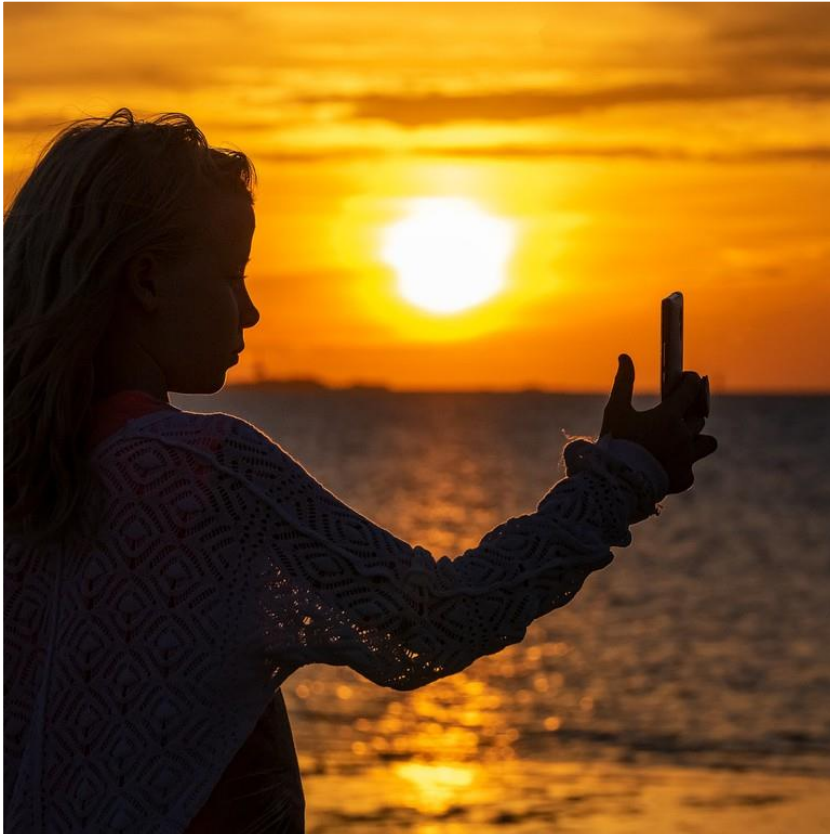
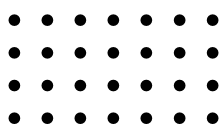




2023

Beyond the Selfie

Amy Dent



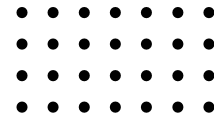
the
CHURCHILL
fellowship

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What is a Churchill Fellowship?



The Churchill Fellowship is a national network of 4,000 dynamic individuals who are inspiring change in every part of UK life.

Churchill Fellows discover new ideas around the world and develop new approaches to current challenges.

Fellows are funded to discover the latest innovations and best practice in any practical issue they care passionately about, anywhere in the world. They meet leading practitioners, engage with cutting-edge projects and create a report on their findings. Then we support them to share insights with communities and sectors across the UK and turn their ideas into action.



**the
CHURCHILL
fellowship**



About the author

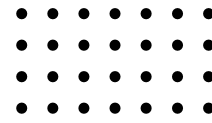


Amy has more than 15 years' experience working in the social policy space, including safeguarding in youth justice, child trafficking and serious violence. She has also worked directly with vulnerable young people in an alternative education setting, supporting those excluded from school and continues to volunteer with her local youth justice service where she is a panel member.

Amy's current role sits within the Home Office in the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Unit. She leads on policy for victims and survivors and her previous role in this team was policy lead for the Child Abuse Image Database. It was in this role and during her time working in Australia for the e-Safety Commissioner that she gained an interest and passion for learning about international efforts to improve online safety and to combat child sexual abuse.



Overview of Fellowship



My passion and career has focused on safeguarding children, whether that be in person or through developing policy. Since the start of my career we have seen a massive development in technology which brings lots of positive opportunities for society but also threats previously not there including more risk to children and young people.

Working in online policy for child sexual abuse, I saw first-hand how criminals use technology to exploit children at a rate nobody could reasonably predict in the past..

Alongside this social media platforms have continued to expand and form part of our everyday lives - often with a lack of community understanding of what risks to children these bring.

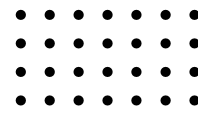
In a personal capacity, when I started my Fellowship, my 11-year-old stepdaughter had just got her own mobile phone. As she grew up, I would be responsible for keeping her safe online, teaching her about these challenges and acknowledging her understanding of technology might quickly become more advanced than mine.

I wanted to embark on my Fellowship to understand what other countries had in place to keep children safe online, how they worked with their community and tech companies to improve this and how could I articulate this and bring what I had learnt back to the UK. The introduction of the Online Safety Act in the UK is a big step closer to keeping children safe, but in parallel there must be more education and awareness to support everyone understand how to keep themselves and others safe.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, this research would not have been possible without the kindness, enthusiasm and hospitality of so many individuals in Sweden, Finland, France, Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg who generously gave up their time to educate me. From invaluable insights and reflections to taking the time to put me in contact with their networks and professional resources so I could share these in the UK - thank you.

I would like to thank the Churchill Fellowship for giving me this opportunity and also my employer and team who supported me throughout my travels and made my passion a reality.



Background

Context in the UK

Too many children's lives have been lost in the UK which were linked to social media and harmful online content.

We live in a world where technology continues to advance, leading to an ever-increasing impact on the daily lives of children and young people. I wanted to gain learning from other countries to explore how the UK could adopt some of these practices to improve our approach to online safety.



DISCLAIMER

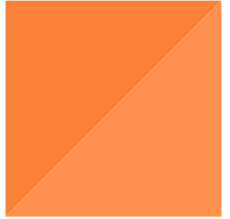
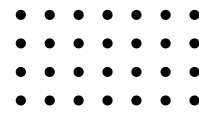


The online world plays a huge role in the lives of children and young people. Social media, online gaming, instant messaging platforms and image-sharing services enable children to interact with their peers, develop and pursue interests, and connect with new communities. However, these platforms and services also come with risks, including online abuse, grooming, and exposure to content that is illegal or harmful.

UNICEF tells us that at least one in three of the world's more than 6 billion internet users is a child

Data from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) shows online grooming reports have risen by 80% in the past four years.

The 2023 Global Threat Assessment also includes data on online grooming in social gaming environments, showing that 45 minutes is the average time for a high-risk child grooming situation to develop in social gaming environments, but this can be as quick as 19 seconds.

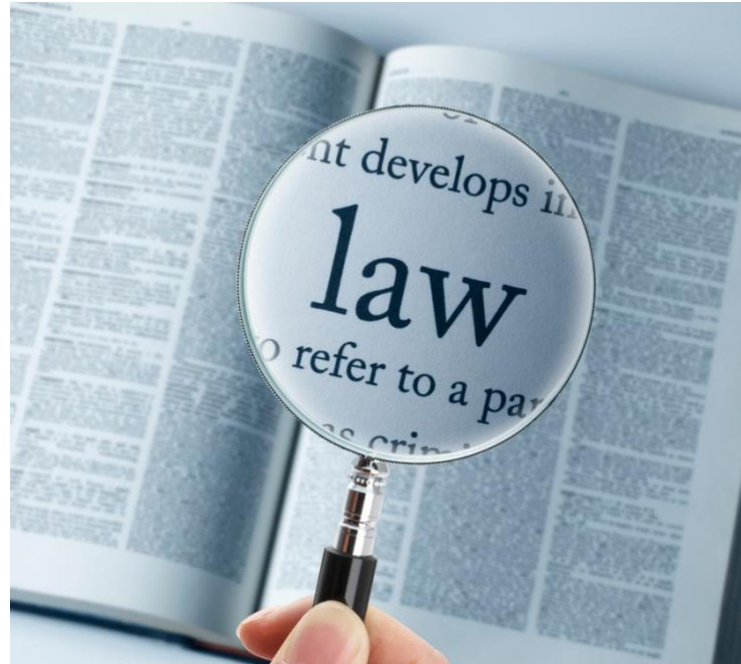


Background

UK Online Safety Act

In the UK the Online Safety Act was introduced in 2023. The Act is a new set of laws that protects children and adults online.

It puts a range of new duties on social media companies and search services, making them more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms.



- The Act will give providers new duties to implement systems and processes to reduce risks their services are used for illegal activity, and to take down illegal content when it does appear.
- Platforms will be required to prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content and provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise.
- The Act means that tech companies running social networking sites or search engines must promote online safety by tackling illegal material and content that is harmful to children, conducting regular risk assessments, and properly enforcing age limits.
- To make sure companies meet these requirements, the government has placed the independent regulator Ofcom in charge of enforcing the regulatory framework and raising awareness around online safety.

Beyond the Online Safety Act

Although the Online safety Act is a start to improve online safety in the UK, I think that there should be further work alongside this that focuses on education and prevention. Tech companies have a responsibility to keep children safe but it is also the responsibility of everyone in society to be aware of the risks and understand how to safeguard others; including children themselves.



MY CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP JOURNEY

Travelling: "It leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."

Destinations

How did I determine what countries to visit?

I used the KidsRights Index 2022 and 2023 to support my decision when selecting which countries I would research on my Churchill Fellowship.

Kids Rights index

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of vulnerable children across the world and advocates for the realisation of their rights. KidsRights strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are empowered to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as 'changemakers' who have the power to move the world and facilitates.

The KidsRights Index exists of 5 domains:

1. Right to Life
2. Right to Health
3. Right to Education
4. Right to Protection
5. Enabling Environment for Child Rights



Top ten of the KidsRights Index 2022

Country	KRI 10 Total Ranking	KRI 10 Total Score
Iceland	1	0.945
Sweden	2	0.915
Finland	3	0.913
Netherlands	4	0.910
Germany	5	0.909
Luxembourg	6	0.905
Denmark	7	0.890
Austria	8	0.882
Slovenia	9	0.880
Norway	10	0.879

From this study, I decided to focus my research in the following countries:

- 1) Sweden
- 2) Finland
- 3) France
- 4) Switzerland
- 5) Germany
- Luxembourg (Online)

Organisations visited



Sweden

British Embassy Stockholm



The British Embassy Stockholm maintains and develop relations between the UK and Sweden. The British Embassy in Stockholm provides services to British nationals in Sweden. Our work covers a range of issues including political and economics.

We continue to work closely with Sweden to take forward our shared foreign policy interests around the world. We work to help UK companies export to Sweden and encouraging Swedes to invest in the UK.

Safer Internet Centre - Swedish Agency for the Media



Swedish Agency for the Media works to promote freedom of expression and diversity in the media market, where multiple voices are heard and consumers have access to a wide and accessible range of radio, television and news media. They also have the task promote the empowering of minors as conscious media users and to protect them from harmful media influences. The agency coordinates the national effort for a strengthened media and information literacy in the general population

ECPAT



ECPAT Sweden is a children's rights organisation working to combat the sexual exploitation of children. They run the ECPAT Hotline, a website that gives the public an opportunity to anonymously report suspected sexual abuse of children. As a children's rights organisation, the participation of children and young people in our work is essential. This involvement helps us to better support them by

Organisations visited

Sweden

BRIS



Bris, Children's rights in society, is one of Sweden's leading children's rights organizations that fights every day for a better society for children.

World Childhood Foundation



Childhood prevents child sexual abuse. They do this in partnership with passionate pioneers, grassroots organizations, companies, foundations and other actors who share our vision of a world where no child is sexually abused. They invest in innovations, methods and partnerships that strengthen protection and reduce risks for particularly vulnerable groups. They engage in advocacy and increase knowledge and awareness of child sexual abuse. Our mission is to create long-term and sustainable change for children.

Baranhus Linköping



The overall objective of the JOURNEYS project is to contribute to improved access to child-friendly justice, protection and recovery for child victims and their families. The project will seek to improve practice through the provision of a safe, informed and participatory pathway through Barnahus with a focus on advocacy for the individual child.

Organisations visited



Save the Children Finland



Save the Children is the world's leading independent child organization and a professional in child protection. Our mission is to make sure that every child, here in Finland and all around the world, has the right to a safe life, protection, education, and the chance to be heard.

The Finnish Safer Internet Centre



The Finnish Safer Internet Centre exists to promote a safer and better use of the internet and mobile technologies among children and young people. The Finnish Safer Internet Centre (FISIC) is a joint project of three individual organisations: the National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI), Save the Children Finland (STC) and the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL). Each organisation has an established role in Finnish society and strong national and international relations.

Protect Children



Protect Children brings together specialists each with unique specialities into a strong and dedicated team, working tirelessly to strengthen children's rights. Together, they have years of expertise of national and international cooperation in preventing sexual crimes against children, especially in the online environment. They evaluate their processes on a regular basis and constantly update our knowledge.

Organisations visited

Finland

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare



The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare is an expert and research institute that provides reliable information for decision-making and activities in the field of health and welfare. Their goal is to promote the welfare, health and safety of the population.

France

Point De Conact.net



Created in 1998, Point de Contact is a 1901 law association whose mission is to protect Internet users from the excesses inherent in the evolution and development of the Internet.

Point de Contact has created various reporting tools allowing Internet users to anonymously, free of charge and simply report potentially illegal content online in order to obtain its withdrawal from hosts and digital platforms, both in France and internationally.

e-enfance



Created in 2005 and recognized as a public utility, the Association e-Enfance / 3018 raises awareness each year of 200,000 children, adolescents, parents and professionals on the issues of harassment and digital uses. With the 3018, they accompany young victims and witnesses of harassment and digital violence.

Organisations visited



Switzerland

Fedpol



Fedpol is a member of NEDIK, a network that supports the investigation of digital crime. The network was established in 2018 by the Conference of Cantonal Police Commanders of Switzerland (CCPCS) and plays a coordinating role in the fight against digital crime. Its tasks include ensuring the transfer of knowledge and exchange of best practices as well as compiling a national case overview.

Jugend Und Medien



Jugend und Medien is the federal national platform for the promotion of media literacy. It is aimed at parents and professionals with the aim of enabling children and adolescents to use digital media in an age-appropriate, safe and responsible manner. In addition to legislative activities, it is particularly about information and awareness-raising of important topics, opportunities and risks.



Germany

Childhood - Haus



The first childhood house in Baden-Württemberg was created together with the World Childhood Foundation. The Childhood-Haus Heidelberg follows the concept of interdisciplinary care and legal clarification in cases of sexualized and physical violence against children and adolescents. Under the umbrella of the Childhood House, representatives of medicine, psychology, social pedagogy, police and justice work in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner on case investigation.

Organisations visited

fragFINN



fragFINN offers a protected surf room specially created for children from six to 12 years. With the search engine for children auffragFINN.de and the associated browser app, only child-friendly websites that have been editorially checked by media educators are found, children's websites are placed at the top of the search results.

FSM



The German Association for Voluntary Self-Regulation of Digital Media Service Providers (FSM) is a non-profit association that aims to protect minors in online media. In addition, the FSM promotes media literacy to ensure safe and positive online experiences for children and teenagers. Parents and families are empowered to protect and support their children, teachers are motivated to include media education into their lessons.

Dr Claudia Lampert



Dr Claudia Lampert is a senior researcher and co-head of the program “Knowledge for the Media Society” at the HBI. Her research focuses on the challenges of digital transformation for media socialisation and health communication as well as on how to make evidence-based knowledge on these topics meaningful for different decision-makers.

Luxembourg (Virtual)

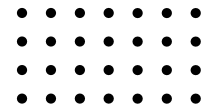
BEE Secure



BEE SECURE is a governmental initiative involving the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Family, Integration and Greater Region. BEE SECURE aims to raise awareness for a safety-oriented and responsible use of digital technology to the general public, and to particularly empower children, young people and their entourage (parents, teachers, educators) through targeted offers.

Key findings

Educating families and wider community



Embedding online safety through health care

Save the Children Sweden discussed how they are bringing in healthcare to introduce and assess online safety.

This introduction starts as early as pregnancy and is embedded into screening through a child's lifetime. By using the same screening each assessment it allows the healthcare professional to track known risk factors and provide further support and education to parents when needed. Approx 99% of Swedish families participate in health care screening

Extend media literacy to wider community

Across the countries, specifically Sweden and Finland there is a big focus on media literacy. They are putting a big focus on embedding media literacy across the wider community.

Areas that they are focusing on includes, nurse's, army, education system, libraries, sport and wider health care.

By educating the wider society at all levels, the community can pass the knowledge on to their own family but also those they interact with in day-to-day life.

Themed cards- how to have the conversation

Resources have been developed across these European countries to support adults when having online safety conversations with children. The online world is rapidly developing and it is important that adults understand how to start basic conversations,

It is important that adults have the confidence to recognise when a child has online concerns and then how to approach this.

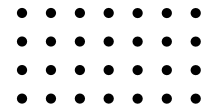
Parents evening online sessions-

Educating parents and carers can take place in many different forms. There is a strong culture across all countries to promote educating parents and carers via online parents evening sessions.

There is a number of organisations which deliver this for free and try to promote these sessions through advertising on social media, directly through schools and community centres. These sessions are targeted at all age groups, with an increase in the lower ages.

Key findings

Delivering for children but 'with' children



Board Game/Treasure Hunt - World Childhood Foundation

World Childhood has contributed to the Change Attitude Foundation's development of the game "Parkgömmet" for elementary school children. The game, developed by researchers at Skövde University, consists of a physical board game making use of augmented reality through a tablet or smartphone. During the game, the children receive messages from an unknown person who tries to get them to reveal clues to where their treasure is hidden. This way the children can experience how it feels and how they can react to common online grooming techniques, such as flattery, nagging and threats.

Language for adapted in resources for children

Save the Children Sweden discussed how they have consulted children when creating their resources. This enables resources to be child-friendly and useful to those who need it. At a basic level, even using the language.

An example of this is using the term 'online sexual abuse'. Although this phrase is commonly known in the adult language, what does this actually mean for young people? They decided to review language used in resources and break it down so young people could understand what constitutes online sexual abuse, understanding warning signs rather than assume young people will take the phrase seriously.

Consulting children for tech development

When developing tech to support online safety for children, organisations automatically thought that this should be designed around what young people use daily. They started to design an app but after consultation and feedback with young people they realised that apps are associated with 'fun' and they didn't want support services in the same format. It seemed like a really easy assumption to make and shows the importance of 'delivering with children'.

Educate young people earlier

There was a consistent theme across all countries where it appeared they educated young people about online safety at a much younger age. In some countries these conversations happened with pregnant mothers even before a baby was born but in nearly all countries there was targeted support at lower years. This would facilitate conversation and ideas at a young age, allowing organisations to understand what works and what they need.

Key findings

Using social media positively

How you can use social media influencers positively.
Swedish Agency for the Media

Swedish Agency for the Media discussed their research on influencers and social media. They found children and young people relate to influencers both actively and appreciatively as well as critically. Influencers are an important part of children's and young people's everyday social life. They are repeatedly highlighted as potential role models of significance for both individuals as well as for children and young people in general. Therefore it is important to consider how we could use influencers to promote positive online safety.

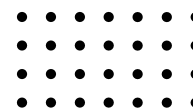


Use social media to promote education programmes.
Work with and not against

E-enfance discussed the importance of working with social media companies to ensure they promote online safety through their platforms. Many of them have information and education resources that adults can use to understand how to keep their children safe. Online Safety organisations should work with social media companies to promote their own resources and target specific age groups on appropriate platforms.

Key findings

Developing tech to enable safer reporting and awareness



Encourage young people to report for friends

In Finland, Protect Children have developed a campaign online #myfriendtoo which encourages young people to help their friend disclose sexual violence to a safe adult. They have developed a range of resources and templates which young people can access which gives them advice that they can pass onto their friend. It provides information on how to use tech to get images removed. We know that young people are often more likely to confide in their friends if they are facing problems online. This resource allows them to empower their friends to report.

Embedding tech safety in schools at early age

In Germany, fragFINN aims at establishing a secure place in the Internet that allows children aged six to 12 years of age to surf the web without any risk of them finding harmful content.

Building up a 'whitelist' as a basis for the secure search engine for children www.fragFINN.de and the free browser app, fragFINN is promoting the positive diversity of the Internet for children. In this respect, children can pursue their interests over the full length and breadth of the Internet and learn how to use the medium responsibly and on their own.

fragFINN offers other resources and its well-used across most schools in Germany.

Creating multiple ways to report content online

In France, Point de Contact create reporting tools and platforms to enable both adults and young people to report content. Rather than just have one option, there is a range to adapt to all styles and preferences. These include a browser add on to allow reporting you to simply, quickly and anonymously report shocking content encountered online, directly from your search engine. An app, so that you can report directly from a mobile and an online reporting form which can be accessed on both. They have also created a tool where you can report things live, in case things get removed after.

Embedding parental controls directly into tech

Since July 13, all new connected devices sold in France must now be equipped with pre-installed parental control. A provision that follows the Studer law voted in 2022, aimed at protecting minors from overexposure to screens and shocking content. The parental control device must be activable from the first commissioning of the device, free and easily accessible. It must at least allow the download and access to certain applications, in particular those "likely to harm the physical, mental or moral development of the minors concerned."

Recommendations

1. Embed online education in all areas of the community

It was clear that in the countries I visited, they were expanding their education models to ensure that as many touch points in the community were receiving learning about online safety. Delivering this just to parents is not enough. Consideration needs to be given at the key points in a child's development about online safety awareness, this could range from early health care professionals, to club leaders, teachers and beyond.

2. Ensure technology and resources are developed with children

When organisations and tech companies are developing materials and reporting tools to support keeping children safe online, there is no one better than using children themselves to be expert consultants. What we think they want and need is quite likely to be very different. Using this approach will save wasted time on development and also produce material that can really support children in a way that is right for them. One way to approach this is for organisations to ensure that they have a child led approach to developing products. This could include establishing a Youth Forum.

3. Explore how social media and tech could be used more positively

Although there are many risks with social media platforms, a move to exploring how to use these more positively could improve online safety. This could include using positive social media influencers to educate more about online safety and promote increased reporting. Examples of how this may be delivered could include recruiting age-appropriate influences to work with tech companies to build safety awareness videos within their platforms. These could be automatically launched when a child is watching a video on that platform.



Further Reading

The Churchill Fellowship

<https://www.churchillfellowship.org>

Online Safety Act 2023

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/50>

Kids Right Index

<https://www.kidsrights.org/kidsrights-index/>

Global Threat Assessment 2023

<https://www.weprotect.org/wp-content/uploads/Global-Threat-Assessment-2023-English.pdf>

ECPAT Sweden

<https://ecpat.se/aboutecpatsweden>

BRIS

<https://www.bris.se/languages/>

World Childhood Foundation

<https://childhood.org/>

Barnahus Linköping

<https://www.barnahuslinkoping.se>

Save The Children Finland

<https://www.pelastakalapset.fi/en/>

The Finnish Safer Internet Centre

<https://www.mll.fi/en/about-mll/media-education/finnish-safer-internet-centre/>

Protect Children

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en>

Point de Contact

<https://www.pointdecontact.net/>

E-Enfance

<https://e-enfance.org/>

Jugend und Medien

<https://www.jugendundmedien.ch/>

Childhood Haus

<https://www.childhood-de.org/childhood-haus/haeuser/childhood-haus-heidelberg/>

FragFINN

<https://www.fragfinn.de/>

FSM

<https://www.fsm.de/>

Dr Claudia Lampert

<https://leibniz-hbi.de/en/employee/claudia-lampert/>

BEE Secure

<https://www.bee-secure.lu/fr/>

