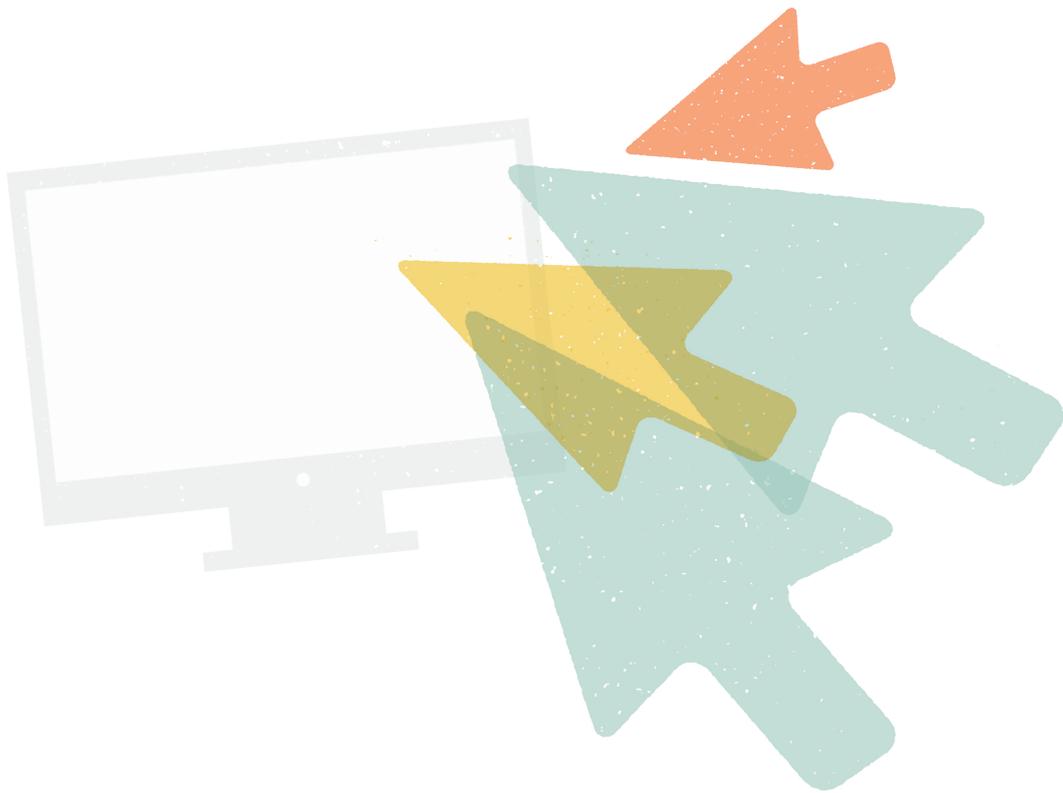

Rape Crisis Scotland

Online safety: information for parents and carers



The leaflet is for parents and carers. It suggests what you can do to help your children stay as safe as possible when using the internet. It also suggests where to get help or advice.

Sexual violence and the online connection

Any form of sexual contact which someone does not agree to is sexual violence. Anyone who does not respect another's privacy, who will not leave them alone, who posts embarrassing or threatening statements about them, or 'shares' photos online without their permission is being abusive.

The internet makes it very easy for people to quickly connect with others and find out and send very personal information. But it also allows people to hide who they really are and what they are doing. Some people use the internet to harm young people.

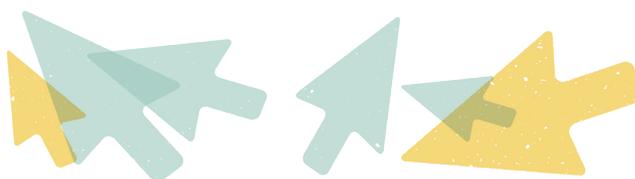
Some examples are:

- » Using social networking to stalk, bully and harass others
- » Distributing images of victims of sexual crimes by phone
- » 'Befriending' young people and others for sex through chat rooms and instant messaging
- » Grooming young people and others for sex
- » Controlling someone through constantly emailing, texting or checking their phone
- » Taking photos of sexual assaults with mobile phones and sharing them by email, text and posting them on social networking or porn sites
- » Distributing intimate photographs of former girl/boyfriends, which were originally taken consensually, in order to harass and distress them
- » 'Cyber stalking' as part of a pattern of stalking and harassment (maybe a previous boy/girlfriend or a complete stranger)

The person who commits any kind of sexual violence and abuse is always responsible for it. They choose to do these things. Even if a young person has taken risks or done something that made them vulnerable, this does not mean that they caused or invited the abuse.

Depending on the incident or the abuse, it may be possible to get protection under the law. If the abuse involves a child (under 16), the police and other authorities would see it as a child protection issue.

There is more information on our website at www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk



Helping children and young people stay safe

It is important to tell your children how to use mobiles and be online as safely as possible:

- » Discuss issues openly with your children and encourage them to come to you if they are concerned about anything
- » Let children and young people know that you will not be angry with them or blame them if they get into a difficult situation or if they do something they know that you will disapprove of. Be clear that they can always come to you, no matter what
- » Use parental control settings on computers, smartphones, tablets and games consoles
- » Download the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) (see below) symbol onto all screens. This is a good way of warning off potential groomers that the child is safety aware
- » Make sure PCs or laptops are in a public part of the house
- » Sit with young children when they are online
- » Warn them that people they meet online may not be who they say they are
- » Tell them to keep personal details private
- » Provide a family email address for them to use when filling in online forms
- » Warn them about online 'grooming' which may start with someone trying to form a close and 'exclusive' friendship with them; and/or checking out where in the house they are when online; and if they are on their own
- » Warn children who are gaming online that some people will pretend to be children interested in the game just to find things out about them
- » Warn them never to meet in person, without supervision, anyone they have met through the internet
- » Be aware that there are various terms which young people use online to 'code' their discussions to conceal what is being said from parents/carers; for example KPC for 'keep parents clueless' and LMIRL 'let's meet in real life'. You can find out more about these from CEOP and knowthenet (see below)
- » Visit www.thinkyouknow.com This is a website for young people and their parents/guardians and teachers run by CEOP

Help and information

Sexual violence in any form is traumatic. It is important to be able to confide in people who understand what you/your children are experiencing. You may find it helpful to speak to a support worker from the Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline.

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

08088 01 03 02 (6pm-12 midnight daily)

Email: support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Free confidential support and information for women and men, aged 13+, affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives; also support for friends, family and professionals.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Parents and carers can also download a CEOP app which stays visible on a web page and can be clicked to instantly report abuse or get advice:

www.ceop.police.uk

Knowthenet

www.knowthenet.org.uk

Advice and tips on staying safe.

Chatdanger

www.chatdanger.com

How children can keep safe while chatting online.

iKeepSafe

www.ikeepsafe.org/parents

Useful site with safety information including Google safety centre video.

Childline

www.childline.org.uk/talk

Call: **0800 1111**

Bullying line: **0800 44 1111**

For children or young people who want to talk to someone in confidence.

OFCOM

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/2009/10/parental-controls-for-mobile-phones>

How children can keep safe while chatting online.

Get Safe Online

www.getsafeonline.org

Practical advice on how to protect children, computers and mobile devices against problems encountered online. Useful section on safeguarding children.

Contacting the police

If you are concerned about something which is happening to your child, contact the police by phoning **101**. If it is an emergency, dial **999**.

Help from the law

See www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk for information about how the law can help.

Reporting child protection concerns

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Text: **88858**

National Child Protection Line in Scotland

Call: **0800 022 3222**

UK Safer Internet Centre

www.saferinternet.org.uk Twitter: **@UK_SIC**

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

www.ceop.police.uk

UK police organisation to protect children from sexual abuse wherever they are, including online.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

CEOP site with advice for children, young people, parents, teachers and others.