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SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE

ISSUE: 12 **January 2025**

We hope you've had a great start to the academic year and enjoyed some well-deserved rest over the festive period.

We ask that you read this issue of our Safeguarding & Child Protection Update to help supplement and maintain your knowledge as we enter a new term.

Online safety

Safer Internet Day 2025

Safer Internet Day will take place this year on Tuesday 11th February 2025.

Official resources for the day are now available to download for free. The resources are designed by online safety experts and are created to help educators integrate online safety discussions into their lessons and empower young people of all ages to stay safe online.

WEB LINK: SWGfL Safer Internet Day 2025 resources

WEB LINK: UK Safer Internet Centre online resources

Online safety continued

Barnardo's report – Exploring AI with children and young people

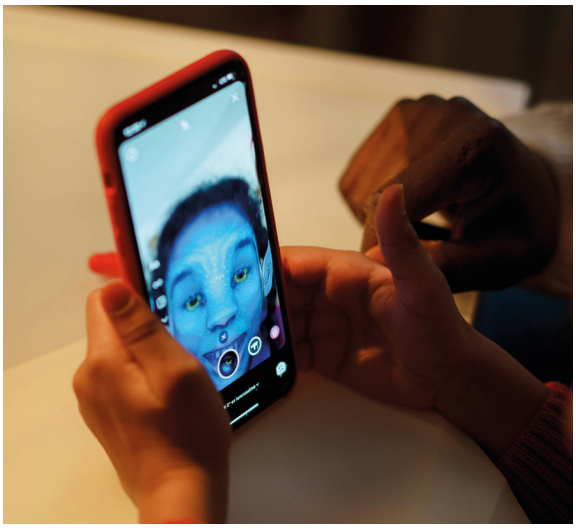
Barnardo's has published a new report which sheds light on children's understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) and highlights critical concerns about their online experiences.

The charity conducted focus groups and surveys with over 500 children and young people from primary and secondary schools, alongside gathering insights from parents and teachers. The report underscores several key issues raised by children, including:

- **Malicious use of AI** – worries about AI being misused for harmful purposes.
- **Privacy concerns** – fears regarding data security and how personal information is managed online.
- **Fear of AI 'taking over'** – apprehensions about AI dominating or impacting their futures negatively.

The findings reveal a disparity in AI understanding across age groups, pointing to a need for better education on the topic. Barnardo's has urged the Government to integrate practical AI lessons into the school curriculum. These lessons aim to raise awareness and equip children and young people with the tools to navigate potential online risks safely and responsibly.

This initiative aligns with broader goals of ensuring digital literacy and safeguarding children in an increasingly AI-driven world.



Barnado's report overview:
WEB LINK: Exploring AI with children and young people

Barnado's full report:
WEB LINK: Exploring AI with children and young people

Research reports

Youth violence research

The Youth Endowment Fund has produced four in-depth reports, with a fifth coming later this year, on the subject of youth violence.

During the last 12 months, 20% of teenagers told the Youth Endowment Fund that they've been a victim of violence, with over half of incidents leading to an injury. These acts of violence have affected almost half a million young people, with many being attacked repeatedly during that time.

The research reports aim to find out what is driving these tragic incidents by looking at who suffers from violence, the role of social media, the differences experienced between boys and girls, and young people's views on the police.

Read more about their research:
WEBLINK: Youth Endowment fund youth violence research

County Lines: Strategic Threat Report

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) have published their Strategic Threat Report about county lines. The report is based on data from April 2023 to March 2024.

What is county lines?

The National Crime Agency advises that county lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'county line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.'

What does the Strategic Threat Report cover?

Organised crime groups (OCGs)

- 1,447 OCGs operate county lines, mostly supplying crack cocaine and heroin.
- The main hubs are London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester.
- There has been an increase in localised drug lines, with shorter travel distances for runners.

Child exploitation

- Exploited children are mostly boys (93%) aged 15 - 17 (80%); although under-14s (20%) can be involved too.
- Recruitment takes place via social media, which is used to groom children and young people with promises of gifts or money. The result can often be that children are then controlled via debt bondage.
- The main risks are violence, abuse and the use of children for laundering crime proceeds.

Indicators of vulnerability

- Children and young people missing from home or care (61% from home, 16% from care).
- Risk factors, such as poverty, family substance misuse, mental health issues, care system involvement and school exclusion.

Drug operations

- Drug running, which is a high-risk role with violent conflicts over territory.
- Cuckooing – where gangs take over vulnerable adults' homes for crime and drug sales.

Support and partnerships

- The report describes collaboration from police with groups like Catch22, SafeCall and Barnardo's to protect exploited children and young people.
- The report highlights the evolving tactics of county lines and the importance of disrupting these operations in order to safeguard children and young people.

Read the full report:
WEB LINK: County Lines: Strategic Threat Report

Staff conduct and safeguarding expectations

Our Code of Conduct – physical contact and proximity guidance

We operate a no contact policy for supply staff with students, which should always be adhered to, apart from in the following circumstances:

- If a student **is at risk of harming** themselves or others.
- Where you are **providing personal care** as part of your agreed job role. You should carry out the task with sensitivity and respect. Ensure another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.
- Supply staff who are **Team Teach trained** (please provide your consultant with your proof of qualification if you have not already done so).
- Supply staff who are **first aid trained** and are in a situation where first aid is required (please provide your consultant with current proof of qualification if you have not already done so).

If physical contact is necessary, always be mindful that physical contact and/or close physical proximity with a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted and may leave you open to scrutiny.

Usually, you should never be on your own with a child. If you cannot avoid this, make sure you keep the classroom door open and do not block any exits.

When working with students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), ensure you have a comprehensive understanding of their individual needs. This includes considerations such as their sensory, health or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, particularly concerning physical contact.

Our full policy is available on our website:
WEB LINK: Code of Conduct

Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children is a statutory guidance document, which sets out the framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It outlines the roles, responsibilities and collaborative approach required from all organisations and individuals working with children and families. This includes local authorities, health services, police, schools and voluntary organisations. It emphasises the importance of a child-centred approach, ensuring that safeguarding efforts prioritise the needs, welfare and rights of children and young people. It also establishes clear expectations for information sharing, multi-agency collaboration and decision-making processes.

The document highlights critical areas such as early intervention, child protection procedures, and the roles of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs). It is periodically updated to reflect legislative and policy changes and serves as a cornerstone of our safeguarding framework, aiming to protect children and young people from harm and to support their development in safe and nurturing environments.

Review the full document:
WEB LINK: Working Together to Safeguard Children

Training resources

It's important to keep your training record with us up to date. If you have completed any recent safeguarding or child protection training via schools, voluntary roles or other agencies, please email copies of your certificates to your agency:

- **visionadminbox@visionforeducation.co.uk**
- **abcadmininbox@abc-teachers.co.uk**
- **smartadminbox@smartteachers.co.uk**

If you haven't completed a safeguarding course within the last 12 months, please speak to your consultant for more details about the free online course we can provide.

FREE training courses available:

- **PREVENT training** – Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation. At the end of the course, you will be provided with a certificate of completion which you should forward to your consultant to be added to your training record.
  - **WEB LINK: .GOV website: PREVENT training online course**
- Online CPD sessions – Visit our website for more information on our upcoming training sessions. Led by experienced practitioners, the training is free of charge but spaces are limited. Please ensure that any sessions you wish to attend are relevant to your role and the needs of the students you work with before signing up.
  - **WEB LINK: Vision for Education: FREE online CPD**
  - **WEB LINK: ABC Teachers: FREE online CPD**
  - **WEB LINK: Smart Teachers: FREE online CPD**

Your data and privacy

Protecting your data is important to us. Find out more about how we comply with legislation in the Data Retention and Privacy section on our websites.

- **www.visionforeducation.co.uk/privacy-policy**
- **www.abc-teachers.co.uk/privacy-policy**
- **www.smartteachers.co.uk/privacy-policy**

Please note that some of the resources detailed in this bulletin are from third-party providers which are not part of The Edwin Group (Vision for Education/ABC Teachers/Smart Teachers) and should be used at your own discretion.