Pan-Lancashire LSCB Online Safeguarding Strategy 2017 - 2019

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Foreword

Children and Young People's relationship to technology is increasingly embedded across all walks of life and as such, we cannot address their wellbeing and safety effectively without considering the potential risks that this can bring. Technology by its nature is constantly evolving, bringing both new opportunities and new risks for all but particularly, for our Children and Young People.

The potential risks related to the online world do not recognise geographic borders or boundaries and therefore, our focus to ensure the best possible outcomes should not have an insular or isolated approach. In order to achieve this and to ensure the strategic direction remains effective, collaboration, co-

"The Internet is the single greatest repository of knowledge in the world...It helps me to do school work, learn new things, discover trivia, find out about new games, chat to my friends, and a lot more...I honestly couldn't live without it"

ordination and sharing of good practice is essential to success. With this in mind, this Strategy and the subsequent Strategic Objectives have a Pan-Lancashire focus across the Lancashire, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen areas.

The provision of an effective Online Safeguarding Strategy therefore outlines the commitment from the Local Safeguarding Children Boards to provide a collective framework for all stakeholders across the region to enable a cohesive focus and common approach.

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Chair, Pan-Lancashire LSCB Online Safeguarding Group
September 2016

What is Online Safeguarding?

Educating our Children and Young People (and those adults who support them) on how to recognise the potential risks and how to deal with them appropriately, should form the core of an effective Online Safeguarding Strategy. Online Safeguarding, as the name suggests, is first and foremost a Safeguarding issue and when broken down into its constituent elements and areas of risk, is **fundamentally concerned with behaviours**. It is therefore important that we are not sidetracked into thinking Online Safeguarding is an Information Technology (IT) issue or that technical measures are the solution to the issues. Whilst the IT has an integral part to play in contributing to the safeguarding of our Children and Young People, the IT itself is incidental to the issue.

Online Safeguarding, eSafeguarding, Internet Safety, eSafety, Digital Safeguarding and Online Safety are all interchangeable terms used to varying extents. However, whatever term is used, all should relate to ensuring those using technology do so safely and responsibly.

Typically, individuals often associate Online Safeguarding with Online Grooming, Cyberbullying or inappropriate images/video. However, there is also a much broader and developing agenda particularly in relation to the growth of Social Media including Information Privacy, Sexting, Gaming addiction, Radicalisation, Self-generated content and numerous other risk areas. In line with this, Online Safeguarding is an increasingly common thread running across a number of related and already embedded areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Anti-Bullying, Anti-Social behaviour and the Radicalisation of young people amongst others (also see Figure 1). If we are to be effective in our approach, it is essential that colleagues across all related agendas work together cohesively to ensure a common and collaborative approach and **ensure the online aspects are appropriately reflected in related risk areas**.

As is apparent, the scope of Online Safeguarding is significant. However, for the purposes of clarity in the context of this Strategy, **Online Safeguarding** is defined as:

A Safeguarding issue where technology is involved.

Context

Young People are often perceived as having a greater knowledge and affinity with technology than many adults. However, it does not follow that they also possess the broader wisdom or emotional maturity adults have developed through life experience. It is therefore vital that we encourage them to increase their understanding of the potential hazards technology presents, developing their resilience and how they can help to mitigate the risks to them (and to others) through their behaviour. It is also clear that Parents and Carers naturally have a fundamental influence on their children's behaviour and as such, have a critical role to play in embedding what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour online (particularly in relation to the use of Social Media) and therefore, developing Parent/Carer awareness and confidence around the online environment is a key priority.

The Stakeholders referred to in this document will include Children & Young People, Parents/Carers, Schools & Colleges (including maintained schools, academies and

independent), Local Authorities, Youth Groups, Libraries, Health practitioners, the Police and the wider children's workforce (both direct and indirect). However, by definition, it equally relates to ALL individuals or groups who have an interest in ensuring the very best possible outcomes for our Children & Young People.

As adults, we will understandably take a perspective of 'responsibility' but it is **essential that we retain a 'child-centric' view** when approaching the safe use of technology and appreciate how Children and Young People perceive the risks and the enormous part that technology will play in their lives. Research informs us that issues often go unreported by Young People for a variety of factors including: a fear of being held to blame; losing access to the technologies they treasure or simply from embarrassment. If we are to address this issue effectively, we must raise awareness and develop the confidence in utilising the support routes available to Children and Young People including their own school support mechanisms, CEOP's Report button and ChildLine.

The prevalence of online messaging, social networking and mobile technology effectively means that children can always be 'online'. Their social lives, and therefore their emotional development, are bound up in the use of these technologies. *We can no longer adequately consider the safeguarding or wellbeing of our Children and Young People without considering their relationship to technology* - we can no longer seek to support and protect them without addressing the potential risks which the use of these technologies poses.
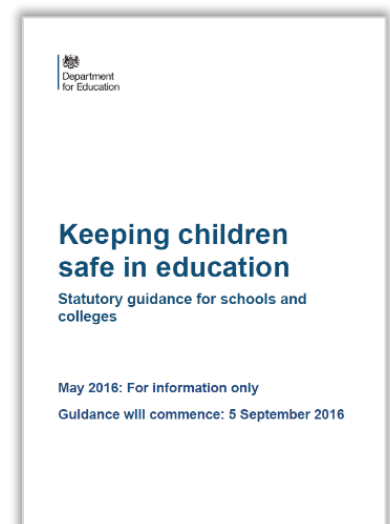
Whilst the focus of this Online Safeguarding Strategy surrounds the safeguarding of our Children and Young People, members of the children's workforce must also be aware of the issues. This includes the standards expected in relation to their own use of technologies such as Social Media, both within and outside of the work environment. Equally, professionals must also be aware of the potential for online abuse towards them by other users and the options available to them should this occur.

"Alarmingly, 35% of our respondents said that either they, or their colleagues, have been subject to some form of online abuse"

Extract from 'The Online Abuse of Professionals' – Research Report from the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC)

What are the Risks?

From September 2016, the revised DfE statutory guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** came into effect. The revisions to this guidance see a very significant emphasis on Online Safety and firmly embed the issue within the broader Safeguarding agenda. The focus on the responsibilities for Schools and Colleges are broad and have substantial implications for how Governors and Proprietors must ensure effective Online Safety provision is in place. As is highlighted in the statutory guidance, *"...the breadth of issues classified within*

online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:".

Emphasising the increasing importance of Online Safety, KCSIE includes a dedicated section (Annex C), highlighting the three areas (**3C's**) as:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.

The extract shown opposite (Figure 1) illustrates these categories as a matrix grid identifying examples under headings of Commercial, Aggressive, Sexual and Values.

As both the technology and the behaviour of individuals change, these risks will also develop. Therefore, if we are to ensure an effective approach, our Strategies and Policies must be equally robust and regularly reviewed to ensure currency.

Annex 4. Content, contact and conduct exemplars[17]

	Commercial	Aggressive	Sexual	Values
Content (child as recipient)	advertisements spam sponsorship personal information	violent/hateful content lifestyle sites	pornographic or unwelcome sexual content	bias racist misleading information or advice
Contact (child as participant)	tracking harvesting personal information	being bullied, harassed or stalked	meeting strangers being groomed	self-harm unwelcome persuasions
Conduct (child as actor)	illegal downloading hacking gambling financial scams terrorism	bullying or harassing another	creating and uploading inappropriate material; sexting	providing misleading info and advice health and wellbeing; time spent online

Figure 1: Areas of risk (as structured from EU Kids Online, LSE, 2009)

Although the grid has been defined in terms of 'child' use, it is relevant to everyone who uses digital and mobile technologies

Our approach?

Whilst we must understand the issues and risks posed, we must be careful not to demonise the technology and ensure that these are balanced with the immense opportunities and benefits that new technologies bring. Managing and mitigating these risks strategically is most appropriately addressed by ensuring we maintain a holistic overview. However, in order to tackle the issues effectively, we must break them down into practical areas to be addressed. As such, the framework used for this Strategy is developed from the original and widely-recognised 'PIES Model for limiting eSafety Risk'. This model quantifies Online Safeguarding into four **inter-related** areas as identified in Figure 2 opposite.

Figure 2: Original PIES Model for limiting eSafety Risk

Strategic Objectives

In line with our framework approach, we will embed risk areas where appropriate to ensure these areas are addressed across the wider landscape, ensuring that we retain a holistic approach and therefore not overly-focussing on the technical challenges. The Strategy therefore identifies four clear Strategic Objectives which will form the outline framework for the underlying Action Plans and activities across the region:

Strategic Objective 1: Safer Management
To support and ensure stakeholders develop robust and effective policies, practices and procedures to safeguard C&YP against online risks

Strategic Objective 2: Safer Access
To identify and promote technologies, tools and infrastructure services which appropriately support Online Safeguarding priorities for C&YP and related stakeholders
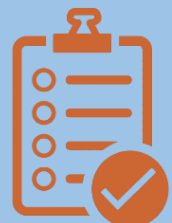
Strategic Objective 3: Safer Learning
To support and promote effective learning opportunities for all stakeholders which recognise and address current and emerging Online Safeguarding risks for C&YP

Strategic Objective 4: Safer Standards
To promote and ensure appropriate monitoring and review practices are in place which ensure Online Safeguarding systems and procedures are effective and regularly audited

Online Safeguarding Strategy Action Plan

Whilst this Strategy provides an overarching framework outlining the scope of Online Safeguarding and identifies the Strategic Objectives intended to address the challenges, the operational aspects for how this should be achieved are the focus for the supporting Action Plan. Whilst significant work and success has already been achieved in recent years, much remains to be done. In addressing the current issues, we must remain vigilant to new and emerging threats and therefore collaborating with, and seeking the views of, C&YP will be integral to our success. The Action Plan will therefore be based around the 4 Strategic Objectives outlined above and whilst not mutually exclusive, will seek to identify explicit actions with specific and measurable outcomes based ont hose priorities as highlighted by both national and local evidence bases.
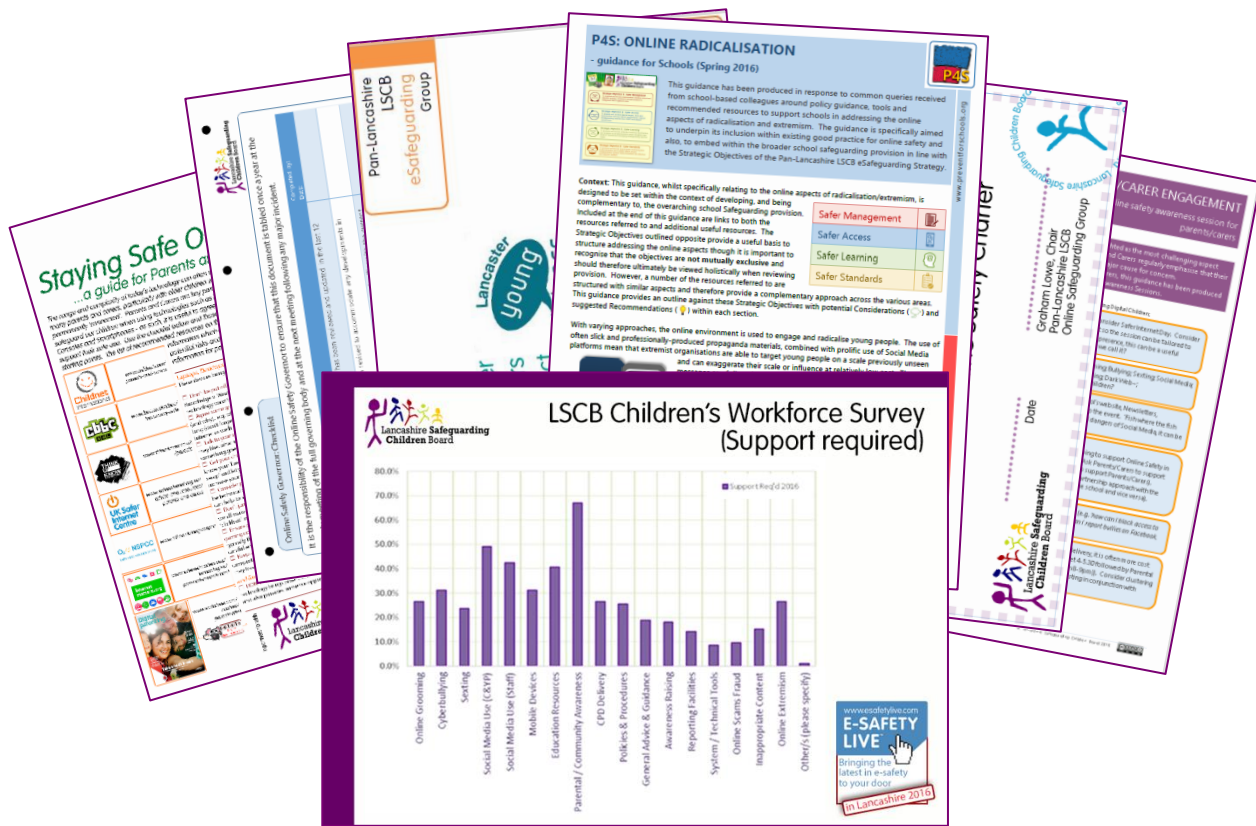
Audience

The range of individuals, groups and organisations with a responsibility for safeguarding our Children and Young People is significant, ranging from Parents / Carers through to Local and National Government bodies. As such, this Strategy is primarily aimed at (though not limited to) those groups identified below.

- All Agencies represented on the Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen Safeguarding Children Boards
- All Education establishments (including maintained schools, independents and academies) across the region
- 3rd Sector organisations, including Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors
- Private and public-sector organisations providing support, guidance and/or training to stakeholders
- All private care providers delivering services to/for children across the Pan-Lancashire region
- All private and public sector Service providers delivering technical services and points of access utilised by our Children & Young People

Summary

In order to achieve the effective and positive outcomes, it is vital that meaningful engagement, investment and collaboration by those groups identified above is secured at the earliest opportunity.

It is apparent that Online Safeguarding is a growing and ever developing area with constantly changing trends and as such, is not a Task-and-Finish issue nor is it an area where the risks will disappear in the foreseeable future. Equally, the pace at which technology continues to change is enormous and therefore we must also adapt to this change if we are to embrace the challenges and ensure the best possible outcomes for our Children and Young People.

Copies of this Strategy document and additional supporting documents, resources and further guidance can be found at:

www.lancashiresafeguarding.org.uk