

# Hertfordshire

## Safeguarding Adults Board

*Working together to prevent abuse*

### **Cyber abuse and cyber bullying**

Cyber abuse and cyber bullying are generally defined as the use of internet, interactive or digital technologies by one or more people to exploit, deceive, bully, harass, intimidate, threaten, sexually abuse or steal from another individual. The term cyber-abuse and cyber bullying most commonly refers to the abuse and bullying of children or teenagers, however, in principle could also be against adults at risk.

Examples of abuse could include:

- tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or targeting an individual;
- stalking/harassment/spy on/tracking an individual;
- 'trolling' which is the antisocial act of causing personal conflict or controversy on line;
- stealing passwords or hacking into computers - may be to impersonate the adult at risk or commit crime or fraudulent acts to the adult at risk;
- grooming or exploitation, including sexual;
- sending or using pornographic images or photos, including 'sexting' use of mobile phones/devices to take and send indecent or provocative images, or setting people up to receive emails from porn sites;
- sending malicious virus or spyware to PCs or devices;
- impersonation of the adult at risk to provoke attack/abuse - posing as the adult at risk and posting messages which would deliberately invite attack against the adult at risk.

In terms of safeguarding adults at risk, agencies in Hertfordshire should work together to raise awareness of the risks and how abuse may happen, how to stay safe when using the internet or interactive technologies, and how to report concerns and abuse.

Further useful information is available at:

Hertfordshire Constabulary website: [www.herts.police.uk](http://www.herts.police.uk)

UK National Crime Agency – Thinkuknow website: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Bullying UK website: [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

NHS choices website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, criminal and civil laws can apply in terms of harassment or threatening behaviours and threatening and menacing communications. These include the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, Section 43 of the

Telecommunications Act 1984, the Communications Act 2003 and Public Order Act 1986.