

Zahawi claims Instagram failing 'duty of care' to the young

Nadhim Zahawi claims that Instagram is not fulfilling its duty of care to young people as it is "pumping out" harmful material to them. The education secretary told *The Times* that executives at Facebook, which owns Instagram, needed to "look at the mirror and think what kind of business am I running". He said that although many aspects of Instagram, a social media platform, were "entertaining, enriching and quite amazing", there was "evidence of failure". Zahawi also said that evidence of rape, harassment and abuse in leading schools raised by the Everyone's Invited campaign was "hugely worrying". He linked the treatment of girls in schools by boys to violent pornography. He said sex education was part of the answer, but that parents needed to explain to their children that pornography was an "unhealthy distortion of reality".

The Times

Undercover police protect schoolgirls from abuse

Undercover police officers have been patrolling eight high schools across Cheshire in an effort to protect girls from harassment and abuse. Cheshire Police Chief Constable Mark Roberts said that female officers posing as parents were sent to the schools - in areas including Chester, Warrington and Runcorn - for two weeks. He added: "We've been having covert, plain clothes patrols around schools where schoolgirls on occasions have suffered abuse and some of the cat-calling and unpleasant stuff that can go on." Uniformed police officers were also stationed near the schools for back-up. No arrests have been made as a result.

BBC News

Figures reveal parents abused by their own children

New figures reveal that children as young as four are among thousands who have been reported to police for physical and emotional abuse of parents and carers in their homes. Analysis shows over 92,000 calls were recorded between January 2018 and June 2021 in which the perpetrator of the violence was the child of the victim. Children aged 19 and under were responsible for 42,000 of the incidents and, of the police forces who specifically record child-to-parent violence or abuse, more than 2,000 incidents were by children aged 12 and under, with some as young as four or five.

The Times

Right-wing extremism among young people on the rise

Home Office figures show how right-wing extremism is on the rise among young people, with 310 people referred to the Government's anti-terrorism Prevent programme by schools, colleges and universities due to extreme right-wing links in 2020-21. This compared to the 157 who were referred due to their risk of radicalisation by Islamic extremists over that time. In addition, almost one in three cases involving far-right extremism were escalated to the next stage of the Government's scheme, compared to fewer than one in five cases of suspected Islamic extremism. There has also been a rise in the prevalence of online gaming and chat apps being used by right-wing groups to target young people.

Meanwhile, a sharp decline of referrals during the COVID-19 pandemic has raised concerns that young people at risk of radicalisation are being overlooked. This comes as research by UCL's Institute of Education this year found teachers are seeing a rise in extremist views and conspiracy theories among pupils, but feel they lack the training or resources to tackle it. ASCL's Geoff Barton said the Prevent figures highlight the need for more school support.

| The Guardian

NSPCC helpline calls surge

The NSPCC has revealed the number calls it has received about child sexual abuse has hit record levels amid a "surge in publicity" about violence against women and girls. The charity received 4,735 calls about child sexual abuse or exploitation over the six months to October, a rise of 36% from the same period last year. The NSPCC said over 1,500 of these led to a referral to bodies such as the police or local councils. Calls included those from survivors of non-recent abuse who said they had come forward following media coverage, including of the thousands of testimonies sent to the Everyone's Invited website about incidents in schools and universities. Kam Thandi, head of the helpline, said: "We are also worried that the risk of abuse has gone up since the start of the pandemic. We all have a role to play in preventing child sexual abuse and our experts are here to support both adults to spot signs of abuse and share concerns and to give children the chance to speak out and stay safe."

Daily Express The Daily Telegraph The Independent The Times

Plans for tougher child abuse sentences confirmed

Child abusers in England and Wales could face life in jail under tougher sentencing plans unveiled by ministers. It follows a campaign for Tony's Law by the adoptive family of seven-year-old Tony Hudgell, who had both legs amputated following abuse. Justice Secretary Dominic Raab said the legislation would provide "maximum protection to the most vulnerable". Under the plans, the maximum jail sentence for those who cause or allow a child's death will increase from 14 years to life imprisonment. Sentences are also set to go up from 10 to 14 years for people who cause serious harm to children. The planned tougher sentences would be added to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Sky News BBC News The Times Daily Mail London Evening Standard

Charity warns of 40% rise in youth homelessness

The Centrepoint charity has warned that youth homelessness in the UK has increased by an estimated two-fifths in five years, rising to more than 120,000 people in 2019/20. Chief executive Seyi Obakin also believes young black Britons will probably be disproportionately affected. Analysis of Government data by the *Guardian* shows that although England's black population stands at about 3.5%, black households make up 10% of those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Guardian