

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE PRESSURE OF IMAGE

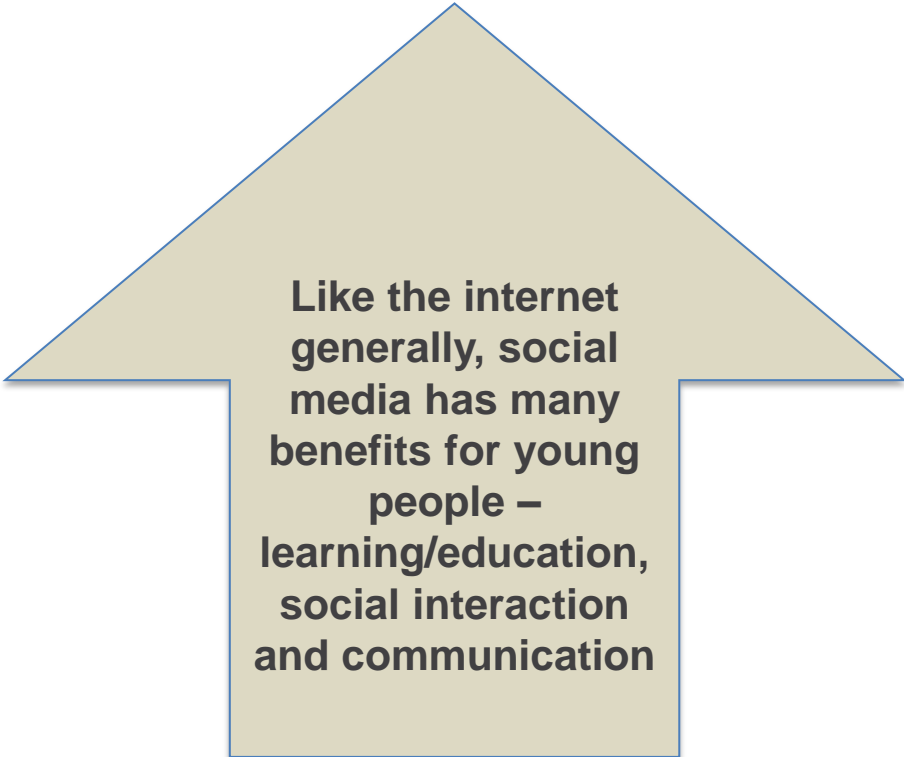


**Northern Ireland Commissioner for
Children and Young People**

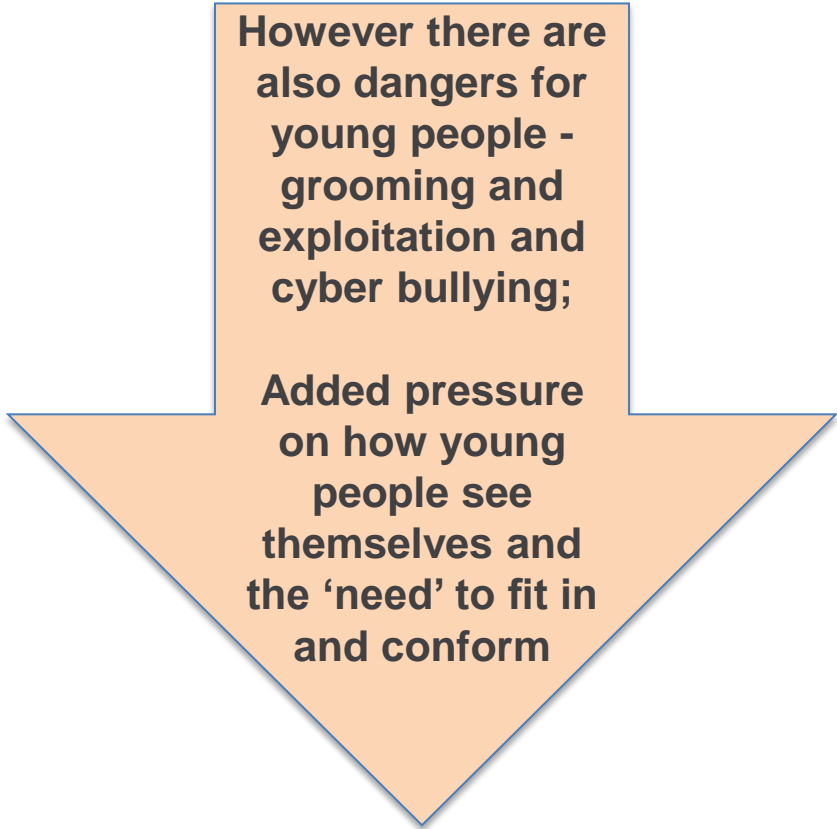
Mairéad McCafferty Chief Executive



Social Media

A large, light beige arrow pointing upwards, with a blue outline. It contains text about the benefits of social media.

Like the internet generally, social media has many benefits for young people – learning/education, social interaction and communication

A large, light orange arrow pointing downwards, with a blue outline. It contains text about the dangers of social media.

However there are also dangers for young people - grooming and exploitation and cyber bullying;

Added pressure on how young people see themselves and the 'need' to fit in and conform

KEY therefore to **get the balance right** so that young can enjoy benefits but also keep safe & healthy – education is essential!

What Social Media Are Young People Using?

Ofcom (UK's Communication Regulator) research shows what social media young people are using (Dec 2015)

- **Children with a social media profile:**

- 75% aged 12-15
- 21% aged 8-11s
- 74% aged 12-15s

- **When asked which is their 'main account'**

- 58% said Facebook
- 13% named Instagram
- 11% chose YouTube

- **Of those with a social media profile:**

- 87 % used Facebook (fallen from 96% in 2014)
- 53% have an Instagram account
- 43% have Snapchat
- 33% have YouTube

How young people are using social media

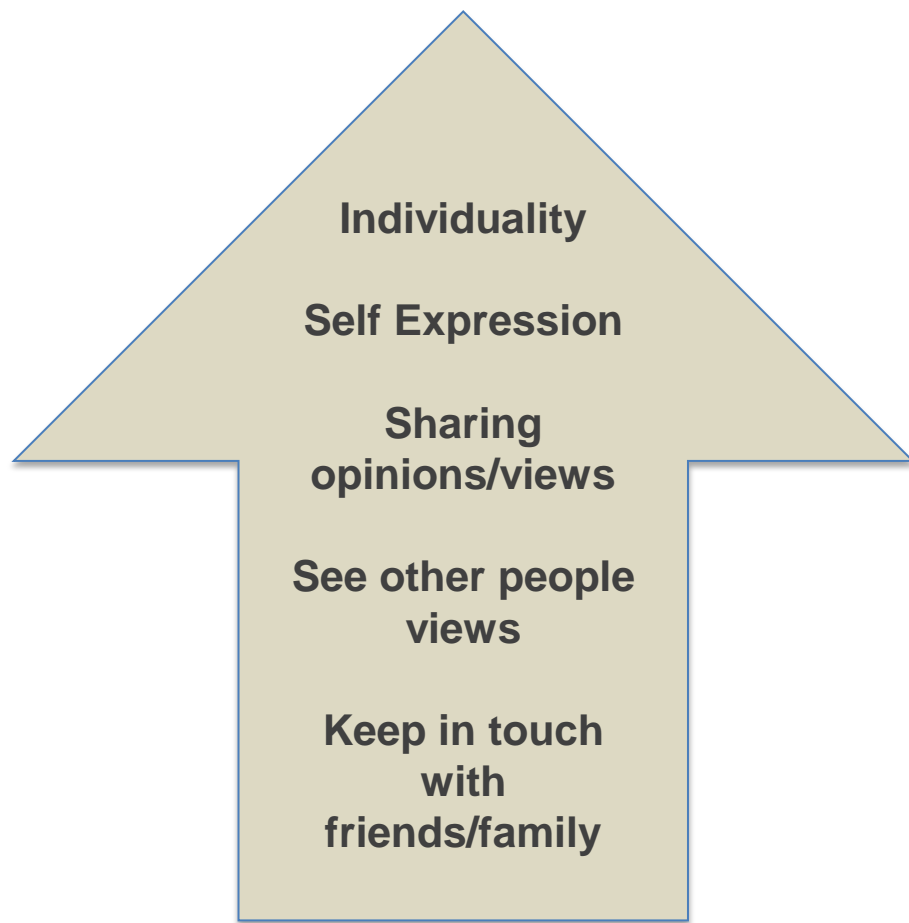
Results from a three-day 'media diary'

'Communication Activities' 50%+ time on text messaging, instant messaging and photo messaging (adults it is 28%)

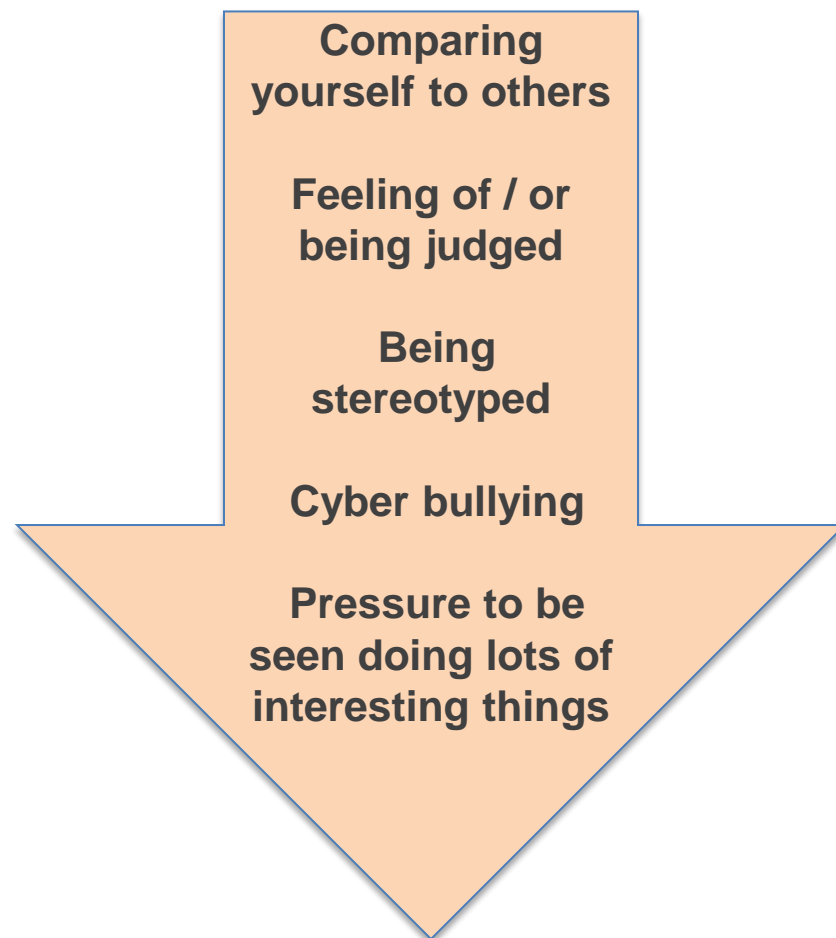
'Watching Activities' (52%) of 11-15 year olds watch live TV (adults spend 69% watching TV) 19% watch short online video clips (adults 2% online clips)

Playing Games (on electronic device) 75% of children (6-15yrs) taking up a fifth of time spent on media / communications (5% of media time taken up by adults)

NICCY Youth Panel - Feedback



Benefits



Challenges

NICCY Youth Panel - Feedback

“Social media is massively important to us; for communicating, organising and staying in touch, I don't think anyone would want to give it up.”

“However it also comes with setbacks, it encourages us to **compare ourselves with others** and is **just another platform for bullying** and causing people to **feel self conscious**.”

“It's always going to be something we can't live with, but yet can't live without.”

Social Media and Image

“A Perfect Storm”



E.g.. Links between body image and steep increase in mental ill health indicators in 15 yr old girls.

E.g.. Combination of...Increasing concerns over body image, public health messages about weight, and **soaring use of social media.**

R. Whitehead

**Compared to
18% who
didn't go on
social media
networking
sites.**

**48% who spend
3hrs a night on
facebook and
twitter were
unhappy with their
looks.**

**Children who
use social
media are more
unhappy with
their
appearance.**



Survey of 3,500 10-15 yr olds by University of Essex



Image: from Jade Johnson, student at Birmingham City University who developed the "Un-Edit" campaign to highlight the impact Instagram users and celebrities can have on young women.

Self image & self esteem

As Caitlin-Jay a 19 yr old mental health campaigner in Scotland observes:

“I feel social media is a big part of the problem. Everything’s based around the amount of **likes** and comments you get on posts. If you’re constantly comparing yourself with other people online, with filtered pictures that other people have posted, pictures that aren’t even real, there’s a pressure and expectation.”

“.....For a lot of young people the first thing they do is go to their phone and there’s a lot of bad sites out there and a lot of bad information that can be seriously detrimental to young people’s health, particularly around eating disorders and body image. It’s so easily accessible to the point it’s scary.”

UK House of Lords Select Committee on Communications (Children and The Internet)

24% of parents said they felt they did not know enough to help their children manage online risk

9% of parents of 3 & 4 yr olds felt their child knew more about technology than they did (OFCOM)

1 in 3 internet users are under 18 – in parts of the developing world it rises to 1 in 2. (UNICEF)

In response to a question of gender dimension, Will Gardner CEO Childnet International stated:
“ ... **girls broadly speaking have a worse time online issues relating to body image, peer pressure**”

July 2016



What to do?

Engage Educate Empower!

