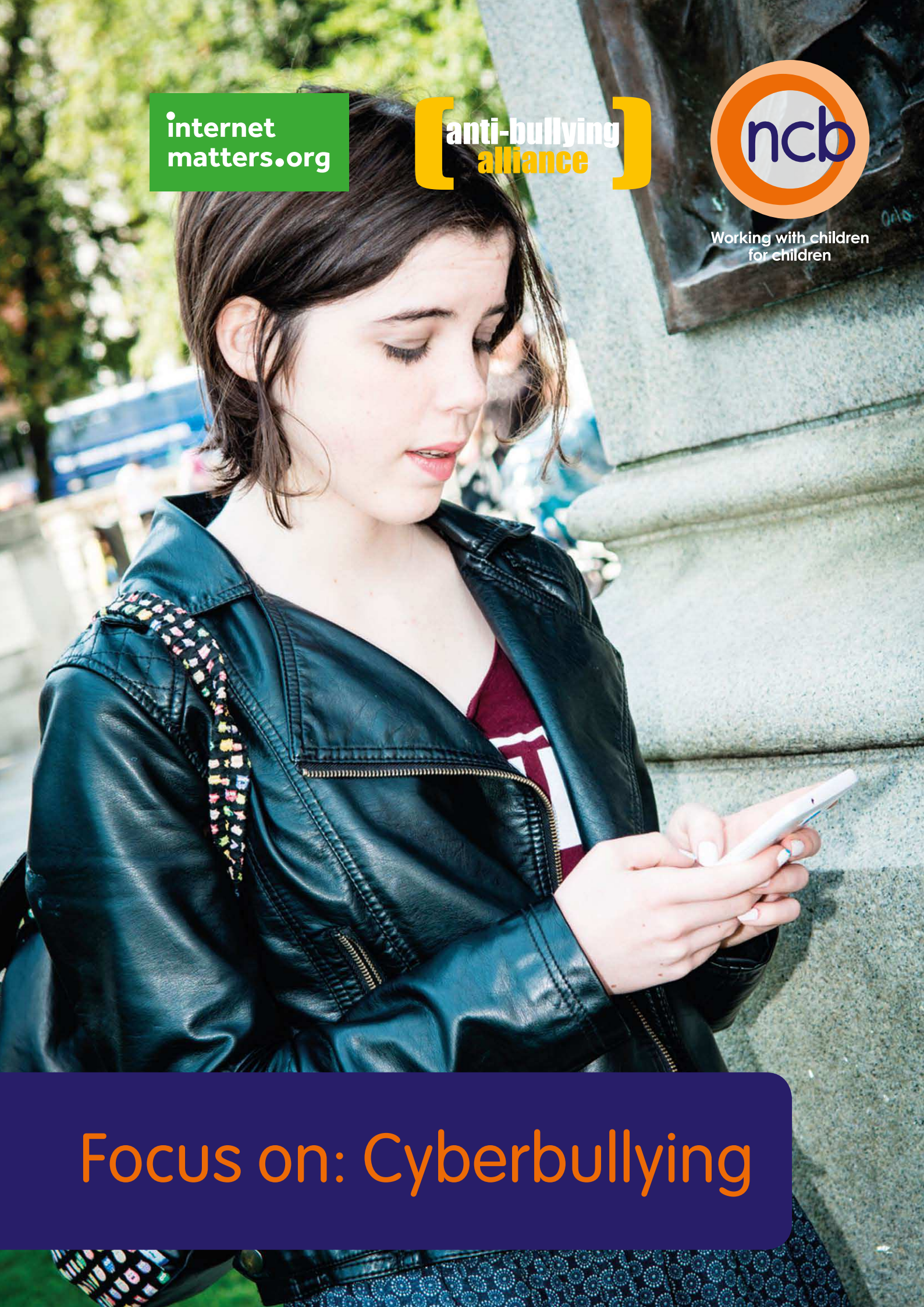

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Working with children for children

Focus on: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying that is carried out through the use of electronic media devices, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, or gaming consoles

Focus on: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying that is carried out through the use of electronic media devices, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, or gaming consoles. These devices offer numerous methods of communication, which range from direct audio or video calls, to messaging services, and social networking or media sharing applications, which allow users to share their thoughts, photos, and videos with their friends and family online. Over the past decade, these forms of communication have dramatically increased in both popularity and availability, with British households now owning an average of 7 internet-enabled devices, and both children and adults alike spending a significant proportion of their free time online[1]. Despite the benefits that electronic forms of communication offer, there is increasing concern that children may become more exposed to cyberbullying and other forms of abusive behaviour online. Reviewing recent research conducted primarily in the UK, this briefing paper explores what we currently know about cyberbullying among children and young people, focusing on its forms and prevalence; its association with age and gender; the link between cyberbullying and traditional forms of bullying; and the impact that cyberbullying has on those who experience it. Finally, a series of recommendations are provided which can help parents and carers, schools, and industry providers prevent and respond to incidents of cyberbullying among children and young people.

Defining cyberbullying

those involved need to have access to, and at least some understanding of technological communication

In academic literature, cyberbullying is defined as 'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using mobile phones or the internet, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself' [2]. Although sharing many similarities with traditional forms of bullying, which include physical, verbal, and relational victimisation, cyberbullying is often treated as a separate type of behaviour for a number of reasons.

Firstly, cyberbullying requires the use of electronic media, such as a computer, smartphone, tablet or games console, therefore those involved need to have access to, and at least some understanding of technological communication. In some cases, it may be differential levels of expertise, such as having a greater knowledge of communication platforms, or a wider social network, which enable one person to cyberbully another.

Secondly, cyberbullying is not limited to a specific location, such as a school or club, therefore, victims can be targeted in any place, and at any time. Unlike traditional bullying, the home no longer represents a safe place. Cyberbullying can follow a victim, invading all aspects of their personal life, and allowing them little opportunity to escape.

Thirdly, many forms of electronic communication allow some degree of anonymity, which can mask the identity of the perpetrators, and make it difficult to respond to incidents. Whereas perpetrators of traditional bullying are able to see the reaction of the victim, those who cyberbully cannot, and may be less likely to feel empathy or guilt over their actions.

Lastly, cyberbullying is capable of reaching a far broader audience than more traditional forms of bullying. Initial incidents of cyberbullying, such as posting an embarrassing photo or video, can spread throughout social networks, traversing school and personal boundaries, and increasing the chance that others will join in with the bullying. That cyberbullying can happen anywhere, and involve multiple, potentially anonymous perpetrators, has made it particularly difficult for schools to know when and how to respond to incidents of cyberbullying.

Prevalence of cyberbullying

So far, determining a precise estimate on the number of children and young people who experience cyberbullying has proven difficult, with prevalence rates for both victimisation and bullying perpetration ranging from anywhere between 5% to 80%, depending on the nature of the research.

For example, an annual survey of bullying behaviour which has been produced since 2013 by the anti-bullying organisation *Ditch the Label*, has consistently shown that almost 70% of participants who complete their survey each year have experienced being cyberbullied [3-5]. The findings from the latest report, which surveyed over 3,000 young people aged 13-20, found that 62% had been victims of cyberbullying in the past year, with almost one third of these being cyberbullied often, and 13% very frequently [4]. Rates of bullying perpetration appeared to be somewhat lower, with 27% of respondents reporting that they had ever said something nasty to somebody online. A further report, which focused only on cyberbullying, found a similar prevalence rate for victimisation, with over 70% of the 10,000 young people surveyed having been victims of cyberbullying in the past year, 37% of whom experienced it frequently, and 20% at least once per day [6].

The findings showed that owning a media device significantly increased the risk of being victimised

In contrast to these high figures, other research has suggested that only a relatively small number of children and young people experience cyberbullying. A national survey of over 11,000 English school pupils, aged 13-15, found that 11% had been victims of cyberbullying within the last 12 months; young people were more likely to be bullied by name calling, social exclusion, and threats of violence, than they were through cyberbullying [7]. Similarly, a survey of around 3,500 children, aged 9-16, across seven European countries (516 children from the UK), found that 12% of UK participants had experienced any form of cyberbullying in the past year [8]. The findings showed that owning a media device significantly increased the risk of being victimised; only 1% of participants without a smartphone or tablet had experienced cyberbullying, however, this rose to 18% among children who owned a tablet, and 19% for those with a smartphone. Comparing these results to a similar survey conducted three years earlier, showed a slight increase in the rate of cyber-bullying, with more children having been cyberbullied in 2013 (12%) than in 2010 (8%) [9].

As these examples show, when comparing findings there can often be large discrepancies in the cyberbullying prevalence rates. Much of this results from methodological differences between studies, and some of the key factors that can influence how much cyberbullying is reported include:

- How cyberbullying has been defined and explained to the participants;
- What types of cyberbullying were measured (i.e. cyberbullying overall, or only that occurring through a specific platform such as social networking sites or mobile phones);
- How the participants were chosen (randomised or selective sample);
- Whether participants can be considered representative (so that findings can be applied across a broader spectrum of children and young people);
- What cut-off limit was applied, if any (e.g. whether participants were cyberbullied ever or only within the past year);
- Whether rates of cyberbullying include one-time or only repeated incidents (as bullying is technically considered a repeated behaviour).

A review of 35 international studies on cyberbullying concluded that around 24% of children and young people will experience some form of cyberbullying

Changing any of the above characteristics can lead to drastically different rates of cyberbullying. For example, if a study is carried out among a sample of social network users (who will be fairly technologically advanced), and considers one time incidents to be cyberbullying, then it is likely this will give a far higher prevalence rate than another study which uses a school-based sample (which may include children who do not use technology), and only counts victims as those who have experienced repeated incidents.

To resolve this problem, researchers have recently begun to conduct systematic reviews and meta-analytic studies, which pool together findings from multiple studies while accounting for their methodological differences, to give a clearer indication of overall prevalence rates. A review of 35 international studies on cyberbullying concluded that around 24% of children and young people will experience some form of cyberbullying, and 17% will take part in cyberbullying others [10]. Similarly, a recent review summarises that "occasional or one-off occurrences may be reported by over 20% of young people, but serious or recent or repeated incidents are typically reported by only around 5%" [11]. This appears consistent with the results of a meta-analysis of 80 studies, which concludes that across all of the research carried out to date, around 15% of children and young people report being victims of cyberbullying [12]. While this is a substantial number, it is still significantly lower than those who are bullied in other ways (35%), suggesting that cyberbullying is only part of a much wider problem.

Types of cyberbullying

The range of communication devices and platforms available to children and young people is now more diverse and more widely available than ever before. By the age of eight, many children will have begun to use a smartphone or internet-enabled device, and the most popular online activities among 9-16 year old British children include communicating with others through both social networking and instant messaging [9]. Identifying how children communicate through technology is a crucial component in understanding whether or not they are at risk of being cyberbullied, and what this kind of behaviour is likely to involve. Research in this area typically distinguishes between types of cyberbullying on the

basis of two particular characteristics: 1) what methods of communication were used for cyberbullying, and 2) what kind of behaviour the bullying entailed.

Cyberbullying can be carried out on any device, and through any website, platform or application that allows people to communicate with each other electronically. Some of the most common means of cyberbullying include:

Communication Devices

Gaming Consoles
Laptops
Personal Computers
Mobile Phones
Smartphones
Tablets

Websites, applications or other services

Email
File sharing sites
Instant Messaging
Multimedia text messages
Phone calls
Social networking sites
Text/Audio/Visual Chat programmes
Text Messages

There are some indications that certain forms of communication are used to cyberbully more than others. One of the first studies in this area compared rates across seven different types of electronic media, finding that the most common ways of being cyberbullied were through phone calls, text messages and instant messaging[2]. A similar survey conducted a few years later found that over 40% of participants had been bullied through instant messaging, while around 1 in 4 had been bullied through email, and 1 in 10 through online games, or social networking sites[13]. As technology changes however, the types of media used for cyberbullying may also adapt. A multi-national European survey, comprising 3,500 children and young people aged 9 to 16, found that by 2013, only a minority of victims reported being bullied through instant messages, phone calls, or text messages (around 2-3% each). Instead, social networking sites were by far the most common source of cyberbullying, with over half of victims having been targeted in this way[8]. The high rate of bullying occurring on social networking sites was confirmed through a dedicated report on cyberbullying by Ditch the Label, who asked social networking users whether or not they had experienced cyberbullying across a variety of social networks[6]. Findings showed that bullying was common across all sites, with over 50% of Facebook users having been cyberbullied, and around 20-25% of those who used Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and YouTube experiencing the same.

In addition to the type of media used, it is also important to understand what kind of behaviour cyberbullying can involve. Through combined research findings, a number of distinct behaviours have been identified which typify the types of incidents cyberbullying victims are likely to experience. These include:

- Written or verbal attacks
- Threats of physical violence (including towards a person's family or property)
- Name calling
- Denigration (putting some down in front of others)
- Cyberstalking (following someone without their knowledge)
- Masquerading (pretending to be someone different or setting up fake profiles)
- Exclusion
- Prank or silent phone calls
- Outing (posting personal information without consent)
- Impersonation (stealing someone's password and pretending to be them)
- Flaming (intentionally starting fights)
- Rumour spreading

As yet there is limited data on the prevalence of each of these forms, however, a small number of studies do provide some insight. Using types of behaviour roughly similar to the ones mentioned above, a survey of over 2,000 middle and high school students found that among victims, over one quarter had experienced name calling in the last three months, while slightly fewer had had rumours spread about them (22%), or had someone impersonate them (18%)[13]. Around 1 in 10 victims had been threatened online, and 7% had had private pictures of themselves sent out or posted online without their consent. Another study examined cyberbullying perpetration among a sample of 1,211 10-12 year olds[14]. Taking the experiences of both victims and perpetrators, the findings showed that name calling was the most common form of cyberbullying (12% were victimised in this way, and 14% bullied others), followed by gossiping (around 5% for both victims and perpetrators), ignoring (5% among victims only) and hacking (5% among perpetrators only). While these studies provide an initial indication, the data is clearly limited, and we need to better understand what kind of behaviours children are at risk of experiencing online.

the findings showed that name calling was the most common form of cyberbullying

Age differences in cyberbullying

Involvement in traditional bullying is strongly linked to age; as children grow older they are less likely to be bullied, or to bully others. Research has attempted to identify whether a similar trend exists for cyberbullying, however, at present the findings remain unclear. The majority of studies tend to suggest that the likelihood of being cyberbullied is not related to a child's age[15-17]. A comparison of rates of bullying among 5,862 European adolescents found that for both mobile phone and internet forms of bullying, 12 year olds were as likely to be bullied as those aged 16[18]. In contrast, other studies have found slight differences across age groups, with higher rates of victimisation observed around the ages of 13-14[19, 20].

A meta-analysis which combined findings from 25 studies of cyberbullying suggested there was a curvilinear relationship, with rates of victimisation reaching their peak between the ages of 12-14, and declining thereafter [21]. At this age, children may first begin to use social networking or other forms of electronic communication, and so may be particularly vulnerable.

There is little data available cyberbullying perpetration, however one study found that among middle and high school students, the number of children who cyberbullied others increased with age [13]. Similar findings were reported in a US study of 10-14 year olds, which found that children aged 12-14 were twice as likely to cyberbully others than those aged 10 or 11 [22]. The type of cyberbullying may also be important to consider, as older secondary school students have been found more likely to cyberbully others using text messages, photo/video clips and instant messaging, but did not differ from younger pupils across other media [2]. Systematic reviews suggest that, in contrast to victimisation, cyberbullying perpetration increases with age, reaching its peak around 15 years [11]. Children at this age are likely to be more experienced at using technology, and may use this advantage to pick on others who are younger, and less technologically advanced than themselves.

Photo credit: Bernie McAllister © 2015

Sex differences in cyberbullying

Although boys are generally more likely to be involved in traditional forms of bullying, both as victim and perpetrator, there are some slight variations: boys tend to engage in more physical bullying, while girls use more indirect methods, such as gossiping or social exclusion. This distinction suggested that cyberbullying may be more suited to bullying among girls, as it offered opportunities to spread gossip or rumours without the need for any physical behaviour. There is some support for this, with several studies finding that girls are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than boys [18, 22, 23]; yet at the same time, other studies find that boys are more often victims [24, 25], or that there are no overall differences [2, 15, 17]. The Ditch the Label report on bullying through social networking sites suggests sex differences may be

marginal: while slightly more females than males were cyberbullied often or very frequently (68% compared to 57%), this did not represent a significant difference [6]. A meta-analysis focusing on victimisation concluded that overall, there are no predominant sex differences in rates of cyberbullying victimisation [21].

Less is known about cyberbullying perpetration, although a small handful of studies have suggested that females are no less likely than males to cyberbully others [2, 26, 27]. When comparing the findings with those on traditional bullying, the evidence suggests that cyberbullying is equally likely for both sexes, and the greater number of girls involved may result from the indirect nature of electronic communication, and the opportunities it presents for group social interaction.

Relationship between cyberbullying and traditional bullying

cyberbullying is closely connected to traditional forms of bullying

Cyberbullying has often been treated as a unique behaviour which is separate to other forms of bullying. Increasingly however, we are coming to realise that cyberbullying is actually closely connected to traditional forms of bullying, and in many cases is simply an extension of bullying behaviour which traverses the school and home boundary [28]. Many studies which examine both traditional and cyberbullying show a significant overlap between the two [2, 15, 29, 30]. For example, one study found that among a sample of 1,211 adolescents, only 7% were exclusively involved in cyberbullying, while 23% experienced both traditional and cyber forms of bullying, as either a victim or a perpetrator [14].

Additionally, it appears that children's roles in traditional bullying may transfer across into cyberbullying. Several studies have found that children who are victims of traditional bullying at school are more likely to be cyberbullied; and conversely, children who perpetrate traditional bullying will more often cyberbully others [2, 29, 31]. Comparing rates of involvement in both traditional and cyberbullying, one study found that 8 out of 10 victims of cyberbullying were also victims of traditional bullying, and over 90% of children who cyberbullied others, also perpetrated traditional forms of bullying [29]. In reviewing these findings, Olweus concludes that only 10% of children involved in cyberbullying have not experienced traditional bullying, and argues that cyberbullying is simply a case of bullying transferring from the school into the digital environment [32].

The high number of cyberbullying victims who know their attacker is evidence that many incidents of cyberbullying originate within the school. Among a sample of middle and high school children, over one third of victims reported that they had been cyberbullied by a friend, while 22% were targeted by another student at their school, and 11% by someone from another school; only 13% reported being cyberbullied by a stranger [13]. Similarly, among cyberbullying perpetrators, 52% had bullied a friend, 21% someone else from their school, and 9% someone from another school. Only around 1 in 10 had targeted someone they did not know in real life. As these findings suggest, cyberbullying is not a new type of bullying, but rather a continuation of traditional bullying behaviours, which is carried out through virtual rather than face-to-face interactions [28].

Impact of cyberbullying

There is substantial evidence which shows the significant and lasting impact that traditional bullying can have upon a young person's physical and mental health [33]. At this stage, similar research examining the effects of cyberbullying is limited, but there are some indications to suggest that cyberbullying may be as dangerous to a young person's wellbeing as more traditional bullying behaviours. Several studies have found an increased risk of physical and mental health issues among victims of cyberbullying [30, 34-36]. Examining the association between cyberbullying and psychiatric and psychosocial problems, one study found victims of cyberbullying displayed a range of emotional and peer problems, and were at high risk of psychosomatic problems including headaches, bed-wetting, and stomach aches [37]. A longitudinal study examining mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying, showed that victimisation significantly increased the likelihood of adolescents becoming depressed [38]. Furthermore, this also had an impact on their internet use, leading them to engage in more problematic online behaviours, including bullying others.

victimisation significantly increased the likelihood of adolescents becoming depressed

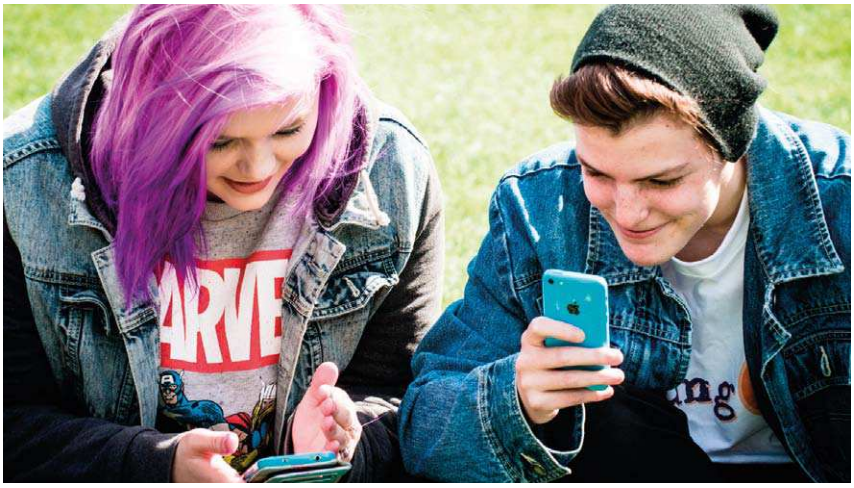
As with traditional bullying, cyberbullying appears to increase the likelihood of children committing or contemplating suicide. Examining the link between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among 1,963 US middle school students, one study found that both traditional and cyber forms of bullying were associated with increased suicidal thoughts and behaviour, however, the experience of being cyber-bullied almost doubled the risk of children attempting suicide [39]. Cyberbullying perpetrators also appeared to be at risk, and were 1.5 times more likely to attempt suicide than those who did not cyberbully.

A meta-analysis which brought together the results of multiple studies found that cyberbullying can lead to a range of significant physical and mental health problems, both for victims and perpetrators [12]. The findings showed that cyberbullying others was significantly associated with lower self-esteem and life satisfaction, as well as higher levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. Furthermore, perpetrators were also more likely to engage in drug or alcohol abuse, and performed more poorly at school. These outcomes were even worse for those who were victimised. The experience of being cyberbullying was associated with greater stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness. Victims were also more likely to exhibit a range of behavioural, emotional and somatic symptoms, and the findings identified a moderately strong association with suicidal ideation, suggesting victims were significantly more likely to have contemplated committing suicide.

Tackling cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can clearly have a substantial impact on a child's health and wellbeing. That it happens across a variety of settings, including the home and the school, suggests that tackling cyber-bullying is a community issue, which will require the input of parents and carers, schools, and industry service providers, as well as children and young people themselves. There are many resources available which provide practical advice and information on how all members of the community can take action to respond to incidents of cyber-bullying, and help to prevent it from happening in the first place (for a

comprehensive list see: **http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/resources/16plus/cyber-bullying/)**. The following section outlines a series of recommendations produced by government, charity, and other professional organisations which can help to reduce the risk of children and young people being cyberbullied. The recommendations are provided separately for parents and carers, schools, and industry providers.



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Recommendations for parents and carers

Telling someone at home is often the first response for many children and young people who experience cyberbullying, but parents and carers may feel ill-prepared to provide help, particularly if they are unaware of the types of activities their children are involved in online. There are a range of resources available which offer advice on how parents and carers can respond to cyberbullying. The following recommendations are taken from two resources: guidance from the Department for Education entitled *Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying*[40], and the Anti-Bullying Alliance's factsheet *10 top tips for parents and carers to help protect their children and young people from cyberbullying*[41]. These include:

- Know what cyberbullying is, including who is likely to be involved, where it happens, and what impact it can have on those who experience it.
- Build a clear picture of what kind of activities your child is involved in online, including what applications or websites they visit, and familiarise yourself with the privacy and reporting procedures available.
- Look for signs that your child may be experiencing cyberbullying, such as being upset after using their phone or laptop; being secretive about their online activities; spending more or less time than usual online; becoming increasingly withdrawn, upset or angry; not wanting to go to school; avoiding social situations; difficulty sleeping; and lacking confidence or self-esteem.
- If you suspect your child is being cyberbullied, then it is important to remain calm, seek professional advice, and not retaliate. Attempt to find out as much as possible about the bullying, including where it happened, and who was involved.

- Gather evidence, such as through screenshots or message logs, and contact the relevant authority for help, including internet or mobile service providers, application or website support teams, or the police. If it is likely that other students are involved then it is advisable to contact your child's school.
- Above all, take the incident seriously, and ensure that there is a successful resolution. If children and young people lose confidence that something will be done, then they are unlikely to report any future experiences of cyberbullying.

Recommendations for schools

The following recommendations are taken from the Anti-Bullying Alliance publication *Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: guidance for teachers and other professionals*[42], which is a useful resource for tackling cyberbullying generally, as well as among students with special educational needs and disabilities. The advice centres around two key components, prevention and response, and includes a number of recommendations which schools can follow to address cyberbullying:

1 Preventing cyberbullying

- A whole-school approach is the first step toward preventing all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying. All members of the school community should be aware of what cyberbullying is, the impact that it can have, and what the school is doing to tackle it.
- The school's response to cyberbullying should be clearly outlined, so that all members of the school community are aware of what will happen when incidents of cyberbullying are reported. Cyberbullying should be specifically referred to within the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Students should be aware of what cyberbullying is and the dangers that using technology poses. Integrating online safety and cyberbullying into the school curriculum, supported with the use of real life examples, will help children to talk about cyberbullying, and identify it when it happens.
- Children and young people should be taught how to use technology safely and responsibly. Explaining what kinds of behaviours are appropriate, and encouraging students to think about other's thoughts and feelings can stop them from engaging in cyberbullying.
- The positive aspects of technology should be promoted, and lessons should cover how to use technology safely and responsibly. Supporting positive usage should be reflected in the school's learning strategies and targets, and through their staff development programmes.
- Ensure that information on cyberbullying is freely available in a variety of formats throughout the school, so that children and young people are able to access it whenever and wherever needed.
- Regular evaluations of cyberbullying prevention activities should be carried out to ensure policies and procedures are up to date. Annual surveys of pupil's experiences of cyberbullying can be a useful tool for assessing current effectiveness, and can be publicised to increase awareness and satisfy parent's concerns.

The positive aspects of technology should be promoted

2 Responding to cyberbullying

- To encourage children and young people to report incidents of cyberbullying, reporting procedures should be clearly outlined, and understood by all member of the school community. Those who experience cyberbullying should know exactly how and to whom it should be reported.
- Anyone who reports cyberbullying should be provided with the necessary support, and reassured that reporting the bullying was the right course of action. Victims should be referred to the appropriate person for pastoral support, and procedures put in place to avoid further incidents. Staff should encourage students to take an active role in this process, so that they feel they are in control of the situation.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, offer students advice as to what their next steps should be. This could range from saving evidence, through to showing the student how to block someone, or change their privacy settings. The most important advice is to prevent the child from retaliating, as this will likely enflame the situation.
- Where possible, take steps to contain the incident or advise the student how they can do this. This could include contacting the offender directly, or contacting the appropriate service provider. Many websites or social networking sites will have a dedicated support service which can be used to report incidents of bullying or abuse. If the cyberbullying violates laws then the police should be contacted.
- Investigate incidents fully, and keep a record of all actions. Many incidents of cyberbullying are carried out by someone known to the victim, so it may be possible to identify the offender, and if they are a student within the school, take the appropriate disciplinary steps.
- Work with those who are responsible for the bullying behaviour. Perpetrators of cyberbullying are also at risk of poorer health outcomes, and may have been victims of bullying themselves. Advising them on how to use technology safely and responsibly, as well as encouraging them to think about how their actions affect others, may help to dissuade them from engaging in further bullying.

To encourage children and young people to report incidents of cyberbullying, reporting procedures should be clearly outlined

Recommendations for Service Providers

At present there is no specific advice for service providers regarding cyberbullying, however, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), has brought together professionals from over 200 government, industry, law, academic and charity organisations to produce a series of recommendations as to how service providers can improve the online safety of children and young people. The report entitled *Good practice guidance for the providers of social networking and other user-interactive services* [43] sets out recommendations which can help social network and other communication service providers improve the online safety of children and young people who use their services. These recommendations are divided into 11 key areas:

1 **General Principles:** Service providers should offer safety advice to all users, including children, young people, parents, and carers, which is clear, relevant and easily accessible.

2 **Safety information, awareness and education:** Safety information should be relevant, up-to-date, and effective. Instructions for using privacy and reporting procedures should be available, and a robust system put in place to handle complaints. Users should also know how to delete their profile if they wish to leave.

3 **Editorial responsibility:** Service providers should be cautious when featuring content provided by children and young people, and ensure that any advertising featured is appropriate to the audience, and complies with legal requirements.

Users should understand how their personal details will be used, and who has access to them

4 **Registration:** Users should understand how their personal details will be used, and who has access to them. Acceptable behaviour should be explained, along with what will happen to users who breach these conditions. Where appropriate, sufficient personal information should be obtained, including unique identifiers such as IP addresses, so that users can be identified. By default, profiles should also be set to private, or only allow approved contacts.

5 **User profile and controls:** Service providers should ensure users understand what information can be seen by others. Warnings about uploading material which breaches services guidelines should be provided. Direct links which allow users to report abusive or offensive content should also be easily accessible.

6 **Search:** Steps should be taken to ensure that users under the age of 18 are not searchable through either the service or external search engines, and sensitive personal information, such as age, sex, school or location is kept private.

7 **Content screening and moderation:** Information which explains how users can reduce the risk of harassment or abuse should be provided. Services providers may also consider offering users an option to approve or moderate content.

8 **Identity authentication and age-verification:** Tools can be put in place to minimise the risk of underage users accessing inappropriate content, and age verification systems used for those who wish to access adult content.

9 **Responsible use and managing bullying:** Service providers should offer clear guidelines on how to behave responsibly and respect the rights or others. Users should be aware that incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, and know what measures will be taken if incidents are reported. Reporting systems should be easily accessible, and encourage users who do complain to provide sufficient information to allow for the complaint to be handled effectively.

10 **Reporting concerns of abuse and illegal behaviour:** Clear procedures for reporting abuse should be established, and links to relevant external organisations who can offer help provided.

11 **Relationships between service providers and law enforcement:** Service providers should ensure their services are consistent with local laws, and develop arrangements with law enforcement agencies to report suspicious, illegal, or abusive behaviour included that which is directed towards children and young people.

In addition to this advice, the UKCCIS also offers guidance tailored towards specific industry providers in the document *Advice on child internet safety 1.0: Universal guidelines for providers*[44]. These recommendations include:

- **Internet Service Providers or Telecoms Providers** are encouraged to provide safety messages to anyone who uses their service, either as a soft copy, or as a hard copy when their devices or services are first purchased. Included with this advice could also be an explanation of the privacy and reporting services that they offer. Any advice should also be permanently available through the customer services website.
- **Content Providers** should determine which aspects of safety advice are most relevant to their organisation, and make this available from the time that users first begin accessing their service.
- **Application Providers** are encouraged to provide relevant safety information to users when their software is first downloaded or installed, and ensure that this information is directly available through the application itself. Safety information can also link to any family or privacy settings and reporting procedures that the application offers.
- **Social Interaction Providers** are recommended to link advice on internet safety with their own safety procedures, and include with this any information on their own privacy settings and reporting procedures. A link to this safety advice should be visible and easily accessible to users at all times.
- **Device Manufacturers** are advised to include internet safety messages within their products, either as hard copy within the device packaging, or as a soft copy on the device itself. The safety information provided can also be linked with specific privacy or reporting procedures offered by software partners.
- **Retailers** are recommended to offer internet safety advice to consumers at the point of purchase, either verbally by the salesperson, or as a hard copy. Safety information could also be put on display and highlight organisations or websites that provide further advice. If the organisation offers any form of support, then staff should be provided with basic training in online safety, and be aware of organisations they can refer customers to regarding specific safety issues.

Written by Neil Tippett on behalf of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Internet Matters

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and brings together organisations and individuals with a shared vision to stop bullying between children and young people. ABA coordinates Anti-Bullying Week each November and leads on high profile programmes to reduce levels of bullying. ABA looks to transform research into practice to improve the lives of children and young people. **www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk.**

Internet Matters is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working with online safety experts to bring parents all the information and advice they need to keep their children safe online. We offer information about many of the issues and technologies that children may come across in the online world and provide practical suggestions for parents about how to take preventative measures and what to do if their family needs advice about a specific issue. **www.internetmatters.org**

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