The UK Safer Internet Centre plays a vital role in tackling the spread of online harms in the UK. We are absolutely committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to go online by running initiatives such as Safer Internet Day. We are actively involved in the policy making process by supporting the work of the UK Council for Internet Safety and by providing the secretariat to the APPG on Social Media.

We are currently progressing a funding bid and are in discussions with DCMS about our future funding as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) process. Although Safer Internet Day 2021, is not currently at risk through a lack of funding, it could be the UK's last if this isn't addressed as part of the CSR process.

Key Asks:

- **Ask the Government to secure the long-term future of the UK Safer Internet Centre by replacing £1.3m European funding which is due to finish this year.**

- **Highlight the current threats to children caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic including:**

    o **An increase in the amount of self-generated indecent images of children**
    o **A 50% increase in public reports of suspected child sexual abuse material**
    o **8.8 million attempts to access child sexual abuse in one month**
    o **22% increase in Revenge Porn cases in 2020**

- **Further highlight the work of the UK Safer Internet Centre in tackling online harms**

Introduction-

The UK Safer Internet Centre is a unique partnership of three world leading charities (Childnet International, SWGfL and Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)) working together to identify threats and harms online that then enable us to create and deliver critical advice, resources and interventions that help to keep children and young people safe online.

We provide:

- A hotline, for members of the public to report suspected child sexual abuse imagery online;
- A helpline to support professionals working with children and young people on online safety issues;
- A platform that reviews harmful content decisions made by the largest social media platforms; and
- An awareness centre incorporating educational, outreach and engagement programmes for children, families and teachers as well as providing a youth platform and facilitating youth engagement.

We also run Safer Internet Day, the critical touchpoint each year in the education of young people across the UK about online safety. Last year Safer Internet Day reached *50%* of the nation's children and **26%** of parents.

Government Funding-

The Government has stated that it wants to make the UK the safest place in the world to go online. It is impossible to achieve without a properly funded UK Safer Internet Centre.

Over the past **10 years**, the UK Safer Internet Centre **has received 50% of its funding** from the European Union, this has been instrumental in its ability to secure match funding from industry. Without fresh Government support for the next financial year, the UK Safer Internet Centre will lose this leverage and be unable to deliver critical programmes and services.

The cost of their bid to Government to UK Government is **£1.3million** per year, just **10 pence per child under the age of 15** in the UK per year.

Impact of the UK Safer Internet Centre over the last decade-

- Since 2012, the UK Safer Internet Centre has trained over **21,000** professionals working with the nation's **6 million children.**
- In 2020, Safer Internet Day, reached **50%** of the nation's children, **26%** of parents and over **1,700** organisations took part. There educational resources were downloaded **1.1 million times** and **77%** of children said they felt more confident about what to do if something was worrying them online.
- Since launching the Digital Leaders Programme in 2015, **1,000** schools have been recruited and **4,000** children have been trained in educating their peers about safe and responsible use of tech.
- The Internet Watch Foundation has removed **millions** of child sexual abuse images and videos and has helped to reduce the UK hosting of child sexual abuse content from **18%** in 1996 to less than **1%** where it has remained ever since 2003.
- The Report Harmful Content platform is the only route for those in the UK with complaints regarding the removal of legal but harmful content online. In 2019, **6,700** children, **1,400** parents and **3,000** teachers were engaged with the platform.

Statistics from the UK Safer Internet Centre-

Schools desperately need support with online safety-

The UK Safer Internet Centre last week released data which maps the relative performance and engagement of schools by local authority area when it comes to protecting children online.

- **14,000 schools** were surveyed using a 360 self-assessment tool which enables schools to review **21** aspects of online safety.
- This includes the deployment of appropriate filtering solutions, engagement of children, having appropriate online safety policies and acceptable use of technology.
- The report concluded schools *desperately need help and support in levelling up online safety* throughout the UK. There are clear gaps in online safety and many of the worst performing local authority areas have had significant safeguarding issues in the past.
- You can see further detail on the online safety maps here.

Revenge porn on the rise-

- The Revenge Porn Helpline in April 2020 saw a **98%** increase in cases when compared with April 2020.
- This trend has continued month on month even as the lockdown restrictions had eased.
- So far in 2020, the Revenge Porn Helpline has dealt with **1,914** reports, already **22%** higher than the total number of reports received in the whole of 2019.
- Predictions that this could reach **2,700** by the end of the year based on current trajectory, this would be **60%** higher than 2019.
- Further detail on this rise can be found here.

Self-generated indecent images of children continue to rise through lockdown-

- In just one week, analysts from the UK Safer Internet Centre Hotline, the Internet Watch Foundation, found that **700 individual girls** had been exploited into filming their own abuse.
- Analysts found over 1,400 instances of abuse. Meaning that these images had appeared in multiple places online.
- Most of the girls **(55%)** were in the **11-13 age range**, but some children were as young as 3 and as old as 17.
- They were from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and global locations.
- Figures from the Internet Watch Foundation suggest that **self-generated images now account for 44% of all content actioned in 2020.**
- Further detail about the rise can be found here.

50% increase in public reports of suspected Child Sexual Abuse Images-

- There has been a **50%** increase in public reports of suspected child sexual abuse images to the Internet Watch Foundation between **March and July 2020**, when compared with 2019.
- Figures from the Internet Watch Foundation found that **44,809** reports had been received during the national lockdown compared with **29,698** in 2019.
- Of those public reports between March and July 2020, **5,367** were confirmed to contain child sexual abuse material compared with the same period in 2019 where only **3,252** were actioned. This constituted a **65%** increase in the amount of material the IWF was able to remove.
- Further detail about the rise can be found here.