

# SAFEGUARDING

## LGBTQ+ film raises safeguarding issues

A new documentary titled *1 Year*, focusing on Ben Hodge, a transgender teenager from Merseyside, will be shown in state schools during LGBTQ+ History month. The film chronicles Hodge's transition from female to male, detailing his experiences with bullying and his journey through gender identity. However, Lucy Marsh from the Family Education Trust has raised concerns, stating that the film's suitability for children aged 11 and over represents a "huge safeguarding failure." She highlighted the lack of information on the serious side effects of testosterone and the risks associated with breast binding. The film is part of a collection of 700 films made available by Into Films, a charity supported by the British Film Institute.

*The Times*

## NHS launches clinic to tackle teen vaping

The NHS has established a pioneering clinic at Alder Hey children's hospital in Liverpool to assist teenagers aged 11 to 15 in quitting vaping. The clinic will offer tailored treatments and gather data to better understand nicotine dependence in youth, addressing the complexities of vaping, including the presence of illegal substances in some products. Board minutes show staff are working with schools to gather data that will help drive the service, including the numbers of nicotine-dependent children. Hazel Cheeseman, chief executive of Action on Smoking and Health, highlighted the need for this service, commenting: "There is limited evidence about what works to support people to quit vaping, particularly young people."

*Daily Mirror The Guardian*

## Quarter of children need social care services

Research from University College London (UCL) reveals that one in four children in England will require social care services by the age of 18, a significant increase from previous estimates. The study highlights that "high proportions of children are referred to, assessed and recognised as needing services" due to factors such as poverty and funding cuts. Lead author Dr Matthew Jay, a senior data scientist in public health at UCL, noted that in poorer areas, the need for services could exceed 50%. The study also found that 7% of children require a child protection plan at some point, related to the risk of significant harm such as abuse or neglect. Katharine Sacks-Jones, chief executive of the charity Become, said: "Children's social care is already in crisis with more children in care than before and a system struggling to meet their needs."

*The Observer*

## Government launches awareness campaign and 10-year study on youth vaping

The Department of Health and Social Care is to launch a national awareness campaign, featuring YouTube and Instagram influencers, including doctor and DJ Bodalia, to highlight the health risks of vaping for under-18s. The Government is also launching a 10-year study into the effects of vaping on the health of young people, with the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) study to track the health of 100,000 young people currently aged eight to 18. Public health minister Ashley Dalton said that while vaping "can be a useful tool to quit smoking", it is "crucial we have clear evidence on the long-term health harms, especially for young people".

*Sky News Daily Mail Daily Mirror The Daily Telegraph The Guardian The Independent UK*

## Government introduces tougher knife sale regulations

The Government has introduced new measures, dubbed Ronan's law, to combat knife crime and restrict access to blades for under-18s. Named after Ronan Kanda, who was tragically killed in 2022, the law mandates retailers to report suspicious knife purchases and imposes harsher penalties for selling knives to minors, increasing prison sentences from six months to up to two years. The measures will be included in the upcoming Crime and Policing Bill, with a two-step verification process for online knife sales. The Government said it is also piloting a dedicated new central police unit, with £1m funding, to tackle the issue, and in the spring will launch a consultation on whether a registration scheme should be put in place for all online retailers selling knives.

*BBC News The Guardian*

## More than 100 knives reported in South Yorkshire schools

Recent police data reveals that over 100 incidents of children bringing knives into South Yorkshire schools have been recorded in the past three years. But only 3% of these cases led to charges or court summons. Superintendent David Cowley said: "We are dedicated to combating knife crime in South Yorkshire and take a robust approach in response to incidents." The statistics were released following the tragic stabbing of 15-year-old Harvey Willgoose in February. The figures show that Sheffield had the highest number of incidents, with 37 cases, followed by Doncaster with 30.

*BBC News*

## Ketamine use among youth surges

Concerns have been raised about the rise of ketamine use among young people in the UK. The National Drug Treatment Monitoring System reports a rise in under-18s entering treatment for ketamine, from 335 to 917 between 2020-21 and 2023-24. A recent survey revealed that 11% of 15-year-olds had been offered ketamine. According to the same study, which was done for NHS England, schoolchildren's ketamine use has more than doubled over the past ten years, from 0.4% in 2013 to 0.9% in 2023. The drug, once a party staple, is now seen as a social high, leading to severe health risks. Authorities are considering reclassifying ketamine as a Class A drug, but experts warn that enforcement alone won't solve the issue.

[BBC News](#)

## Primary pupils taken to hospital over suspected cannabis-laced sweets

Eight pupils at **Phillimore Community Primary School** in Darnall, Sheffield, were taken to hospital earlier this week after eating sweets that are believed to have been laced with cannabis. South Yorkshire Police said the children "were taken to hospital as a precaution and have since been discharged", adding that "enquiries are ongoing".

[BBC News](#) [Daily Mirror](#)

## Teachers seek guidance on tackling misogyny

A report by the University of York has found that teachers are seeking guidance on teaching children about the "manosphere" to combat the spread of misogyny in classrooms. It follows concerns that the popularity of influencers like Andrew Tate has led to an increase in boys harassing and disrespecting girls. A survey of primary and secondary school teachers across the UK found that 90% of secondary school teachers would benefit from guidance on the dangers of the 'manosphere', with more than two-thirds of primary teachers also saying the same. The 'manosphere' refers to a network of websites, blogs, and online forums that promote masculinity, misogyny, and opposition to feminism. The study found that over three-quarters of secondary school teachers were extremely concerned about the influence of online misogynists over their pupils, with 44% claiming this had resulted in inappropriate behavior towards female pupils and 14% receiving sexist abuse in the classroom themselves.

[Daily Telegraph](#)

## Failure to tackle youth vaping risks 'health emergency'

The *Manchester Evening News* looks at rising concerns over the impact of vaping, particularly on children, with a survey by Action on Smoking and Health in August finding that 18% of 11- to 17-year-olds had vaped, with more than 4%, or around 230,000 children, vaping at least once a week. One headteacher tells the paper that a pupil requested vape breaks during exams - which were refused until he was diagnosed with a nicotine addiction. In other cases, schools have reported pupils collapsing after using illegal vapes, which can contain high levels of nicotine or the synthetic cannabinoid spice. A long-term study at Manchester Metropolitan University is due to conclude in March, and study lead Dr Maxime Boidin has already called for tougher restrictions on vapes, saying that "doctors should be able to prescribe vapes for a certain time, so they could be used as a transition tool, but only for a short time". "We now know the long-term effects of vaping", she added, "and if we don't act now we will see a health emergency in the next 10, 15 years."

*Manchester Evening News*

## MPs to debate raising the age of "internet adulthood"

The Safer Phones Bill, introduced by Labour MP Josh MacAlister, seeks to raise the age of "internet adulthood" from 13 to 16, aiming to protect children from the adverse effects of smartphones. The bill will be debated in the Commons, with its second reading scheduled for Friday. Supporters hope to encourage the Government to strengthen Ofcom's powers to safeguard children from addictive apps. The bill follows a study indicating that schools with mobile phone bans achieve better GCSE results, although a recent investigation found no significant difference in student well-being or academic performance between schools with and without such restrictions. The debate has gained momentum following Australia's decision to ban under-16s from social media accounts, set to take effect in November 2025.

[Sky News](#)