Online Peer on Peer Abuse

A national survey of Headteachers and Safeguarding Leads in England and Scotland

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS .................................................................................................................. 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ................................................................................................ 2

1. INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................... 4

2. BACKGROUND ......................................................................................................... 5

3. METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................................... 7

4. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................. 9

  4.1 Reported Prevalence and Awareness ................................................................. 9

  4.2 Policy .................................................................................................................. 11

  4.3 Educating Young People .................................................................................. 12

  4.2 Training Experiences ...................................................................................... 14

  4.3 Responses to Online Peer on Peer Abuse ....................................................... 16

    Peer on Peer Abuse: Stakeholder Involvement ................................................. 17

    Peer on Peer Abuse: Police Involvement ......................................................... 19

5. CONCLUSIONS ...................................................................................................... 21

6. APPENDIX .............................................................................................................. 23
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate). Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, distribution of sexualised content and harassment.

While anecdotally, through our work with schools and the wider children’s workforce, we have been aware that online peer-on-peer abuse is a growing problem among children and young people, this study is the first of its kind to try to measure the scale of the problem in schools and to discern how they deal with it.

A survey, targeting senior leaders across more than 300 schools in England and Scotland highlights the issues faced in addressing the problems caused by peer-on-peer abuse. The results show that online peer-on-peer abuse is a growing problem in schools; with 83% of respondents saying incidents have increased over the last 3 years. Other significant findings include:

- 90% of survey respondents report experiencing online peer-on-peer abuse in their educational institution
- The majority of respondents considered online peer-on-peer abuse to begin before secondary school, particularly between the ages of 8-10 years.
- Despite an equal number of respondents across primary and secondary schools reporting incidents of online peer-on-peer abuse, respondents still considered online peer-on-peer abuse to be more prevalent in secondary school years overall.
- Currently, training is highly victim focused and is less likely to focus on implications and support for the child instigating the harmful behaviour and
legal issues. Training is variable across different schools, highlighting a lack of national coordination on these matters.

- Education and awareness of the issues related to online peer-on-peer abuse are generally delivered to children in our respondents’ schools but the manner and content of delivery can vary greatly.
- The involvement of the police is inconsistent – for example, schools are less likely to involve police when addressing peer-on-peer abuse that involves hate speech than they are when there is a sexual element.

However, perhaps the most significant finding is that schools are dealing with the issues of peer on peer abuse without national coordination or resources. 61% of respondents felt that they do not receive sufficient guidance and support from government and local authorities. Given the potentially life changing impact of such abuse on both victim and instigator, we are concerned that schools are being left to address these problems in such an ad hoc manner. We would like to see far more joined up thinking around these issues to enable schools to be confident they are addressing the problems effectively and students are receiving accurate and informed education around online peer-on-peer abuse.
1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents research commissioned by the Marie Collin’s Foundation to explore schools’ awareness of, and responses to, online peer-on-peer abuse. Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer on peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, distribution of sexualised content and harassment.

The aim of the research was to determine awareness of online peer-on-peer abuse in schools and understand how they respond to incidents, in order to better understand education and training needs around these issues as well as informing national policy around current practice in schools.

The report primarily presents the findings of a survey of school headteachers and safeguarding leads that set out to determine:

1. Prevalence of online peer on peer abuse in schools and age ranges of where it begins
2. Policy that related to online peer on peer abuse
3. Education for students around online peer on peer abuse
4. The nature of training for school staff around online peer on peer abuse
5. How schools respond to online peer on peer abuse incidents and which other stakeholders they include in addressing incidents.
2. BACKGROUND

Online safety has never been more prevalent in the education landscape. OFSTED is now expected to assess online safety during school inspection\(^1\), the Department for Education expects online safety education to be part of the school curriculum, with governors responsible for ensuring that “appropriate” monitoring and filtering is in place in schools to ensure students cannot access inappropriate content and, if they try to, alerts are raised\(^2\). More recently, the government drive for age verification on access to any pornography shows policy level commitment to ensure children cannot access sexual material via any internet-enabled device.

However, while progress has been made, the focus of what online safety fundamentally is seems to relate to harm being done to children, rather than by children. While prohibitive technologies have a role to play, particularly in schools, in ensuring exposure to inappropriate content does not occur, these technologies will fail to address harm that occurs as a result of digital technology being used to abuse by peers. Research has shown\(^3\) that children and young people report that most online upset is caused by “people" rather than content, and that peers play a major part in this\(^4\).

Online peer on peer abuse is a broad term that can encompass a lot of different practices but fundamentally relates to the use digital technology for children to harm and abuse other children. Examples of online peer-on-peer abuse might include:

1. Using the communications setup in a multi-player game to make threats to a gamer that are intended to intimidate and cause upset.
2. Using social media platforms to create groups to abuse individuals.

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\(^1\) https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-maintained-schools
\(^4\) https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/fomo-causes-young-people-to-spend-too-much-time-on/
3. Using mobile technology to coerce an individual into performing sexual acts, for example as a result of obtaining an indecent image of them.

4. Sharing an image of someone among a peer group with the intention of causing harm or upset.

5. Using a social media platform to racially abuse a peer.

This is a small set of examples of online peer-on-peer abuse used solely to illustrate the point that there are a multitude of approaches, but the delivery approach for abuse is online technology and the intention is to harm or cause upset. As such, we propose there is a need for a reversal of focus – rather than act (for example, sharing an indecent image, using social media to abuse, using technology to groom a peer into a sexual act) we focus more broadly on the use of technology to be used to abuse among peers. By refocusing, we can take a more holistic approach to exploring how schools understand and respond to peer-on-peer abuse in general, rather than promoting different strategies toward cyberbullying, sexting, discrimination, etc.
3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research was to get a broad level understanding of the prevalence of online peer-on-peer abuse in schools and how school staff respond to issues that arise, as well as their approaches to education and training. As such it was decided a survey approach was the most appropriate way of reaching a large respondent base to achieve a consistent response. The survey tool (see Appendix A) was developed to ascertain the prevalence and responses to online peer-on-peer abuse within educational settings. It was piloted with schoolteachers and safeguarding leads, as well as Marie Collins Foundation who provided comments, feedback and suggestions.

The survey was designed to collect as consistent a response as was possible, as such the majority of the questions were closed and presented as multiple-choice responses. However, the survey also included opportunities for respondents to add additional comments which are also presented in the survey findings below. The survey followed ethical guidance from the Association of Internet Researchers\(^5\) and was subject to ethical approval from the University of Suffolk. Completion of the survey was entirely voluntary and respondents’ answers anonymous. The survey was launched across England and Scotland for a month duration between April 2018 – May 2018.

The survey was distributed across England and Scotland, through a variety of dissemination routes – to schools individually, via local authority partnerships and also through professional networks. Two surveys were used due to differences in the education systems in England and Scotland, primarily between the naming of school years (i.e. Primary 5 in Scotland is equivalent to Year 4 in England and Wales, while Secondary 1 in Scotland is equivalent to Year 7) and the types of children’s workforce professionals that might be included in dealing with peer-on-peer abuse incidents.

While care was taken to target the key demographics with dissemination, we should acknowledge that the approach is still a self-selecting web survey. Therefore, the findings presented here are not generated from a stratified sample and, thus generalisations should be avoided. However, given the intention for this early research was to gain some understanding of the scale of the issue and how individual schools respond, we are confident that the dissemination method is a valid one. The sample

\(^5\) [https://aoir.org/ethics/](https://aoir.org/ethics/)
size of 327 respondents representing individuals from over 300 schools in England and Scotland allows us to draw some conclusions from the findings which will assist in identifying levels of current awareness, training experience and responses to online peer-on-peer abuse. For the analysis of the results the responses to both surveys were collated and combined with mapping of year groups to ensure consistency of results. The key findings from the survey are discussed in the following section.
4. FINDINGS

A total of 327 head teachers, classroom teachers and safeguarding leads responded to the survey across the UK. The majority of respondents were staff within a primary school (47%) or a secondary school (42%), all of which tended to be state funded (92%) and with the majority in urban (53%) or semi-rural (30%) locations.

4.1 Reported Prevalence and Awareness

Unsurprisingly, almost all respondents reported experiencing incidents of online peer-on-peer abuse within their educational institution (90%). The nature of the abuse was not explored in detail in the survey, although respondents were given the opportunity to comment. We explore these in more detail towards the end of the report but it is clear that the nature of abuse ranges from comments on social media to what might be referred to as group cyberbullying toward more serious abuse of a sexual nature. Only 17% of this latter group were reported to have led to legal proceedings (for example, police caution, prosecution). The legal position on these issues in a complex one and will be explored later in this section.

The majority of respondents considered online peer-on-peer abuse to begin before secondary school (29%), during year 4 (14%) or year 5 (21%), and report higher prevalence in year 6 (27%). However, when considering responses overall, over half of respondents suggest online peer-on-peer abuse is most prevalent during secondary school years (60%) (Particularly years 7, 8 and 9) as opposed to primary school years (40%). Conversely, the most popular response to “when do you expect peer on peer abuse to first occur” is “before secondary school” (30% of respondents state this), suggesting there is an acknowledgement that abuse begins at a far earlier age. We know from our work in schools that there is an increasing prevalence of what we might refer to as “severe” peer-on-peer abuse occurring at primary level. This was confirmed by one comment from a respondent:

“I recently dealt with a case of a child who was of p6 age who sent an indecent image to another pupil who subsequently distributed this to the rest of the school.

Scottish P6 is equivalent to year 5 in the English system, meaning the child was between 9 and 10 years old.
and others in the area. This was only discovered by myself when I overheard other pupils discussing this. We were faced with a difficult choice on how to deal with this issue and I had not been given any training on how to deal with this before."

This quote highlights the need for training (discussed below) to start at in primary settings and be inclusive of all staff. While it might be shocking to hear of this sort of incident in a primary setting, it is not unusual for these issues to occur on a small scale at that age. However, we can also see another problematic response from one respondent in a secondary setting:

“Students and parents are more frequently stating that this is normal behaviour.”

This is not an unusual comment to hear from professionals, particularly over the last couple of years. Given the media coverage around some aspects of peer-on-peer abuse, particularly sexting, we might forgive attitudes that think that this is fairly routine behaviour among young people of a certain age and, therefore, that we shouldn’t worry about it. However, we might observe that normalisation is sometimes used as an excuse to not get to the root cause of issues – just because “this is something everyone does”, it doesn’t mean that isn’t something that should be tackled. We are frequently told this about the exchange of indecent images between peers. However, the reality of the situation is more complex – there is only a minority of young people who actually engage in such practices, most are exposed to the objects of the exchange – the images – because they are swiftly distributed. So, while we might say this is “normalised” behaviour the reality is that it isn’t, and if we are to accept it as “normal” we are failing those who might become at risk as a result of engaging in practice they have been told is routine.

A total of 83% of respondents also suggest that incidents of online peer on peer abuse have increased or increased significantly in the past three years (Figure 1), which would confirm reporting from organisations such as the Professionals Online Safety Helpline. We have also had comments from staff in the survey that they are ill equipped to deal with this growth:

“It is becoming a tidal wave in terms of problems generated – with stretched resources to deal with it.”
In terms of prevalence, 33% of respondents reported receiving online peer-on-peer abuse reports at least once a term, 18% less than 5 a term and 14% suggesting they receive between 5 and 10 reports a term. Only 12% suggest that they never receive reports of online peer on peer abuse (all within primary settings).

**Figure 1:** Have incidents of online peer on peer abuse increased in the last three years?

- Increased
- Increased significantly
- No change
- Decreased

4.2 Policy

Having policy in place is a very important aspect of any safeguarding issue in a school. A policy not only acknowledges that a concern exists, but that the school is aware of it and have guidance in place for staff to know what to do should an incident occur. The comment above related to staff not knowing how to respond to a complex issue highlights what might happen if an incident occurs for which a relevant policy doesn’t exist.

Given the majority of our respondents stated that online peer-on-peer abuse incidents had increased or increased significantly in the last 3 years, it would be reasonable to expect that schools would have policy in place to address this. Yet while most respondents report their associated schools having policies that specifically cover online peer on peer abuse (70%), there was still a significant minority that did not, which is a concern for a growing problem such as online peer-on-peer abuse.

Respondents were then asked in which policies they would find guidance on online peer on peer abuse. The majority of individuals reported finding information around
online peer on peer abuse within anti-bullying policies (85%), however a quarter or more of respondents suggested that online peer on peer abuse was not included in their online safety, child protection or behavioural policies (Figure 2). Those who selected “other” suggested that information around online peer to peer abuse was included in acceptable use policies and specific peer to peer abuse policies.

In exploring where online peer-on-peer abuse is addressed in policy (if at all), we begin to see a frequently occurring theme with our responses – that schools are responding to these incidents with a lack of consistency, which is to be expected given the lack of national coordination on these issues. We can see from Figure 2 that there is a wide range of policies that online peer-on-peer abuse might be included within – some statutory (such as child protection and behaviour) and some voluntary (such as online safety). There is no consistent place that online peer-on-peer abuse is “supposed” to reside, so schools do their best in isolation.

### 4.3 Educating Young People

Obviously, a fundamental requirement for tackling the root causes of online peer-on-peer abuse is effective education for students. If students can receive quality education at an early age about the issues related to online peer-on-peer abuse (for example, empathy, respect, self-esteem, etc.), it is less likely they will engage in practice as they grow older. This is true of any aspect of social phenomenon – we cannot assume children can grow up thinking these behaviours are unacceptable unless they have
received effective education that allows them to reflect on these behaviours in a critical way. While the quote above about p6 pupils engaging in the exchange of indecent images might be shocking, how would they know this was unacceptable without effective relationships education?

There are some aspects of the responses to education that are encouraging, and some that are less so. Most respondents suggest that the youngest year group to whom they deliver education on online peer-on-peer abuse is year 4 (11.2%) or below (30%). Year 7 (37%) were also likely to be the youngest year group in which education around online peer-on-peer abuse was delivered. While it is encouraging that in a lot of cases online peer-on-peer abuse education began at an early age, there was still plenty of evidence to suggest the focus of education is on secondary aged students. Which, for a lot of children and young people, is too late – we need to lay the foundations for education in the primary setting where there is, arguably, more time to deliver social and personal education.

According to respondents, education around online peer-on-peer abuse is most likely to be delivered to students via Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons (84%) and student assemblies (65%) (Figure 3). Again, this highlights the inconsistency of approach. While PSE is a logical subject to cover this sort of education, there are a wide range of contexts in which a student might experience online peer-on-peer abuse education according to our respondents. This includes ICT lessons, which seems like a very strange place to provide education around these issues – and while the vehicle for delivery of abuse might be technology, this is not a technological issue, it is a social and behavioural one.
4.4 Training Experiences

Coupled with education, the other part of the knowledge base within a school is staff training. An informed and knowledgeable staff base will be aware of the issues related to online peer-on-peer abuse, will be responsive to incidents that occur, and will be able to deliver high quality education to students. Again, our responses show some encouraging results and some less so. A total of 68% of respondents suggest that training around online peer-on-peer abuse is delivered to staff, however of these respondents just under half reported that training is inclusive of all staff members, as opposed to senior and pastoral staff members only (48%), furthermore 21% report no staff training within their institution, and 10% were unsure of whether training was delivered. This means that, in our respondent schools, the majority do not deliver training to all staff.

“I would like to be more informed about how to deal with any issues that may be presented by a child in my class/school.”

“Class Teachers unaware of extent/details of incidents.”

In one case, a very telling observation was made that all staff have a role to play in the response to these issues and as such would offer a lot to policy and practice if they were given the opportunity:
“Support staff such as Learning Assistants often work closely with children and can be the first to become aware of abuse. They are rarely included in discussions about policy and practice.”

While safeguarding responses are sometimes, for the best of reasons, dealt with by a small, specialist group of staff at a school, the above comment does highlight that all staff have a role to play in safeguarding and can make positive and valuable contributions.

In terms of who delivers training, in-house staff (49%) delivered the majority of this training, with some respondents suggesting that their training was delivered by local authority (27%) or external agencies (19%). We know that there is a typical approach in schools, particularly given resource limits and budgetary concerns, that a “train-the-trainer” model is often used in training – a member of staff will attend a training course and will then disseminate the training within the school. While we can completely understand why this would be the case, we would also raise concerns that some of the issues in online peer-on-peer abuse are complex and would benefit from delivery from an expert.

When asked what was covered during the training, the majority of respondents suggested that training was likely to cover behaviours/abusive practices (80%), impact on victim (64%) or incident response (51%) and victim support (50%). Training is, however, less likely to cover support for the child instigator of the abuse, impact on the instigator and legal issues surrounding online peer on peer abuse (Figure 4).
Again, this is an illustration that, without effective national coordination, schools are left to their own devices and training will not comprise of consistent content. While practices are very likely to be covered in our sample, less than half will consider legal issues or anything related to the instigator of the abuse. We will return to this later in the report but we would suggest these are fundamental aspects of understanding the context of online peer on peer abuse and effective response to incidents.

The lack of national coordination and support is something that is acknowledged by our respondents. A total of 61% of respondents suggest that they feel they do not receive sufficient guidance from government bodies and local authorities.

“Yet another responsibility for schools to deal with - but with no additional funding or staffing.”

4.5 Responses to Online Peer on Peer Abuse

Respondents were asked a series of questions around their process of response once an incident of online peer-on-peer abuse had occurred within their school, including what stakeholders they involve and general procedures. Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they deal with online peer-on-peer abuse on a case-by-case basis (94%), which is to be expected. This is a broad range of issues and can range from problematic behaviour (for example, name calling on social media) to
complex and harmful (for example, using threat of distribution of indecent images to coerce sexual acts) and they cannot all be dealt with in the same manner.

Peer on Peer Abuse: Stakeholder Involvement

Respondents were asked to suggest whether a variety of different stakeholders would be involved when dealing with a case of online peer on peer abuse. Most respondents disagreed when asked whether they thought online peer-on-peer abuse is better dealt with in-house rather than involving outside agencies (67%). However, schools were less likely to involve police, who were involved in half of the incidents, or children’s services, when dealing with incidents of online peer-on-peer abuse (Figure 5). Instead, the majority of individuals suggested that they would involve school senior management (95%), the instigator’s parents (94%) and the victim’s parents (94%). Respondents who selected “other” left comments to suggest that stakeholder involvement depends on the situation:

“This all depends on the nature of the abuse, the level of severity, who the abuser is etc.”

“This would depend entirely on the specifics of the particular incident.”

*Figure 5: Frequency of reported stakeholder involvement in incidents of online peer on peer abuse*
It is encouraging to see the vast majority of respondents talking about the involvement of parents because one of the key aspects emerging from the qualitative responses was that the majority of incidents, and much of the resultant abuse, does not occur in school time – it takes place during social hours, in the home, and online. Therefore, it is difficult for schools to tackle these issues in isolation. We received a number of comments from respondents that highlight the complexity of this:

“All incidents have occurred out of school hours and it is less about school and more about their access to social media that causes the incidents. We are proactive about the safe use of the internet and keep up to date using professional groups to support our staff, parents and pupils. We have involved external agencies when it has been appropriate. It is a struggle to support parents in understanding why age restrictions are in place - children too frequently are allowed accounts before the legal age and are not monitored sufficiently. Parents are often embarrassed and defensive if their child has been involved and found to be responsible as they see it as a judgement of their parenting. We approach this is proactive way, frequently updating parents on changes in social media etc.”

“I feel it is a very hard thing for schools to investigate with it happening outside of school and not knowing where the messages are from, if messages have been deleted or tampered with. It is impossible for us as a school to be able to tell what is happening completely and monitor this efficiently.”

“All of the incidences occur out of school. We will hear about them only if parents bring them to our attention.”

“Mondays/ after holidays are key times for dealing with fallout from this issue.”

While parental involvement post-incident is important, this complexity of responses also highlights the need for parental involvement in education around online peer-on-peer abuse. A number of comments from staff highlight the fact that parents are sometimes unaware or complacent in the face of abuse. While we didn’t specifically ask about parental engagement in the development of education in this area, it is clear this is a crucial aspect is addressed if we are to tackle these issues effectively:
“It should be the government that has a BIG campaign to make parents aware of the grave dangers that exist...when there is sufficient public outcry, things change...look at the public’s response to plastic in the sea...”

Peer on Peer Abuse: Police Involvement

Respondents were asked how likely they were to involve police officers after incidents of online peer on peer abuse which revolved around indecent content, sexual acts or hate speech. **Respondents were less likely to involve the police when online peer on peer abuse involves hate speech** (homophobia, violence, racism, religious bigotry), as opposed to sexual acts or indecent content (*Figure 6*).

*Figure 6*: How much fo you agree with the following: We involve the police in online peer on peer abuse incidents that involve...

Moreover, legal proceedings, as a result of peer-on-peer abuse incidents were more likely at secondary school level compared with primary school level (1% versus 21%).

The involvement of police is a complex one, and one that requires careful thought (and therefore effective training and policy). Clearly there are some occasions where police intervention is crucial (sexual coercion, abuse using hate speech, etc.) the broader issues around “sexting” sometimes mean that police intervention might result in the criminalization of the victim as well as the instigator of the abuse. While “Outcome 21”
guidance\textsuperscript{7} by police means that a crime can be recorded as “not in the public interest” in the event of the consensual but illegal sharing of self-generated indecent images, this interpretation can still be down to the involvement of the attending officer and we know from previous research\textsuperscript{8} that police training in these issues can be scant. UKCCIS guidance on responding to the sexting incidents\textsuperscript{9} advises only involving the police when there in intent to cause harm or upset. However, this is down to the school to interpret, which highlights the importance of good, up to date, training on both the nature and legislation associated with online peer on peer abuse. We can observe from some of the qualitative responses that this is a complex issue that requires thought, but also effective and well-defined policy, so it can be consistently applied:

“You have to separate out the sexual experimentation that young people engage with, from that which is out to abuse, humiliate, harm and degrade.”

Moreover, sometimes police involvement doesn’t result in effective response:

“Police reluctant to get involved.”

\textsuperscript{7} http://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Police_action_in_response_to_sexing_-_briefing_(003).pdf
5. CONCLUSIONS

The results from the survey research have highlighted that there are both strengths to build on and also challenges around online peer-on-peer abuse. We can show a workforce aware of the issues of online peer-on-peer abuse and, for the majority, policy and training is in place in a lot of establishments.

However, we can also see that both education and training lack coordinated approaches – clearly if education and training differs from school to school, so will knowledge and the capacity to support both victims and instigators in peer-on-peer abuse incidents. More specifically, the results indicate that online peer-on-peer abuse is a highly prevalent and growing problem in schools, with 83% of respondents saying incidents have increased over the last 3 years. An equal number of online peer-on-peer abuse incidents were reported across primary and secondary schools, however there appears to be an overall perception that this is an issue associated more strongly with secondary school. It is important that future training and education for teaching staff alters this perception so online peer-on-peer abuse can be effectively challenged at earlier ages. Not only this, but training for school staff should take a more holistic approach to online peer-on-peer abuse, focusing not only on victim support but the impact upon and support for instigators, as well as being delivered to all school staff.

Training is also variable across different schools, highlighting a lack of national coordination on these matters. Education and awareness of the issues related to online peer on peer abuse are generally delivered to children in our respondents’ schools, but the manner and content of delivery can vary greatly. The involvement of the police is inconsistent – for example, schools are less likely to involve police when addressing peer-on-peer abuse that involves hate speech than they are when there is a sexual element, this may be a reflection of the lack of consistent policy and educational training around legal issues related to online peer on peer abuse.

Perhaps most significantly 61% of respondents felt that they do not receive sufficient guidance and support from government and local authorities. This is reflected in our findings around education and training. We cannot expect school leaders and safeguarding leads to become experts in all aspects of safeguarding without appropriate support and resources. Given the potentially life changing impact
of such abuse on both victim and instigator we are concerned that schools are being left to address these problems in an ad hoc manner. We would like to see far more joined up thinking around these issues to ensure that schools are confident they are addressing the problems effectively and students are receiving accurate and informed education around online peer on peer abuse.
6. APPENDIX

Appendix A – Survey Disseminated

Note: The same survey was replicated across Scotland, but with different year group names.

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Online Peer on Peer Abuse - A Survey for Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads

About your school/setting

1. Is your school
   - Primary
   - Secondary
   - Middle
   - AP/PRU
   - Special educational needs
   - Other (please specify)

2. Is your school
   - State funded
   - Independent

3. How many students do you have on roll?

4. Is your school setting
   - Rural
   - Urban
   - Semi-urban
   - Other (please specify)
Online Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer on peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer on peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, distribution of sexualised content and harassment.

5. Do you feel that there is sufficient guidance from the Department of Education and your local authority around understanding and dealing with online peer on peer abuse?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Have you ever had any online peer on peer abuse incidents in your school?
   - Yes
   - No

7. How often does your school have reports of online peer on peer abuse?
   - Never
   - Approximately once a term
   - Less than 5 a term
   - Between 5 and 10 a term
   - More than 10 a term
   - Too many to measure
8. Have incidents increased or decreased in the last 3 years?
  - Increased significantly
  - Increased
  - No change
  - Decreased
  - Decreased significantly

9. In your opinion when is peer on peer abuse likely to begin?
  - Before year 4
  - Year 4
  - Year 5
  - Year 6
  - Sometime before secondary school
  - Year 7
  - Year 8
  - Year 9
  - Year 10
  - Year 11
  - Year 12
  - Year 13

10. What was the calendar year when the first incident happened at your school/setting?

   [Blank space for input]
11. In your opinion when is peer on peer abuse most prevalent?
   - Before year 4
   - Year 4
   - Year 5
   - Year 6
   - Year 7
   - Year 8
   - Year 9
   - Year 10
   - Year 11
   - Year 12
   - Year 13

12. Does your school/setting have any policies that cover online peer on peer abuse?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don’t know

13. If you answered yes to question 12, in which policies would you find guidance on online peer on peer abuse? (tick all that apply)
   - Anti-bullying
   - Behaviour
   - Child protection
   - Online Safety
   - Safeguarding
   - Other (please specify)
14. Do staff receive any training on online peer on peer abuse?
   - Yes, all staff
   - Yes, just senior and pastoral staff
   - Yes, just senior staff
   - No
   - Don’t know

15. If yes, who delivered this training?
   - In house staff
   - External agency
   - Both

16. What was covered in this training? (Tick all that apply)
   - Behaviours/abusive practices
   - Legal issues
   - Victim support
   - Abuser support
   - Impact on victim
   - Impact on abuser
   - Incident response/triage
   - Resolution techniques
   - Don’t know
   - Other (please specify)
17. How is education on online peer on peer abuse delivered to students?

- Assemblies
- Safer Internet Day
- In PSHE lessons
- In RSE lessons
- In ICT lessons
- During tutor time
- Collected timetable days
- Other (please specify)

18. Which is the youngest year group to whom you deliver education on online peer on peer abuse?

- Before year 4
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- After year 11
19. Do you strongly agree/agree/have no opinion/disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements (tick as appropriate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We deal with online peer abuse incidents on a case by case basis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexting is just a part of wider peer on peer abuse issues</td>
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<td>We involve the police in online peer on peer abuse that involve indecent content</td>
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<tr>
<td>We involve the police in online peer on peer abuse that involve sexual acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>We involve the police in online peer on peer abuse that involve hate speech (homophobia, violence, racism, religious bigotry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online peer on peer abuse is better dealt with in house than involving outside agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>We involve parents in online peer on peer abuse incidents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
20. Which of the following stakeholders would you include when dealing with online peer on peer abuse incidents? (Tick all that apply)

- School senior management
- Pastoral team
- Governors
- Victim's parents
- Abuser's parents
- Police
- LADO
- Children’s Social Care
- MASH
- Other (please specify)

21. Have any online peer on peer abuse incidents at your school ever led to formal legal proceedings (e.g. police caution, prosecution, etc.)

- Yes
- No

22. Do you have any further comments about the issues raised in this survey?