



Information about using technology to deliver children's social care during coronavirus (COVID-19)

We recognise that during the Covid-19 pandemic, social care professionals have increased the use of remote technologies (such as video-conference) to communicate with, safeguard and support children, young people, families and carers. The Government is supporting that through the Get Help with Technology programme which is providing a laptop or tablet to care leavers, and children and families with a social worker (babies as well as older children) if they do not already have one.

The information below is for social care professionals, and others supporting vulnerable children and young people, about using technology safely and effectively. The information is intended to supplement guidance provided by local authorities (and other employers and providers) to their staff and carers.

What best practice advice is there about delivering social work to children, using technology?

The Principle Children and Families Social Worker Network (PCFSW), working with Social Work England, have produced [Best Practice Guide for Video-Call/Contact and Virtual Online Home Visit](#). This includes guidance on topics like planning and managing calls, establishing rapport, and recording information.

How can video conferencing be used more securely when communicating with children, young people and families?

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has produced [Video Conferencing systems: using them securely](#) for individuals. This contains practical advice that may help increase security when using any video conferencing platform.

NCSC has also produced [Video conferencing services: security guidance for organisations](#). This guidance offers recommendations that may help local authorities when choosing video conferencing services, configuring features and accounts, and help staff use platforms securely.

The Local Government Association has identified and commented on a list of video conferencing applications at [Remote Council Meetings: Video conferencing and audio platforms](#).

When selecting a video-conference platform to use, you should follow the guidance of your local authority (or other employer). You should also consider the preference of the family, child, or young person you are communicating with, and try to accommodate them, provided their preference does not conflict with your employer's policies.

How can I help the children and families I work with stay safe online?

The following are 2 pieces of cross government advice to help keep children and families safe online that you can use or signpost to.

[Support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online harms](#) includes advice about specific harms such as online child sexual abuse, sexting and cyberbullying.

[Support to stay safe online](#) includes advice about security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content and parental controls.

Where can I find further support with any online safety issues?

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. They can be contacted by email at helpline@saferinternet.org.uk or by telephone at 0344 381 4772.

How is DfE's Get Help with Technology initiative aiding children's social care during the pandemic?

The [Get Help with Technology](#) programme is providing a laptop or tablet to care leavers, and children and families with a social worker (babies as well as older children) if they do not already have one. This will help social workers to maintain virtual contact with children and families, during a period when social distancing has reduced the number of face-to-face visits. It will help families and care leavers access the practical and emotional support and services they need online to maintain their wellbeing. It will help care leavers keep in touch with their personal adviser online. It will also enable children and young people to access remote education. Wider support is also available, including access to 4G wireless routers for some young people. We are currently delivering laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to local authorities daily. Once delivered, it is the responsibility of the local authority to distribute devices to families, children and young people.

How can social workers improve their digital capabilities?

The British Association of Social Workers and the Social Care Institute for Excellence, as part of their [Digital Capabilities for Social Workers](#) project, have produced resources to help identify the knowledge, skills and values social workers need to develop their use of digital technology in practice.

You can also speak to your local authority (or other employer) about accessing training and support.