

## What you need to know

How is socialising online different for CYP with SEND?

Interacting with others online through social media or other platforms has become an important part of CYP lives and even more so for those with SEND.

## The benefits

Connecting, creating, and sharing with others online brings a range of benefits which can support a child's wellbeing, including:

- Making and maintaining friendships which might be harder to do of ine
- At times it can be seen as a safer option to interact with others (depending on what they are doing) than allowing CYP to go outside (avoids risks of face-to-face bullying/ increased fears around knife crime etc)
- Some CYP find socialising behind a screen easier than face-to-face which makes them feel included and able to make friends and build connections
- The viral nature of the online world means CYP can put a spotlight on issues and concerns to affect change in the real world
- Being who they want to be without judgment
- A welcome distraction for needing downtime
- Managing their moods and relieving boredom
- Finding their 'tribe' of like-minded people
- Being more independent
- Discovering new ~~em~~otional abuse
- **Coercion** – Being enticed to send nude photos with sometimes the lure of gifts, tokens or money
- **Inappropriate content** – this can include sexual, violent or harmful content. CYP with SEND are also more likely to see content that promotes self-harm and suicide
- **Fake news and misinformation** – an [Ofcom](#) study found that 12-15 years old overall, saw social media as the least trustworthy source of news (39%)
- **Cyberbullying** – this can include direct hate/negative speech of the CYP, exclusion from group chats, not liking a photo or status, etc. CYP with vulnerabilities

