

# Keeping children safe online

## Advice for libraries

While the internet offers great opportunities for children, there are also serious risks – like online abuse. Online abuse can have severe long-lasting impacts including anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thoughts and eating disorders.

Since lockdown, children and young people have spent more and more time online, increasing their risk of suffering from online abuse. Here's how you can help:

## Spotting the Signs of Online Abuse

### Signs of online abuse

- You might notice a child or young person spending a lot more or less time online than usual
- They might seem different during or after texting or going online, perhaps upset, distant, angry or irritable
- Children might try and hide who they're talking to or what they're doing online
- They might suddenly become very protective and secretive over their device(s)
- You might notice sudden or unexplained changes in their behaviour like
- Children may have a similar reaction to online abuse as they would to grooming, cyberbullying, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. You can find out more about spotting these signs on [our website](#)

### What to do if you're concerned about a child

- **If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999 straight away**
- **Be prepared**
  - Make sure you know and follow your library's safeguarding procedures
  - Familiarise yourself with the Youth Libraries Group [Safe Place for Children guidelines](#)
  - Remember that children under eight should always be accompanied by an adult. If you have any concerns, even about a child over eight left alone all day, alert your local safeguarding board
- **Share your concerns**
  - Inform your line manager, supervisor or a senior staff member **immediately**
  - Contact your local safeguarding board
  - You can also call the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**
- **Help children know where to turn**
  - [Watch our animation and read our resources to learn how to make sure children](#) know you're listening if they disclose abuse to you
  - Watch our powerful '[Say Something](#)' TV ad and let children know they can always speak to a trusted adult or Childline
  - They can contact Childline on the phone (**0800 1111**) or [online](#) any time, about anything
- **Learn more about how to protect young people and prevent abuse online**
  - Our website has more information about [online abuse](#), like how to spot signs and the risks
  - Our [Online safety elearning course](#) will help you understand how children use the internet and how to respond to risks they may face online
  - Read more information about [safeguarding and child protection during the coronavirus](#)
  - Visit [Net Aware](#), O2 and NSPCC's simple bitesize guide to the latest apps, games and social media sites kids are using
  - [Contact CEOP](#) to report grooming or inappropriate sexual behaviour online