

**Safeguarding Team**

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# **Digital Safeguarding Advice for Adults**

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# Online Safety Advice for Adults

## **Content risk:**

Content risk refers to things you see online that may cause you harm. Harmful content online can include hate speech, sexual or violent content, disinformation and misinformation and content that could have a negative impact on your general wellbeing and self-esteem.

The way you interact with this content online will also impact on how often you are exposed to it. Many apps and website algorithms are designed to show you more of the content that you have engaged with through views, likes, shares and comments. For example, if you have watched a violent video until the end and then commented on it, the algorithm may calculate that you liked it and therefore suggest more content of this nature to you.

### ***Content risk advice:***

- Be aware of how algorithms work – block content you find inappropriate to avoid similar suggested content.
- Think carefully about the information you see online – check your sources of information before believing everything you read or see.

### ***Useful resources:***

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/personal/articles/misinformation-fake-news/>

## **Contact risk:**

Contact risk refers to the interactions you have online that may put you or others at risk. Harmful contact online can include bullying and grooming for sexual extortion.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and be distressing for victims. Knowing how to report and block online bullies is an important step as well as documenting the bullying behaviour where possible.

You may choose to interact with friends and strangers online but be aware of online scammers who use social media and dating platforms to seek out vulnerable adults to extort.

As an adult, you should be mindful of your online interactions with minors and how some online situations may put you or the child at risk. It is best to avoid 1-2-1 interactions with children unless they are part of your immediate family.

### ***Contact risk advice:***

- Avoid 1-2-1 interactions with minors online – all interactions should be in a public space to protect both you and them.
- Explore your privacy settings – change them to suit your personal requirements.
- Think carefully about new people you meet online – do not share personal or financial information.

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- Block and report – use these online tools to manage your social media interactions.
  - Document bullying evidence where possible – this may help with an investigation if the bullying persists.

***Useful resources:***

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/scams-fraud/how-to-spot-a-catfish/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/online-safety-basics/romance-scams-2/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/managing-your-privacy/manage-privacy-settings/>

## **Conduct risk**

Conduct risk refers to online behaviour that may put you or others at risk. Harmful conduct could include oversharing personal information, bullying behaviours, disclosing experiences or sending sexual images.

Everything you do online leaves a digital trail of information about you, known as your digital footprint. This information can be recalled at any point and may impact on your future life choices. Social media encourages users to share information about themselves in real-time, but oversharing personal information could put you at risk of extortion or blackmail or be viewed negatively in the future.

***Conduct risk advice:***

- Think carefully about the content you share – consider how this may impact on you in the future.
- Avoid sharing personal information – this could be used against you.
- Consider others online – treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Report and block – if you encounter behaviour you feel is inappropriate.

***Useful resources:***

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/using-social-media/>

## **Consumer risk:**

Consumer risk refers to online users giving away data and privacy rights in order to participate online. Harmful consumer risks can include commercial targeting or profiling. It also includes the risks created by aspects of digital design and the ways this can be immersive and lead to addiction.

Large amounts of personal data are held by online companies and often users have given away their data rights without realising due to complicated terms and conditions. Some platforms use this for targeted advertising or other commercial practices.

Platforms and websites are also designed to keep users engaged for prolonged periods of time, using features such as notifications. This can be immersive and, in some cases, lead to users spending lengthy periods of time online and neglecting other aspects of their lives.

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### **Consumer risk advice:**

- Be aware of how your data is used – explore the settings menu to find out more.
- Allow for screen-free time – give yourself a digital daily break from tech.
- Delete unused apps – regularly delete and close accounts you no longer use.
- Create strong passwords – and consider where you store them.

### **Useful resources:**

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/password-security/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/online-mental-health/online-offline-balance/>

### **General online safety resources for adults:**

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/blocks/campaigns/think-digital/staying-safe-online.pdf>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/online-safety-basics/>

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/personal/articles/safe-internet-use/>

<https://www.connectsafely.org>

<https://content.iriss.org.uk/oswarh/index.html>

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