

## MY CONCERN

If the Concern you have submitted might result in serious or immediate risk of harm to the person you are concerned about then you **SHOULD** also report this verbally to your Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and make them aware of the incident. Remember, they may not be in a position to receive or read the notification immediately.

### Young people facing crisis of online sexual violence

New research reveals that young people are facing a crisis of online sexual violence, with unsolicited sexual images becoming "dangerously normalised". The study, carried out by academics from University College London, Kent University, the School of Sexuality Education in London and the Association of School and College Leaders, said that children received sexual images almost from the moment they set up accounts with Snapchat, Instagram or TikTok. It also found over half of the boys and girls who received unwanted sexual content online or had their image shared without their consent did nothing. Only 2% reported the incident to school authorities, 5% to parents and 17% to social media companies. The report advised that schools change their guidance to "remove any victim blaming rhetoric", such as teaching pupils that they should "resist pressure" to have sex. Although an Ofsted report into sexual harassment in schools was welcomed, researchers said that it failed to look at how sexual harassment cultures were fostered in schools, such as through punitive uniform policies that focused on girls' bodies.

*The Times The Guardian*

### ICO urged to introduce age verification for commercial pornography sites

Children's safety groups have warned the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) they must introduce age verification for commercial pornography sites or face a high court challenge over any failure to act. The demand in a letter to the UK data watchdog states that the Government's failure to stop children seeing pornography is causing lifelong trauma and putting children at risk of abuse and exploitation. The author of the letter, John Carr, secretary of the Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety, which represents 11 major children's charities, including the NSPCC, Barnardo's and the Children's Society, urges the ICO to use the powers under the recently introduced age appropriate design code (AADC) to introduce rigorous age-checking procedures for publicly accessible porn sites.

*The Times The Guardian*

### Government to launch review into murder of six-year-old Arthur

Nadhim Zahawi has confirmed the Government is to launch a national review into

the killing of six-year-old Arthur Labinjo-Hughes to protect other children from harm and identify improvements needed in the agencies that came into contact with him before his death. The education secretary said the Government was commissioning four inspectorates, covering social care, health, police and probation, to carry out an urgent inspection of the safeguarding agencies in Solihull who were aware of Arthur's case. He said: "All the agencies tasked with protecting children at risk of abuse and neglect in Solihull will be subject to a joint targeted area inspection to consider their effectiveness and advise on where improvements must be made." The Department for Education will work with the national panel and the Solihull partnership to agree a timeline for the review.

*1 The Guardian*

### **Ofsted chief warns migrant children left alone in hotels**

Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman is to warn that refugee children are being put in hotels on their own because the care system is stretched to breaking point. Spielman will say at the publication of the regulator's annual report that the number of vulnerable children is at a record high, leaving them at risk. She will warn that unaccompanied children are routinely being housed in hotels, a practice the inspectorate has described as unacceptable, because of delays in transferring them to local authority care and a lack of suitable places for them to live. The watchdog says that without independent oversight it is impossible to know whether these hotels are safe. Spielman said: "Children should be treated as children, not least those arriving on our shores without friends or family, wanting safety, security and a better future. It is extremely challenging to find them a place to live but using hotels is neither acceptable nor sustainable." Ofsted's report will also cover the impact of the pandemic on schools and colleges.

*The Times*

### **Over 850 calls made to helpline about sexual abuse in schools**

The NSPCC has revealed that over 850 calls, many alleging sexual abuse and harassment in schools, have been made to a national helpline set up after the Everyone's Invited website revealed widespread sexism, misogyny and abuse allegations in education. The children's charity said 150 were so serious that they have been referred to police and other agencies for further investigation. Incidents reported include sexual name-calling, unwanted sexual touching, sexual assault and rape by other pupils, as well as online abuse such as sharing nude images without consent. The Report Abuse in Education helpline, funded by the Department for Education, was due to run until the end of December, however it will continue to operate "for the foreseeable future" in response to continuing demand. The school standards minister, Baroness Barran, said the Government had increased core funding to the NSPCC to £2.6m and had continued to remind schools of the importance of the relationships, sex and health education curriculum.

### **Social media giants urged to create safer internet**

Andrew Walker, a coroner overseeing the inquest into the death of the teenager Molly Russell, has urged social media giants to think about how they can "make the internet a safer place". Walker was speaking during a hearing before an inquest that will examine the circumstances of her death, and will investigate how algorithms

used by social media giants to encourage users to remain on their apps may have contributed. Molly, 14, from Harrow, northwest London, had looked at posts about depression, self-harm and suicide on platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram, which is owned by Meta, formerly known as Facebook, before she killed herself in November 2017.

*The Times*

## **School closures linked to rise in children terror offences**

Home Office figures reveal that police arrested a record number of children for terror offences over a 12-month period, which investigators have linked to the shutdown of schools during the early phases of the pandemic. Analysis shows that 25 under-18s were arrested in the year to September, the highest proportion recorded in a 12-month period, accounting for 13% of all terror arrests. It was an increase of eight, up from 17 (8%) the previous year. Deputy assistant commissioner Dean Haydon, the senior national coordinator for Counter Terrorism Policing, said: "We are very concerned that children are becoming an increasing proportion of our arrests." Investigators highlighted the impact of pandemic-related school closures, while schools also regularly report cases of concern to Prevent, the Government's deradicalization programme.

*The Guardian*

## **1 in 5 children living in unsuitable housing**

Research by the National Housing Federation (NHF) suggests that one in five (or 2m) children in England are living in homes that are cramped, unaffordable or unsuitable. Additionally, 283,000 children are effectively homeless, living in other people's houses as their families cannot afford accommodation of their own. The number of homeless children living in temporary accommodation - 124,000 - has risen by over 80% in the past decade.

*London Evening Standard*

## **De Souza urges parents to discuss online harms with children**

Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has urged parents to "talk early, and talk often" to their children in an age-appropriate way about pornography and sexual harassment before they are given a mobile phone or digital device. De Souza issued a guide to parents, written by teenagers and young adults, on how to have these difficult conversations. The guide tackles issues highlighted during the Everyone's Invited movement, with advice also covering sexualised bullying, body image and peer pressure. The guide tells parents that they should be understanding and not overreact if they find out their child has seen explicit images, or exchanged nude pictures. This comes amid growing concerns about the accessibility of damaging content online and the impact on young children, with more than half of 11 to 13-year-olds saying they had seen pornography online, many by accident. The guide has been issued in the run-up to Christmas, with many children set to receive devices as presents.

*The Times The Daily Telegraph The Guardian*

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*The Guardian*

### **Dramatic rise in children hospitalised with eating disorders**

NHS Digital figures for England show there was a 41% rise in hospital eating disorder admissions for children aged 17 and below between April and October 2021, compared to the same period in 2020 - with a 69% rise compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Experts have warned that the dramatic rise has left psychiatrists and community services overwhelmed. Dr Agnes Ayton, of the Royal College of Psychiatrists said: "We cannot afford to let this go on."

*Daily Express | The Daily Telegraph | The Guardian | The Times*