



How Youth Workers support young people

Youth Workers build trusting, voluntary relationships and provide safe spaces where young people can:

- Talk openly about their experiences
- Build confidence and resilience
- Learn about online safety
- Develop decision-making skills
- Access further support

Youth workers may also work with families, schools, and other services to help young people stay safe and supported



Youth work is based on voluntary participation, respect and supporting young people to make informed choices about their lives, including the digital world



Where to get help

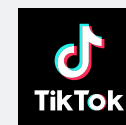
Young people and families can access help for online safety, bullying or wellbeing:

For young people

- Youth clubs, Youth Workers, school or college wellbeing teams, family support and community services.
- Meic (Wales) - www.meiccymru.org (Confidential advice and support)
- Anna Freud - www.annafreud.org (Wellbeing resources)
- Childline - www.childline.org.uk (Confidential support)
- NSPCC - www.nspcc.org.uk (online safety advice)
- CEOP - www.ceopeducation.co.uk (Online safety and reporting concerns)
- YoungMinds - www.youngminds.org.uk (Mental health advice)

For parents and guardians

- NSPCC-advice for parents
- YoungMinds Parent Helpline-support for concerns
- School or college family support staff
- Youth Workers (local or in school)
- Local family support or early help services (via school or GP)



Social Media and Young People

A guide for parents and guardians

Helping young people stay safe, confident and healthy online



Why this matters

Social media plays a major role in young people's friendships, identity and wellbeing. With the right guidance and open conversations, adults can help young people use it safely and positively





Understanding social media



The positive side of social media

Social media can:

1

Help young people stay connected with friends



2

Provide communities of support



3

Encourage creativity and self-expression



4

Help young people learn and explore interests and identity

5

Give young people a voice

For many young people, online spaces are an important part of their social lives and development



Challenges young people may face

Mental health and wellbeing

Young people may:

- Compare themselves to others
- Feel pressure to present a perfect life
- Experience anxiety linked to online interactions
- Lose sleep due to late-night screen use
- Withdrawal from hobbies or friendships



Online bullying

Cyberbullying can happen through messages, comments, or group chats. Signs may include:

- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Avoiding their phone or becoming upset after using it
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Being excluded from online groups or chats

Exposure to harmful content

Young people may encounter:

- Unrealistic body standards
- Distressing or violent material
- Misinformation
- Content encouraging risky behaviour



Online exploitation and grooming

Some individuals use social media to manipulate young people by:

- Building trust quickly
- Asking for personal information or images
- Encouraging secrecy
- Offering attention, gifts, or opportunities

Remind young people they can always talk to a trusted adult if something online makes them uncomfortable



How parents and Guardians can help

Keep communication open

- Ask about apps and platforms they use
- Show interest without judgement
- Stay calm and listen carefully if they share concerns

Young people are more likely to seek help when they feel listened to

Set boundaries together

- Agree on reasonable screen time
- Discuss what is safe to share online
- Encourage device-free time, especially before sleep

Involving young people in decisions helps them take responsibility

Build digital confidence

Encourage young people to:

- Use privacy settings
- Block or report harmful behaviour
- Think critically about what they see online

These skills help young people make safer choices

Notice changes

Look out for:

- Withdrawal or mood changes
- Increased secrecy
- Changes in sleep or behaviour

These signs may indicate it's time for a supportive conversation

