

## Keeping Children in Our Care Safe Online

### Approaches to online safety with Care Leavers



**Transition to adulthood is tough, it's even tougher for a care leaver (CL). They don't need to ask to make decisions as they are adults - but they are still vulnerable. Some lack maturity - they think they know everything and won't listen to anyone. This leaves CLs open to online abuse and crime.**

Carers and social workers tell us that advisors are needed for longer as no one is keeping an eye on care leavers (CLs) for long enough. Many CLs want to come across older than they really are so, carers preparing young people for adult life should help them to understand the need to take responsibility for their own actions online and ensure they learn online safety strategies. There is likely to be a feeling they know more than their carers and many will exhibit a sense of entitlement. They are also vulnerable to inappropriate contact with their birth family.

#### Financial issues that CLs face:

- How to control their money online as there is a risk of getting into debt
- How to look at their credit rating – the only way to obtain a loan
- The risks of downloading apps linked to their money
- Using debit cards for travel without traceability
- Laundering using their account by others as they are vulnerable
- Cash flipping – identifying scams
- Having a phone contract to be able to access a lot of things

#### Other sex abuse and mental health issues are:

- They are old enough to legally access inappropriate sites
- There is a risk of addiction to gambling, porn & gaming, being scammed, duped, exploited
- Coercion using social media
- The associated vulnerabilities of sending selfies and nudes
- Understanding that sexting with an under 18 girlfriend, boyfriend or friend is illegal
- Mental Health issues and how they engage with social media online
- Stalking, online harassment, peer pressure
- Peer pressure to use certain sites to 'fit in'
- Is there a difference in girl/boy online issues? Eg: body image, coercion through gaming?



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### Here are some good ideas on how to address these issues

- ✓ Good communication to build trust is key
- ✓ Work on it together
- ✓ Include in their Post 16 **Pathway Plan** - online safety training from an older care leaver
- ✓ Ensure they have good online education before they leave care
- ✓ Use research to give them facts and statistics
- ✓ Ask care leavers to help you manage your parental controls for younger children in the house to encourage a sense of responsibility and raise their awareness of the importance to protect themselves online
- ✓ Provide digital security awareness
- ✓ Work with your local finance education provider.
- ✓ Learn to manage using cash from a young age
- ✓ Take responsibility for their own money by using a card at their earliest age, supported by carer
- ✓ Online banking training at an early stage
- ✓ Help them to think about who is watching their posts
- ✓ Learn from other's mistakes

### Resources to help

#### Guide to Setting Controls

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

#### Radicalisation advice

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/radicalisation/>

<https://educateagainsthate.com>

#### Exploitation and Grooming

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-grooming/>

#### Online Pornography

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-pornography/>

#### Removing harmful online content

<https://www.iwf.org.uk>



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