Briefing note: Overview of the risks faced by young people online in Warwickshire
Report produced by the Insight Service, May 2017

The internet can be extremely beneficial for children; they can use it to learn, communicate, create and explore the world around them. However, young people are at an increased risk of being victims of online abuse and too often suffer from distressing experiences online. Whilst the nature, severity and frequency of these risks are not always fully understood, it is essential for children's safety that they are addressed.

Loser!

1 in 3 children have been a victim of cyberbullying[3]

Being online and using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat can lead to negative online experiences and behaviours.
Types of online abuse include:
• Revenge porn
• Peer pressure
• Seeing sexual images
• Seeing content that promotes harmful behaviour e.g. pro-anorexia or self harm sites
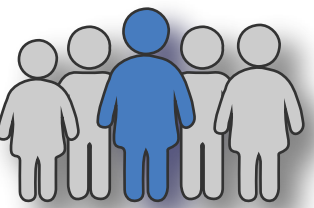• Trolling
• Sexting
• Grooming
• Bullying

1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site[2]

Three-quarters of parents have looked for information on helping their child manage online risks[1]

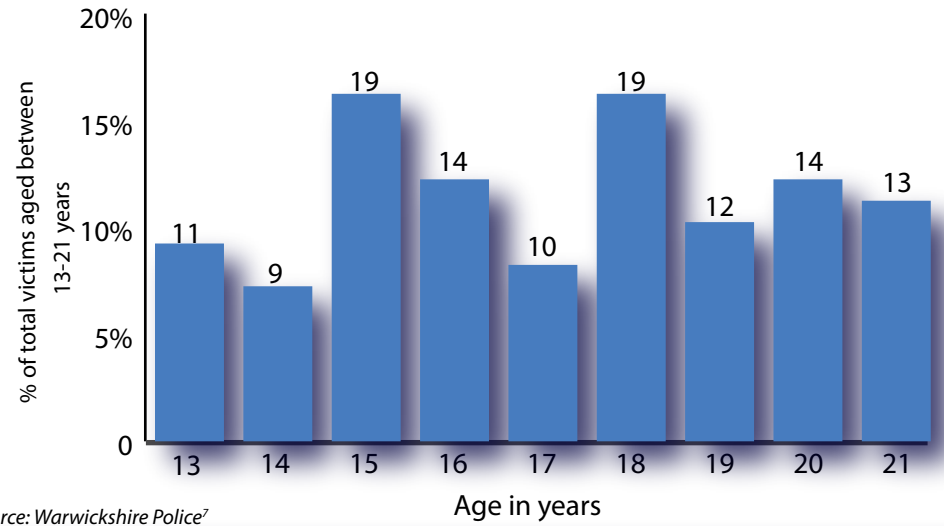**23% of young people don't know how to control who can see their social media posts [5]**

1 in 5 children aged 8-11 years has a social media profile[1]

The IWF* identified over 68,000 URLs containing child sexual abuse images (2015)[4]
*Internet Watch Foundation

Warwickshire Police Offence Data

Of the 428 offences with a cybercrime marker recorded by Warwickshire Police for the period April 2016-March 2017, 28% (121) of these offences involved a victim aged between 13-21 years old.

Breakdown of age of cybercrime victims- within 13-21 years cohort

Bar chart — % of total victims aged between 13-21 years vs Age in years:
- 13: 11
- 14: 9
- 15: 19
- 16: 14
- 17: 10
- 18: 19
- 19: 12
- 20: 14
- 21: 13

Source: Warwickshire Police[7]

A 'keyword search' (e.g. Facebook) was carried out on the basic offence outline for each of the offences with a victim aged 13-21 years old. This revealed that over half of the offences (55.4%) involved Facebook, whilst Snapchat and Instagram were involved in 12.4% and 9.9% of offences respectively. In addition to cybercrime interest markers being added to the offence, additional interest markers were also added.

Table 1: Additional interest markers on Cybercrime marked offences with a linked victim aged 13 to 21 inclusive- 2016/17**	Number	Proportion (out of 121 offences)
Domestic- Partner on Partner	24	19.8%
Domestic- Controlling Behaviour/ Jealousy/ Stalking/ Harassment	15	12.4%
Sexually Motivated	14	11.6%
Domestic- Attempts/Threats of Suicide/Homicide	12	9.9%
Domestic- Escalation and Severity of Violence	11	9.1%
Domestic- Substance Misuse, Mental Health of Suspect	11	9.1%

**Please note, multiple interest markers can be applied to the same offence.
Source: Warwickshire Police[7]

One in five of the cybercrime marked offences also had a domestic partner on partner interest marker on them. An analysis of basic offence outlines for these offences reveals many of the cases involved online bullying, threats to share indecent photos, making up fake profiles using the victim's pictures and threats of violence. Offences related to cybercrime are known to be grossly under-reported, meaning obtaining a true indication of the levels of cybercrime remains challenging.

Please note the cyber 'interest marker' is applied by the police to any offence deemed to be cyber related. As with all interest markers, it is reliant on being manually added and it is known that the cyber flag in particular is currently under-used.

Initiatives being carried out nationally to protect young people online

•**The Friendly WiFi symbol-**developed in collaboration with The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), the Government and WiFi providers amid concerns that children/young people were at risk of viewing inappropriate material when using public WiFi. This WiFi accreditation schemes allows venues to display the 'Friendly WiFi' symbol to show that the WiFi provided is safe to use and is filtered (from pornography and indecent images of children).

•**Share Aware-**A joint scheme developed by 02 and the NSPCC, provides parents and carers with advice on how to keep their children safe online.

•**Safer Internet Day-**Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, the day sees hundreds of organisations promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people.

•**Internet Watch Foundation-**Minimises the availability of online sexual abuse content by identifying and removing online images/videos of abuse, and offer a place for the public to report such content anonymously.

•**UKCCIS Education Group-** Developed guidance for school governors to help governing boards support their school leaders to keep children safe online. The Group has produced advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of 'sexting'.

•**NSPCC Online safety helpline-** Provides expert advice on a range of topics inclduing on setting up parental controls, adjusting privacy settings and advice on social networking sites.

Warwickshire Cybercrime Survey 2015

The 2015 Warwickshire Cybercrime survey revealed that 91.1% of residents aged 29 years and under use the internet on their mobile phones. Moreover, of 162 respondents aged 29 years and under 11.1% reported being targeted for online harassment or bullying, whilst 7.4% reported to being targeted for online stalking.

Of the 149 parents/guardians with children aged 18 and under who use the internet, 62.4% reported to having applied online restrictions for the use of the internet in their household, whilst 79.2% reported to having spoken to their children about internet safety. Nearly three quarters of residents (72.5%) believed their child had not ever experienced cyberbullying, with 16.8% reporting to knowing their children had experienced cyberbullying.

The NSPCC recently reported that 10,067 counselling sessions carried were out in 2015/16, with children whose main concern was sexual/online sexual abuse, accounting for 43% of all abuse-related main concerns[6]. Moreover, national evidence suggests over one in four 11-16 year olds have had an upsetting experience on social media[2]. The national evidence suggests the picture in Warwickshire is an underestimation, and that many more children are being bullied online than their parents are aware of.

Initiatives being carried out locally to protect young people online

•**'Respect Yourself' Programme-** The www.respectyourself.info website regularly receives over 40,000 hits per month and the development of the site has been supported by young people who helped to create materials on issues such as sexting, pornography and child sexual exploitation.

•**'Something's not right' campaign** (http://warwickshirecse. co.uk/) is Warwickshire's multi-agency campaign to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

•**The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)-** a partnership between Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police, National Health Service (NHS) and other key partner agencies working together to safeguard children, young people and adults.

•**Safer Internet Day 2017-**Warwickshire County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner shared with residents their top tips for staying safe online.

•**E safety Programme: Safeguarding Children in the Digital World-** Working with Warwickshire schools to alert them to online risks, providing advice and support to implement precautionary measures.

Sources:

1. Ofcom (2015) Children and parents: media use and attitudes report.
2. Lilley, C., Ball, R. and Vernon, H. (2014) The experiences of 11-16 year olds on social networking sites.
3. McAfee survey of children and parents as reported in the Guardian (14 November 2014).
4. IWF (2016) Annual report 2015.
5. Research Highlights for Children's Online Safety #108 March 2017
6. NSPCC (2016) Childline annual review 2015/16: It turned out someone did care.
7. Warwickshire Police, 2017.