

**SAFETYNET GUIDANCE ON
RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION ON PARENTAL INTERNET CONTROLS
Deadline 6 September 2012**

The Consultation is aimed at a broad range of the public but many of the questions seem to be more appropriate for parents and carers, and the following guidance is designed to help you.
(There is a separate section for businesses/industry at the end which you can ignore)

Decide which of the following categories you fall into. Then look for the parts of these notes that refer to you as below:

Parent (P)
Grandparent/other family member (G)
Carer (C)
Voluntary/community sectors, teachers, someone who works with children (V)
Under 18 (U18)
'All' when guidance applies to all categories
Academic/researcher

The consultation questions appear in italics below.

*Please read carefully and **answer in your own words. Always use courteous language.***

Section 1 – *Your details: tick the box that describes you best and specify in the space below.*

C – a carer ticks 'member of public not described above'

V – a teacher or someone who works with child/ren also ticks this box.

Section 2 – What has already been done

1. What existing parental controls on access to the internet and internet-enabled devices do you use to help your children stay safe online?

P, G - describe what controls are used by you/in your wider family.

C, V - describe, to the best of your knowledge, the controls used for the child/ren you care for or work with.

U18 - list the controls your parents or carers have put on.

All - in the comment box explain whose controls you have described and who put them on, and any other comments.

2. Which of the parental controls you selected in Question 1 do you find the most useful?

All - Comment as you can about the controls you listed in no. 1

3. Is there anything that would make it easier for you to use the parental controls already available on the devices and broadband connections you already have?

All - Describe your experience and make your own suggestions if any.

You can also say that pornography being automatically blocked would make it simpler for you and far less harmful material would get through to your devices e.g. laptops, games consoles, smartphones, TV etc.

4. All - simply choose Yes, No or Not sure and add comments if you wish.

[NB: It is important to note that the Code of Practice places emphasis on parental controls, informing and educating. It does not include the 'opt-in' measure or network level filtering. Similarly, it does not cover all existing users or devices, apart from TalkTalk. Parental control would be ideal however statistics reveal this is far from the case. According to Ofcom, only 39% of households have devices, Internet controls or filtering software in place, where a child aged 5-15 uses the internet at home (SOURCE: Ofcom 'Children and parents: media use and attitudes report' – October 2011).

The filters are not 100% full proof. The 'opt-in' option would go one step further and support parents/guardians who are not proficient in the use of technology.]

5. Is there anything you think should be added to the code of practice, saying what internet service providers should have to do, or anything that should be taken away?

All - you might want to suggest some of these: extending the enforced choice re parental controls so not just new, but also existing customers have to choose; that all devices in a household are covered; that strict age verification should be in place on all controls; that information to customers about online safety should be sent out more regularly than once a year, and this could be easily done by email in the same way as internet service providers (ISPs) send out advertisements for their products to customers; ISPs should also provide a default setting of porn 'off' at ISP network-level.

Section 3 - The role of parents

The following questions seek your views on the role of parents in child internet safety.

6. When it comes to keeping children safe online (tick a box):

Parents have the main responsibility OR Businesses do OR they have a shared responsibility

All - we suggest the 3rd choice - that parents and businesses have a shared responsibility.

7. Which of the following types of internet content and online behaviour do you know for sure that your children have been exposed to?

P & G – refer to your children/the children in your wider family;

C, V – refer to the child/ren you care for or work with and your observations.

U18 – refer to yourself and add the age at which you were exposed in the comment box below

8. Which types of internet content and online behaviour do you think most worries your children?

P & G – refer to your children/the children in your wider family;

C, V – refer to the child/ren you care for or work with and your observations.

U18 – refer to yourself and your own experience.

9 Which of these issues listed in Questions 7 and 8, do you think you need most help protecting your children from online?

P & G – refer to your children/the children in your wider family;

C, V – refer to the child/ren you care for or work with and your observations.

U18 – refer to yourself

All - definitely include pornography (the main focus of Safetynet: www.safetynet.org.uk).

The following questions seek your views on the ways of helping parents keep children safe.

10. a), b) and c) are different filter systems.

All - we suggest you tick 'Yes' for 10 a), the option providing the greatest protection. Tick 'No' to b) and c).

a) is the only proposal that gives the most effective protection from internet pornography which is becoming a very serious problem for children and young people. This would mean the default setting for porn would be 'off' at ISP network-level, with an 'opt in' for over 18s, and strict age verification. This would cover all your internet-enabled devices and give the most effective protection for children from pornography which is now more abusive and degrading than ever before. (Existing filter systems such as TalkTalk's HomeSafe already offer filters for other content in 7 & 8.)

10b and 10c would not require strict age verification, merely a tick in a box, so would be less effective.

11. Do you think systems like this should be in place for all internet connections and households, or just for those with children?

All - YES, we suggest that ALL households must be covered in order to protect children best.

12 Do parents and others responsible for more vulnerable children (for example, the very young, the emotionally vulnerable, children with learning difficulties, children without responsible parents) need additional help?

All – with option 10a above this would not be necessary.

Section 4 – Education and awareness

13. How do you or your children most like to get information about the safe use of the internet?

All - refer to yourself and/or the children you have referred to in previous questions.

14. Where would you or your children be most likely to get information you can trust about being safe on line?

All - refer to yourself and the children you have referred to in previous questions

It would be in the interest of ISPs to provide a more socially responsible service for customers.

15. In addition to education (for parents, children, those who work with children), what other things can be done to protect children from negative online behaviours such as cyberbullying, sexting ...?

All – you could suggest better monitoring and regulation of social networking sites and online traffic, to include peer to peer online contact eg on mobile phones. Parents need to be made more aware of the dangers.

You have finished the questions! Thank you for taking part.

Now go to the end of question 28 to ask for an acknowledgement of your response, and tick a box allowing or disallowing further contact from the DfE.

Send your response to the address shown below by 6 September 2012

By post to: Child Safeguarding Division, Department for Education, Level Ground, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

By e-mail to: ParentalInternetControls.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk