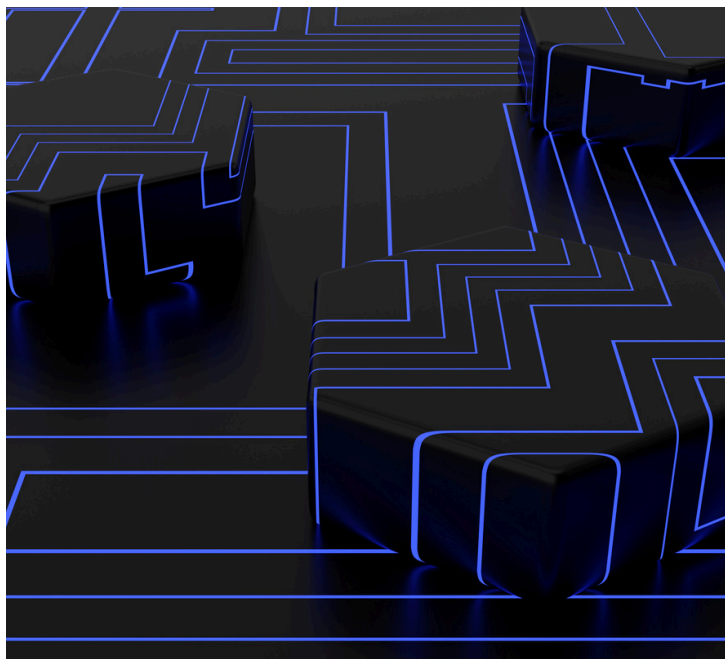




# SAFEGUARDING

OUR BI-MONTHLY SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MAY - JUNE 2025 - MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



## WELCOME

The internet is an amazing tool for learning, working, and staying connected—but it also presents new risks. In recent months, there has been a sharp rise in online grooming, fraud, and digital exploitation targeting people of all ages.

This issue focuses on recognising the dangers, staying informed, and knowing what to do if you or someone you know is being targeted online.

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF ONLINE ABUSE

Online grooming is when someone builds a relationship with a person to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them. Red flags include:

- **Excessive secrecy:** hiding online conversations or quickly closing apps
- **Sudden behavioural changes:** anxiety, mood swings, or withdrawal from usual activities
- **Unexplained gifts or financial transactions:** money, phones, subscriptions
- **Pressure to communicate on private platforms:** such as encrypted apps or video chats
- **Unusual requests:** for images, videos, personal information, or meeting in person

These tactics can affect anyone, not just young people. Adults are often targeted through dating apps, social media, and even online job adverts.





## WHO IS AT RISK?

Online grooming can happen to:

- **Adults experiencing loneliness:** Groomers may exploit a need for connection or emotional support
- **People with learning difficulties or disabilities:** who may be trusting or unaware of manipulation tactics
- **Older adults:** often targeted in romance frauds, scams, or abuse under false pretences
- **Professionals online:** through fake profiles or phishing attempts, including blackmail and extortion

## A RISING THREAT

The UK government and safeguarding experts have recently highlighted online sexual abuse and coercion as the next major crisis in digital safeguarding.

- In 2024, reports of financial and sexual coercion scams targeting adults rose by over 60%
- Grooming on WhatsApp, Discord, Instagram, and dating platforms is increasingly common
- The Online Safety Act now mandates platform accountability—but individuals must stay alert and informed

## STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Here are some steps everyone can take:

- **Don't overshare** personal information—especially with new contacts
- **Verify identities**—never trust a profile at face value, especially if things move fast emotionally or financially
- **Use privacy settings** on all social and communication platforms
- **Trust your instincts**—if something feels off, it probably is
- **Report and block** suspicious users immediately

## SAFEGUARDING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Whether you're supporting learners, colleagues, clients, or loved ones, safeguarding online means:

- **Promoting digital awareness** across all age groups
- **Encouraging open conversations** about online safety
- **Being aware** of how grooming and scams can take many forms—sexual, financial, emotional
- **Knowing how to report abuse** and support those affected

# FURTHER SUPPORT & INFORMATION

## SAMARITANS

Samaritans offers confidential emotional support to anyone in distress, feeling suicidal, or experiencing mental health issues. You can contact them anytime via phone, email, or even text.

**Helpline:** 116 123 (Free, 24/7)

**Website:** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

## ACTION FRAUD

UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime

**Helpline:** [0300 123 2040](tel:03001232040)

**Website:** <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk>

## INTERNET MATTERS

Digital wellbeing tools and privacy guides

**Website:** <https://www.internetmatters.org>

## CEOP (FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

Worried about online sexual abuse? Report it safely and securely.

**Website:** [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)

## OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Contact Steadfast Training's Safeguarding team on 01775 513050 or email [safe-guarding@steadfasttraining.co.uk](mailto:safe-guarding@steadfasttraining.co.uk)

### Our Safeguarding Officers

**Robert Wright** - 07985338185  
**Alison Law** - 07720092609  
**Chloe Robinson** - 07985338116

[Report a Safeguarding Issue](#)



## 9 PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

## PREVENT DUTY

The Prevent Duty is part of the government strategy to reduce the risk of Extremism, Terrorism and Radicalisation.

Report possible terrorist activity online. If you are concerned about someone or see anything suspicious call the local police or the police anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

## BRITISH VALUES

British Values are defined as:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

## CURRENT NATIONAL THREAT LEVEL **SUBSTANTIAL** - AN ATTACK IS LIKELY

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is SUBSTANTIAL. Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.

**FIND OUT MORE AT [PROTECTUK.POLICE.UK](http://PROTECTUK.POLICE.UK)**

