knew online, caused over half of these experiences, or they did not know who caused it. Many professionals do not ask young people about their online lives nor open up opportunities to talk about their online experiences.

Safeguarding the cyborg child requires social workers to assess a range of different communities – not just the locality in which children live, go to school/college, but also their involvement in fluid and ever-changing online networks. Where serious concerns emerge, assessment methods might also trigger checks that require additional specialist technical expertise. Thus, as a way of taking social work safeguarding practice further, we do not ask what are the risks and harms posed by the internet, but rather when and how might a child be vulnerable in the everyday space of ‘networked publics’? (May-Chahal et al., 2014:611).

According to STIR (2015, online) “in England, the barriers to prevention and intervention in this field were understood as being related to school environments. Schools were seen to be reluctant to talk about sexual bullying and trying to make them address the issue in their policies or teaching was described as very difficult. The extent to which they responded to disclosures of online abuse in young people’s relationships was usually dependent on one teacher acting as a champion. Experts argued that instead prevention should be seen as a whole school issue and that an institutional level response was needed.”
Speaking at the Child Internet Safety Summit in November 2016, Keith Niven emphasised the importance of four key elements in effectively responding to risk:

- **Parental engagement**
- **Children's awareness of parental engagement**
- **Education and awareness**
- **Reporting mechanisms**

Much of the advice on intervention to prevent and reduce the online risk of cyberbullying, concerns training children and their parents in e-safety and the development of technological tools to counteract the behaviour, such as blocking bullying behaviour online or creating panic buttons for cyber-victims to use when under threat (Cowie, 2011:52). Monks et al. (2012:488) however, stress the importance of ensuring that intervention and prevention work is age-appropriate, taking into account the diverse nature of risk and the different ways children use electronic forms of communication. In responding to a risk incident, Corish (2014, online) observes how, when an online incident escalates to a crisis within the school community, “the school’s ability to intercede and support is paramount; not only in meeting its safeguarding obligations, but in maintaining its reputation with that community.”

Currently, there is no national multi-disciplinary guidance for best practice when online abuse is discovered. The standard of the response families receive is dependent on where they may be living and the expertise of the professionals in their area. Practice evidence to date informs us that the discovery of the online abuse of a child needs to be treated as seriously as any other kind of abuse. Careful, but timely, planning needs to occur on the part of the professionals at the outset and how we intervene in internet cases needs to be reconsidered. Immediate safety measures need to be assessed at point of discovery, including the decision regarding mobile phone possession, access by young people to online platforms and assessing the parents or carers abilities to safeguard their children’s future online activities. There appears to be a poor understanding of the impacts of online abuse on the victims. The effect of the differential nature of the grooming process online, in particular the speed at which it occurs, and the seeming complicity by young people, appears to be little understood by the majority of the children’s workforce. This has an impact on the nature of the referrals made to projects and the types of interventions requested (Palmer, 2015: 51).
In past incidents, there is clear evidence that a school that fails to respond or support effectively often becomes a focus for negative parental (and in many cases press) commentary, and even anger.

At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children’s social care and/or the police immediately. However, current service response to the online abuse of children is ad hoc, uncoordinated and lacks a UK-wide strategy (Palmer, 2015). It should also be noted from HMIC (2015:34) “children and young people with learning difficulties are over-represented as a group of people who display sexually harmful behaviour. No validated assessment tools exist for working with children and young people with learning, speech, language or communication issues”.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance’s Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: the views of young people (online) report focused specifically on how disabled young people felt support and responses to online bullying could be improved. Their overarching message was that something should be done as many children had experienced severe forms of bullying both on and offline but had not been believed, listened to, or given any support to deal with the bullying they had experienced. The young people in the study highlighted the importance of advising children to save the evidence by taking screen shots, printing or saving messages to show someone they trusted, especially as in their experience they had not been believed when they had reported online bullying. One of their strongest recommendations was for schools to make it clear who they could talk to about bullying; for teachers and school staff to listen to them; to give them time to talk about their experiences; and for staff to believe them. They also felt it was important to give help and support to both the person who had been bullied and the person (or people) who had bullied them.

The young people in the study also pointed out that it was important for the emotional impact of bullying to be recognised, with support given to deal with it, and that reporting to social media providers and/or police also needed to be given due consideration. They also said
that in their experience, teachers and other school staff did not know how to respond to cyberbullying and that school staff were scared of dealing with it. They felt young people were commonly told to avoid using the internet, as a response to cyberbullying, rather than trying to stop the bullying or supporting them to increase their online safety (Anti-Bullying Alliance, online).

“Research surrounding the vulnerabilities of young people to online grooming and abuse is extremely rare and more research is required, particularly from the perspective of those who have experienced the effects of abuse themselves. Young people across all vulnerability scenarios can be better protected through consistent, collaborative approaches by parents, carers and other adults in their lives” (Whittle et al., 2014:1194). Responding effectively to online risk is essential if potential harm is to be minimised. UKCCIS (2016) provide a flow chart for responding to sexting incidents and assessing risk, highlighting five aspects for consideration and five points for referral:

MODEL FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION WHERE THERE IS INCREASED CONCERN FOR A CHILD’S (OR CHILDREN’S) ONLINE VULNERABILITY:

Agencies in both statutory and non-statutory organisations are required to collaborate effectively to safeguard children (Watkin et al., 2009). All organisations, including charitable organisations, must comply with the government interagency statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015). Furthermore, schools need to ensure that they also comply with the Department of Education’s (2016) revisions to the statutory guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, that came into effect on 5th September 2016. The professionals in the focus groups talked about some of the challenges they faced in referring concerns they had. Some teachers (in three separate focus groups) stated that ‘nothing’ happened after they had made a referral to outside agencies, and three groups discussed the problems of losing parent’s trust if you referred to the police and that in some cases they would achieve better results by working with parents themselves. Furthermore, it was pointed out in two focus groups that trust is as an important concept in handling disclosure.
The Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2013:11) also emphasises that multi-agency responses are of paramount importance. Their inspection was informed by a body of research about assessment and interventions, in addition to studies exploring the range and effectiveness of responses to children and young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour. They found that although the research is largely inconclusive regarding the effectiveness of specific assessment tools or types of intervention, consensus exists in the literature about the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of the child or young person. Yet as Watkin et al. (2009:163) point out, “assessing outcomes for service users from team improvement are notoriously hard to evaluate, as it is difficult to isolate achievements from input from other sources”.

Simpson (2013:386) argues that “social work practitioners need to acknowledge that the challenges of unregulated contact are here to stay and that as part of the complexities that arise, there is a need for them to have a greater knowledge and understanding of mobile technologies and social media’. May-Chahal (2014:608) concur suggesting that “in addition to education and awareness raising, a primary issue for practitioners is that of understanding what is normal behaviour on the internet, providing a backdrop from which to assess what might constitute a risk and what might be harmful”. Their study reveals the vulnerability of children of all ages to online identity deception, which they claim has implications for social work that has hitherto been primarily focused on offline maltreatment. Stanley and Guru (2015) discuss ‘childhood radicalisation’ and argue that there is little practice-based research in this issue to date and in light of the anticipated state responses, social work needs engage with the present terrorism debates. May-Chahal (2014:803) propose that an on/offline distinction is unhelpful for ordinary social work practice and that, if it is “replaced by an integrated ontological position (cyborg childhood) then social work has a great deal to offer in safeguarding children in an interconnected on/offline ecology.”

Furthermore, HMIC (2015) found that the source of any report or referral to the police often had a noticeable impact on the quality of the early assessment and help for the child and their family.

*STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO RISK*

One of the concerns that emerged strongly from the focus groups was that all too often, services and professionals are responding to risk reactively rather than proactively. One suggestion that came up in a number of focus groups was the use of text messaging from schools to notify parents of potential risks (actual and potential) with an invitation to attend a school event, together with links to appropriate information and resources.

The police, teachers and CYP professionals felt that more could be done to prevent online risk and that current strategies were not always effective.

“Often it’s too late – it’s a reactive role that we have and we get involved when it is too late and then, for example, when a child is off school because they have been bullied or there’s been an image and parents are like ‘what can I do about it?’ and then it’s like, ‘Well what you should have done is this, this and this’ but by then it’s too late. Parents need to understand what to do before it happens. It’s the same with schools. Too often it’s reactive and it’s too late.” Police
Most of the teachers who took part in the focus group talked about how they responded to risk. Many followed safeguarding protocols for referrals including completing safeguarding forms and completing a CAF.

“I know that when I do certain online safety activities that the children will disclose certain things. So when we have those activities in the lessons like a writing exercise about what they did at the weekend, I have a handful of safeguarding forms there with me because I know it will consistently come up. At our school I will complete the form, I know the game so I look up the rating and whatever. I will then pass it onto the pastoral team and they will then either phone up or meet in person with the parents about that game, [to] explain to them what the rating is and why a child of that age should not be playing it and why it is appropriate or the film is inappropriate and that it should be returned and traded in for something more appropriate.” Teacher.

Some teachers took the approach with parents that they should be educated on the legality of purchasing and allowing a child to play an underage game, but as the discussions illustrated, that law in itself was confusing and open to interpretation:

“Sometimes we take the legal approach with children and tell them quite clearly that ‘What you are doing is breaking the law,’ that is the line we have taken on it because we have had to be very black and white about it.” Teacher.

“Which part of it though is breaking the law? Because if you are over 18 and you have bought it and you take it home and you play it – then that’s not breaking the law.” Teacher.

“But if you buy it with the intention of giving it to someone under 18 then you are breaking the law.” Teacher.

“But if you are buying if for your own use and you take it home, that’s not illegal and we don’t usually tell our parents that they have broken the law because ostensibly they haven’t. They are sharing it with their child. I don’t know of any parents who have intentionally bought it for their child directly, but maybe because it has never been flagged up to me.” Teacher.

“Ok, well we have kids as young as reception age and they are playing Call of Duty and it is on their games console and that I would say if it is on their games console and it has been bought for them for their birthday or their Christmas present – that then is breaking the law.” Teacher.

“That then is completely different.” Teacher.

“If it is on their games console and it is in their bedroom – that is breaking the law.” Teacher.

However, there were examples in the focus group discussions, which suggested that when concerns were reported they were not responded to effectively:

“There’s no point in making a referral as no one will respond to it. It’s therefore just allowed to happen, and we advise parents as to the consequences of it [allowing primary school age children to access 18+ games] but because there are no legal consequences to it, they just ignore us and it carries on.” Teacher.

Generally, agencies expressed that there was considerable confusion about who should be doing what in responding effectively to online risk:
The teachers felt that if they referred something to another agency then they wanted the parents approached directly from that agency, as they felt that as a school they had done their bit in dealing with the matter and that a further intervention was required.

"...they don’t tend to use Facebook anymore; it’s all on Snapchat where it’s there and then it’s gone. And we are also getting a lot on Instagram and then you know it’s so easy for it to go round everybody. Some of the schools they don’t deal with it and we get a lot of parents calling us because the schools they don’t deal with it and they literally say to the parents – ‘contact the police’ and we are then fighting with the schools as we are then like ‘hang on a minute, if this is carried out in school time then you should be dealing with it and be looking at it as well because we get parents who are like, ‘What are you going to do about it? Are you going to arrest them? And seize their phones? And it’s very hard to educate them really into what we can and can’t do.” Police.

You know we have done what we can; now we need a positive, supporting role to be taken by other agencies. We have put a CAF in place and we have done as much as we can and gone as far as our professional capabilities will allow us to go and now it needs another approach from another authority. It doesn’t have to be a heavy-handed approach but it does need further support. To have an outside agency support us is very important in these cases.” Teacher.

In effectively responding to risk, O’Neill and McLaughlin (2011:7) draw on the findings from the EU Kids Online study to suggest the following:

♦ In recognition of the children who have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year (12 per cent of all children) schools and parents should reinforce the importance of reporting abuse while also encouraging children and young people to speak to an adult when they come across upsetting content.

♦ The most common way in which children come across sexual images online is through images that pop up accidentally (seven per cent of all children; 12 per cent of 15-16 year olds). In order to avoid such accidental exposure to any unwanted content online, safety awareness messages need to give greater emphasis to the filter and safety settings of browsers and websites (including search engines and video hosting sites), informing parents and children about how to block such content.

♦ The easy availability of pornography online causes much public debate and anxiety with respect to children’s use of the internet. The finding that the internet is now the most common way for children to see sexual images (14 per cent), marginally more than on television, films or videos (12 per cent), may fuel further concern in this regard. The principal implication arising is that safety messaging should be measured in approach, avoiding implications of harm and seeking to empower parents and children to talk about the subject of sexual images online.

♦ Of the six per cent who have been bullied online, cyberbullying is fairly upsetting or very upsetting for over half (54 per cent), more so for younger children for whom the effect was longer lasting and for children from lower SES homes. In other words, bullying is rarely trivial, and more vulnerable children need targeted supports to enable them to cope more effectively.

♦ In dealing with cyberbullying, internet safety awareness should include responses and coping strategies targeted at children of different ages, enabling them to cope with situations that may arise in online communication and social networking.

♦ Awareness centres and educational authorities should provide teachers with resources, enabling them to be alert to, and be able to respond to, incidents of cyberbullying.

Vandoninck et al. (2012; 2013) emphasise the importance of giving children time to talk about their experiences and developing strategies aimed at solving the problem. They suggest such approaches are also effective with less resilient groups (the younger children,
those low on self-efficacy) as talking about the problem is often the first step in reaching a suitable solution. These studies highlight the importance of open communication both at home and at school and teaching digital skills in both a formal and informal atmosphere from an early age. In the children’s accounts, many had a good understanding of online safety risks in relation to inappropriate content and using social media. This knowledge of potential risk enabled them to understand why they were advised not to use certain sites and social media like, for example, Facebook.

“I know that I am safe because I am only going to get something like Facebook that the police protect when I am thirteen or older so when I am Year 8 or something and it’s better to have Facebook or something that the police protect rather than something like Instagram so that if you get kidnapped the police can go into it and see what the messages are and see where you might be.” Boy, Yr 5.

Online safety discussions also need to include safeguarding strategies in the form of facilitating and reporting concerns and specifying the nature, level and type of intervention that may be necessary (Fostering Network, 2011:5). Schools need to be mindful of the ‘bureaucratic’ procedures for reporting incidents which could create a ‘don’t tell me’ attitude (which can run up through the Senior Management Team hierarchy) particularly in smaller schools where burden of responsibilities/roles has to be designated among a small staff base.

Drawing on other research, including the findings of the Anti-Bullying Alliance report, it is apparent that the importance of providing effective support for children and their families should not be underestimated. Effective support can potentially ameliorate harm and minimise further abuse/risk encounters online. Yet as noted in many of the adult focus groups, schools are under considerable pressure and time constraints, with other policy and procedural demands:

“With the schools what I have found is that they are so busy with their own curriculums and doing what they have got to do that they can’t deal with it at the beginning – it’s all after the event and it is costing a fortune putting the psychotherapists in at the end to deal with it. No one is really taking on board ‘hang on a minute, if you got this bit right at the beginning and were more proactive in preventing this type of stuff then you wouldn’t need your psychotherapists in when it’s all gone wrong’. The schools can’t keep up with it and they just haven’t got the time.” Police.
The document *Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*, produced in consultation with the National Police Chief’s Council UKCCIS (2016), provides comprehensive guidance to schools and law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that “creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding” (UKCCIS, 2016:5). This document provides important guidance for schools and professionals in managing sexting incidents, to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of young people yet ensure that children and young people are effectively safeguarded in cases of online grooming and producing and viewing of indecent sexual images.
The College of Policing (2016) guidance on responding to sexting states:

```plaintext
Most offences involving sexual activity with children will require a full criminal investigative response, for example, in the presence of exploitation, coercion, a profit motive or adults as perpetrators. Offences involving self-generated images or images obtained with consent by other children may be dealt with differently. Forces may, for example, consider that suitably experienced first responders, safer school officers or neighbourhood teams can provide an appropriate response, thereby avoiding stigmatising children or causing them unnecessary fears and concerns. The recently introduced ‘outcome 21’ provides for forces, to resolve crimes with the appropriate contextual factors in a proportionate and effective way (College of Policing, 2016:2).
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However, responding to online abuse is no longer confined to specialist interventions and CWP professionals. All services to children need to be able to recognise and respond appropriately to children who have been harmed or abused online and to effectively support them and their families. Key to effectively responding to risk is identifying that risk early. Taking time to understand what children are doing online and what their experiences are is essential. As Corish (2014, online) points out “one thing is certain however; intelligence, knowing is the key. How can a school or parent make the right decisions for the safety and well-being of the children in their care if they don’t know what is going on?” Understanding the behaviours associated with those technologies allows a school to shape its education programme to build the necessary resilience in children and young people for them to cope with and enjoy life in an online world.

The NFER (2010) review identified 19 documents relating to safeguarding of children accessing the internet. They found most evidence was available on the extent to which safety tools and safeguarding approaches are being used by schools, parents, internet service providers and other organisations/stakeholders, but that there was less evidence on how aware parents, teachers and children are about ways of safeguarding from online risks, including specific safety tools. Although some studies have been undertaken (as discussed below) most focus on online bullying. Generally, according to the PSHE association (2016:3), “there is a lack of evidence around effective practice in online safety education specifically, although authors note that the same principles are often transferrable across different health and risk behaviours”.

Davidson et al.’s (2011:25) review considers the UK, and selected European and international initiatives to protecting children online and they found that measures to protect children included school-based programmes aiming to educate children, parents and teachers about the dangers posed by sex offenders in cyberspace. One example of such an initiative is Schilder et al.’s (2016) study on the impact on an online safety intervention, which found that the children in the intervention group were more likely to be aware of online risks directly after the intervention and that this effect was still noticeable four months later. Another intervention-based study by Schultze-Krumbholz et al. (2015) that adopted multi-group structural equation modelling showed a significant effect of a short intervention on cognitive empathy and significant effects of the long intervention on affective empathy and cyberbullying reduction. They also found that groups without any intervention showed an increase in cyberbullying behaviours and that affective empathy decreased across the study period.
Although some schools have developed interventions and educational awareness about online bullying, more evidence-based intervention programmes are needed (Vandebosch, 2014). Couvillon and Ilieva (2011) suggest that from their review, there was a clear consensus from the literature that cyberbullying prevention efforts need to be comprehensive and an effective school-wide model needs to involve three principal groups of stakeholders: teachers, students, and parents. The actions suggested in the literature are multiple, widespread, and differ in their scope or type of intervention.

**TABLE 13: STEPS FOR ADDRESSING CYBERBULLYING (COUVILLON AND ILLIEVA, 2011: 990)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly define and require compliance with students’ internet usage policies</td>
<td>Enforce rules and clearly communicate commitment to everyone’s digital safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect data representing the extent of cyberbullying presence among students</td>
<td>Define and enforce specific consequences for cyberbullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider implementation of a cyberbullying curriculum</td>
<td>Have faculty or staff as a trusted person for cyberbullying reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce rules and clearly communicate commitment to everyone's digital safety</td>
<td>Create a response procedure if faculty is approached by a cyberbullying target or witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect data representing the extent of cyberbullying presence among students</td>
<td>Provide extensive faculty training on cyberbullying issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define and enforce specific consequences for cyberbullying</td>
<td>Initiate cooperation among the schools, parents, and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider implementation of a cyberbullying curriculum</td>
<td>Make all stakeholders aware of resources and support availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have faculty or staff as a trusted person for cyberbullying reporting</td>
<td>Include students in peer-to-peer or school-wide activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce rules and clearly communicate commitment to everyone's digital safety</td>
<td>Engage students as collaborators with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide extensive faculty training on cyberbullying issues</td>
<td>Model and make the conversations on cyberbullying and its effects ongoing; do not assume that a one-time effort is effective or sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate cooperation among the schools, parents, and the community</td>
<td>Use different means to implement a cyberbullying prevention plan: technology, classroom resources, special sessions, community activities</td>
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</table>

Additionally, Lam and Frydenberg’s (2009) study found that a programme teaching coping skills (Best of Coping Program) and a programme teaching cybersafety (Cyber Savvy Teens program, or CST) can optimise young people’s capacity to cope online. Participants in both intervention groups demonstrated improvements in their overall mental health and in making better online choices post-programme, and while the BOC program was found to be a better programme for improving general coping than CST alone, the CST programme was better at tackling cyber-specific issues.

Papatraianou et al. (2014) propose that adopting a more ecological approach can be helpful in responding to online bullying and also in understanding resilience, and they propose a model to illustrate this relationship, which highlights both the risk factors and the protective factors that need to be considered.
Harrison (2016) offers a robust critique of the current dominant approaches to tackling online bullying in schools. He argues that by adopting a more moral, philosophical approach, children would be encouraged to become digitally virtuous citizens through the development of cyber-phronesis (reflecting on what is good and bad) which would increase the likelihood of children and young people making both ‘good’ and ‘wise’ choices when online.

...adults have legal, social and moral responsibilities with regard to the well-being of children. Similarly, teachers are trained professionals, often with years of classroom experience, and disregarding their views would be ill-advised. In conclusion, the question might be posed of how student voices are to be privileged in the e-safety discourse. While recognising the benefits of existing democratic practices such as whole school councils, elected student representatives and school-based ‘talking circles’, it is perhaps to school children themselves that this query needs to be addressed and possible answers sought. Such a process would not only include recognition of student experiences and insights but also the privileging of children’s digital rights. Such developments are essential if the opportunities offered by school-based digital learning are to be effectively exploited in the coming years (Hope, 2015:352).

DEVELOPING ONLINE RESILIENCE

Resilience, according to Przybylski et al. (2014:4) refers to “an individual’s ability to accurately adapt to changing and sometimes stressful environments and to feel empowered to act instead of react in the face of both novel and threatening challenges”. There are many educational resources and online safety awareness-raising materials freely available to schools, and many of the children in our focus groups had seen them. Jigsaw\textsuperscript{10} seemed to be the one that all the children had already seen.

\begin{quote}
The ICT coordinator and e-safety teacher showed us this video yesterday. It was just a Key Stage 2 video that if you post pictures of yourself, like, for anyone to view online, consequences can happen. It’s like if you post photos online it’s like leaving your door open and letting people into your bedroom.” Girl, Yr 5.
\end{quote}

Similarly, some (but far fewer) children mentioned that their parents had shown them online safety materials like I’ve seen Alex’s Willy\textsuperscript{11}:

\begin{quote}
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iofMV1HVQOY
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{10} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE

\textsuperscript{11} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iofMV1HVQOY
In the children’s focus groups, they talked about what they did to keep themselves safe:

“My Mum, she showed me this video. It’s not rude, but it tells you what happens if you take a picture… it’s a little clip about what happens if someone takes a picture of something on their body and showed it to their friend and they showed it to their friend and then they sent it to their friend and it got all round the world… the people at school were saying stuff like I saw you… It shows you what can happen.” Girl, Yr 6.

“But I’ve got this thing where it says private or not private and I have it on private so people can request you and they can follow but loads of people request you but I just say no unless like they are your friends and like, pretend [name of child] requests me then I’ll say yes because it’s [name of child] but if it’s someone else then I would say no and then they couldn’t see what I have on there .” Girl, Yr 5.

“You know though, when you go onto YouTube and try and watch videos, that if there’s swearing and that you don’t always know. But if there is inappropriate or violent content then you get like a little warning pop-up which says this has adult content. So if that happens, I know it’s inappropriate so I just click off it.” Girl, Yr 6.

The children also talked about using the comments on videos to ascertain whether something was suitable for them to watch or not, but they were also aware that bad language and swearing were not confined to the content of videos but could also be found in the comments that other people posted under the videos.
"I always read the comments first before I watch anything because I was once with my friend and we were watching this video and it was one that was going to like hypnotise you and she went, ‘it’s OK it’s only going to hypnotise us’ and I was like ‘no, wait let’s read the comments’ and I did and the comments said that there was a scary face at the end of the video so we decided not to watch it." Girl, Yr 6.

"I think often the bad language and the swearing is worse on the comments than it is on the actual video.” Boy, Yr 6.

Often they also discussed how because of their knowledge they tried to keep other children safe too.

“My Mum tells me a lot because she does a lot on internet safety and she is very strict. She explains some of it to me but some of it I am too young to understand and some of it is a bit gory. So what I do know is what happens. I try – there’s some people I know about, like yesterday, there’s this 10 year old boy and he’s got a YouTube account, and he was posting stuff that could like affect him. And I said, ‘you shouldn’t do that’ and ‘it’s not that safe’ and many people don’t know.” Boy, Yr 5.

**Figure 12: Different Levels of Sustainability in Developing Children’s Resilience (Przybylski et al. 2104: 9)**

![Diagram showing different levels of sustainability in developing children's resilience](image)

Resilience is conceptualised as a process of learning to deal with difficult or problematic issues in the online or offline world. It involves learning from one’s mistakes and recovering from negative experiences (Vandoninck et al., 2012). Digitally literate children are considered to be more resilient to online adversities (Vandoninck et al., 2013: 61). Responding effectively to risk, therefore, needs to include strategies to develop online resilience and digital literacy skills.
The role of parents, teachers and other school staff in developing children’s online resilience and digital literacy is well acknowledged, but peers can also provide a useful resource in developing resilience and both formal (for example the Childnet Digital Leaders Programme 11) and informal (for example, chatting to friends) mechanisms.

Get older students involved: one of the most positive approaches I’ve used with students is peer education. A group of older pupils receive in-depth training to become e-safety ambassadors and train students, staff and parents on digital citizenship. I’ve delivered the training across a range of schools, all with very positive results. The students were particularly responsive to this approach as the advice was practical, realistic and relevant. No mentions of dated social networking sites or “don’t meet online friends,” which is often seen in traditional e-safety one-off assemblies (Mackenzie, 2013).

Therefore, the evidence suggests that developing children’s online resilience as a protective factor is essential, but it needs to understood as an ongoing community of practice rather than as a short-term intervention as a solution to risk. Vandoninck et al.’s (2012:72) study concluded that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for increasing a child’s online resilience. They initially investigated which children use which coping strategies, and which children feel more upset after a negative online experience. The results indicate that children struggling with low self-efficacy and psychological difficulties offline are also more vulnerable online, as they feel harmed more intensively. Being self-efficacious is also related to more proactive coping responses. Although girls and younger children experience more harm, they are more likely to talk to somebody about the problem and that is important in terms of reporting the risk and preventing further harm. A few of the children in our study were also aware of the importance of not just ‘telling someone’ but of ‘talking’ about what they had seen so they could make sense of it.

“I talk to my Mum if I am worried about something on the internet and she helps me to delete things, but then you can still remember what you saw so you should talk about it.” Girl, Yr 5.

11 http://www.childnet.com/new-for-schools/childnet-digital-leaders-programme
Online coping, therefore, is an important concept in the consideration of developing online resilience, which is understood as the internet-specific problem-solving strategies children adopt after a negative experience online, such as deleting the message or blocking the sender.

**Figure 13: Three types of coping strategies (Livingstone et al., 2011)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fatalistic/passive</th>
<th>Communicative</th>
<th>Proactive problem-solving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Responding in a fatalistic or passive way entails the absence of taking an initiative that tackles the cause of the problem</td>
<td>• A communicative approach refers to talking with someone trustworthy</td>
<td>• Proactive strategies refer to both a willingness to act and actual action when facing problems, with a view to reducing or eliminating further harm</td>
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To avoid risky problematic situations online, many children plan, strategise, and reflect to actually self-monitor their online activities. Proactive strategies are used more frequently than seeking-support strategies when dealing with online bullying — although girls are more likely to seek social support when faced with online problematic situations compared to boys (Smahel, and Wright, 2014). Avoidance tactics, that is, avoiding or clicking away from certain online platforms, applications or websites, is a popular strategy among the youngest age group (9-11 years). In general, behavioural avoidance turns out to be an effective way of preventing problematic situations related to content risks (Smahel and Wright, 2014). “Key to developing online resilience is digital literacy and most of the issues associated with young people’s use of technology are the result of little pedagogical or parental guidance or intervention as even when it does occur, it is seldom comprehensive and often ‘knee-jerk’ in its response. Digital literacy and citizenship skills generally do not blossom on their own but need to be taught as a key component in what is taught in modern education curricula” (Corish, 2014, online).

Certainly there are useful, safety-enhancing technology-related skills, like how to use Facebook privacy settings. But it may be that the most effective prevention skills for safety and health both on and offline are about conflict management, empathy promotion, emotion regulation, consequence anticipation, refusal techniques, bystander mobilisation, and help-seeking (Finkelhor, 2014: 657).

As children live in an ‘always on’ digital world constant monitoring of a child’s digital life is impossible children need to be empowered to judge and respond to risk themselves (Przybylski et al., 2014). The discussions with the children also talked about ‘bystandering’ and the importance of telling someone if you or some you knew was being bullied.

“It’s called bystandering… it’s like, really important keeping yourself safe because if you are, like, in a chat room and you see that someone is being horrible to someone else then it’s really important that you tell someone and that you get the evidence. So you can take a photo using an app, or by clicking both buttons at once and then have a screen shot of it and then you block them so they can’t be horrible and say nasty things to you any more and I’d tell someone straightaway.” Girl, Yr 6.

While knowledge of the risks children face online has increased, Livingstone and Smith (2014) argue that challenges remain and there is a need for a clearer understanding of how
the risks interrelate and how to build on the risk and protective factors identified to design effective interventions.

**TOWARDS DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL RIGHTS**

According to Carrick Davies (2012) online safety cannot be effectively taught as a ‘bolt-on’ but needs to be embedded into the wider teaching of emotional, social and digital literacies. As outlined at the beginning of this report, the majority of children’s online access is from home via a mobile device rather than at school. Primary schools filter and block many websites to safeguard children within school, but as Phippen (2015, online) points out, “internet filters all too easily threaten children's legitimate right to information in the well-intentioned effort to protect them from online pornography. A better policy response is more focus on relationship and sexual education”. Information and guidance on healthy relationships need to be embedded into PSHE education from an early age to empower children to recognise unhealthy/abusive relationships and develop resilience and effective coping strategies. Although a higher level of digital literacy is related to the use of online coping strategies aimed at solving the problem and protecting the child from further harm (Vandoninck et al., 2013) Annansingh and Veli’s (2016) research highlights that online safety policies and procedures have not kept up-to-date with technological advances. Furthermore, the debate and the educational resources available tend to be dominated by the threat of child sexual abuse and they adopt a ‘harm and loss-based’ approach which focuses on risks and overlooks the positive opportunities (Barnard-Wills, 2012). Barnard-Wills (2012:251) argues that a “lack of knowledge is seen as the cause of negatively evaluated behaviour, with the assumption that an increase in knowledge will prevent or eliminate that behaviour. The rational actor of liberal governmentality requires knowledge with which to reflect upon his or her behaviour and alter it.”

“In a digital world, information literacy and knowledge of technology have become fundamental in a child’s education, development and self-discovery” (Annansingh and Veli, 2106:162). Jones and Mitchell (2016) recommend distinguishing digital citizenship education from digital literacy education (internet and computer technical skills). ‘Digital citizenship’ currently covers a broad range of goals. To improve education, they argue that there needs to be a narrower focus on respectful behaviour online and online civic engagement, moving away from digital literacy education and cyberbullying prevention. Instead, digital citizenship education should be focused on young people practising respectful and tolerant behaviours toward others and increased civic engagement activities.

Children, professionals and teachers felt that there were greater learning outcomes from involving the children (and parents) in active learning opportunities in which they could explore different scenarios, relate to the characters and engage in making decisions for the characters and discuss the consequences:

“A lot of research says that interactive stuff works far better on young people if you show them video clips of real life people; it has a far better impact on them... Some university devised it. You follow two children and there’s a traffic light system and you have to press the buttons and make decisions, and they engage really well with it, and at the end you get all the answers and leads on to discussion about the choices. They relate better to characters they can see something happening to, e.g. Tiffany in Eastenders online bullying.”
CYP professional.

“We need a Crucial Crew-type bus to go round schools.” Teacher.

The focus group of Year 7 children in particular vividly recalled the details of interactive online safety learning experiences that they had experienced while in Year 6 and felt these were really memorable opportunities for getting online safety messages across to children:
Jones and Mitchell (2016:2074) argue that if digital citizenship education is going to be embraced by schools as the next direction for internet safety education, then it should follow several critical steps:

♦ it should be well-defined
♦ it should incorporate effective educational strategies, such as active learning
♦ it should target specific educational goals and outcomes
♦ the impact on intended behavioural outcomes should be evaluated.

Furthermore, “policy makers and practitioners must engage children in an ongoing conversation about how to use digital media to support children’s rights. Children want to be involved in these conversations. They want to take responsibility for making the internet a better place and they have valuable expertise to share” (Third et al., 2014:9). The importance of children’s rights to meaningful participation cannot be emphasised enough in the development of online safety programmes, initiatives and awareness raising activities. The knowledge that children already have about the technology and online resources was identified as an important factor for adults to upskill themselves and to be aware of through dialogue with the children:
“Digital rights can be described as civil liberties that relate to the ability to freely access and use digital media, electronic devices and communications networks. Currently discussion of digital rights tends to focus predominantly on issues of internet access as an entitlement rather than a privilege, the right to individual privacy and freedom of expression” (Hope, 2015:351).

The iRights principles (as outlined by the UK Safer Internet Centre, online12) interweave to tackle the multiple issues of digital engagement and include:

- **The Right to REMOVE** - Every child and young person should have the right to easily edit or delete all content they have created
- **The Right to KNOW** - Children and young people have the right to know who is holding or profiting from their information, what their information is being used for and whether it is being copied, sold or traded.
- **The Right to SAFETY AND SUPPORT** - Children and young people should be confident that they will be protected from illegal practices and supported if confronted by troubling or upsetting scenarios online
- **The Right to INFORMED AND CONSCIOUS CHOICES** - Children and young people should be empowered to reach into creative places online, but at the same time have the capacity and support to easily disengage.
- **The Right to DIGITAL LITERACY** - To access the knowledge that the internet can deliver, children and young people need to be taught the skills to use, create and critique digital technologies, and given the tools to negotiate changing social norms.

All the focus groups discussed a range of online safety resources, lesson plans, awareness-raising films, and websites. Some teachers discussed the difficulty of knowing where to find the best and most appropriate resources for specific age groups. They said it was very difficult to ‘keep up-to-date’ and that they had spent a long time finding online safety resources and developing a digital curriculum for their setting. Some schools had highly developed curriculums whereas others had virtually nothing in place.

> “Our curriculum is linked to our [PSHE] curriculum. I have spent a long time developing it and now it is well established. There is an e-safety stage for each year and every teacher in my school knows exactly what they are doing. So we use Thinkuknow, we use that duck one – DigiDuck. We start at reception and we go right up to Year 6 and every class does some every year. I thought it was like that at every school but it’s not.” Teacher.

12 http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/irights-launch
One of the teachers discussed the e-Safer Suffolk e-package bought for £299 for a year’s subscription (which included assemblies, worksheets curriculum plans, resources from Childnet and CEOP). But they commented that there was little usable material for teachers and that the ICT coordinator had to adapt the resources as many needed to be updated. The teachers also discussed the importance of a coordinated approach in schools as often teachers would ‘do their own thing’ and not communicate what they were doing. This often resulted in children being shown the same video twice or expected to undertake the same activity, which disengaged them, lost impact and the children ‘switched off’. Some schools just had an ‘e-safety day’ but the teachers emphasised the need for a staged approach to curriculum design, which was clearly articulated to all staff and that all schools should adopt this approach. Often the development of a successful curriculum depended on a teacher taking an interest in online safety and driving change forward.

“I took the role on myself. I saw it as really important it is part of safeguarding and I think a teacher’s primary role is to keep the children safe. And I had children who at the time were using stuff and finding things out so I tried to learn alongside them. Then I did the CEOP Thinkuknow training and I got really into it. I realised how important this is. They send you the resources but then I realised that they weren’t enough and that I needed more so I started looking around and discovered the other sites. We can’t afford to ignore it.” Teacher.

Digital literacy skills are essential for online safety, yet many younger (11-13 year old) children lack key critical and safety skills (Sonck et al., 2011). SWGfL have provided a free Digital Literacy curriculum ¹³ that is designed to empower pupils and students to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world.

Ensuring that all children are safe online requires approaches that promote digital literacy, resilience and cyber-savvy. It is only in partnership that we can reach consensus on how to create a safe, open, accessible, affordable and secure digital world. Critically, children and young people’s profound insight must help inform, shape and drive this goal – which needs to focus on equity of access, safety for all, digital literacy across generations, identity and privacy, participation and civic engagement (Burns et al., 2014:7).

TOWARDS A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY APPROACH

There are various different approaches in European national education systems to online safety and to what children learn about online safety in school. Educational authorities establish a broad public/private partnership to promote online safety activities through collaborations in conferences and workshops, or through the establishment of long-term activities related to infrastructure or methodological projects in schools (Rangelov, 2010). There are a wide variety of primary schools in Suffolk (county run, church aided, free schools, academies and independent schools) ranging from large, multi-class entry to very small schools, sometimes in a rural area. The teachers in the focus groups commented on the very different access to resources that schools have, and while some are able to afford high specification technological infrastructures, others struggle to meet the recommended requirements. Similarly, the time and resource allocated to online safety issues varied and many schools felt they struggled.

Yet most studies on the effectiveness of educational interventions focus on online bullying rather than online safety. In Aston and Brzyska’s (2012) study, for example, 45 per cent of primary school teachers felt that their pupils understood how to report online abuse. Cowie and Colliety (2010) argue that, rather than imposing tighter regulation and stricter sanctions, it may be more productive to work holistically with the relationships in the peer group in responding to online bullying to develop heightened awareness, its consequences, as well as empathy towards those who are affected. Another example of good practice is provided by Good and Fang (2015) who suggest that parent-child programming may hold promise for young people with conditions that impact their learning, social competency and emotional regulation, such as LDs, ASD, and ADHD. This experiential learning model provided a non-hierarchical teaching and learning environment, where adults and young people sat together at a computer and worked through hypothetical scenarios of online risk developed by the young people (Good and Fang, 2015).

Pearce et al.’s (2011:12) review considers current best practice, concluding that current evidence supports a whole school approach to deliver a programme that tackles bullying online. They stress the importance of developing sustainable structure, skills, resources, commitment, and promoting understandings “across the school community in facilitating a common school vision and culture that promotes a safe and supportive learning environment”. For Pearce et al., such a systematic whole-school approach will effectively prevent and manage online bullying while strengthening capacity, to enable schools to translate current evidence into informed practice. Research shows that prevention programs focused at the school level will have a positive impact to some extent, but greater consideration needs to be given to both design and the evaluation of improving online

"How do we educate parents and young people? We need to also educate parents about picking up on signs that something is wrong. Parents need to understand the signs of exploitation, and also if a young person is depressed and not engaging, [or] self-harming; and do parents really understand why these things are happening and that it could be to do with online stuff that the young person is behaving and presenting in certain ways? It goes back to education and really low-level stuff in Year 6 or Year 5 in primary schools and thinking about how do we deliver to schools and what the police’s role is in that. What do we want young people to know and what do we want parents to know about e-safety before they leave primary school? They need a good understanding what online is.” Police.
safety. Couvillon and Ilieva (2011) point out the designing of any online safety model or programme is only one part of the overall process, and implementation and sustainability are also important aspects which need to be considered from the outset if the programme is to be successfully integrated into a school’s culture and ultimately into the wider community. There are a number of models proposed in preventing online abuse and in improving school-based approaches to online safety.

**Figure 14: A model for preventing online bullying (Couvillon and Ilieva, 2011)**

Whole-school community responses are also advocated in relation to online bullying by Cowie’s (2011:55) research, which demonstrates the importance of tackling bullying early before it escalates into something much more serious. This affirms the need for schools to establish a whole-school approach, with a range of systems and interventions in place for tackling all forms of bullying and social exclusion. The research also suggests that action against cyberbullying should be part of a much wider concern within the school for the promotion of restorative practices, within an emotionally literate community (Cowie, 2011:55). The Department for Education Report (2014) gave whole-school restorative approaches the highest rating of effectiveness at preventing bullying, with a survey of schools showing 97% rated restorative approaches as effective. There is good evidence that restorative practice delivers a wide range of benefits for schools (Restorative Justice Council, Online).

Ang (2016) argues that effective prevention and intervention strategies need to be multi-pronged and should encompass multiple systems such as the family, peers, the school and the community. Shipton’s (2011) study also identified key factors in improving online safety in primary schools and considers four key areas for schools to focus on planning and developing their online safety strategy.
Any attempts at improving online safety needs to be based on up-to-date, relevant information, current legislation and best practice – and they also need to be evaluated. Adopting a self-review approach to online safety, particularly with strongly defined criteria, is an effective way of schools considering and improving their online safety practice (Phippen, 2014). The 360 degree safe schools self-review online tool provides a free, straightforward and practical means for schools to review their online safety provision. It has won many awards for innovation as it is both user-friendly and interactive and enables schools to develop an action plan to bring about improvements and evidence their progress.

It provides:

- Information and stimulus that can influence the production or review of online safety policies and develop good practice.
- A process for identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Opportunities for commitment and involvement from the whole school.
- A continuum for schools to discuss how they might move from a basic level provision for online safety to practice that is aspirational and innovative.

...safety should be better linked to the wider community, as parents, teachers, schools and local authorities all need to play a role in guiding children into being confident and safe users of the virtual world (Annansingh and Veli, 2016:163)

The College of Policing also set out guidance on the role of the police in working with schools to educate children:

Police need to work with schools to educate children on the risks of exchanging imagery, to engage as appropriate during investigations, and understand schools’ powers to delete images (College of Policing, 2016:2).

The focus group of professionals considered the Bronfenbrenner model to be relevant to the context of community in which they work with children and families:

14 http://swgfl.org.uk/products-services/esafty/services/360
Adopting a more holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to both the academic study of childhood and working in practice with children is fundamentally important (Bond, 2013b; Cowie and Colliety, 2010). Following an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) a whole school community approach incorporates the individual level (including higher risk students) the home level (engaging and involving parents) the classroom level (curriculum) and the school level (policy, behaviour support, peer support, classroom and school culture and school playground/free time improvements) – Cross et al., 2011. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model for an Ecology of Human Development, the interconnected systems are also apparent. The child in the centre has their own individual characteristics, like age, gender, (dis)ability and previous experience, which will influence both the child's development and how they interact with their immediate environments, both offline and online. These characteristics will also influence their vulnerability and resilience online. The microsystem, which refers to the institutions and groups that most immediately and directly impact the child's development, how they interact with their immediate environments – both offline and online – will also impact both vulnerability and resilience online.

Often overlooked, and depicted in the model as mesosystems (shown as the arrows in Figure 16) are the connections or relationships between the microsystems; for example, the relationship between the parents and the school. Consequently, interactions between individuals, groups and social structures are significant in improving children’s online safety and are highlighted as being everyone’s responsibility. As such, effective communication and cooperation between all of these systems and those within them is of paramount importance.
importance. The police focus group were very knowledgeable about the importance of effective communication and cooperation in engaging young people and suggested:

“We have really changed the way we engage with young people and schools and we are getting much better at it. We need to learn from what we have done to improve rape services, as in before, once victims reported and they came into the system, they felt it was all out of their control. And now, with the SARCS and that they have more choice as in the level of intervention they want, it is more victim-led. And that’s what we need to do maybe with the self-referrals; that it’s not like entering into a machine and you want someone arrested but more like you can talk about it and discuss what could be done and give young people that choice.” Police.

So good practice examples are confined to educational arenas and the HMIC (2015:39) report provides some examples of how some police forces have worked with their partners to provide advice and guidance to the public on internet safety and they point out that although much of this work is provided in a traditional way (face-to-face rather than online) it is, they suggest, nonetheless important. One child in Year 7 summarised what he felt was the most important message to feed back to through this report is the importance that he felt the police involvement is in conveying online safety messages to the local community, schools, parents and children:

“Speak to the police branch and ask them to go to the head police branches, and they could get the local police to put up websites and go and give talks in their area about online safety.” Boy, Yr 7.
However, although the HMIC (2015:38) identifies some good practice examples of the police in community engagement in relation to online safety (as outlined in Figure 17), the review also investigated how easily children could find information and support on police websites, in relation to activity in their online world.

They found that:

- almost all force websites had information – albeit to varying degrees – relating to online child sexual exploitation or ‘cyber-bullying’. However, this information was primarily aimed at parents and carers
- almost all force websites provided the user, within two or three clicks from the homepage, with a link to the website of another agency (for example CEOP, NSPCC, or Internet Watch Foundation) for more information and help
- less than one third of force websites (14 out of 43) had cyber-bullying or online child sexual exploitation highlighted on their homepage
- less than one third of force websites (14 out of 43) had useful information aimed at an audience of children and young people.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook (2015) details a new set of requirements for schools considering the online safety of pupils, stressing the importance of a whole school community approach. However, in his analysis of the 7,000 schools on the 360 degree safe database, Phippen (2015) found that almost 60 per cent of schools have no engagement with the community on online safety issues.

Parents need to actively work together with senior school leaders, governors and staff to develop strategies for online safety, for the schools that are most effective in reducing online risk have excellent ongoing relationships with families and parents, with young people...
actively involved in developing policies (Robinson, 2012), educational programmes and awareness raising initiatives.

“Everyone is going to [have to do] their bit. The only way we can make a difference is by getting everyone involved.” Police.

“As a county, should we have an online safety team of professionals? A multi-agency team, but [one] who can give support and advice, intervene when required to support schools and other agencies but also to follow up those referrals and ensure that the child actually got the help and support they needed.” CYP Professional.

Ofsted (2014) highlights what they consider to be examples of good and outstanding practice, relating to the active involvement and leadership of young people.

**Figure 18: Examples of Good and Outstanding Practice (Ofsted, 2014)**

Young people’s accounts reflect the complexity of the various problematic situations they encounter online or indirectly experience, and how their experiences reflect wider developmental contexts such as peer relationships, parent-child relationships, romantic relationships, school, sexuality, identity, health, and morality. As such, educational programs need to be developed which focus on young people’s problematic situations online and how to deal with them (Smahel et al., 2014). An outstanding example of such an approach, which also fosters meaningful participation and effective partnership working, is the Childnet Digital Leaders Programme<sup>15</sup>. The programme, highly successful and well established in high schools, had been successfully piloted in 13 primary schools and has now been rolled out to primary schools across the UK in November 2016. Results of the independent evaluation found there was a clear positive impact on the whole school community and 70 per cent of

<sup>15</sup> http://www.childnet.com/new-for-schools/childnet-digital-leaders-programme
pupils who received a session from their school’s digital leaders said they would now be more careful about what they share online. The broad impacts on online safety outcomes in schools included:

♦ Effective internet safety education: the Digital Leaders act as educators, role models and advocates for their peers, ensuring all pupils are safer and happier online
♦ Championing the positive use of technology
♦ Digital Leaders are up to date with the latest trends and opportunities: from how schools are using technology in learning, to competitions and resources. Digital Leaders championed the positive use of technology in school, supported pupils and school staff in making the most of the fantastic opportunities offered by technology, while helping all pupils to build positive digital footprints
♦ Parent and staff training: engaging young people in educating their parents and teachers ensured that adults can support young people more effectively and have a better understanding of young people’s online experiences and concerns
♦ Evaluation: the programme provides schools with an annual report on the impact of the online safety education delivered by the Digital Leaders in their school, and helps them track progress in how the school is improving around online safety provision and children’s exposure to risk
♦ Achieving outstanding in Ofsted inspections: this programme addresses multiple indicators of outstanding practice in online safety education as outlined by Ofsted, including educating children through peer mentoring, children being integral in online safety policy development, and children teaching parents about online safety.

Some of the teachers had experience of the Digital Leaders Programme and considered it an excellent initiative. Others had not had direct experience of it but discussed how older children were a powerful and effective resource for teaching younger children and that children themselves could teach their parents.

“I think slightly older children teaching the younger ones is a really good idea as they would take notice of them and listen to what they say. Also it’s the children themselves that really know what’s going online and what’s in and cool and what’s not.” CYP Professional.

Other ideas included a ‘cycling proficiency’ type programme for primary school-aged children:

“Police used to deliver cycling proficiency in schools; why can’t we have a similar programme in schools for e-safety? A short course delivered in schools by us and you get a certificate at the end of it to say that you have passed your e-safety course and the children could then take it home and parents would think ‘what’s this?’ and talk to their child about it. We have got to get the message across somehow.” Police.

While this report outlines some good practice examples of digital awareness programmes, STIR (2015) points out that in practice, much education for young people on this issue is delivered in an ad-hoc way. In order to develop a more consistent, comprehensive approach, Phippin (2014) suggests that the 360 degree tool offers schools and other children and young people’s organisations a comprehensive tool for self-evaluation, in relation to online safety planning and development.
The flexibility of 360 degree safe is such that it can be introduced at any speed (as appropriate to the school’s situation) and can be used in any size or type of school. As each question is raised so it provides suggestions for improvements and also makes suggestions for possible sources of evidence which can be used to support judgements and be offered to inspectors when required. In one particularly interesting development, where evidence is needed, the program provides links to specific areas of relevant documents, rather than simply signposting documents on the web. This saves time for everyone concerned about online safety, and allows the school to show immediately the coverage and relevance of its online safety provision. 360 degree safe will also provide summary reports of progression, (again this is useful when challenged) and is an excellent way of helping all staff (not just those charged with the job of implementing an online safety policy) to understand the scope of online safety and what the school is doing about the issue. Above all, 360 degree safe provides a prioritised action plan, suggesting not just what needs to be done, but also in what order it needs to be done. This is a vital bonus for teachers and managers who approach the issue of online safety for the first time, in a school which has no (or only a very rudimentary) policy (Phippin, 2014:3).

However, despite the primary focus upon children in online safety policy, their voices are often marginalised in the official documents (Hope, 2015:347). Whatever educational programmes, awareness-raising initiatives or interventions are developed and implemented, it is clear that intergenerational honest, open and respectful dialogue about online engagement is essential.

“Referrals are coming [via] social services from schools and that goes into the MASH and then that gets referred out to us and we are working together a lot better now.” Police.

“Yes – working together – its getting better; our communication lines are getting better and referrals are coming through other than self-referrals from young people themselves and that’s something we need to work on as they should come from the children because they try to hide that they have a problem and try to deal with it themselves, and that is a problem.” Police.

Any initiatives and interventions must adopt a child-centred approach to both online safety and digital literacy, respecting children as active members of digital society who are engaged and contribute to digital environments shared by both children and adults, rather than viewing children as passive recipients of media created by adults (Ito et al., 2010).

It is important to encourage children to be responsible for their own safety as much as possible rather than rely on restrictive or adult forms of mediation. The focus of internet safety messaging should be on empowerment rather than restriction of children’s usage, emphasising responsible behaviour and digital citizenship. Similarly, the development of policy, child safety practices and positive online content should also focus on children as a competent, participatory group (O’Neill and McLaughlin, 2011:4-5).
TRAINING – BEST PRACTICE IN UPSKILLING FRONTLINE STAFF WHO ENGAGE WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS

This section of the REA considers the evidence as to what constitutes best practice in training and upskilling staff in relation to online safety. It is clear from the evidence to date that it essential that all teachers, school staff, CYP workforce (including NGOs), police and social workers have frequent and up-to-date online safety training. The importance of training about online safety was raised a number of times in all the focus groups, including the children’s:

“I think it’s really important that teachers should have training about it. Because if you have talked to your friends and then you decide to tell the teacher that something bad has happened online then they should know what you are talking about and they should be able to understand what has happened and what they need to do to help you. It should be in teacher training but I know that they only get a tiny part of it because it’s all about focusing on what to teach and stuff but not about [how] to keep children safe outside of school as such.” Boy, Yr 6.

But as the Bond et al. (2014) study found, 96.5 per cent of professional respondents in children’s services, education and health across England stated that they required training for online risk assessment, and 94 per cent said they needed training for intervention programmes. Ofsted (2014) recommends all teaching and non-teaching staff receive regular and up-to-date online safety training, but Phippen’s (2015) analysis found that 54 per cent of staff in primary schools have received no training on online safety and 55 per cent of schools have carried out no governor training around online safety issues.

It would appear that there is a dearth of understanding and professional expertise in relation to this particular area of child protection (Palmer, 2014, online).

So this section addresses the research question:

♦ Is there any research to demonstrate best practice in upskilling frontline staff/organisations who engage with vulnerable groups, regarding the safe use of the internet and social media?
FIGURE 19: APPROACHES TO UPSKILLING FRONTLINE STAFF WHO ENGAGE WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS

From the available evidence, there are a wide variety of approaches to training professionals on online safety (as depicted in Figure 19). Most easily accessible are a wide variety of excellent materials, high quality educational resources and detailed information regarding children’s online safety – all of which are freely available to access, download and use (see Table 14 for a summary). These resources offer an invaluable opportunity for individuals to learn about online risk and safeguarding children, as well as educational materials, lesson plans, ideas and learning activities. However, in accessing both information and training, it is often an issue of release time/teaching cover for teaching staff with safety responsibility, and while there is a requirement for safety under Ofsted, there is no requirement for specific/formal safety and awareness training of staff. More formal and structured training opportunities for professionals range from online safety awareness raising courses accessed online (for example NSPCC) to professional training sessions either facilitated by someone within the organisation or external to it. School staff training initiatives are often delivered in this way, for example, UK Safer Internet Centre, Childnet, SWGfL, Karl Hopwood (an e-safety advisor) and some local safeguarding children boards (LSCB) offer school/organisation based training.

Other training initiatives run along a train-the-trainer model (for example the CEOP Ambassador 16 and Thinkuknow 17 programmes) so professionals can access training and subsequently deliver online safety training to others. Face-to-face interprofessional approaches to training are less common. Current examples include Click: Path to Protection – the Marie Collins Foundation 18, SWGfL’s Online Safety Briefings 19 and some LSCBs. Other school-based initiatives are based on a partnership approach in collaboration with

16 https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/teachers/training/paidtrainingdetails/
17 https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/Teachers/Training/
19 http://swgfl.org.uk/training-events/online-safety-briefings

MESCP/final report/December 2016 102
children, staff and parents, including *The Right Click* from BT and Unicef 20. It is clear from the research that child-centred, intergenerational, whole school community initiatives such as Childnet’s Digital Leader’s Programme21 are most effective and offer the most sustainable approaches to online safety.

One of the ways in which the adult focus groups felt that information and advice could be improved would be to have a ‘one-stop’ shop as an easily available platform for educational resources and materials.

> “Everything else for safeguarding is on Suffolk Learning. We need something all together in place – it would save me hours and also to know that we are sending out the right messages and have got the most up-to-date information. Right now, we are just stumbling across it rather than being pointed in the right direction, and also there should be a clear framework of statutory requirements, which we should be meeting at each stage. That would be really useful because we have safeguarding obligations we have to demonstrate we meet.” Teacher.

The table below is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of the types and genres of available educational materials but rather offers a summary chart of the main sources of high quality, child-centred resources available on online safety nationally.

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### TABLE 14: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

The REA found that there has been little evaluation of many online safety resources. As such the table below briefly summarises some of the main providers but the list is not exhaustive and does not include a sound evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources. The development of any educational programme for online safety should include a robust evaluation of the appropriateness, relevance and educational impact of the resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Website</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Safer Internet Centre</td>
<td>The UK Safer Internet Centre is coordinated by a partnership of three leading organisations: Childnet International; the South West Grid for Learning, and the Internet Watch Foundation. It is co-funded by the European Commission’s Safer Internet Programme and is one of the 31 Safer Internet Centres of the Insafe network. The centre has three main functions: an awareness centre, a helpline and a hotline.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/">http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childnet</td>
<td>Childnet works directly with children and young people from the ages of 3-18 on a weekly basis, as well as parents, carers, teachers and professionals, finding out about their real experiences online, and the positive things they are doing, as well as sharing safety advice.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.childnet.com/">http://www.childnet.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWGfL</td>
<td>SWGfL are a not-for-profit charitable trust, providing a wide range of products, services and solutions designed specifically for education. They offer a range of training courses and educational resources as well as the 360 degree safe online safety review toolkit. In partnership with the UK Safer Internet Centre, they host the Professionals Online Safety Helpline.</td>
<td><a href="http://swgfl.org.uk/">http://swgfl.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Matters</td>
<td>A not-for-profit organisation backed by the UK’s most prominent internet industry players (BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media) and supported by leading child online safety experts.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.internetmatters.org/">https://www.internetmatters.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>The leading children’s charity in the UK, specialising in child protection and dedicated to the fight for every childhood. The only UK children’s charity with statutory powers and that means they can take action to safeguard children at risk of abuse.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Collins Foundation</td>
<td>The Marie Collins Foundation is the UK charity enabling children who suffer sexual abuse and exploitation via internet and mobile technologies to recover and live safe, fulfilling lives.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/">http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/</a></td>
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Thinkuknow is an education programme from the National Crime Agency’s CEOP Command. Thinkuknow is underpinned by the latest intelligence about child sex offending from CEOP Command. Thinkuknow aims to ensure that everyone has access to this practical information – children, young people, their parents and carers, and the professionals who work with them.

Vodafone provides a digital parenting magazine and also online advice, news and resources for parents.

The Right Click: Internet Safety Matters initiative has been developed by BT and Unicef UK to enable children and young people to become confident digital citizens, while helping their parents and teachers to keep them safe online.

It is clear that any upskilling opportunities need to convey the positive potential of the internet as well as the negative aspects to frontline staff. They should also address the individualisation of risk, in that it is a subjective concept. As such, careful consideration needs to be given to effectively responding to online harms as appropriate for each child’s circumstances. Carrick Davies (2012) argues that it is important for all those with a duty of care for young people to understand how new mobile social networking platforms are influencing relationships and behaviour both within and outside the learning environment. This must, he suggests, be covered as part of professional training and continuing professional development. One excellent example of good practice is the Munch, Poke, Ping project – an online safety intervention initiative based in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) which adopted a participatory approach with groups of vulnerable children. Led by Carrick-Davies (2012) the project has a strong child-centric approach, clear recommendations and practical suggestions for the development of appropriate resources, and is intended to positively support dedicated staff who undertake such important work caring for vulnerable young people in the ‘blended’ environments of education, social care, and well-being. The resources, based on films made by young people themselves, provide easily accessible examples of how to discuss various online risks with vulnerable young people and strategies they can use to keep themselves safe. Identifying four key areas (identity, relationships, conflict and coping) the research shows how vulnerable groups working in collaboration with staff (in this case PRUs) effectively documents how powerful such an approach can be on both young people and staff. What is unique about this project is that through the intensive workshops and film-making, they were to capture the authentic voices of young people, and then contrast these views with those from the dedicated staff who they filmed, describing how they deal with these issues in their professional practice.

Woollard et al. (2009) undertook research regarding the support for e-safety provision in initial teacher education. They found that some trainee teachers expressed degrees of naivety with regard to online, both positive and negative comments were made, and ranges of trainee attitudes were expressed. Their report concludes that there is a need for e-safety training within teacher training programmes. In their evaluation, the DVD ‘Jenny’s Story’

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22 http://www.childnet.com/resources/jennys-story
(developed by Childnet International and Lancashire Constabulary) proved to be a most stimulating resource. They recommended that e-safety tuition in initial teacher training programmes is delivered face-to-face in small groups and should include direct reference to authoritative and statutory requirements.

The multi-agency training delivered by the Marie Collins Foundation is a short, interprofessional training course, designed to develop both the competence and confidence of professionals in responding to the needs of children and their families after online sexual abuse. The pioneering scheme (being rolled out at the time of writing) will train police, education and children’s services, health professionals, the Crown Prosecution Service and non-governmental organisation staff, as well as the judiciary (Marie Collins Foundation, online). The aim is for CLICK: Path to Protection to eventually be rolled out to all front-line professionals working in this area. The evaluation of the pilot study (n=114) found there were consistent, statistically significant improvements in the participants’ views on their knowledge of the subject, their ability to assess online risk and their confidence levels. The feedback from the participants suggested that the learning tools adopted in the training were highly appropriate and that the interprofessional delivery was a key aspect to the positive learning experience (Bond and Dogaru, 2017 forthcoming).

SWGfL offer a full, day’s training for social workers on online safety. The training programme and toolkit enables practitioners to better assess the needs of children and improve their support of the child. The training seeks to explain the digital world inhabited by children, parents and carers and to provide professionals with the information they need to assess impact on children and families within this digital context. It provides practitioners with the practical tools to use during the assessment process, the questions to ask, and observations to make in order to collate evidence to make informed decisions about appropriate interventions.

One quite different example of good practice is ‘Zak’, a joint initiative between Kent police and the University of Kent. Zak is a bespoke, research-based simulation on the radicalisation process, which emulates a social media site with photos, chat, likes and shares. Reeves and Sheriyar (2015) analysed the responses of teachers, children and young people (including children aged 9-11 years) to the Zak intervention programme. The explained context advice, guidance and training provide opportunity to maximise the potential uses of the resource to full effect in the classroom.

What social workers and others must stop doing is seeing CMC [Computer Mediated Communication] and ICT as something separate, difficult to understand, of peripheral relevance to social work or as solely a law enforcement concern. With a change of perspective, social work could do more to work together with parents and other professionals to safeguard children in their interconnected, digital-mediated and unmediated worlds, shifting safeguarding into the 21st century and contributing to practice-based evidence to inform children’s safety in a rapidly developing future (May-Chahal et al., 2014:611).

SWGfL offer a full, day’s training for social workers on online safety. The training programme and toolkit enables practitioners to better assess the needs of children and improve their support of the child. The training seeks to explain the digital world inhabited by children, parents and carers and to provide professionals with the information they need to assess impact on children and families within this digital context. It provides practitioners with the practical tools to use during the assessment process, the questions to ask, and observations to make in order to collate evidence to make informed decisions about appropriate interventions.

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23 http://swgfl.org.uk/training-events/E-Safety-Training-for-Social-Workers
It [Zak] was also recognised as a flexible learning tool enabling various pathways to be explored with young people in lessons, addressing the many aspects of e-safety, not just radicalisation. Additionally, the teachers remarked that the young people appreciated the social media ‘Facebook’ format of the simulation, and this appeal resulted in their immersion with it as a teaching aid. The comprehensive delivery of the Zak package into schools was also significant. Staff reported that the interprofessional training delivered by specialist police trainers, and the accompanying materials, enhanced the learning and confidence of the teachers on this multi-faceted and complex topic (Reeves and Sheriyar, 2015:20).

Reeves and Sheriyar (2015:24) also point out that Zak addresses the safeguarding agenda and meets online safety requirements set by Ofsted, in that it provides an age-related, comprehensive curriculum for online safety that enables pupils to become safe and responsible users of new technologies. The initiative also works with their partners and other providers to ensure that pupils who receive part of their education away from school are e-safe, therefore, fulfilling Ofsted requirements (2014:5).

Other innovative approaches to raising awareness of online risks and encouraging discussions about reporting online risk also involve technology, but in the form of apps. Poblet et al. (2016:2) evaluated MediaKids and found that it was not just seen as an app but “as a service that creates its own social ecosystem based on the cooperation between families (parents and siblings) and schools (peers and teachers) to produce educational and socialisation effects”. In the UK, Tootoot 24 is an online anti-bullying tool and mobile application, which allows students to report bullying directly to their school. Piloted in September 2014, Tootoot has, according to the Anti-Bullying Alliance, a proven track record to date, with thousands of students using and reporting, and hundreds of teachers and mentors responding to those cases.

Childnet provides another excellent training resource – the Staff E-safety INSET Presentation, designed to be delivered by the e-safety lead or designated staff member in a school or organisation working with children and young people. Online safety is not just the responsibility of the e-safety lead or designated safeguarding staff. It is a whole community issue, and this presentation is accessible and relevant for all staff, including support staff (Bond, 2016). While the INSET session is designed to be delivered in an hour, it contains a wealth of constructive advice and information, including how to keep safe as professionals, considering the importance of professional reputation, and practical tips on using the privacy settings of social networking sites (Bond, 2016).

However, while there are some examples of best practice in upskilling fronting professionals who work with vulnerable groups there is, overall no UK-wide guidance for multi-disciplinary working when investigating cases of online abuse of children and no evidence-based models for assessing online risk and the therapeutic needs of children. There is currently little or no accreditation for training. There are some pockets of innovative practice that should be developed and used to inform national policies and a number of good resources [are] available to raise awareness of the safety issues regarding the internet, but these could be better advertised (Palmer, 2015:57).

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24 https://tootoot.co.uk/
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on evidence from the REA and the focus group data, the following recommendations are proposed. They are based on adopting a child-centred approach and a multi-agency model adapted from the Ecology of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These recommendations have been suggested to develop effectively the mesosystems that can promote a countywide approach and advance the interactions between the layers of responsibility. Digital technology will continue to develop and its impact on society will only increase. In Suffolk, the Office of the SPCC and Suffolk Constabulary are members of the County Strategic e-Safety Group, hosted and chaired by Suffolk County Council. The membership also includes a representative of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The aims of the group’s Online Safety Strategy 2020 are to:

♦ Maintain awareness of online safety as part of a safeguarding approach.
♦ Support the development of online safety resilience and digital literacy skills.
♦ Leverage the resources and skills of partners to improve access to digital opportunities and social connectivity for the most vulnerable in society.

Therefore, in light of the objectives set out in the multi-agency e-safety group, the recommendations set out below are designed to be supportive of them. These recommendations are provided in line with the Multi-agency E-safety Crime Prevention (MESCP) Project Initiation Document (2016:3) that, following analysis of the project research phase, SC and SPCC will design an effective model to deliver countywide to appropriate educational establishments and other such recognised groups during the following year (2018/2019).

Attitudes and ideologies provide clear values, which underpin Suffolk’s countywide approach, online safety initiatives and the MESCP project. It is recommended that:

♦ Online risk is understood as a complex interaction between people – human behaviour – and technology.
♦ Suffolk adopts a countywide approach to online safety.
♦ Online safety is everyone’s responsibility and everyone knows what their responsibility is both in promoting and in responding to online safety.
♦ Every child understands that they have the right to participate online safely and responsibly.
♦ Professionals working with children have up-to-date relevant information, multi-agency support and high quality resources in responding to and preventing online risk.
♦ Children are central to informing, developing and evaluating the solution.

By ensuring that up-to-date knowledge, high quality educational resources and state-of-the-art training is accessible to all CYP professionals in Suffolk in order to meet government policy and statutory obligations, it is recommended that:

♦ National policy and statutory requirements for online safety are a priority for all schools in Suffolk and schools should be encouraged to undertake the 360 degree safe self-assessment framework.
♦ High quality online safety educational materials and learning resources are easily accessible to schools, teachers and CYP professionals, and embedded within the curriculum for children and young people.
♦ Professionals are encouraged to exploit national online safety training programmes and knowledge-exchange opportunities to share best practice.
♦ A digital engagement hub for online safety is developed which is free at point of
delivery and addresses professional aspects of online safety, legal and statutory requirements. It should include access to educational resources and learning materials, best practice guidance, training opportunities at national and county level and have accessible and up-to-date information for parents and children. The hub should include effective anonymous reporting, consultation and advice mechanisms and use social media for targeted updates.

- Safer Internet Day (SID) should be widely supported across the county, and every school and CYP organisation should engage with SID.

A more joined-up approach between the wider community, police, LSCB, social care and schools needs to be developed to support professionals in safeguarding children online. It is therefore recommended that:

- A small, focused team is developed to drive MESPC change forward, manage the project and work collaboratively to develop an engagement strategy with the multi-agency online strategy group led by LSCB.
- A map of the roles and responsibilities of key agencies is identified, agreed, clearly communicated and an online safety lead nominated in each agency for referrals and points of escalation.
- Training needs are ascertained through a countywide workforce survey; responsive and relevant training opportunities are provided, audited and more robustly evaluated.
- A new post for an online safety officer for Suffolk is introduced to develop and implement the programme, to work closely with key stakeholders and provide advice. This role would include overseeing the MESPC project's delivery, coordinating between agencies, developing the digital hub, as well as policy and strategy development.
- Consideration be given to a role for Independent Online Safety Adviser(s) to provide more focused support and referral follow-up when children have been identified as being vulnerable online.
- Online safety educational programmes and resources are evaluated to develop a primary digital curriculum for Suffolk.
- Data on online safety is collected and shared across agencies, and local case studies discussed to develop best practice examples and ‘lessons learned’.

For schools to develop the knowledge, resources and support they need to safeguard vulnerable children and engage parents in online safety, it is recommended that:

- All schools in Suffolk enrol and engage with the 360 degree safe self-assessment tool and implement the self-improvement programme.
- Schools engage with opportunities to share best practice and exchange knowledge about ‘what works’ engaging parents in online safety and protecting vulnerable children online.
- Nationally accredited online safety and digital literacy programmes, for example, the Childnet Digital Leaders Programme are introduced to complement the whole school digital curriculum. Children’s engagement should be monitored and their progress rewarded.
- A programme of parental engagement (linked to digital literacy curriculum detailed above) is designed and implemented on an on-going, frequent basis. Using text messaging, email and social media to engage parents, in addition to more traditional face-to-face approaches, including sharing events and parents’ evenings.
- Schools implement an annual Acceptable Use Policy agreement and review with staff, parents and children, ensuring all staff are provided with appropriate and up-to-date online safety training, as highlighted within Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2016.
♦ Parent(s) are encouraged to be online safety ambassador(s) and a school governor for online safety.
♦ The online safety lead (designated safeguarding lead or an appropriately trained deputy) ensures that the recommendations highlighted in KCSIE (2016) are met and that mechanisms are in place to effectively identify and report online safety concerns, and that referrals are reviewed.
♦ Schools provide additional access online and support for children who do not have access to the internet at home.

To improve parental engagement with online safety and confidence to talk to and listen to their children, it is recommended that:

♦ A toolkit is developed effectively engaging parents.
♦ Schools provide clear policies, ensuring that they are clearly communicated and that parents understand their implications.
♦ Easily accessible, relevant, up-to-date and age appropriate information about online safety for parents is available in a variety of formats.
♦ Parents are encouraged and supported to talk to and help their children to be safe online and are given on-going opportunities to work collaboratively with their child on the digital curriculum.
♦ Parents are given opportunities to consider their influence as a role model for their children and to become parent ambassadors within the school.

To empower children to stay safe online, develop digital literacy and actively participate in the sustainable and ethical development of the MESCP project, it is recommended that:

♦ Children are given meaningful opportunities to participate and contribute to online safety awareness programmes – not just made the subject of them.
♦ Children are given multiple and repeated opportunities to progress their digital skills and online safety awareness, to become competent and confident online users and also to develop their resilience online.
♦ Children are provided with spaces to talk about their concerns, including a system of self-referral and independent, non-judgemental advice and guidance.
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APPENDIX 1:

Invitation, Information and Consent Form

The University of Suffolk are working with Suffolk Police to find out what would make the internet a better place for children.

We would like you to talk to us about what you like doing online and what you think would make the internet better for children.

We would like to know:

1. What do you like doing online?
2. When do you go online?
3. What do you use?
4. Who talks to about what you are doing online?
5. What do you think children your age need to know about the internet?
6. What do you think would make the internet better for children?

Emma and Vanessa work at the University. They will be coming to your school on [INSERT DATE] and would like to talk to a group of children. The talk will last about 45 minutes and will happen during the school day. We may write what you say in a report but we will not include your name or your school. We will not tell other people what you say, but if you tell us something that makes us think that you or someone you know may in danger, we will have to tell someone from the school who can help you.

If you are happy to talk to us, please write your name below, ask your parent or carer to read the information and also sign the form below.

You do not have to take part if you do not want to and you can change your mind if you want to.

Vanessa & Emma
I have read and understood the attached information and I am willing to take part in the discussion group.

Name:  
Date:  

(This is for UoS record purposes only and will be kept confidential)

Consent Form (to be signed by a parent/guardian and young person)

If you are happy for your child to be involved, please read the following statements and sign below.

• I am willing for my child to take part in the focus group
• I have read and understood the attached information
• I understand that the information they provide will be confidential (unless concerns are raised about their safety, in which case the researchers will pass on information to the appropriate member of staff at [name of school])

Parent/Guardian (this is for UoS record purposes only and will be kept confidential)

Parent/Guardian Name:

Please sign here to say that you are happy for your young person to participate

Signature……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………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