



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

5 JANUARY 2017

BRIEFING NOTE: E SAFETY OFFICER, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (NCC)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held in November 2016, the Scrutiny Panel felt that it would be useful for the E-Safety Officer to attend this meeting to provide an update of his work.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 The E Safety Officer has been employed by the Council for the past 2 years and travels the county and country at times educating schools and organisations on ways to keep safe online. Roughly 80% of his work goes into schools educating young people, teachers and parents on ways to keep young people safe online.
- 2.2 One of the key areas of concern is engaging parents around online safety, often parents don't see the internet as a risk for grooming. The common naivety is sex offenders hang out at parks and are men in their 60's. Sadly research is telling us that it takes 20 minutes to groom a young person online and 1 in 2 children aged 5 – 11 in every classroom in Northamptonshire would go and meet someone they met on the internet. Another concern is a lack of awareness among people in general around online safety and emphasising to people to have a positive, healthy digital footprint. By working closely with Northamptonshire Police it not only enables the E Safety Officer to increase his knowledge around threats to young people and adults online but also the E Safety Officer can give practitioners localised fears around online safety. The main areas the E Safety Officer tends to focus on when delivering a session are online grooming (warning signs) platforms where this can happen, online gaming, keeping safe on social media, sexting but mainly educating young people and adults to use technology safely. The E Safety Officer always preaches "technology is not the problem. It's how we use it".
- 2.3 The PCC in March 2015 did a huge piece of consultation work involving nearly 14,000 young people in Northamptonshire really looking at their online behaviour some of the stats the E Safety Officer often quotes are frightening. Such as 88% of young people in Northamptonshire don't feel

at risk online and 77% of young people don't have any boundaries on the internet at home. We now have a generation of young people that know, no different than technology. The internet for young people and adults can create loneliness and isolation, is having a huge impact on mental health especially social media now having links to anxiety and depression. The average teenage girl in this country spends 1 hour 24 minutes perfecting the perfect selfie. Stats are great but they don't challenge the way young people and adults behave online. The E Safety Officer feels his job is to support and educate practitioners to keep young people and adults safe online, highlight the issue in this county and provide practical, accessible solutions.