



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY
2026



Welcome

As we move from January into February we acknowledge that this can be a difficult time of year for many people.



**Children's Mental Health Week
2026 will take place from
9-15 February 2026**

The Place 2 be Children's Mental Health Charity have resources available for you to download with suitability for primary school children, secondary school children, families, community groups or workplaces. [Click here to access.](#)

The theme for Children's Mental Health Week 2026 is 'This is My Place', and the aim is to support the systems around children and young people to help them feel they belong.

Parenting today can feel overwhelming – especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day.

Following [recent media](#) regarding **Ofcom's investigation** into **Elon Musk's X over Grok sexualised imagery** we wanted to send a reminder to some useful resources –



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The **UK Safer Internet Centre** have published **free educational resources** for Safer Internet Day which will help schools and youth groups talk about safer internet usage with young people of all ages. This covers a range of issues from looking at voice assistants and chatbots, to exploring some of the ethical considerations in responsible use of AI technology.

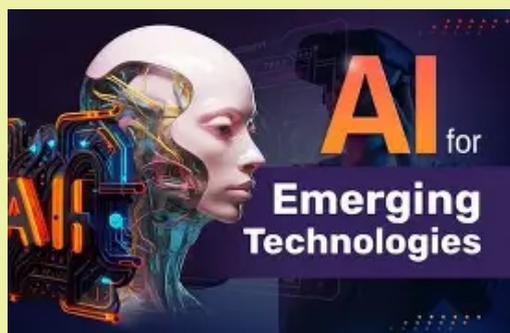
They also produce top tips and advice for parents, carers and grandparents covering how to talk about AI, helping them to use new technology in safe and responsible ways. There are also video resources available for primary educators **here** and secondary educators **here**.



INEQE has published an article 'New Year, Safer Devices - Prioritising the Online Safety of Children and Young People'.



In the new digital age, parents and carers are now required to be informed about the online world, the risks it can pose to their children, and how to protect them. **In this article**, there is actionable advice to help parents enhance knowledge to protect young people using those new devices received over the festive season.



Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies are increasingly shaping children's online experiences – powering search engines, chatbots, gaming features, social media algorithms, and even educational platforms. Developments in AI come with a range of benefits, including supporting learning, creativity and innovation. There is however growing concern for how AI can also be misused, to create and share child sexual abuse material. Understanding these risks is essential to help protect young people from potential harm and to respond effectively to incidents. **SBNI Online Safety Hub** has published resources to assist parents /carers, and professionals in supporting young people to use AI safely.



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Safer Schools NI - Is Your Child's Photo Safe?

Safer Schools NI have published a document regarding Image Consent at Schools and Preventing AI Image Exploitation.

The increasing prevalence and accessibility of AI image generation tools is a worrying development, raising the likelihood of these practices becoming more common. **This guide** aims to provide parents with information on how to prevent, respond to, and report incidents of AI-generated image exploitation.



**Working together
to stop child sexual
abuse online**

The National Crime Agency (NCA), the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), and the SBNI Online Safety Committee has developed an essential guide for professionals who work with children and young people regarding child sexual abuse imagery generated by artificial intelligence.



This resource is specifically tailored for professionals in Northern Ireland and addresses the urgent and growing threat of AI-generated child sexual abuse material (AI-CSAM). The guide offers clear, practical advice on identifying and responding to AI-CSAM, and reinforces that this material must be treated with the same seriousness and safeguarding response as any other form of CSAM.



AI 'nudific@tion' apps are to be banned following an **Internet Watch Foundation** campaign as **new data** reveals nearly one in five reports of nud3 or s3xual imagery of young people involves some form of faked or digitally altered imagery.



OFCOM have published an **Online Nation Report** which includes **research on children's online activities**. Children aged 8–14 spend almost three hours online each day, with YouTube and Snapchat leading screen time. Overall, nine in ten children aged 8–17 say they are happy with what they do online, using social media and messaging apps to stay connected, though some children reflected on the negative impacts of spending too long scrolling on their smartphones. While seven in ten 11–17-year-olds had seen or heard harmful content online in the last four weeks, nearly two-thirds (64%) took action, including using platform tools such as the 'dislike' button (15%), reporting content (11%), blocking the person who posted it (10%) or telling an adult (10%). Importantly, this research took place before our Protection of Children Codes of Practice came into force in July 2025, which now require sites and apps to take steps to prevent children from encountering the most harmful content relating to suicide, self-harm, eating disorders and pornography.



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**Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland**



The Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland has published a **report** assessing how much progress has been made to implement recommendations from its 2020 report on child sexual exploitation. A period of fieldwork carried out with criminal justice agencies found significant gaps between partially and achieved recommendations and the level of progress organisations believed they had made.

Out of nine accepted recommendations, only one had been fully achieved. This was the introduction of an IT process in the police service to alert child protection registration on its system. Inspectors raised concerns around resource and staffing pressures but highlighted positive developments around multi-agency training opportunities and the police service's work to improve understanding around child sexual exploitation.

NSPCC 'Learning'



NSPCC has recently made available **a 1-hour masterclass** on understanding, identifying and tackling misogyny wherever children may encounter it – online, in the community, at school or at home. This masterclass is designed for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people in the following sectors:

- education
- charity
- local authorities
- voluntary and community (VCS) organisations
- sport
- entertainment.

This masterclass is available at a cost of £20 per person.



Reminder

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If you have any changes to your safeguarding team, can you please advise us, so we can ensure our records are up to date and accurate.

As always the CPSS Helpline 02895 985590 is operational Monday to Friday (09:00 am until 4:30 pm) (except the statutory holidays).

We trust you will find these resources helpful.

Thank you once again for your continued commitment to ensuring that your school remains a safe and supportive environment. We look forward to continuing to work with you in this term.

**Kind regards
The Child Protection Support Service**

