

# Praesidio

## SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the third Praesidio Safeguarding newsletter! We hope you will find that it is filled with advice, support and tips. This month we are discussing the topic of gaming.

### GAMING



The latest research from Ofcom found that two thirds of 8-11-year-olds and 72% of 12-15-year-olds are playing online games, with an estimated 2.7 billion players worldwide. This magnanimous global community have established themselves as one of the best connected in the online world. But what is it about this industry that is so compelling to young people and what are some of the risks we should be aware of?



Before we consider some risks, it is important to understand gaming as a community. Websites, such as Twitch, have been established not for players to play games, but instead to watch each other play. Twitch reported an all-time viewer peak of 6,577,002 in January 2021 – that's six and a half million people across the world experiencing games together. With so many players of all different ages and backgrounds connecting online, its essential that we consider some of the risks involved.



As with any interaction online, young people need to consider their arena – public versus private. Whilst the experience of playing in a public setting with people you don't know can be exciting, younger players should begin their online gaming journey in private groups, where each of the players is known to the host. This reduces the risk of encountering inappropriate content in the chat functions, whilst still allowing a multiplayer experience for all. Playing in public settings presents many challenges, as you can never quite be sure who you are playing with. Measures such as avoiding wearing headsets will enable care givers to monitor the chat between participants and intervene if necessary.



To add to the gaming experience, many games allow you to customise your avatar by making in-game purchases known as microtransactions. These transactions allow players to buy 'skins' or accessories for their characters. It is important that young players understand that real money is used to make these purchases, as it will be deducted from the credit card used to set up the game. Whilst there are risks involved in most of the online games children encounter today, it's important to remember that the main objective is to have fun. If young players are shown how to use the game safely, and build towards making safe choices independently, then they can enjoy all of the different features designed to make the experience a great one.

## Safeguarding News



The recent news that commercial pornography sites are not covered in the Online Safety Bill comes as a real concern. The reality of this means that popular sites such as Porn Hub will likely be able to evade the restrictions by simply disabling their user-generated aspect.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>



The coronavirus pandemic could leave a legacy of anxiety and poor mental health and wellbeing among British children and young people, Barnardo's has warned. [Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk)



Olaf Kapella wrote a very thought-provoking blog on his thoughts around parents becoming overwhelmed by the rapid changes in information and communication technologies (ICT) and the sometimes contradictory advice on how best to support their children's safe and beneficial internet use. Families, technology use, and daily life: parents' role in building resilience and mitigating harm – [Parenting for a Digital Future \(lse.ac.uk\)](https://www.lse.ac.uk)

## Information and Signposting



-PEGI (Pan European Gaming Information) provides age classification for video games in 30 European countries. The age rating confirms that the game is appropriate for players of certain age. PEGI considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty. On their website, there is a lot of information around age ratings and how they are decided.

<https://pegi.info/>

### The gaming playbook

Everything you need to know about the gaming audience

The Gaming Playbook is a helpful resource which gives a lot of information about gaming and how it impacts people of different ages.

<https://www.gwi.com/reports/the-gaming-playbook?>

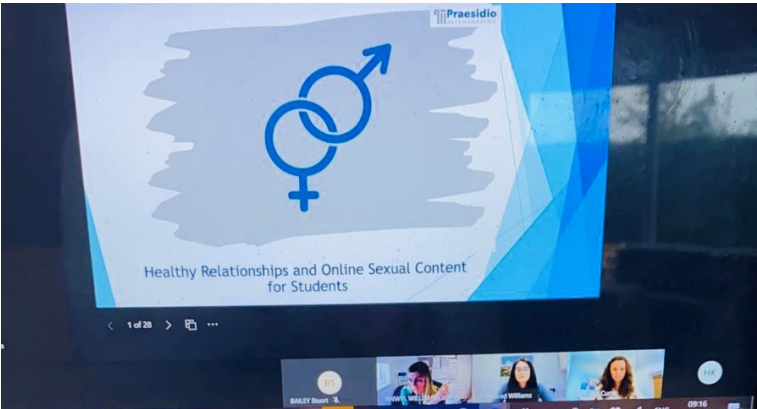


The University of Oxford has recently researched the positives of gaming.

<https://psyarxiv.com/qrijza/>



# May at Praesidio



May has been another month full of great training sessions and workshops. We delivered several Digital Safeguarding sessions to foster carers from Scotland, England and Wales and worked with the sixth form at Cardiff Cathedral to remove the stigma around healthy relationships, consent, digital romance and online sexual content. We have also worked with a number of international charities on safeguarding policies and strategies and continued with a number of ongoing Government contracts.



We were also finally able to have a face-to-face meeting with the whole team. Adapting to the new normal since COVID-19 has been embraced by everyone at Praesidio and we have enjoyed many aspects of remote working, however face to face team meetings will always play a big part in our work.

Training and Support we offer to help support children online.

Our Digital Safeguarding training is a practical three-hour online course to help parents and carers understand the pressures children face in the online world. Conducted by our team, we look at a range of topics including gaming and offer personal effective strategies and approaches to support children online.



Intended for: Parents, carers, professionals.

For more information contact:  
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***The True Character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children - Nelson Mandela***