

## **Computer Use and Internet Safety**

Access to the internet is recognised as an integral part of adolescent life and holds benefits in terms of education and staying in contact with significant people in the lives of young people. It is also recognised that the internet and in particular social media present risks to young people and in terms of cyber bullying and exploitation.

Staff at residential units are responsible for the promotion of safe internet use by residents. This task is often shared with partner agencies such as Barnardos Safe Choices and NSPCC as vulnerability online is often linked to risk issues in the lives of individual young people. The following are measures which can be used to help young people access the benefits of the internet in a safe way.

- Education and advice around privacy settings and ensuring young people know the identity of who they are talking to online.
- Education around the nature of bullying and exploitation.
- Risk assessment.
- Access to the internet in-house.
- Supervision of internet access.
- Time limiting of internet access.
- Accompanying young people to Wi-Fi zones.
- Monitoring of internet enabled devices.
- Removal of internet enabled devices.
- Withdrawal of internet access.

These measures are applied subject to the young person's age and stage of development, and ongoing risk assessment. The more restrictive measures above are only applied where the level of risk is significant and there is agreement with fieldwork colleagues.