Impact of Social Media on Young People

Report from the Think Tank on June 2015

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Brighton and Hove: Impact of social media on young people.

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“I think it’s explored many different views on social media. Not only the negatives but the positives too. This is a good way of doing it because everyone gets involved”.

Comment from participant about the think tank event
1. Executive Summary

The Public Health Schools Programme was launched in March 2014 across Brighton & Hove and takes a whole school community approach to health improvement for pupils, staff and parents. The impact of social media on young people became a consistent theme of discussion, resulting in a half-day ‘think tank’ event, held on 25 June 2015, which brought young people and professionals together to develop a citywide approach.

To inform the think tank event a series of ‘finding out’ activities were carried out in May and June 2015. An online survey with parents and carers and with young people highlighted the diverse experiences that young people have with social media. On the one hand social media opens up a treasure trove of information and relationships, supporting young people to develop specialist interests and make valued social connections. On the other hand social media consumes time and is seen as a catalyst for mental health problems. Parents and carers were more concerned about social media use than young people, but within each group there was a wide range of opinions and experiences. Focus groups carried out in youth settings across Brighton and Hove gave young people an opportunity to explore the issues in more depth.

The key themes emerging from the survey and focus groups were:

- **Family conflict:** Young people and parents acknowledge that social media has been a source of conflict between them (although parents are more likely to say so than young people).
- **Time:** Time spent online was a very strong theme. Social media and the internet was described as having an addictive nature and there was often a difference in opinion between parents / children and amongst young people about what was an appropriate amount of time to spend online and whether or not the young person was in control of the time they spent online.
- **Fear of missing out / quality of online content:** Through the focus group discussions, some young people identified what they called ‘FOMO’ or ‘fear of missing out’ and this FOMO was set alongside a sense of frustration about the mixed quality of content online.
- **Safety and privacy:** Young people listed very specific suggestions about how to use content settings to make social media safe and identified risks associated with new / emerging applications:
- **Mental health and emotional wellbeing:** High importance was given to mental and emotional health but comments reflected a lack of vocabulary / knowledge to articulate their concerns. A number of comments related to young people wanting to know how best to help friends with mental health problems if they identified these problems while online.
- **Critical users / consumers.** Young people’s comments point towards a desire to be in control of their use of social media and many are aware of the pitfalls. This included awareness about the commercial nature of the online environment; wanting to be able to see through the design and not feel tricked by scams or hidden agendas. Young people also wanted to be able to manage their digital footprint.

These themes formed the basis for discussion and exploration at the think tank event. It because clear that a positive approach was wanted, which celebrates the best of social media and fosters creativity, as opposed to just focusing on the bad side of social media and mechanisms to limit use. This needs to guide the style of education and safety initiatives aimed at supporting young people.

Participants also called for a young people led response – that reaches peers, parents and professionals, and includes the most vulnerable. A small percentage of young people do not use social media, and issues of digital exclusion warrant further exploration. Mental health and emotional well-being is a ‘backdrop’ off-line issue that needs to be further addressed, possibly using online technology as a means to provide support.
Throughout discussions there was an awareness of the challenge of providing a response to social media, which is itself constantly changing. Actions developed in response to the findings presented in this report therefore need to have inbuilt responsiveness so that sustainability is achieved.

The Public Health Schools Programme has now developed an overarching objective on social media: **to support and prepare young people for the digital world so they can enjoy its wealth of opportunities and remain safe.**

Recommended actions to contribute to this objective are summarised below, and have been developed from the ideas created through group work discussion under these headings during the think tank event.

1. **Education about social media**
   - Work with young people who are experimenting with methods for managing their own time online effectively, to collate these experiences and tips into a form that can be shared.
   - To explore further what the evidence says about digital exclusion and understand the characteristics of young people and the impact of this digital exclusion, to then inform further work.
   - To integrate real life experiences into PSHE teaching in schools and community settings, including reaching those most vulnerable.

2. **Safer use of social media**
   - To explore if there are any applications or websites providing regularly updated safety information from a credible and safe source and then share locally.
   - To revise the training package based on the findings from this think tank that is available to staff and parents and enhance the delivery with stories from local young people and/or parents/carers or co-train with young people.

3. **Understanding of mental and emotional health**
   - To support young people to improve their emotional health and wellbeing across the city.
   - To use the online environment more effectively to support access to good quality information/self-help as well as for signpost to local services which can be easily accessed if problems arise.
   - Gender is a theme that requires further exploration.

4. **Supporting parent and family communication**
   - To increase family communication about social media and other factors affecting young people with a focus on reducing family conflict and increasing safety and support for young people.

5. **Creative**
   - To use the experiences of local young people to create a culture of young people becoming critical or even creative users of social media.

6. **To revise all Public Health, health promotion approaches to ensure best use of social media.**

Finally, the recommendations are to be based within the agreed key principles and in line with the iRights principles.
2. Introduction

a) Why this ‘Think Tank’ project was initiated

Brighton and Hove, Public Health Schools Programme initiated this ‘think tank’ project in response to teachers, youth professionals and young people repeatedly sharing the dilemma they had with social media – ‘it is an everyday part of a young person’s social life, but does it cause too much harm?’. The Public Health Team suggested adopting a collaborative approach where young people and professionals work together to explore the impact social media has on young people’s lives and to agree how we could work together across the city, to create a joined up response to bring the best out of social media and keep young people safe and happy.

This suggestion was met with a positive response!

b) The process and methodology

A date was set for a half day ‘think tank’ event (25\textsuperscript{th} June 2015) and a series of ‘finding out’ activities were carried out in May and June 2015 to inform that event, namely:

- Focus groups (x12) with young people (a total of 91 young people participated), facilitated by youth workers and teachers
- An online survey with parents and carers in Brighton and Hove, which formed part of a broader survey asking parents and carers about mental health and emotional wellbeing – a mix of open text and closed questions
- An online survey with young people in Brighton and Hove, which formed part of a broader survey asking young people about mental health and emotional wellbeing - a mix of open text and closed questions

Findings from these activities were then synthesised by a consultant (Lucy Emmerson, Sex Education Forum) and presented to delegates at the think tank event and used to inform the activities carried out at that event.

c) The focus groups

The focus groups took place in a range of youth venues, with young people ranging from 12 – 23 years old, with the lower age groups (12-14) most heavily represented. The groups included young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and a fairly equal split between male (32) and female (43) participants, with three participants not identifying as male / female. The venues / groups were Downsview Link College, Brighton Town Hall, 67 Centre, Allsorts x 2, Right Here, Blatchington Mill School, Crew Club, Young People’s Centre x 2, Tarner Youth Project and St Richards Church and Community Centre. These groups were facilitated by staff experienced in working with young people such as Youth Workers or the Youth Council.

The focus group sessions lasted approximately one hour. They began with a brainstorm activity to get initial reactions to the theme of social media. The group was then offered a set of statements that they could select from as prompts for further discussion:

“young people these days spend too much time on the internet”

“Friendships online are just as important as those off-line”

“Social media comes between us like a barbed wire fence”
“I worry about what will happen in the future to information I have shared on social media”

“Pictures tell a thousand words”

“My best friends are my online friends”

“I worry about my online reputation”

“Social media can harm someone’s mental health”

“Social media is something you either love or hate”

“Social media is addictive”

“Chatting online takes the embarrassment and taboo off sex and relationships”

“Social media brings people together”

“That’s not really me”

Discussion points were noted on sheets. This led into an action-focused activity in which the group listed ‘what they wished they had known’ about social media and recorded a list of things that could be done to help young people in relation to social media.

**d) The online surveys**

Both online surveys were completed by self-selecting adults (n=161) / young people (n=55) and were promoted by the local authority through their networks and contacts. Data was collected about the demographic of people responding to the survey, but the surveys cannot be viewed as a representative sample because of the small sample size.

The following definition of social media was introduced at the start of the two online questionnaires:

“*By social media we mean the wide range of ‘applications’ for communicating and networking with other people that can be used through the internet – either on mobile phones, tablets or computers. These applications include facebook, twitter, chat rooms, whatsapp, snapchat, tumblr, Instagram and youtube. Text messaging is also a form of social media*."

**e) The think tank delegates**

The list of delegates to invite to the think tank event were selected by Kerry Clarke, Public Health, in consultation with colleagues and included a group of young people from Year 7 at Blatchington Mill School and a group of young people from Year 10 at Varndean School. The event was hosted by Blatchington Mill School and was facilitated by Lucy Emmerson.
3. The fabric of social media: good, bad and ugly

This section draws on the online survey findings to provide a sketch of young people’s experience of social media and parents and carers perspective. A deeper exploration of themes follows in section three.

Young people’s use of social media

The surveys asked young people how they felt about their use of social media and the same questions was asked to parents / carers (about how they felt about their young person’s use).

Firstly, an assumption cannot be made that all young people use social media. Three of the 55 (5%) young people taking part in the survey did not use social media. While this is a small sample research elsewhere raises the issues of digital exclusion.

The surveys revealed a clear difference between parents/carers and young people, with parents/carers far more likely to feel worried about their young person’s use than the young people themselves. 89% of young people surveyed reported being either very comfortable or fairly comfortable with their use of social media. None of the young people responding picked ‘quite worried’ or ‘worried’ to describe their use of social media. In contrast 47% of parents/carers were either ‘quite worried’ or ‘very worried’ about their child’s access to and use.

A selection of open text comments from young people and parents/carers show the wide range of experiences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The best...</th>
<th>The worst...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“helped her to feel part of a social network at school” [parent]</td>
<td>“The bios they write on Instagram list their 'best' friends encouraging exclusivity and feelings of isolation if you are not included in their bio list” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Reading news articles and accessing social events” [parent]</td>
<td>“Xbox games” “YouTube obsession” “constant distraction” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Keep in contact with family who live away” [parent]</td>
<td>“They spend a lot of time consoling their friends which I don't think helps their mental health” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She has made two good friends through social media and they have been positive influences for her” [parent]</td>
<td>“Bullying, harassment” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Counselling, learning guitar, Japanese, story writing skills and more!” [parent]</td>
<td>“Age inappropriate content” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tumblr. Being able to access a trans community with lots of support and advice on offer.” [young person]</td>
<td>“A negative remark was made about her appearance on an Instagram post. She was upset but was able to discuss it and show it to me.” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Helped me find job / accommodation” [young person]</td>
<td>“The general effect of self-image manipulation. People's lives seeming continually wonderful. This is especially impacting to me at times when I've felt low and...” [parent]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“asking others about exam/study questions” [young person]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It has helped me make new friends that I can’t normally do in person due to my self-confidence and my autism” [young person]

“I was able to assist a friend who was having mental health problems when I couldn’t get to them in person”. [young person]

worthless.” [young person]

“Arguments, harassment, being bullied to the point of suicide: “People are constantly bullying others on all social media platforms”[young person]

“Social media has almost become a measure of popularity” [young person]

“Accounts being hacked” [young person]

A similar range of responses were elicited through the focus group sessions. Following individual brainstorming (see picture 1 below) the first activity in the session asked young people to define social media themselves. Their definitions highlight both the beneficial and problematic elements of social media.

“A virtual arena where human beings present their identities” [young person]

“A way of connecting with friends and meeting new people online but can be a way that bullies get to you” [young person]

“A platform for sharing ideas, information and interests” [young person]

“…for the purpose of entertainment, talking, communicating and looking stuff up” [young person]

“pervasive, habitual, time-consuming” [young person]
4. Themes emerging from focus group discussions

The focus group discussions provided an opportunity for more nuanced exploration of the ‘good, bad and ugly’ of social media. Facilitators noted areas of discussion where there was more or less consensus. The focus group feedback as a whole reveals the wide range of views and experiences that young people have in relation to social media.

A summary of themes emerging from the focus group discussions is provided below, illustrated with quotes from young people and facilitators and including some open text responses from the online survey. The key themes emerging were a) family conflict, b) time, c) fear of missing out / quality of online content, d) safety and privacy e) mental health and emotional wellbeing, f) critical users / consumers.

**a) Family conflict**

Young people and parents acknowledge that social media has been a source of conflict between them (although parents are more likely to say so than young people).

“My daughter likes to go on Instagram on her ipad a lot and I find this a barrier to communication within the family” [parent]

“My mum doesn’t have Facebook but finds out things through other people and then tells me about it. It’s never been resolved I just tell her to stop being nosey” [young person]

“older generation doesn’t understand – they think young people spend too much time on internet” [young person]

“I limit his time on a screen to one hour a day, but it is hard to police and we often argue about it” [parent]

Research by Ofcom (2014) found that 9 out of 10 parents mediate their child’s access to the internet in some way including by having rules around access and use, talking with their child, supervising online activity and using technical tools.

Comments also pointed to ways in which young people and parents/carers have gone about resolving conflict. Communication seems to be the key to harmony and resolving problems.

“We have ongoing conversations about the use of social media - the effect of using screens late at night and last thing before sleep” [parent]

“We talked about it in person and made up” [young person]

Young people were also concerned about boundaries / privacy but also wanting to resolve conflict and aware of the impact on quality of relationships within their family.

“When you spend time with your mum or dad you’re just on your phone” [young person]

“I blocked my parents” [young person]

**Action point:** increased family communication about social media and other factors affecting young people may be the key to reduction in family conflict and increased safety and support for young people. How can this be supported?
b) Time

Time spent online was a very strong theme across the focus group and survey responses. Social media and the internet was described as having an addictive nature and there was often a difference in opinion between parents / children and amongst young people about what was an appropriate amount of time to spend and whether or not the young person was in control of the time they spent online.

“My friend was at my house and she was on her iPad the whole time, in the end I wanted to smash it” [young person]

“I just have to have something to do, all the time” [young person]

“Some ‘addicted’ to social media, others don’t use it much” [facilitator]

“Two young people [in the focus group] who said they were addicted, couldn’t put down their tablets/phones for the duration of the conversation” [facilitator]

Young people provided suggestions about how to manage their time online and commented that the level of addictiveness ‘depends on the person’. Suggestions were also made by parents about how time could be managed:

“I have not used Facebook for 56 days. Not using it makes you see how addicted others actually are for it” [young person]

Other research has tried to quantify the time that young people spend online, for example, a survey by the UK Safer Internet Centre asked young people about time spent online and found that over half of young people surveyed said they communicate with their closest friends several times per hour online.

Action point: some young people are experimenting with methods for managing their time online. Can these experiences and tips be collected and shared?

c) Quality and fear of missing out

Through the focus group discussions some young people identified what they called ‘FOMO’or ‘fear of missing out’ and explained that “[social media] can give you the ‘Fear Of Missing Out’, especially as people organise real world events using it” [young person]. The fear of missing out was set alongside a sense of frustration about the mixed quality of content online.

“Young people expressed a level of being on social media not for the sake of what they took from it but more for fear of what they might miss out on”. [Facilitator]

“It would be great if you could filter out all the rubbish, but you can’t” [young person]

These comments contrast with the very positive comments from young people and parents / carers identifying specific interests and specialist information which had been accessed online, for example to learn a new language or hobby.

Action point: More research may be needed to understand peer group dynamics in relation to social media use and to find out what factors support the use of social media to develop interests and to access ‘quality’ content.
Young people also compared the qualities of their online and offline communication and recognised limitations for social media:

“I would rather high five them then putting a high five emoji on the chat” [young person]

“You can’t always put your thoughts and emotions into text” [young person]

d) Safety and privacy

Young people listed very specific suggestions about how to use settings to make social media safe and identified risks associated with new / emerging applications:

“People can screen shot what you say so it’s not safe to say certain things on social media” [young person]

“Many of the young people were wary of social media and talked of raising the age limit on platforms such as Facebook, deleting accounts and the need to be able to report bullying in group chats”. [Facilitator]

The need to be up-to-date with emerging risks and safety tips was apparent and identified that education messages can sometimes become stale:

“Safety messages just keep getting repeated. In school for example, each year its covered it should go into more details and depth – its too generalized and the same old internet safety messages are given time and time again and it makes you switch off. It also takes too much of a lecture / negative mode.” [young person]

Action point: are there any applications or websites providing regularly updated safety information from a credible and safe source?

Other research (EU Kids online 2014) shows that children are strongly influenced by the media's often sensationalist reporting of certain online risks (such as cyber-bullying or meeting an online friend offline), despite the fact that these are in reality less likely to be experienced by the majority of online users. This can lead to them focusing more attention on these potential risks than those they are more likely to experience, such as exposure to violent or sexual content, which is in reality a more common online problem reported by children, or witnessing or receiving nasty messages.

The EU Kinds online report recommends that e-safety education should therefore incorporate the need to educate children on the drawbacks of some media coverage as well as warning about potential online dangers.

Action point: can young people provide information to other young people about how to keep themselves safe, which is interesting, engaging and relevant – that will include live and up to date experiences that are affecting young people?

e) Mental health and emotional wellbeing.

High importance was given to mental and emotional health in survey responses, but comments reflected a lack of vocabulary / knowledge to articulate their concerns. A number of comments related to young people wanting to know
how best to help friends with mental health problems if they identified these problems while online, for example considering if it would help to give their friends more ‘likes’.

Comments from young people and parents and carers identified the benefits that social media can provide for mental health, particularly if a young person is isolated in some way as social media can provide connection with groups of people they could not access physically / locally. However young people also saw social media as a trigger for mental health problems.

“If social media is the only way of communicating with a person then social media can be vital for someone’s mental health”

“If someone has depression or anger problems it would trigger that they would hurt themselves or not eat”

“At school my friends would rather use their phones and play technology games than play actual games or talk to me. I feel left out because I don’t have an iphone and can’t join in”

**Action point:** if social media is a trigger/platform to affect emotional or mental health problems, is there more that can be done to improve young people’s emotional health and wellbeing across the city? How can the online environment be used effectively to support access to good quality information / self-help and signpost to local services which can be easily accessed if problems arise?

**Action point:** Gender is a theme that requires further exploration. For example research has shown that boys are more involved in gaming and girls more interested in social communication online. Parental response to girls / boys social media use also varies – monitoring some aspects of girls activities more closely than boys. (Ofcom 2014)

**f) Being a critical user**

Young people’s comments point towards a desire to be in control of their use of social media, with an awareness of its pitfalls. Some understood the commercial nature of the online environment, whilst some felt that others may need help to be able to see through the scams or hidden agendas. Young people wanted to be able to manage their digital footprint and bring in controls. Knowing that life goes on without social media and there is an element of choice was a key message to get across. So being a critical user is a good goal – but how about going further and being a creative user – able to use social media as a form of creativity and self-expression?

“It’s good for businesses because of the amount of money that social media sites make” [young person]

“I wish I had known more about scams “ [young person]

“likes don’t mean people like you” [young person]

“Don’t do things you know you’re going to regret in the future” [young person]

Finally, one young person advised that life goes on without social media and suggested that this would be useful information for other young people to know.

“It doesn’t matter if you don’t want social media. It may seem essential but it isn’t” [young person]
5. Outputs from the think tank

The think tank event was attended by 68 people including young people from two secondary schools and professionals from the voluntary and statutory sectors representing a wide range of perspectives including education, sexual health, mental health, police, community, family, special educational needs and disability, arts and communications.

The half day event began with a brainstorming activity in groups, followed by a presentation of the survey and focus group findings and a presentation by two pupils from Blatchington Mill School. (insert link to presentation)

Groups responded to the presentations by identifying anything that had surprised them, and identifying any further information that they felt was needed to understand the issues further.

Some of the delegates did not find much to be surprising, but a selection of the comments show the areas that delegates found particularly striking:

- “Young people’s concern about mental health – and lower concerns re bullying than expected”
- “Young people would like to know how someone was feeling via social media so they could help”.
- “Compassion around mental health demonstrated by the young people”.
- “What is addiction? Time involved -how you struggle not having it or looking at it all the time.”
- “Not surprised if adults are addicted.”
- “Acknowledged they were addicted”.

Delegates identified a wide range of issues that they would like to know more about:

- Primary schools and children’s social media use – needs research
- Understand the trigger to be aware/self-aware – immediate.
- What is the need that is being fed? Can we feed it in another way?
- Be aware that there is a real world. Why are young people using social media? “Hobbies.”
- Explore the addiction to social media. Triggers and brain responses
- How do young people ask for help?
- How do people give help online? Some thought this may not be different than in person?
- Attention seeking vs. asking for help?
- What skills are they gaining?
- How can we use these in a positive way?

These initial reactions were followed with group work discussion, with delegates selecting which theme they wanted to work on from this list:
1. **Education about social media**

2. **Safer use of social media**

3. **Understanding of mental and emotional health**

4. **Supporting parent and family communication**

A fifth group was formed choosing to look at ‘creative use of social media’.

A selection of the ideas suggested by each group is presented below:

### 1. **Education about social media**

Considerations would be to take the learning from the ‘finding out activities’ to implement the actions and then use the intelligence in education. Key being:

- Young people themselves
- Parents
- PSHE
- Schools
- Assemblies
- Link through across all subjects to SM
- “Super users” group of young people to inform how we develop strategy and practice – broad definition of social media needed.
- Promotion of “teacher in your pocket.”
- Involve research/academic perspectives – help us to think in different ways.
- Peer to peer approach needs to be open-ended discussions.
- Education that reaches the most vulnerable.

### 2. **Safety**

Ideas for consideration:

- All professionals working/educating young people need to have training on social media so they can present a balanced view e.g. how social media can be used positively.
- Early intervention, particularly for very young children on using social media safely.
- Education for parents including: awareness of benefits and dangers; their own use of social media and impact on their children, balance between openness and policing/snooping.
- Young people made aware of the impact of social media. Protective behaviours. Update PSHE lessons.
3. Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Ideas for consideration:

- Youth led task group champions – emotional health
- Youth-led website – or make local one.
- Dumping website “antisocial media”.
- Anonymous like/love buttons on websites/anonymous posts and feedback. “Silent secret”.
- Apps – warnings/self-regulation
- Website toolkit for pupils & teachers. Message boards & links to mindful computing resources/legal data.
- YP make video of personal experiences or theatre piece for younger age group.
- Young people working task group leading further research/discussion.
- Youth mental health Kite marks for SM platforms e.g. Facebook.
- Lower years teaching older years – help teachers understand

4. Family

Ideas for consideration:

- Young people training parents so move away from negative view. Swap a parents evening for training – celebration of young people’s efforts and myth busting.
- Apps for supporting health and wellbeing.
- Focus on positive aspect of social media as a prompt for discussion/interaction e.g. global news.
- Parents/carers forum to learn from each other – regulate.
- Exploiting potential for playfulness
- Public Health campaign to raise issues – positive aspects.
- Having a discussion with adults/parents/self-reflection on their own use of SM.
- Shared protocol with agencies to give information to families.

5. Creative approaches

- No recorded set of ideas – but top idea shared was about a city-wide activity via social media involving written lines of song lyrics.

6. Key principles and locus of action

This section aims to draw out common themes and areas of consensus from across the think tank discussions and group work outputs, so that actions can be prioritised. A clear consensus emerged supporting the following set of cross-cutting principles:

- Celebrate the best of social media & foster creativity (not just the bad side)
- A young people led approach – that reaches peers, parents and professionals
- Needs to be responsive to constant technological change, but also sustainable
- Address ‘backdrop’ off-line issues: mental health & emotional well-being
- Ensure effective promotion of existing support
- Reaching the most vulnerable
- Education
- Safety

**Action point:** use these principles as a check-list against which any action can be considered. These principles are similar to the ‘iRights’ principles that have been developed nationally (the right to remove, the right to know, the right to safety and support, the right to informed and conscious choices, the right to digital literacy). [http://irights.uk/the_irights/](http://irights.uk/the_irights/)

Across all group discussions the following topics emerged that can be addressed within different actions and initiatives.

**a) The key topics (What)**

- Information on the law (for children and young people)
- Critical users / critical thinking e.g. journalism, agenda behind content, shock value, commercialism
- Time spent on-line – how to manage it (young people can suggest tips)
- ‘Peer pressure’ didn’t come up but ‘fear of missing out’ did
- How to identify when a friend (or self) needs help with mental health (on and off-line) – what to do next
- Resilience and resourcefulness – supports wellbeing both on and off-line
- Knowing the triggers for self-awareness, knowing the triggers for ‘over-use’
- Communication skills in general (on and off-line) (assertive, passive, aggressive etc)
- Education about safety mechanisms e.g. flagging
- Self-image
- Supporting family communication
- Professionals want to hear from young people: what they use and how
b) The following diagram shows both the locus of action emerging from the think tank discussions:
Diagram: stakeholders and settings (who and where)

**Who?**

- **Children & young people**
  - Ensure inclusion of CYP with SEND and digitally excluded

- **Professionals**
  - “More training for professionals so they can present a balanced view”

- **Parents and carers**
  - CYP-led delivery of training to parents & carers (also staff and other pros) – through workshops, or other format

- **Nation-wide**
  - What is happening in other local authorities?
  - Links with iRights, academics,

**Where?**

- **Whole-school:** Reference social media and safe internet use across all relevant policies and subjects. Mark events (e.g. Safer Internet Day)

- **PSHE in school**
  - Ensure that issues related to social media are mapped in an age appropriate way throughout the primary and secondary PSHE curriculum with the aim of developing a range of relevant skills i.e. resilience, safety, consent.
  - Mapping SM within PSHE provision: primary and secondary (mental health, resilience, communication skills, consent / pressure)

- **City-wide**
  - Celebration, innovation, creative arts, kite-mark, inter-agency, use SM to connect, inter-generational, signposting, careers in SM.....

**Research: gaps and fact finding**

- Brain science, adolescent development, sleep
- Social contexts
- Full literature review / identify academics
- Use of social media by pupils in primary school
- Look at NCB partnership for mental health and wellbeing in schools
7 Recommendations:

Public Health Schools Programme objective on social media:

- to support and prepare young people for the digital world so they can enjoy its wealth of opportunities and remain safe

The think tank participants explored the pre-session findings under five themes and for the purpose of this report we have produced the recommendations under these headings.

1. Education about social media
   a. Work with young people who are experimenting with methods for managing their own time online effectively, to collate these experiences and tips into a form that can be shared.
   b. To explore further what the evidence says about digital exclusion and understand the characteristics of young people and the impact of this digital exclusion, to then inform further work.
   c. To integrate real life experiences into PSHE teaching in schools and community settings, including reaching those most vulnerable.

2. Safer use of social media
   a. To explore if there are any applications or websites providing regularly updated safety information from a credible and safe source and then share locally.
   b. To revise the training package based on the findings from this think tank that is available to staff and parents and enhance the delivery with stories from local young people and / parents/carers or co-train with young people.

3. Understanding of mental and emotional health
   a. To support young people to improve their emotional health and wellbeing across the city.
   b. To use the online environment more effectively to support access to good quality information / self-help as well as for signpost to local services which can be easily accessed if problems arise.
   c. Gender is a theme that requires further exploration.

4. Supporting parent and family communication
   a. To increase family communication about social media and other factors affecting young people with a focus on reducing family conflict and increasing safety and support for young people.

5. Creative
   a. To use the experiences of local young people to create a culture of young people becoming critical or even creative users of social media.

6. Public Health
   a. To revise all Public Health, health promotion approaches to ensure best use of social media.
   b. A super users group will be developed in partnership with young people and they will monitor and review the evaluation of the action plan. This will be made available in October.
AIM: Brighton & Hove City Council’s Public Health Schools Programme aims to provide a whole school community approach to health improvement for pupils, staff and parents in collaboration with Schools and our partners.

- Social media outcome: to support and prepare young people for the digital world so they can enjoy its wealth of opportunities and remain safe

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective (matched with Recommendation)</th>
<th>What will be done</th>
<th>How/who/when we will do this</th>
<th>How we will know this is having an impact*</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. To ensure young people’s voice and experience are kept at the centre of recommendations and actions.</strong> (Recommendation 1.a and 3 a)</td>
<td>Form a super users (SUs) group to lead and delivery of the action plan. (ensure diversity and digitally excluded young people if possible)</td>
<td>Kerry Clarke (Public Health) to identify a lead school. First task group in October – then termly. Public Health and the CCG will release grant funding and oversee the application and selection process alongside task group. Sept – Dec.</td>
<td>Strong representation of young people and functioning task group that informs developments. All actions endorsed by the SU’s group. Young people’s qualitative feedback. Ten projects successfully completed that supports other children and young people to access digital technologies creatively, knowledgeably and fearlessly and improves young people’s resilience.</td>
<td>Discuss with the Youth Council Need to look at how this transfers to / includes primary schools. iRights is a civil society initiative that seeks to make the digital world a more transparent and empowering place for children and young people (under 18) by delivering a universal framework of digital rights, in order that young people are able to access digital technologies creatively, knowledgeably and fearlessly.</td>
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<td>Link with the Councils Comms Team and ITC support, as well as existing social media activities.</td>
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<td>Compare the principles coming out of the think tank and the iRights principles.</td>
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<td>Provide and promote a small grant for young people to develop projects that addresses the key principle agreed at the think tank event and present at a show case event in 2016.</td>
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2. To equip young people with the skills and competency to deal with modern day technologies that builds resilience & to support young people to become ‘critical users’ of social media (Recommendation 5.a and 3a)

- Right Here volunteers to create:
  - Video/Vox Pox, (the Good, the Bad and the Ugly of social media – maybe use the idea of FB activity within everyday life eg poking someone in the street, etc.)
  - Develop and deliver workshops and teaching resources
  - Viral campaigns to be developed – critical users work and asking for help when needed.

To work with two schools to develop their pupil voice to implement the above campaigns and resources within schools.

- Volunteer skills training (Film Production/Presentation Skills/ Peer Facilitation/ Social Media and Mental Health Induction) (volunteer feedback forms on training)
- Workshop feedback from Teachers, Students, & Volunteers – new feedback forms & metrics for actionable feedback.
- Stakeholders involved: Right Here, schools, young volunteers, pupils, standards and achievements, CCG, Community CAMHs,
- Monitor Webpages (Right Here, School etc) – no of visits, number of resource downloads/shares, views of film
- #hashtag campaign (number of tweets)
- Volunteer feedback on impact of volunteer placement on their own social media use (forms/opportunity to feedback via 121 session)

Link with schools on how to take workshops into school settings – young people and parents

Important that the video / vox pop moves towards resilience / coping / critical user strategies / tips for young people rather than just reiterating what can go wrong.

Ensure equalities reach is included / addressed.

Develop working partnership with relevant organisations who expressed an interest at the think tank event.

Importance of establishing feedback channel for post workshop follow up: dialogue continuing in schools? (PHSE, Pastoral, Extra-curricular)
### Public Health Schools Programme

#### 3. To use the opportunities available through social media to improve easy access to high quality information, self-help support and access to appropriate support to build emotional health and wellbeing.

(Recommendation 3a, 3b and 2a)

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<tr>
<td>As part of the Emotional health and wellbeing Transformation, the CCG will lead on the review and developing an innovative communication system that provides support about services and how to access them, by taking opportunities available in digital and social media.</td>
<td>The CCG will design a specification that will be released by October. Tender process will be October to December. Implementation stage - tbc</td>
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<td>Stakeholders involved: CCG, Third sector, Digital media experts, young people’s parents, Children, young people and their families will provide positive feedback on how to access support and information online in Brighton and Hove. Increasing number of hits to the social media platforms. Positive self-evaluation through social media.</td>
<td>This will be part of the wider transformation of emotional health and wellbeing services in Brighton. Apps and websites – are the links that can be developed to sites that provide regular updates on safety information. Use learning from what is in place</td>
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#### 4. To integrate young people’s real-life experiences of social media within PSHE of emotional health.

(Recommendation 1c)

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<td>All new Council resources developed reference social media / internet safety appropriately or use social media related case studies. Top tips in incorporating work around safety and social media etc into PSHE teaching to be developed for PSHE teachers (supported with training if required) Internet Safety Day 2016 to be promoted to all schools.</td>
<td>As part of the PSHE Adviser and PSHE lead Teacher roles working in partnership with schools, young people and ‘experts’ Stakeholders: from above objectives. Standards and Achievements., Paul Platts, Community CAMHs, Youth Services. PSHE Curriculum Frameworks reference show that internet safety is woven into provision Positive feedback from service users.</td>
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#### 5. To review training packages delivered on digital inclusion or internet safety to include learning from the think tank.

| Existing training packages that are available to school to be reviewed by autumn 2015. The PH Schools Programme will promote this purchased service to schools from Autumn 2015. New stories and intelligence from the SU group to be fed into the training packages. | Public Health, Comms and ICT will work together to review training for schools. Public health and ICT will jointly attend the SU group to ensure intelligence feeds training. | Schools need to purchase the support from ICT – look at supporting ways to get information across, i.e. youtube / communications through websites. Links with workforce development for the professionals working with youth. |

#### Outstanding issues:

- **Links with primary education:** run focus groups with primary school pupils and compare findings from those already done with older children and revise the above objectives.

- **To explore the potential to work alongside local university’s to:**
  - examine the impact of social media on social and cognitive development
  - to understand peer group dynamics in relation to social media use
  - to find out what factors support the use of social media to develop interests and to access ‘quality’ content.
  - Gender is a theme that requires further exploration. For example research has shown that boys are more involved in gaming and girls more interested in social communication online. Parental response to girls / boys social media use also varies – monitoring some aspects of girls activities more closely than boys. (Ofcom 2014)

Special thanks to:

Young People who shaped the event:
- Young People from Blatchington Mill,
- Young People from Varndean

Partners who led the groups
- Young People’s Centre,
- Youth Council
- Right Here
- The Youth Collective.
- Tarner Youth Project
- Crew Club
- Young People’s Centre
- Hangleton and Knoll project

Think tank participants.
- Young People
- Youth Employability Service BHCC
- Youth Advocacy Project
- Longhill School
- Brighton University
- Our Future City
- Varndean
- CAMHS BHCC
- PRU
- LSCB
- Youth Council and Youth participation Team, Partnership Forum Youth and Wider Voice
- Social Media Officer BHCC
- Education Psychologist BHCC
- Senior Learning Officer BHCC
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service.
- SoundCity BHCC

Youth Collective
- Youth Worker Trust for Developing Communities
- Sex & Relationships Educator & Trainer
- Homewood College
- School Nurse
- Sussex Police
- ICT Support for Schools BHCC
- Parenting Team, Children and Families BHCC
- YMCA Downslink Group
- WISE
- Family nurse supervisor Whitehawk
- CAMHS lead
- Education Psychologist CAMHS
- Dialogue
- Health Promotion Specialist
- Emmaus
- Blatchington Mill
- Amaze
- Brighton and Hove Youth Service
- Public Health
- Youth Service
- Integrated Families for Children
- TAPA

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