ISPCC
Cybersafety Review

By Gillian Baker

Context

- Increase in reports about cybersafety issues-what are the trends?

- What can we learn from our data?

- Are we supporting people as best we can?

- Are our staff/volunteers skilled/ knowledgeable to deal with these issues?

Data

- In 2016 we reviewed 18months of work across:

  - Childine-Phones & Online Services: 833 Calls & 233 Online Contacts

  - Support Line: 53 Calls

  - Child and Family Support Services: 36 Cases Reviewed

  - CAC:1 Focus Group

  - External Network Meetings: 3

  - Interviews with Volunteers & Staff: 16

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8 Themes

- Cyberbullying
- Excessive Time Spent Online
- Access/Exposure to Inappropriate Content
- Sexting
- Sextortion
- Grooming
- Identity and Wellbeing
- Lack of Knowledge and Skills

Themes 1 & 2

- <u>Cyberbullying</u>
  - Most prevalent issue reported through Childline
  - 3rd of Client Cases experienced cyberbullying
  - Young people perceive aggressive, threatening and bullying behaviour online as the norm

- <u>Excessive Time Spent Online</u>
  - Reports of Children as young as 5yrs with unsupervised access to internet
  - Staff worry about affects of Isolation
  - Zeminar Results:
    - 4.6hrs online on a school day
    - 7.31hrs online on a weekend day
    - Averages at 35hrs online a week

Theme 3

- ## Access/Exposure to Inappropriate Content

  - Children viewing age inappropriate, violent and/or pornographic material online.
  - Some were coming across this inadvertently while others were seeking this content out.
  - Some of the inappropriate content was being shared between young people.

- This theme featured regularly on the support line and the following are some examples of concerns:

  - Children exposed to sexual content online
  - Concerns about accidentally seeing child sexual abuse material online
  - Concern for child accessing self-harm sites online
  - Inappropriate content/messages on Facebook
  - Concern regarding young person using an adult dating site
  - Concern for young people swapping/sharing pictures of themselves self-harming on snapchat
  - Child experiencing ongoing bullying who is accessing suicide websites online
  - Concern that child sending/receiving explicit content on snapchat about vulnerable girl

Themes 4

Sexting

- Children aged 10 and 11 talking about sexting on Childline online
- Huge pressure young people feel, to share self-generated sexual images
- New online version of flirting
- View that sexting is Safe way to explore sexuality
- Exploring/Curious about sexuality
- Reputational Damage

Themes 5&6

Sextortion

- Sexual exploitation which is marked by a threat of public humiliation
- In some cases young people are sometimes blackmailed for money or asked to send further intimate pictures or coerced into do sexual acts in attempts to stop a perpetrator from sending their personal images to others.

Grooming

- Public profiles, childlike pictures, names, activities, more accessible
- Perpetrators can groom many young people simultaneously and within a relatively short space of time.
- Perceive talking to strangers online & offline differently
- Catfishing

Theme7

<u>Identity and Wellbeing</u>

- Impact online activity can have on one's own sense of self and wellbeing
- Validation and recognition of identities
- Limitless supply of people that can impact this (comparing/commenting)
- Continuous exposure – prolonged negative emotional state can impact people mental wellbeing

List of negative feeling experienced by young people from online interactions:

Isolated	**Anxious**
Frightened	**Stressed**
Foolish	**Confused**
Shame	**Worthless**
Overwhelmed	**Suicidal**
Hurt	**Self-hatred**

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Theme 8

Lack of Knowledge and Skills

- Parents were particularly feeling ill-equipped to deal with issues of safety online. Only 10% Young people surveyed had parental controls on their internet devices.
- The sharing of inappropriate pictures was a problem for young people.
- Young people were unsure of how to address issues online.
- Young people did not know how to stop receiving inappropriate messages on apps.
- Young people were not fully aware of potential risks from online predators or hackers.
- Fear of exposure is blocking people from accessing appropriate supports and advice.
- General knowledge on reporting and responding to inappropriate online activity was inconsistent.

Recommendations

Education:

- Provide education through an evidence informed outreach and awareness programmes for children on cybersafety.
- Target **primary school children** to build their resilience to deal with this issues now and in the future.
- Education around the risks, reach and consequences of certain online behaviour and sites being visited (gaming etc.).
- Explore real options of what to do when certain issues are encountered, for example, threats or harassment – it is not as simple as just blocking people or sites.
- It is important to educate young people on the on the impact and ramifications of sending a self-generated images. We would need to take into account that young people get involved in this because of their curiosity and wanting to explore their sexuality or have sexual experiences.
- We need to look at how we can educate young people to explore and enjoy the cyber world in a safe way.

Recommendations

Parents/carers

- **Promote Open Communication:** open discussion between parents and children's improves relationships and increases protections. Provide education and support for parents on how to have conversations about safety, risk taking behaviour, parental controls and what to do if you or your child is concerned.

- **Modelling Behaviour:** Focus awareness campaigns on the importance of parents/cares role modelling appropriate behaviours. How we influence our children's online usage.

- **Child Participation:** Explore ways that children can educate parents

Teachers

- **Training:** teachers need ongoing training in cybersafety, be able to identify risks/dangers, set classroom/school boundaries.

- **The Voice of Teachers:** as educators and prominent stakeholders in the lives of children and young people, we recommend that a national teachers dialog on cybersafety. They may be able to contribute to the development of resources and identify risks at an early stage.

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Recommendations

- **Challenge:** some of the recently established "norms" among teenagers and challenge young people's acceptability of certain online behaviours. **Resilience:** We need to look at the issue of Online Resilience and how to support and empower young people if something goes wrong online.

- **National Dialogue:** It was repeatedly highlighted throughout the review that young people were fearful of accessing support to deal with cybersafety issues. This emphasises the need for a national dialogue on cyber safety which includes the voice of the child.

- **Mental Wellbeing:** Cybersafety needs to be also considered in broader context of safety by recognising the affects online interactions can have on young people's wellbeing for example, exclusion felt by young people, seeking validation of self from online interacts.

- **Work with ISPs** (Internet Service Providers)-they have a responsibility to ensure that when they sell any technological device that they educate both children/young people and parents/cares on safe and responsible use. We need to work more closely to ensure this is happening. Work with **ISP's** to have more involvement in the initial set up of privacy settings on new technologies that are bought at shops.
  - Cybersafety Hubs in shops

- **Gardaí** – Encourage people to report criminal online activity to Gardaí