

DIGIWISE REPORT



PROOF



MIDDLESBROUGH
CHILDREN
MATTER

DIGIWISE REPORT



The children’s commissioner office identified several challenges for looked after children the main 3 were:

- **Lack of Digital access**
- **Lack of digital skills and support from foster careers/professionals**
- **Lack of appropriate safeguarding**

The report concluded: “Children in care must not experience social isolation or lack the opportunity to develop their digital skills because of poor digital access or because their foster parents or key staff lack.

We completed a survey with a total of 35 young people (16 female, 18 male and one unidentified). 43% (15) of the young people we surveyed lived in a residential home 23% (8) were living in supported accommodation or lodgings, 20% (7) were living by themselves, 9% (3) were living with family and 3% (1) living in foster care. We then went further and completed 6 deep dive surveys with young people, which was more in-depth.

We were successful in securing funding from Nominet to work to elevate the young peoples’ voices to influence the services they are given by creating a new policy for all young people looked after.

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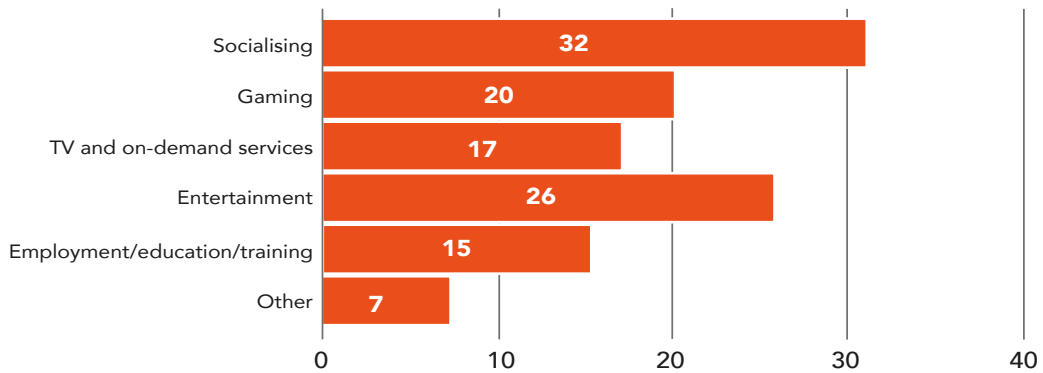
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WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DO ONLINE

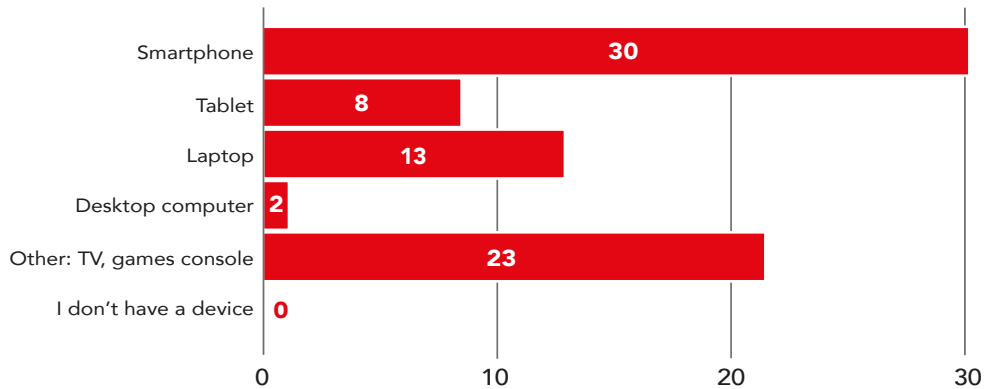
TOP 'APPS'



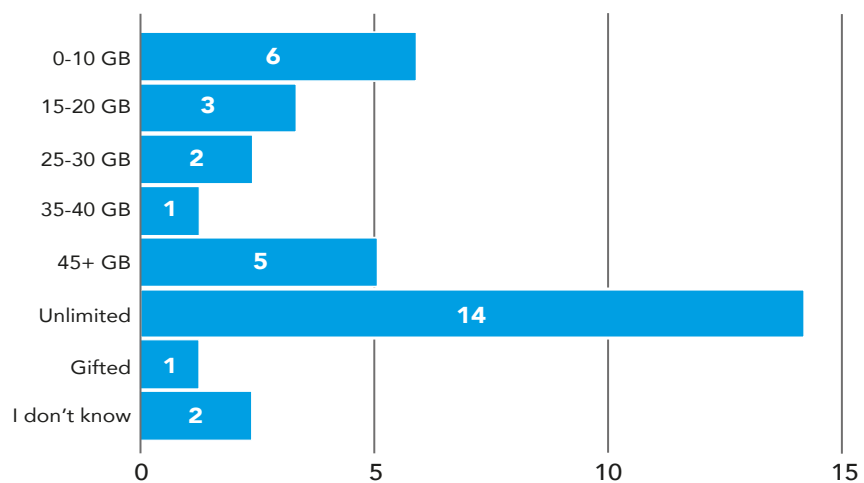
What are the reasons you go online?



How do you access the internet?



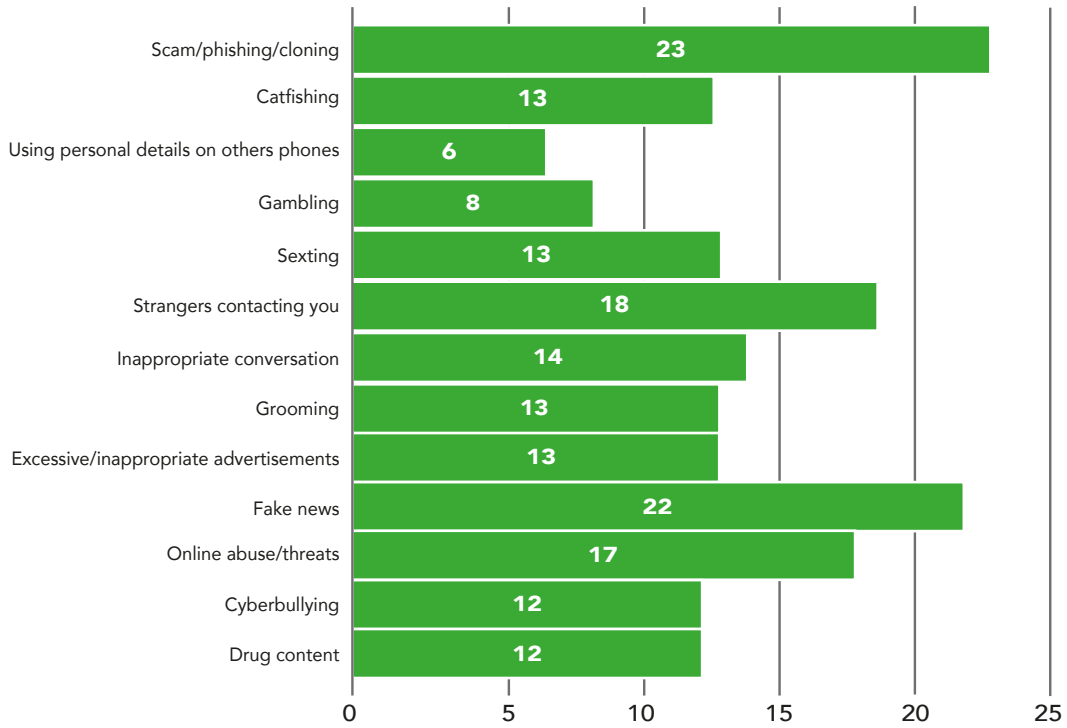
How many GB of data do you get per month?



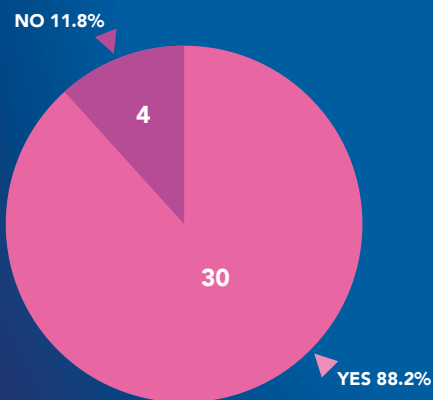
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WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DO ONLINE

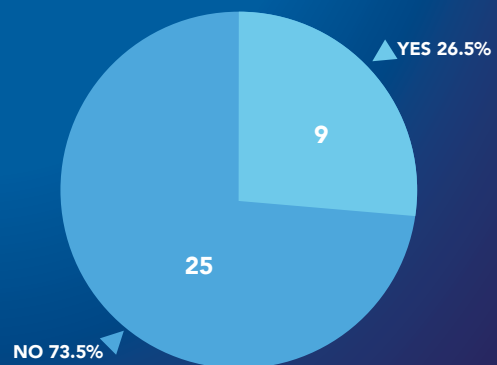
Risks our young people face online



Do you think the internet should have filters?



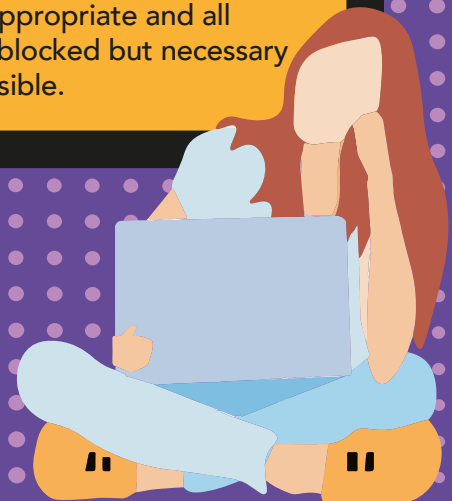
Have you been stopped from accessing a website



2 YOU SAID WE DID

We asked young people what education/ training they received whilst in care

YOU SAID	WE DID
"Our young people have said they face a lot of issues online and some online issues are discussed more than other."	The Middlesbrough children matters website Digiwise Toolkit allows professionals to access the 11-18 toolkit resource for activities relating to online exploitation.
"Foster carers were not very knowledgeable about online safety."	Fostering Digital skills training program has been given to all professionals and foster carers so they can learn about online risks.
"They (staff) cover everything except how to put your accounts on private."	We have directed staff and carers to digital online guides and information to make sure conversations cover everything.
"There should be quick and easy links to get support services."	We have developed a resource document for young people that can be accessed by scanning the QR code on the phone holders that we have shared with young people.
"I don't remember signing an acceptable use agreement to go online."	We have created a digital pledge that is only 5 short statements to make it more memorable. We have introduced the UKCIS Digital passport for all young people.
"Because of the online filters I couldn't get onto teams for school."	We will work with staff and carers to make sure all filters are appropriate and all harmful content is blocked but necessary websites are accessible.



3 CONCLUSION

We have recommended that the UKCIS Digital passport will be completed by all young people in partnership with carers/staff to establish a mutual understanding of expectations in the home.



We have allocated the fostering digital skills training to all carers/staff and professionals to give them knowledge to stay up to date and keep young people safe.



We have made a parental guide to hand out to carers to give them guides on how to support and implement safe online practice and help with developing conversations in the home.

We have made a step by step guide about how to set up online filtering settings onto home Wi-Fi to enable all foster homes to make sure all adult content is blocked to safeguard young people.

We have concluded that young people find acceptable use agreements lengthy and hard to understand so we have replaced them with an easier to understand 'Digital pledge' which is only one page long and with minimal writing.



We worked with Q Design to create phone holders to hand out to all young people so there is a physical product that can lead them to resources and support through the QR code on the back. By scanning this it will link to the Middlesbrough children matters website where young people can access our resource poster with support and advice on how to deal with issues



4 CORE C'S

	Content Child as recipient	Contact Child as participant	Conduct Child as actor	Contract Child as consumer
Aggressive	Violent, gory, graphic, racist, hateful and extreme content	Harassment, stalking, hateful behaviour, unwanted surveillance	Bullying, hateful or hostile peer activity e.g. trolling, exclusion, shaming	Identity theft, fraud, phishing, scams, gambling, blackmail, security risks
Sexual	Pornography (legal and illegal), sexualisation of culture, body image norms	Sexual harassment, sexual grooming, generation and sharing of child sexual abuse material	Sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual messages, sexual pressures	Sextortion, trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, streaming child sexual abuse
Values	Age-inappropriate user-generated or marketing content, mis/disinformation	Ideological persuasion radicalisation and extremist recruitment	Potentially harmful user communities e.g. self-harm, anti-vaccine, peer pressures	Information filtering, profile bias, polarisation, persuasive design
Cross-cutting	Privacy and data protection abuses, physical and mental health risks, forms of discrimination			

We also want all staff and carers to be educated in the 4 c's (content, contact, conduct and contract) so they can support young people to understand them and remain safe.

4

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY: Katie is a 17 year old female, currently in private residential home



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Currently attends college studying Catering, Mathematics and English functional skills with aspirations to work in the restaurant industry.

HOBBIES AND INTEREST: Katie like to keep herself busy and enjoys the outdoors and being around dogs and animals. Katie enjoys social activities with staff and peers, going to places like jump 360 and bowling and enjoys being around children.

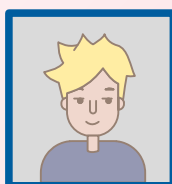
DEVICES: Katie owns a smartphone, a tablet, a laptop computer and a PlayStation. Katie's screen time is around 6 hours per day with an additional 2 hours split between her other devices, occasionally plays games titles such as Sims 4, Grand Theft Auto v and fortnight. Katie mainly uses her 4G data plan to access her social media on her smartphone.

APPS: Katie enjoys using Tiktok, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Facebook, mainly using these apps to stay in touch with family and friends, and see what they are up to.

ONLINE ACCESS AND EDUCATION: Katie enjoys watching YouTube my favourite channel is DaddvGirls they do family vlogs and challenges where they have to stay in a room for 24 hours or last to leave, they just joke around. Katie also likes to watch Netflix on the houses account, she explains it has a restriction pin but the home shares it with us when they think we are responsible enough. She has had lot of education on online safety from staff covering risks such as Sexual exploitation, Cyberbullying, Keeping safe such as not sharing person information or location and discussions and guidance around not send nude photos and has signed an acceptable use agreement to access the internet and fully understood what the expectations were when signing this.

ONLINE RISKS: Katie while she hasn't been exposed to risks herself directly, she thinks "social media accounts should be made more secure on apps for everyone" as default because "a lot of young people use them" and "it can be dangerous for people who don't know how to use them safely".

CASE STUDY: Lee is a 16 year old male, he has been looked after since 2019 currently in supported accommodation.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Lee is on roll at a local school in year 11, he explains his attendance is not good as it should be and so attends an alternative education provider several times a week, here he is learning skills in construction trades. He has career aspirations to do 'anything hands on' with a main goal to be an electrical engineer.

HOBBIES AND INTEREST: Lee enjoys mountain biking and motorbikes, he also enjoys maintenance on them and enjoys taking things apart and fixing things. He is also a talented martial artist and an avid gamer.

DEVICES: Lee mainly uses his smart phone (I Phone XR) to access the internet, which he averages around 3 hours and 8 mins per day, but also sees the internet as gaming, which he enjoys playing online on his Xbox, Lee plays on his Xbox every day for around 1 additional hour using Xbox Gamepass and plays a lot of game titles including 18 plus titles but doesn't enjoy chatting on a headset.

APPS: Lee enjoys a lot of applications, but mainly uses You Tube for gaming content watching his favourite you tubers do walkthroughs, but also sometimes watches this content on Twitch. His social media top 3 are Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. He also enjoys music downloaded from Sound cloud.

ONLINE ACCESS AND EDUCATION: Lee's favourite online activity is watching you tube gaming walkthroughs and playing on his Xbox, his favourite titles being Grand Theft Auto and Fortnite. He mainly uses the residential home internet connection for this and says that it is good, but he also has 80Gb for when he is out in the community. His care staff allow him to play 18+ titles he says "as long as you are mature about accessing that content then you should be allowed at 16 as long as you don't copy the behaviour" he has had limited interventions from professionals on how to stay safe in online spaces.

ONLINE RISKS: Lee has not had to deal with any severe online harms or risks, the only issue he feels that have affected him are what he sees as his excessive screentime.

CASE STUDY: Chris is a 17 year old male, he has been looked after since 2016 living between foster care and private residential placements from 2016 and 2021 and then moving into local authority residential home, currently ready to transition to supported accommodation.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Currently attends college studying Mathematics, English and employability prepare for work pathway with placements in warehouse type roles with aspirations to work in manual type trades.

HOBBIES AND INTEREST: Enjoys following football and is a fan of Middlesbrough Football Club, enjoys playing rugby, Chris considers himself to be a great rugby player.

DEVICES: Chris is an avid gamer owning Playstation 4 which he mainly plays on Fifa and Fortnite. He uses his mobile for internet mainly – which is a Samsung a12 – android device, this fulfils everything he needs it for, Chris's favourite online activity is online gaming he uses his Playstation 4 everyday, mainly at night before sleep, on average around 2 hours gaming per day and on Saturday's maybe upto 4 hours but he doesn't like using headsets to chat to people. His mobile use is every day and he averages 5 hours per day from his screen time checks and he doesn't feel that his screen time is excessive. Chris states that during COVID-19 lockdown his online screen time increased to around 12 hours per day.

APPS: Chris's favourite apps are dragon city a popular RPG game, His main socials are Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook which he jumps between, he only uses his data for this as he has unlimited 4G and doesn't really see the point in accessing via the homes Wifi. Chris enjoys watching Netflix and You Tube content via the residential homes internet. The Netflix account cannot access 18 plus content due to enabled restrictions.

ONLINE ACCESS AND EDUCATION: Chris states he has not had any online safety education interventions while in the residential home, but he did have these discussions while in foster care, he recalls signing a document to access the internet, although he doesn't remember explicitly what the detail was he understands that it set out the rules and consequences of abusing or accessing the homes internet, he believes the internet would be disconnected and his device would be taken away from him if he broke the rules of the agreement.

ONLINE RISKS: Chris has not been exposed to many online risks, he explains he has been involved in some online "beef" or arguments with others. He has seen and reported a lot of drug content and sales as well as sales of items like e-cigarettes and gold jewellery on snapchat, Chris by his own admission states that Snapchat is "lethal" for drug content and sales – meaning its very common content.

CASE STUDY: Dahna is a 13 year old female, she is currently living in a private residential home.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Dahna currently attends a local school in year 8 and has determined aspirations to join the armed forces.

HOBBIES AND INTEREST: Dahna enjoys art and drawing and gaming on her console as her main activities and interests, although she explains she doesn't chat to others across online games and also doesn't chat VOIP, (voice chat headsets) due to her particular console not being usually enabled for voice chat.

DEVICES: Dahna has not been allowed to have any devices due to her age and the policy for her current home. Currently she just uses her Nintendo Switch using it for internet and gaming both for around 6 hours per day, she manages quite well with using her Switch as a tablet. She explains that during lockdown she did not have a device to go online.

APPS: Dahna enjoys watching You Tube as her main form of on demand entertainment, her favourite you tuber is Mr. Beast.

ONLINE ACCESS AND EDUCATION: Dahna rated her internet connection in her residential home as extremely poor, stating "there's no point in having it". Dahna explains that staff have discussed online safety issues with her and that she "probably" signed an acceptable use agreement but didn't pay much attention to the content and she didn't understand why she had to sign something anyway. Dahna felt very confident about her online safety, adding that "I'm not 3, I know how to" (sic - keep myself safe)

ONLINE RISKS: Dahna had not experienced any adversity in online spaces.

CASE STUDY: Charlotte is a 17 year old female, she is currently living in a private residential home.



EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Charlotte is currently attending college studying hair and beauty

HOBBIES AND INTEREST: Charlotte enjoys completing beauty treatments such as make-up and nails, she also is a keen artists and enjoys drawing.

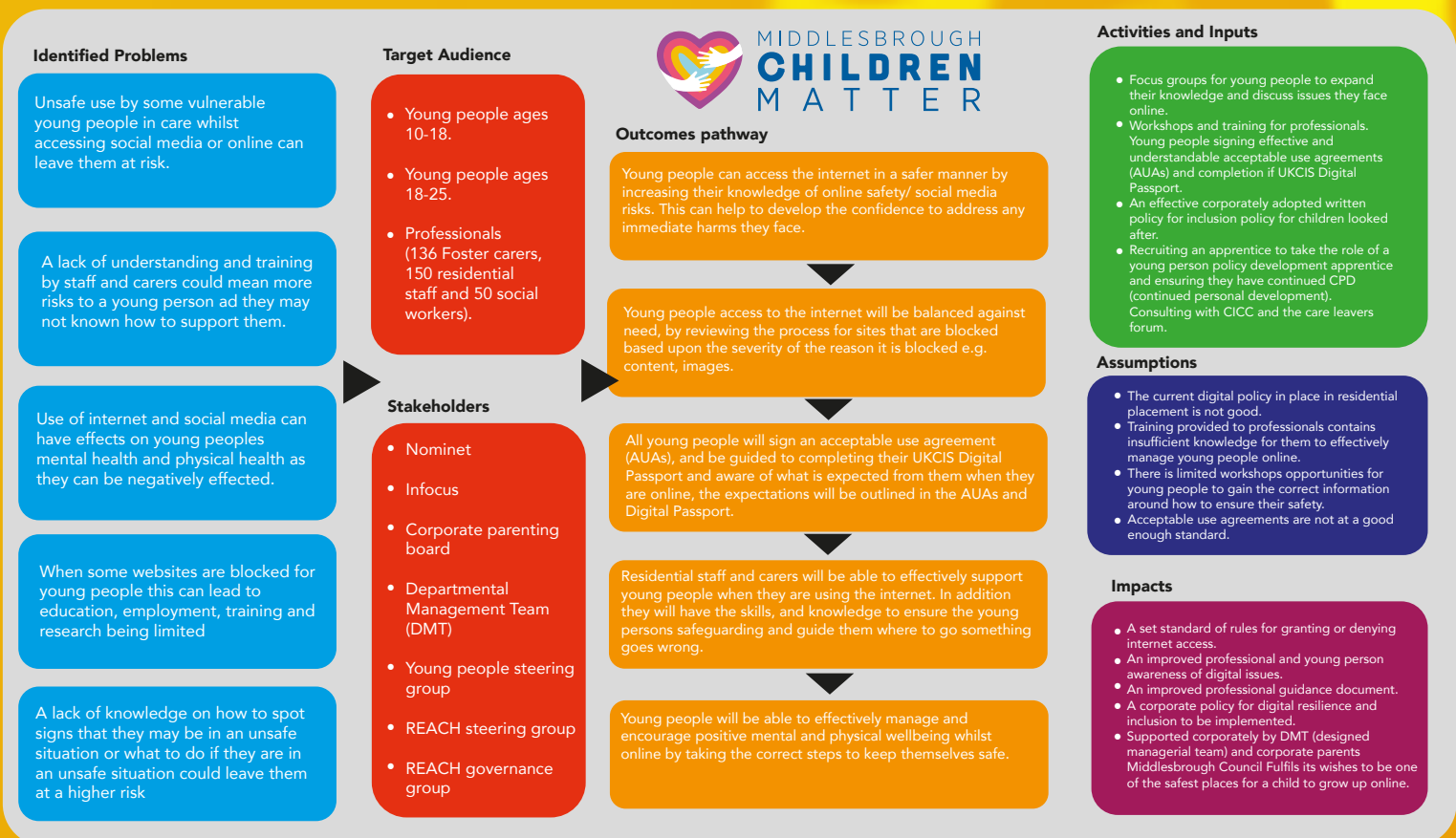
DEVICES: Charlotte has several devices which include a smartphone, a PS4 gaming console and a laptop computer. She uses these devices collectively for around 8 hours per day and feels that they fulfil her requirements for being online, she also tries to avoid being online late at night because it interferes with her sleep routine. Charlotte notes that while she has her PS4, she doesn't bothering playing online as the internet connection is too slow which stops any meaningful online gameplay.

APPS: Charlotte enjoys using Snapchat as her main social media application and frequently uses Netflix for entertainment, choosing to watch documentary type programmes, these have age restrictions enabled which prevent her from access any content above her age, and Charlotte also enjoys TikTok watching various videos.

ONLINE ACCESS AND EDUCATION: Charlotte commented her internet connection in her residential home could be better, stating she would usually use her data or Wifi at her friend's houses instead of the residential home because "it doesn't work well"

Charlotte has signed acceptable use agreement to access the internet and has had education intervention and discussions with staff regarding online safety which has included awareness of not adding people she does not know and how to block people who are being "weird" and the risks of accessing inappropriate content and websites.

ONLINE RISKS: Charlotte explains that she as a victim of child online exploitation/grooming and had reported the perpetrator to support staff and Police which received an appropriate response.





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