

Safe Internet Day

Dear parent or carer,

I am writing to you personally as the CEO of Safe and Sound, a local grassroots charity in Derbyshire that supports children, young people and their families who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation. When I took over the leadership of the charity in May 2019, I was surprised how hard it was to get people talking about child exploitation.

“It I don’t hear about it it’s not happening.” I must change that and get everyone thinking about it.

Over 70% of the children and young people we supported last year were groomed online. The youngest child we have supported was eight years old. One in twenty children will suffer some form of sexual abuse. That is one in every classroom. Sadly, it can happen to any child anywhere and at any time.

The use of some form of technology features in many cases of child sexual exploitation. Perpetrators might use social media to locate and target vulnerable children or they might use a mobile phone as a direct line to a child to facilitate the grooming process.

For children and young people growing up today being online is very much a part of their normal social experience. Most children from school age have access to the internet whether through a tablet, a mobile phone, or a gaming device.

At the same time, technology moves quickly, and it can be difficult for parents to keep up and to know what safeguards might help minimise the risks children could encounter online.

We also know during Covid-19 the risk has again escalated. Perpetrators are aware children and young people are at home spending more time at home, may be isolated from their friends. They are using this to their advantage.

We are always available through our online chat facility on our new and improved website [www.safeandsoundgroup.org.uk](http://www.safeandsoundgroup.org.uk) You will also find guidance and resources on here.

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 it is Safer Internet Day. We are using this opportunity to reach out to parents and carers to reduce the risk of our children and young people being affected by online dangers and exploitation.

During this day we are also hosting an online interactive live session through our Facebook account between 10 and 11am <https://www.facebook.com/safesoundgroup> and providing an hour workshop on online safety and awareness through Zoom between 1.30 and 2.30pm. There are 100 places so log on nice and early.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85229040011?pwd=SENCVkJkaIRCeINSR3BIMVdRbHVTZz09>

Meeting ID: 852 2904 0011

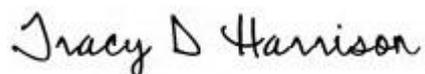
Passcode: 811976

If you would like to take part in an awareness workshop but cannot make Tuesday, please contact us via [info@safeandsoundgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@safeandsoundgroup.org.uk) to register your interest for a future workshop.

In the first instance, talk to your child about what they do online in the same way as you ask them about what they do offline. Ask them about what they share, who they talk to, how they know their online friends and what they do to keep themselves safe. You would not let them go to meet someone you did not know without putting some checks in place, would you?

Thank you for reading this letter and I hope together we can keep our children and young people safe.

Yours sincerely



**Tracy D Harrison**  
CEO, Safe and Sound