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# Being Sex Savvy

# Introduction

The growth of social media networking online in recent years has transformed the ways in which many people meet, keep in touch with each other and develop sustain friendships and relationships.



The web has allowed people to develop 'virtual communities' online where they can post photos, keep in touch with friends and family, contact new people and expand their friendship and relationship networks.

Advances in technology have also enabled easy access to the web on smartphones, tablets, computers, and other mobile devices meaning large numbers of people are regularly accessing and updating their social networking profiles.

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The ever evolving world of 'app technology' (short for application software) has led to a wide range of social networking apps that can be downloaded onto smartphones, tablets, computers or other mobile devices many include GPS (Global Positioning System) feature allowing people to know where other people are located at that point in time and meet up easily



In terms of social networking, **Facebook twitter and Instagram** are the most popular. In addition to these, other specific sites and apps are also popular among certain communities or interesting groups the popularity of these apps continue to shift and change as new ones are developed.

While the use of social networking is most popular amongst young people, there is increasing use amongst older age range as it's always keep in touch, share news and meet new people

# Savvy social networking

Most of the time many people - young and older - use social networking sites to chat, post links and photographs, meet friends and new people online safely.

However, there are some risks that you may not have thought of and there are things you can do to try and minimise some of those risks.

## What might be some of the risks!

- Trolling - making offensive comments online with the intention of upsetting people or provoking a reaction
- Cyberbullying - using electronic technology to send messages to individuals that are threatening or intimidating
- Stalking - online harassment or unwanted attention from others which is illegal and can lead to prosecution
- 'Friends' companies' or other people's posts which encourage you to link to fraudulent or inappropriate websites
- Grooming - when someone builds a relationship with a young person overtime, befriending them and gaining their trust, eventually leading to sexual exploitation and abuse. this is often done by manipulation, exchanging gifts and encouraging secrecy. Online this may involve someone older pretending to be someone younger in order to gain the trust and competence of the young person
- Snapchat technology - an app that enables the user to send photographs or videos of themselves which self- deletes after a few seconds -although in reality is or not disappear from the Internet forever and are potentially recoverable
- Private information or photo getting online and being distributed without your permission





- Prosecution or recrimination from posting comments seem to be offensive to others or inappropriate
- Phishing emails which encourage you to visit fraudulent or inappropriate websites. Phishing is when others tried to get information such as your username and password to get your credit card details or access to your money by pretending to be a trustworthy entity via electronic communication

- People hacking into or hacking your account or page
- Viruses or spyware containing within attachments or photographs



# Online dating

Some people use the Internet to meet partners - whether it is seeking a long-term partner, casual sex or just meeting people to see what happens or where it might go .

There is a wide range of dating sites and apps available aimed at young people with different interests who are looking for different types of relationship .

Most involve posting a profile about yourself and what type of partner or relationship you are looking for some are free others may carry a charge. If you think it is appropriate and safe to use these dating sites make sure it is a legitimate website before submitting any of your personal or financial details .



Some of these sites will then 'match' you Suggested partners while others you may need to search through other people profiles before messaging people you may like or want to meet.

Be clear about what you are looking for in your profile to avoid any confusion and disappointment. Bear in mind that some people may post a profile which is not as honest as it could be there is an 18 + age restriction on people registering or dating sites for apps



# Photos videos and webcams

Some people also choose to share sexual photographs or videos of themselves or use webcams with partners.

It's important to think that how you might feel if these images were shared wider than you intended which might happen once you have posted them.

If this happens and you want an image taken down you can report this to the website that is hosting the image video it's also important to remember that the law aims to protect young people under the age of 18 so it is an offence to pose or distribute indecent images of people under the age of 18.





# Sexual health



Wherever you are meeting partners, whether it's on or offline, your sexual health is an important issue to consider.

Using condoms for penetrative anal or vaginal sex can help protect you and your partner from picking up or passing on HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea, or syphilis. Using flavoured condoms or dams for oral sex can prevent the transmission of STIs.

Condoms can also prevent unplanned pregnancies, but there are also lots of other contraception choices available including the pill, implants, or injections. It's important that you find a contraception method that you feel comfortable with. Talk to your GP or a sexual health professional for more information about

contraception choices and what might be best for you.

However, it is important to remember that contraception methods other than condoms won't prevent the transmission of STIs.

If you're not using contraception or thinking it may not have worked and you think you may be at risk of getting pregnant, if you act quickly (ie. within 120 hours) taking emergency contraception can also prevent pregnancy. This is available from pharmacies and sexual health services.

Also, if you are sexually active, it's important to consider regular sexual health screening. This can be assessed at your local Department of Genito-Urinary medicine (GUM) which offers free, confidential screening, treatment, and advice for all STIs.

It's important to remember that if you do pick up an STI you won't necessarily have visual symptoms (e.g. a discharge, rash or pain when urinating). If it's not checked out it may cause lasting problems and you may also be passing it onto your partner(s) without knowing. The only way to be sure is to screen at your local GUM or sexual health clinic.

# Safer social networking



Here are some things you can do to try and minimise some of the risks involved in social networking:

1. Not allow others to encourage you to do something online that you are not comfortable with -think before you post or reply
2. Taking care when posting or publishing any information about yourself that identifies you, such as your phone number, photos where you live or work, or address your birthday.
3. Picking a username that does not include any personal information -avoid including your name or the name of the town where you live for example
4. Using complex passwords that include numbers, capital letters etc and that do not include any personal information
5. Using complex passwords that include numbers, capital letters etc and that do not include any personal information
6. Setting up a separate email account to register and receive email from that site, so if you want to close down your page or account, you can simply stop using the account. It is easy to set up an extra email account using Hotmail, Yahoo!, Mail or Gmail for example
7. Keeping your profile private and allowing only your friends to view it
8. Being aware that some people set up fake profiles. Unless you know someone in person, be wary about who they are and about meeting up



9. If anyone online makes you feel uncomfortable, tell someone you trust



10. Ensuring you have effective and up to date antivirus antispyware software and firewall running before you go online

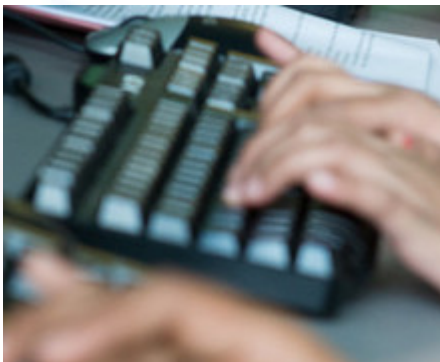
11. Not writing anything or posting pictures that might later cause you or someone else embarrassment -nothing ever disappears once posted online

12. Never posting comments that are abusive or may cause offence to others

13. Being on your guard against phishing scams, including fake friends' requests and posting from individuals or companies inviting you to visit other pages or sites

14. If you do get caught up in a scam making sure you remove any correspondence links and app permission from your account

15. Remember that companies routinely view current or prospective employees social network pages so be careful about your profile what you say and what pictures you post ensure all your settings are the highest privacy settings possible



# Legal issues

## Sexting

Sexting is sending of explicit text or pictures to another phone(s). It is illegal to 'sex' pictures or text to someone under 18 and for someone under 18 to send 'sexts'. Sexting is only legal if everyone - send us an receiver - is over 18 and if the text /picture itself is within the law.

## Cyberbullying

It is illegal to bully or stalk people online or by email. Cyberbullying includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the other person/people.

If the bullying is based on sexual racial or religion grounds, prosecution could be sought through anti-discriminatory laws. Punishment can be a fine or up to six months in prison.



## Pornography

Producing or publishing pornography (as opposed to owning and viewing) is an offence under the Obscene Publication Act 1959/1964 if it is likely to "*deprave and corrupt*" those viewing it.

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 makes it an offence to possess extreme pornography. It refers to pornography which is "*grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise an obscene character*".

Child pornography law in England and Wales are covered by the Protection of Children act 1978, which makes it illegal to take, make, distribute, show or possess an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of someone under the age of 18.

## Consent

The legal age of consent for sex is 16, and people can be prosecuted if they break the law. However, Home Office guidance is clear that there is no intention to prosecute teenagers under the age of 16 where both mutual agreement and where they are of similar age. Sexual health services are confident that they will not tell your parents or carers that they have visited the service, however social services may be informed if you tell them that you are being harmed or harming someone else in some way (this is called safeguarding).

## How does one determine consent?

To determine if someone is giving consent saying yes, the following questions must be able to be answered:

1. Does the person want to give consent?
2. Is the person capable of giving consent?

If the answer to either these is **'no'** then there is 'no' consent

Please click here for a good example of consent by Thames Valley Police

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ>

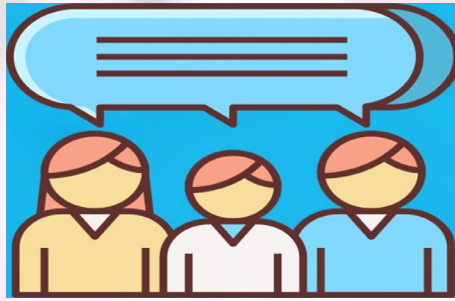




# References/ resources

If you'd like more information, the following legislation covers some of the issues referred to in this booklet:

- Protection from Harassment act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communication Act 2003
- Obscene Publication Act (1964 law stands as current)
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
- Sexual Offences Act 2003



# Useful services and websites

## **NHS 111 service**

Tel: 111 for fast medical help that is not a 999 emergency

## **Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline**

Provides free confidential information and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities throughout the UK

helpline:-0300 330 0630

[www.switchboard.lgbt](http://www.switchboard.lgbt)

## **National Rape Crisis Helpline**

For female survivors of sexual violence

helpline: 0808 802 9999

## **Survivors UK**

For male survivors of rape and sexual abuse

helpline: 0845 122 1201

[www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

## **Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**

Running partnership between Women's Aid and refuge

helpline:0808 2000 247

[www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

## **Men's Advice Line**

Advice and support for men experience domestic violence and abuse

helpline: 0808 801 0327

[www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

## **Internet Matters**

An independent, non for profit organisation to help parents keep their children safe online

[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

## **Thinkuknow**

A guide to Internet safety and safe surfing for young people. Also includes sections for parents commas carers and teachers

[www.thinkinguknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkinguknow.co.uk)



Information provided for this information document came from Sheffield's Teaching Hospital for more information go to [www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk](http://www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk)

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