MUNCH POKE PING!*

VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND E-SAFETY

A study for the TDA by Stephen Carrick-Davies

FULL SUMMARY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR RESOURCES

* The title of this report, 'Munch, Poke, Ping' refers to familiar tools and applications which young people utilise on social networking and mobile phones. Echoing these terms, this report attempts to:

Munch: Just as screen-munching applications allow the users to grab the content on their screen, so this report attempts to provide an up-to-date 'screen capture' of the way vulnerable YP live online.

Poke : Just as a gentle 'Poke' on a social network helps draw attention, this report seeks to poke policy makers to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities of social media, and ensure those working with vulnerable YP are given training to equip those in their care.

Ping: Just as 'pinging' one-to-many on a mobile helps spread news, so this report seeks to start a wider debate about vulnerable YP online, how it can provide a wonderful platform for inclusion, but how it also opens real safeguarding issues for those already vulnerable offline.

Carrick-Davies & Associates
Communications … People … Change …

MUNCH, POKE, PING! EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a summary of the full *Munch Poke and Ping* report which the Training and Development Agency (TDA)[1] commissioned Stephen Carrick-Davies[2] to undertake in 2011.   The focus of the research was to consider the risks which vulnerable young people, being taught in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)[3], encounter online and through their mobile phones. The aim was also to ascertain what specific advice, support and safeguarding training staff working with these young people need when it comes to understanding social media and mobile technology. Please note that this document contains just the summary findings, reflections, recommendations and resource ideas for staff. (See www.carrick-davies.com/research for full report and films).

The research used a mixed method approach including an online survey of staff, face-to-face interviews, literature review, site visits, workshops and, perhaps most importantly, intensive focus group sessions with a small group of young people (aged 15-17) from one PRU in London. This work resulted in a film, devised and acted by the young people themselves, which highlights two of the key recommendations to come out of this report: The modelling of a very positive use of technology and the active involvement of students as co-researchers and peer-teachers to help other young people understand the risks. As an integral part of the research process, the film (and a short documentary about how the film was created) should be viewed in tandem with the full report.

The report, with its strong child-centric approach, clear recommendations and practical suggestions for the development of appropriate resources, is intended to positively support dedicated staff who undertake such important work caring for vulnerable YP in the 'blended' environments of education, social care, and well-being. Many of the young people they work with have mental health problems, a 'Statement' of special educational needs, are school-phobic or have very real emotional behavioural difficulties and the report examines the challenges that PRU staff face in responding to such a wide range of students' needs.[4] There is also a section on the difficulties of classifying what we mean by 'vulnerable'. However, the central thrust of the report is that whilst the offline *physical* environments are challenging, the *virtual* environments these young people inhabit are equally important, challenging and potentially transformational. To serve vulnerable young people adequately, it is vital to take into consideration the ways in which they are vulnerable and at risk **online**. It is hoped others will discuss these findings, support the recommendations and build on the work with further research looking at the area of E-safety in policy, practice and pedagogy.

This summary report has 8 key findings, recommendations and suggestions for practical resources. However, in the full report these are outlined in more detail under 4 main themes which emerged directly from the young people who were interviewed. **Please note that these findings appear in a different order to that in the exec summary and this full findings section.** It is important to read these fuller sections and also see the film which the young people created to appreciate the full validity of these findings.

IDENTITY	RELATIONSHIPS	CONFLICT	COPING
Reputation, Status, Compulsion, Peer-Pressure, Membership.	Fun, Romance, Flirting, Sexuality, Sharing, Family, Teachers.	Suspicion, Hidden Rules, Assumed Norms & Values, Emotions.	Resilience, Reporting, Teachers, Parents, Peer Group.

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[1] The TDA is the national agency responsible for the training and development of the school workforce in the UK. See http://www.tda.gov.uk/.

[2] Stephen Carrick-Davies has been working in the field of technology and children for over 13 years and prior to becoming an independent trainer and consultant was the CEO of Childnet International. See www.carrick-davies.com for full details.

[3] Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) were established under the 1993 Education Act. This Act gave PRUs both a definition of purpose; as a temporary, transitional provision for disaffected and disruptive pupils, and an ultimate goal; to employ interventionist strategies which would enable young people attending PRUs to be re-integrated into a mainstream school. Some refer to PRUs as 'Pupil Re-integration Units.' Currently there are 560 in the UK but exact figures are difficult because of the terms used.

[4] It is important to recognise this range of need because so often the word 'vulnerable' is only used for those who are excluded for behavioural reasons. Anxiety or depression have their own issues in relation to online vulnerability.

FINDING **①**	The task of assessing the correlation between offline vulnerabilities and online risk for certain groups of young people is problematic[5] but nevertheless broad principles can be extrapolated. The report identifies 6 challenging areas typical for young people in PRUs and identifies key ways in which these young people can face further risk online.

SURVEY RESULTS: From the question asked to PRU professionals, *'In your experience are the young people you work with involved in risky behaviour online or via their mobile phone?'* **81% said yes, 13% said not sure, 5.7% said no.**
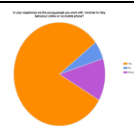
KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"No-one wears a hoodie online"* PRU staff member

"The greatest risk is that they don't see themselves as risk!" *PRU Staff member*

"Many of the young people I work with are massive risk takers, impulsive to the extreme and often use alcohol and/or drugs. On average they first engage in sexual activity at a far younger age than other students. They also have huge amounts of unsupervised time on their hands, often till very late at night. I teach many YP who are half-asleep as they have been online till gone 3am." PRU staff member

REFLECTION

There are a number of challenges which vulnerable young people face and have to overcome. For this report six were identified :

1. An absence of supportive adults in their lives.
2. More unsupervised time and less regular routines or directed activities.
3. Staggered entry to learning environments, potentially missing E-safety advice.
4. A tendency to crave group identity and be viewed as 'outsiders' and/or 'risk-takers.'
5. Likely to experience abusive environments including being on the receiving end of anger and violence.
6. Greater exposure to influences of alcohol, drugs, early sexual experience and gang culture.

RECOMMENDATION

Dedicated staff working with vulnerable young in PRUs (and elsewhere) must be given ongoing support and training to better understand how young people are harnessing social media and mobile communication and why it is now the *single most important activity many vulnerable young people rely on to give them identity, connection and a sense of community*.

The work which the TDA has started in ensuring that E-Safety[6] is included on the Initial Teacher Training syllabus should be strengthened by ensuring that regular training on new technologies is available on an ongoing basis, especially for all staff working with vulnerable young people.

Policy and practice need to be updated based on grounded evidence and the experience of dedicated staff who work with these young people. This report will serve as an important starting point but further research is needed.

RESOURCE

Signposting staff to the existing high-quality, age-appropriate E-safety resources and guidance is important. But there is no substitute for high quality **'hands-on' training** so staff can fully understand the language, tools and applications which do not just amplify young people's voices but can act as what the report calls an 'incubator' in the process of communication, interaction and behaviour (see finding 2).

"I don't use social networking so probably understand less than my students."

PRU staff member.
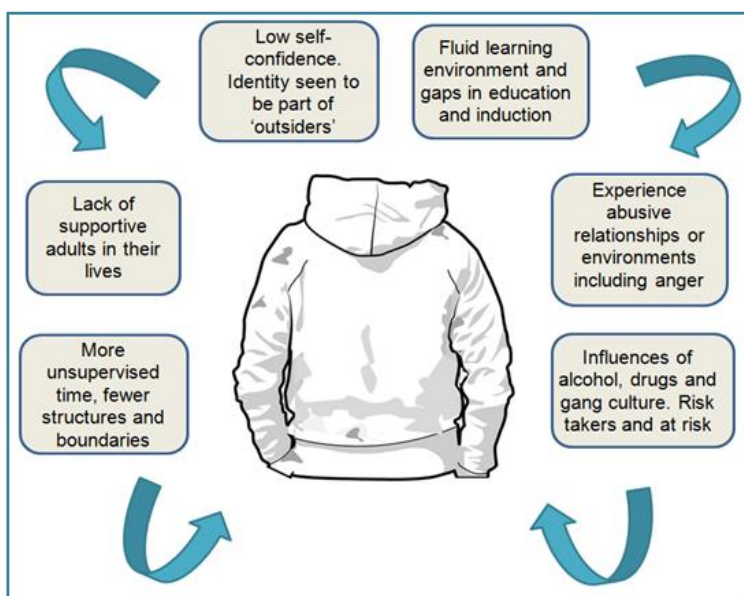
← Professionals will of course be able to identify other factors which have an impact on young people, but these 6 challenges arose directly from the feedback in this study. The report acknowledges that all children are potentially vulnerable and that there may be complex contradictions. However, as one experienced teacher commented,

"You have to start where vulnerable young people are and beyond the theory there is the practice, and practitioners need good quality advice now."

See Section 1.3 'Understanding Vulnerability'

[5] The report reviews these tensions and includes a review of the current literature on the subject and earlier studies on the needs of young people in PRUs.
[6] The TDA **provides funding for** e-safety **resources for the whole school workforce and training for trainee teachers see** http://tinyurl.com/44uumtv

| **FINDING 2**	**For most young people, the primary gateway to the internet is now their mobile phone.[7]** Because young people can access, update and interact with their social networking service easily, on the move and ever more privately, this creates particular risks for those who are already vulnerable. Furthermore because of the way in which young people are able to 'screen grab' messages and use private message services such as Blackberry Messenger (BBM) to communicate one-to-many, there is much less distinction between what is private and what is public which creates very real safeguarding issues.

KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"Cause like you can munch a conversation, like if it is funny yeah you can munch it as a display picture, but the bad side of this is that if someone tells you something now you can put it on Facebook. Like people have their own munch album... even if you don't munch a ping you can still munch a text, so nothing is private."* Student in focus group. *"I have over 120 people on my BBM but I deleted like 30 on Saturday cause I was angry and they pissed me off so I just deleted them. Since I've had my BlackBerry only 2 people have deleted me."*
" I love fraping people like – it's when yeah, basically you get someone, like when I'm logged into <name's> facebook status and I'm writing a funny statement like 'I'm gay or something'." All comments from students of Focus Group.

REFLECTION

RECOMMENDATION

RESOURCE

The BlackBerry has become a very important smart phone for young people. In part this is because of the private message system BBM through which you can easily send pictures, files, audio, and contact info to other Blackberry users. Because BBM is "always on" and is free, it is incredibly popular. With BBM you do not just message and interact one-to- one (as you largely do when you text someone), but are able to set up an entire network of BBMers who you can message, 'broadcast' or 'ping' (i.e. one to many) in much the same way as you use Facebook to update your status and communicate to a whole group of 'friends'. BBM is thus effectively a mobile social networking platform and many of the YP in the focus group reported that they were 'addicted[8]' to it and often "only fell asleep at night when the last person stopped pinging."

BlackBerry was the only phone that the yp in the Focus Group used but of course other devices have similar messenger services and screen grabbing applications[9].

This report reviews whether technology, as well as being an amplifier, can somehow also act as an 'incubator'. Does the constant stream of communication which is created, uploaded, stored, mutated or morphed and then re-broadcast somehow create a new dimension? For example, content originally intended as private can be captured, allowed to gestate, commented upon, added to and altered. It can then re-surface later as a broadcast as something very different.

The question of whether the technology simply mirrors and amplifies behaviour or whether it somehow alters behaviour is of course a complex and challenging one. However, it is important for all those with a duty of care for young people to keep up to speed with the exponential changes in technology, and convergence of media, as well as the very sophisticated ways in which many young people are able to exploit new apps and services independent of adult supervision.

← *SEE FILM FOR FURTHER REFLECTION ON THIS PRIVATE OR PUBLIC 'BLUR'*

"It's easier to use a BlackBerry instead of a touch screen mobile under the desk because you can feel the keys on the keyboard!" Student from Focus Group.

Most teachers have just caught up with Facebook, but BBM and new applications such as screen- munching show just how quickly the social networking world is changing.

It is absolutely crucial that PRU staff, like all teachers, are given good quality up-to-date information on how yp are using the very latest technology and recognise the positive opportunities that smart phones provide for learning.[10]

But they also need to understand the new subtle safeguarding issues of converged services. For example, smart phones now give users access to GPS services which will pin-point users' locations. What does face recognition on a social network service mean to someone who feels they constantly need to wear a 'hoodie'?

These are important safeguarding questions and those working with vulnerable young people need support now. (See finding 4).

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[7] This mirrors the trend of Smart phones outselling PCs because of the personalisation, apps, mobility, intimacy and price.
[8] Whether this is really 'addiction' in the same way as substance addiction is something the report considers under the term 'compulsion'.
[9] Gauging the % of a particular handset in the youth market is problematic because many phones are registered to a parent or YP may not give their accurate age. Of course tech-take up amongst YP is typically influenced by what the group goes with and it would be good to do a further focus group study in another part of the country to see what the trends are in terms of phone ownership.

FINDING **3**	**It is imperative to be informed by young people's own experience of online risk.** To understand whether and exactly how young people are at risk online, it is imperative to understand young people's experience of risk through their *own* narrative accounts and to analyse the contextualised social phenomena found there. Resonating with the principles of emancipatory research (that an oppressed group has access to knowledge in a way that others do not), it is vital that the voices of 'excluded' young people are properly heard.

SURVEY RESULTS: From the question asked to PRU professionals, *'Do you think your young people are more at risk online than other groups of young people ?'* 62% said that they thought they were much more at risk or slightly more at risk.
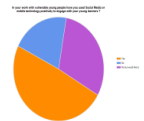
KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"I go to bed like at 2 o'clock in the morning cause I'm texting. When my pinger's gone to sleep that's when I go to sleep. If there's no-one to ping I'll go to sleep. If <name> is up till 6am I would stay up all night."* Student from Focus Group

REFLECTION

Looking at the way young people identify risk under their areas of:

Identity, Relationships, Conflict & Coping

can be a very helpful way of de-mystifying what is meant by E-safety. It can aid understanding of and empathy for vulnerable young people and their online experiences.

With this group of YP it is not that they don't appreciate the dangers of risks on line, it may be that they actually don't care, or are actively engaging in self-destructive behaviour online.[11] As such E-safety should be seen within broader support mechanisms. Although there is indeed a technological aspect (such as providing tools to filter, monitor or block content,) it is ultimately about understanding behaviour and relationships, and identifying the safeguarding issues which arise in these interactions.

If we are assessing public service delivery with a *'Digital by Default'* tag we need to also ensure that *'Digital safety by default'* is at the top of agendas, especially for those who are most vulnerable and excluded in society and who have much to potentially gain from the digital promise.

RECOMMENDATION

Helping to equip and support young people (vulnerable or otherwise) to fully utilise social media and mobile technology safely and responsibly is becoming a fundamental task for all schools and organisations working with YP.

Social media and mobile technology are now ubiquitous in society and an indispensible part of young people's lives, so teaching about e-safety cannot simply be 'bolted on' as a curriculum extra. Instead, **E-safety needs to be embedded into the wider teaching of emotional, social and digital literacies in all schools from an early age.** This is especially important when working with vulnerable young people who may lack supportive adults and offline networks.

Providing specialist resources and policy for staff in PRUs would be helpful (see finding 6), but in this area where young people have the expertise, it is also essential to help young people explore online relationships, privacy, risks and behaviour themselves and to support them in better sharing this knowledge and understanding with staff and peers.

"Schools should be more serious about this subject, like they don't know what's really going on like, ah it's just a mobile phone and they're just pinging each other but it's more serious than that and there ought to be a law about what phone you should have." Student from focus group

RESOURCE

Creating lesson resources which involve scenario exploration, drama, role- play and even film-making has been shown in this project to be a highly effective way of unpacking E-safety issues. Any such interactive teaching method can showcase how learners can become teachers and how professionals and young people can work collaboratively in shared learning experiences. Furthermore, with new online platforms it is easy to disseminate these authentic and authoritative user-generated resources directly to a wide range of young people.

Developing a resource which asks YP to rate the most serious online risk to them can be more helpful than telling YP which risks we as adults perceive yp to encounter. This was the approach taken in the film-making session with YP sharing their fears about when something private goes public.

A resource looking specifically at the compulsive nature of mobiles and understanding the 'need' for constantly checking for messages, could be a really positive resource for PRUS and could be a great 'way in' to addressing issues of identity and belonging.

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[10] There are a number of websites which provide updated examples and ideas eg.teachtoday.eu and learningwithoutfrontiers.com
[11] In the focus group a number of students shared how they used their mobile phones to 'get back' at someone when quizzed about this they felt that this was perfectly normal and felt they knew how to handle themselves.

FINDING **4**	**It is becoming apparent that there are very real, risky situations online which vulnerable young people in particular can get drawn into.** Young people's ability to access more and more content through the mobile internet is making supervision more difficult. We are seeing a mirroring of offline anti-social behaviour onto online activity and vice versa. Also, young people can become participants in anti-social activity unwittingly as bystanders or insidiously; for example by accepting an invitation to an event which turns out to be a fight.[12]

KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"By the time I engage with YP they have either been kicked out of school, not in school, or are already involved in gang/crime activities...That's their identity."*
"They have low self-esteem, limited life experiences and role-models. They are at risk from others for both criminal activity (particularly gang-based and drug-related) but also from sexual exploitation."
"More and more 'Facebook' style bullying issues and confrontations are arriving in the classroom with no warnings accessed through mobiles (not PCs). All our young people, despite their socio-economic group, have mobile phones - most with internet access. We have seen serious incidences of grooming through mobile, using a mixture of SN and conversations." All comments from PRU staff via online survey.

REFLECTION	RECOMMENDATION	RESOURCE
The ground-breaking NSPCC report looking at partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships outlines a growing trend in which young vulnerable girls are being groomed by older peers.[13]	It is beholden on all those working with YP to realise the ways technology can be used to exercise control and influence on more vulnerable young people. The increasingly private nature of social networking on mobiles can result in vulnerable young people being contacted and 'blackmailed' into risky and sometimes unlawful behaviour. For some young people whose offline identity is weak, a membership online can feel so much more important.	A multi-agency-supported education and safeguarding campaign addressing how to help vulnerable young people avoid being drawn into offline crime (via technology) should be developed. An awareness of the issues is not in itself enough and would need to be combined with new policing initiatives, support from reporting organisations (ChildLine, CEOP etc) and a greater education programme targeted at those who work with vulnerable young people including, as the NSPCC report outlines, adult learning mentors and parents.
In talking to staff working with vulnerable young people this was borne out, with 'gifting' of expensive mobiles, phone credits or vouchers given in exchange for membership in a certain gang or for later abuse.	More research about the targeting of young girls by older boys via technology should be undertaken and a multi-agency-supported campaign about peer-grooming aimed at vulnerable young people should be considered. More advice is needed for young people about the risks involved in Social Location Services, such as Facebook's new 'Places' or 'Foursquare'. There are specific risks which vulnerable young people are open to. For example a vulnerable young person can be monitored by an adult who is exploiting them by involving them in illegal activity (for example drugs running) or grooming them for the sex trade. Staff and students need simple advice about the settings which exist to limit access.	An education resource to raise awareness of the issues of social location services and face recognition applications to help young people know how to opt out/in would be very timely. Those yp who struggle with literacy (IT and conventional) need special help. We must not assume that all young people are "digital natives".[14]
If it is clear that older young people are targeting vulnerable young girls who may have low self-esteem, may be less financially well off or may have complex emotional needs (many of whom are in PRUs) then it is vital for PRUs' staff to be made aware of this, given support to recognise the signs and get outside professional help.		

''The police see a continuing trend where too many young people are robbed because of their mobile phones. Also the inappropriate use of social networking sites can sometimes create an increased risk around youth violence and bullying. Any initiative that helps to reassure and to address some of these concerns whilst allowing young people to be educated to use these internet sites safely has to be welcomed." Police Sergeant Safer Schools interviewed.

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[12] Of course 'flash mobbing' events where crowds are contacted through social media/mobiles and gather very quickly can be positive and creative, but they can circumvent parental supervision and vulnerable YP can accept invitations and be 'in the wrong place at the wrong time.
[13] See the ground-breaking report carried out by the NSPCC and Bristol University, which found that 33 per cent of girls and 16 per cent of boys reported some form of sexual abuse. See also the 'Expect Respect' Toolkit for addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse by the Home Office and Women's Aid – see http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/teenage-relationship-abuse/
[14] "Digital natives" was a term coined by Marc Prenksy in 2001 to describe a new group of students who "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" Whilst many do, it's important to recognise that many vulnerable YP will have not have been immersed in this world.

FINDING ❺	**Empowering vulnerable young people to overcome the challenges and risks they face online takes enormous expertise, resources and ultimately a whole-community commitment.** There are no quick fixes; no simple programs or policies which, on their own, can fully protect vulnerable young people from risky situations or behaviour online. What is needed, is what is required in every other area of work with vulnerable young people whether in the fields of education, youth work, or social care, namely all the aforementioned elements: expertise, resources (including time) and a shared whole-community commitment.

SURVEY RESULTS: From the question asked to PRU professionals, *"In your work do you feel that you are properly equipped to deal with cases of online or mobile abuse?"* 34% said they were very equipped, 54% somewhat equipped and 12% said not equipped.

KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"It's more than just their oxygen, it's their life support system. We don't have a culture of panic around here. ICT is embedded in everything we do." "Many of them lack the understanding of what is safe and what is appropriate behaviour online."* Head Teachers from PRUs

REFLECTION	RECOMMENDATION	RESOURCE
There are very real, risky online situations which vulnerable young people are accessing through their mobile phones such as, offline crime, cyberbullying, unauthorised status updating,[15] and pranks. However, to simply view the risks that vulnerable young people are encountering online as an isolated or 'out of school' problem, which can be sorted by simply banning access to technology within an educational establishment, is clearly both inaccurate and short-sighted. [16] There appeared to be little consistency and a lack of parity in relation to how PRUs developed their Acceptable Use Policies.	Caring for young people online takes a whole-school, whole-community response. It is vital that PRUs are given more support and guidance on developing effective policies but also supported in developing creative educational practices which address the changing use of mobile technology within our society. Furthermore, if the support and guidance which PRUs give students in this area is to be effective, it has to be consistent across multi-agencies. Any agreed policies should also be understood by those working with vulnerable young people outside the PRU system, including those responsible for caring for young people (parents and carers, or foster providers, care homes etc). This is challenging as some of the environments in which these young people live can be 'chaotic'. Low levels of literacy impact on a young person's ability to customise privacy settings and other instructions. Resources must be differentiated for different stages as well as ages.	Creating a robust whole-organisation Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) toolkit for PRUs (whereby staff produce the centre's AUP but with direct involvement and consultation with young people) would be a very positive resource, especially if the toolkit provided teachers with ideas for learning. These could include 'scenario cards' and role-play examples of misuse so the process of the activity (rather than just the end product) contributes to learning and understanding on both sides. [17] *"We don't need more guidance from the top down. What we need is support, resources and trust to develop appropriate responses based on our considerable professional experience and understanding of vulnerable young people."* LA advisor.

"Many PRUs have requested guidance about "banning" technology and how to stop pupils using their own devices (particularly mobile phones). We recommend that use of social media and personal devices is covered in the unit's AUP and I now strongly recommend to PRUs that a AUP for young people must be written with the young people themselves otherwise most will find it impossible to follow, seeing it as yet another set of things they can't do (as opposed to things they can do). We are now rewriting our sample KS3/4 AUP for students after direct consultation with young people." *Local Authority E-Safety officer*

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[15] On Facebook this is termed 'Fraping' and was something that the YP interviewed had experienced and were suspicious in allowing someone else to use their mobile in case they updated their FB status with something inappropriate purporting to be the owner.

[16] Outstream Consulting has recently published guidance on E-safety within FE Education which includes a helpful checklist for providers and learners. See http://tinyurl.com/6a8f6rm

[17] This resource specifically for PRUs could then be integrated into the work of other organisations such as Childnet and SWGFL who already produce education resources and AUP training for schools. Showcasing the positive experience from PRUs to the mainstream schools would be a very positive development, especially as schools have also to deal with vulnerable young people.

FINDING ❻	**It is crucial to balance the risks and showcase the very real positive ways technology can be used to support vulnerable young people.** The study found a number of positive examples of the way in which those working with vulnerable young people were using social media and mobile phones.

SURVEY RESULTS: From the question asked to PRU professionals '*Have you used social media positively to engage with the vulnerable young people you work with?*' *47% said they had but 30% said they would like to.*
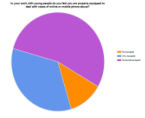
KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"Those who are shy are much more likely to use social media more than face to face as it helps break down communication barriers, especially for those with learning difficulties. Also online games and tools for learning are a great way for children to learn and can be used at optimum times to suit different learning styles." Teacher.*

"Deliverables" need to be dynamic and not a set of 'dos' and 'don'ts'. AUPs need to be positive NOT negative – so often the expectation on teachers is that they will do something wrong!" Teacher.

REFLECTION

There is a wealth of research and information in relation to offline risk and expertise in helping to safeguard and equip young people to handle it. The challenge is to help professionals recognise online risks. However it is important to acknowledge the very many positive ways in which technology can be used to support and empower young people and protect them from harm.

In 10 years' time, when constant connection is built into appliances, clothes and even our physical environment (what is termed the 'internet of things'), will young people be equipped to handle this ubiquitous connection if we don't start piloting new ways of widening trust and responsibility now?

RECOMMENDATION

It is important to pilot more creative approaches to the use of mobile technology and access to social networking within PRUs. Examples of vulnerable young people's positive engagement with social media should be better promoted and disseminated within the field. The www.prus.org.uk network could help in disseminating good examples to members and help link practitioners wanting to piloting new ideas.

It is also important that the existing guidance about not 'friending' students on social media platforms is reviewed for staff working with excluded young people. Whilst 'friending' for socialising is clearly inappropriate, some professionals working with vulnerable young people find 'friending', for professional purposes invaluable and the only way to reach and support young people who may otherwise be missed. Further consideration and guidance is required for 'rules of engagement', and there are important lessons about transparency, using non-personal devices and auditing conversations and developing safeguards. Some detached youth work professionals have developed these guidelines and there would be real value in sharing these .

RESOURCE

A resource which could capture 5 inspirational case studies from PRUs developing positive policies and practices involving ICT would be extremely beneficial. If filmed and then streamed online these could be disseminated to other PRUs and importantly to other educational institutions who could learn from the pioneering work. One example is a PRU in Croydon which has a '*Facebook Friday*[18]' project where Facebook use is promoted within a context of educational support.

When it comes to YP and Mobiles so often the media highlights the negative activity and coins inappropriate phrases such as 'Happy Slapping' as if assault was a joke. It would be good to develop an opposite 'Serious Smiles' resource which profiled examples of how excluded YP were using social media and their mobiles positively and for social good.

"Working with these most vulnerable of youngsters is like working with distilled or concentrated solutions. What I mean is that the activity and issues that they face are likely to be issues for all children but in more diluted conditions. In fact by working with these groups and identifying new risks (such as the misuse of location devices) gives a good insight into risks which could affect the wider generation of YP and help to provide wider guidance for all." E-safety expert interviewed for this project.

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[18] Because Facebook is only for those over 13 this would not be an appropriate activity for younger children and staff would need to set up non-personalised accounts. There are examples where this is being done in mainstream schools which PRUs could pilot. For example, see http://www.heppell.net/facebook_in_school/

FINDING **7**	Many PRUs have a mixture of paid teachers and external agencies working with pupils in centres and in the community (including training providers), so it is vital to create a standardised approach to E-safety. There is a real need for multi-agency partnerships, staff development and a consistent standard of policies related to the use and support of young people using mobiles and the internet. Furthermore, at a time when the Government looks set to put a new onus on schools to provide education for excluded pupils and has a desire to see more PRUs set up by voluntary sector providers and free schools, it is vital that there are cross-sector standards for E-safety.

SURVEY RESULTS: Feedback from survey contributor "In a youth policy environment which continues to prioritise multi-agency working and, (where local areas are making varied decisions about the structure of provision and the different professionals, volunteers and sectors involved in provision), finding shared frameworks to promote effective use of technology and to provide strong direction and support for E-safety work is vital."

KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS *"Some parents allow and encourage inappropriate behaviour & violent games and we've had parents engaged in Facebook spats with other young people which doesn't help."* Comment from staff participant in workshop

REFLECTION	RECOMMENDATION	RESOURCE
PRUs are not the only areas where vulnerable young people receive education, training and support. There are important lessons to be gained from policies and practices developed by youth workers outside the PRU system [19] Many who work in this area recognise the positive opportunities of using social media in detached youth work and feel the use of mobile phones for contacting and interacting with their clients in their own 'space' is invaluable. Piloting different policies of mobile phone use in a PRU learning environment and devising strategies to build greater trust and openness could help create balance between the Policy, Infrastructure, Education (PIE) triangle.	It is important that those working with vulnerable young people in formal education settings learn from and share experiences of online policies and user experiences with those working in non-formal educational settings, such as youth work. A national conference bringing a range of practitioners from different sectors working with vulnerable young people (including SEN, migrant communities, etc) should be convened to provide an important forum for identifying work being carried out, sharing experience, mapping risk and developing standardised policies. There are various organisations providing specialist support to youth workers in how to use and engage with vulnerable young people using social media.[20] Developing a database of these providers and auditing various policies which provide protection for staff in using social media would be good. Providing high-quality training for staff on how to protect their own online privacy, reputation and safety is essential if staff are to be more active in engaging with students and helping students with their own profiles.	A number of staff interviewed said they needed better advice about when certain online activity was illegal and what their legal duties were when it came to viewing content on a student's device. A simple 'pocket guide' (or app) for practitioners outlining when **content, contact** or **conduct** was **criminal** would be useful. This wouldn't just refer to photos (which could be deemed as child abuse images), but other areas of communication or behaviour for example online harassment, malicious communications, data protection breaches, racist messages, extremist threats etc. If staff had such a resource it would empower them to know how and when to intervene and know how best to report, caution or educate (or all 3).

"These students often get far less education than their mainstream peers and it is things like e-safety which get squeezed out due to time constraints. They also miss out on whole school events, school assemblies and often have no access to any form of online curriculum/curriculum support where e-safety messages are often placed. Many of these students have much, if not all, of their education delivered in alternative settings: work experience, college, motor vehicle projects, private vocational training providers and other private providers. E-safety isn't touched on at all by most of these providers. Even within more formal alternative education settings such as pupil referral units (where I teach), home tuition services and hospital teaching services, ICT often isn't delivered at all and where it is it is often minimal in nature and delivered by a non-specialist as just a small part of their job." PRU staff member.

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[19] One experienced teacher working with excluded young people shared how she had to rely on using the mobile phone to send wake up calls to her students for interviews or exams, or checking on them when they were on work experience.

[20] For example Online Youth Outreach project – see www.katiebacon.co.uk/

FINDING ⑧	**Vulnerable young people may have a lack of understanding of the consequences of risky behaviour online, and be unable or unwilling to get help.**
	Supporting vulnerable young people online when something goes wrong can be extremely challenging because as we have seen there are real challenges re supervision. These young people may also have less understanding of their rights, fewer supporting mechanisms and also mistrust in authority (including Police).

KEY QUOTES FROM CONTRIBUTORS "I don't trust them (talking about phones). It's like everyone's just talking about you behind your back, and it's like you are on the phone and they message something to you but they put it on private number and you don't know who it is and you don't know what's going on." YP

"Resilience is low because they already feel crap about themselves" Teacher from workshop

"I've noticed, like having my phone causes a lot of arguments, I think if I didn't have my phone I would hardly be in any arguments or probably with people. Having a phone is like having a devil thing." YP in Focus Group

" Sure it happens (talking about cyberbullying) you just have to teach them a lesson... I wouldn't tell a teacher what can they do? YP in Focus Group

💭 **REFLECTION**	📣 **RECOMMENDATION**	✋ **RESOURCE**
We already know the challenges that yp have about disclosing abuse issues. For example a feeling that: • it was nobody else's business • it wasn't that serious or wrong • they didn't want parents/friends to find out • they were frightened • they didn't think they would be believed • they had been threatened by the abuser etc.[21] Added to this the vulnerable young person may find it harder because: • they are scared their 'life-line' may be confiscated. • they may feel it was their fault (and they may have been a participant as well as a victim) • what will the police do this time? It is important to develop an empathetic understanding of vulnerable young people and recognize the very real sense of isolation/mistrust they feel.	All of those who work with vulnerable young people need to appreciate that they will find it hard to disclose problems. It is vital that staff are vigilant, are able to recognise signs of distress and ask in discussions about conflict and coping – is there an online dimension to this problem? Whilst making a report or talking to a trained but unknown councillor is important, vulnerable young people need to have someone they trust and respect who can provide support and help the young person build resilience in coping. How to develop resilience? There is no silver bullet, we can use to help vulnerable young people to open up and share complex online problems. What is needed is the professionalism, care, energy and dedication that staff working with vulnerable young people show every day. Embedding this personal aspect of safeguarding into the curriculum and culture of institutions working with young people and properly resourcing professional development, training and expert services (including further research) is what is needed. *"They lack the self-control/regulation that other YP might have. It is also becomes a means by which they can quickly engage in pay-back and retribution from a 'safe' distance."* Teacher from a PRU	The film which the YP produced as part of this research may hold some of the answers as to how to help young people know their rights, their responsibilities and where to report. The production of scenarios as a 'safe way to share', enabling vulnerable young people to talk and discuss thoughts, feelings and experiences would be really useful for PRU staff. It's important that those offering 'Report abuse' and helpline services appreciate the 'barriers' that vulnerable young who may have in using these services. For example reading and writing difficulties, depression, few supportive adults in their lives etc. Has any work been done to create a specific 'Get Help' App for Smart phones which would help YP know how and where to get help or report abuse?

See full report, and films at
 www.carrick-davies.com/research

Contact Stephen at stephen@carrick-davies.com

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[21] *Source: Child Maltreatment in the UK Cawson 2000*