

Tackling Virtual Violence

A mini guide to keeping safe
from online harm




"What begins online doesn't stay online. Digital abuse spills into real life, spreading fear, silencing voices, and—in the worst cases—leading to physical violence"
UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous

Setting the Scene




The digital world is not optional. It is where you learn, connect, build identity, and form beliefs. Yet most digital platforms were never designed with safety or wellbeing in mind.



The 4 major online harms

- ★ Online misogyny
- ★ Pile-ons and online harassment
- ★ Online domestic abuse
- ★ Image-based sexual abuse

Key Facts

- 1 in 4 for young women aged 16-24 have experienced online violence (1 in 3 LGBTQ+ women).
 - 75% UK teenagers aged 13-17 say they have encountered one or more potential harms online.
 - 79% UK teenagers aged 13-17 regularly use generative ai tools such as chatbots and image generators.
 - 13% of women in England who experienced online violence reported that it later progressed to offline violence.
 - 1 in 5 women aged 16 and over in England and Wales have experienced stalking at some point since turning 16
 - Black women are 84% more likely to receive abusive tweets than white women.
 - 46% of people under 30 surveyed had been tracked by a partner without their consent
 - 69% of boys aged 11-14 have been exposed to online misogynistic or harmful content
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Sources

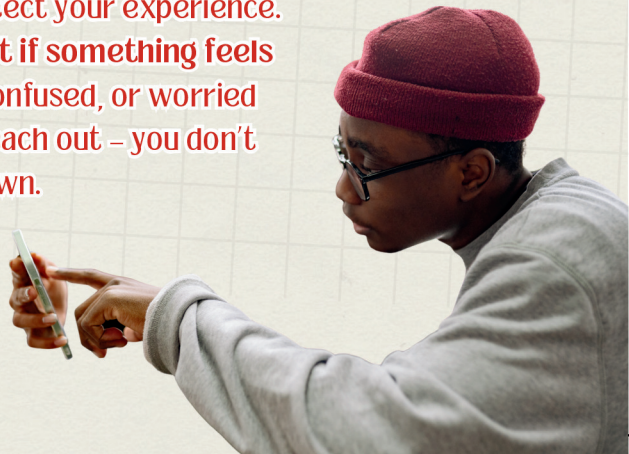
Amnesty International, 2017 Vodafone, 2024
Ofcom, 2025 Open University research, 2024
Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), 2024



Safe Choices

Be smart online

- **Pause and question content:** Just because something looks or feels real doesn't mean it's true. Take a moment to think critically before reacting or sharing.
- **Don't share personal or sensitive information:** This includes your full name, address, school, passwords, location, or private details about yourself and others.
- **Check sources and images:** AI can create fake images, videos, and news stories that appear real. Check sources where you can or question what someone has to gain from you believing it's true.
- **Use platform safety settings:** Privacy controls, blocking, reporting, and content filters on apps and websites can help protect your experience.
- **Talk to someone you trust if something feels wrong:** If you feel upset, confused, or worried about something online, reach out – you don't have to handle it on your own.




What to do if something goes wrong



Step 1: Pause and Protect Yourself

- Stop engaging with the content or person if possible
- Do not respond to threats, pressure, or abusive messages
- Block or mute accounts that are causing harm

Step 2: Save Evidence

- Take screenshots or screen recordings of messages, images, usernames, and dates
 - Keep links, URLs, or profiles if safe to do so
 - This can help with reporting and support later
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Step 3: Talk to a Trusted Person

- Tell a parent, carer, teacher, youth worker, or another trusted adult.
- You will not be in trouble for speaking up, and getting support early can help stop harm from continuing.

Have you
seen Kulpa?



Step 4: Use Reporting Tools

- Report harmful content or behaviour using platform reporting tools. If the harm is serious, ongoing, or involves exploitation, sexual content, threats, or coercion, seek specialist support.

Step 5: Get Specialist Support

- If the situation feels overwhelming or unsafe, specialist services can help you understand your options and take action.
- Support is available even if you're unsure what has happened.

REMEMBER

- Experiencing online harm does not mean you did something wrong
- You deserve to feel safe, supported and believed
- Asking for help is a strength, not a failure
- There are people and services whose job it is to help you

Report & Support



Protect yourself online

- Use strong, unique passwords and two-factor authentication.
- Be cautious about sharing personal information or images.
- Report and block abusive content or users.
- Use privacy settings and safety tools on all platforms.
- Keep evidence (screenshots, message logs) of any abuse for reporting.
- Avoid clicking unknown links or downloading unverified files. Review friend lists and followers regularly – remove people you don't know or trust.
- Turn off location sharing on apps that don't require it.
- Use secure Wi-Fi networks and avoid logging into personal accounts on public devices.
- Consider using separate emails for school, work, and personal accounts to reduce risk.
- Talk to a trusted adult or professional if anything online feels worrying, confusing, or unsafe.

Secure your tech





Reflective Questions



Test Your Thinking!

- If someone asks you to do something online, how would you respond differently from now on?
- How aware of the privacy settings on your phone? What steps can you take to ensure your personal information is more secure?
- What healthy habits can you put in place this weekend?
- How comfortable are you discussing online challenges?
- Do you set boundaries with your social media?
- Do you know how to access the support you might need in the future?
- Do you have a plan for getting better at this stuff?



Resources



Documentaries

Molly Vs The Machines: Social Media Helped Kill My Teenage Daughter



Daisy Maskell: I Stalked My Own Boyfriend



Andrew Tate: The man who groomed the world



I Hunted My Scammer: Blackmailed For Nude Pictures



Credits

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