

## Safer Internet Day

### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February

**Safer Internet Day takes place in February of each year to raise awareness of a safer and better internet for all, and especially for children and young people.**



Over the years, **Safer Internet Day** has become a landmark event in the online safety calendar. Starting as an initiative of the EU Safe Borders project in 2004 and taken up by the Insafe network as one of its earliest actions in 2005, Safer Internet Day has grown beyond its traditional geographic zone and is now celebrated in approximately 170 countries worldwide. Last year over half of children and young people in the UK heard about the campaign, but it also involves and influences government, charities, police forces and tech companies including social media and gaming platforms.

In fact, in 2023, over 5,000 organisations across the UK delivered activities for the day. It was profiled on national TV and radio, from the BBC and Sky, to the Independent and the Mirror. Coverage included young people across the country being interviewed about their experiences and hopes for the future of the internet. Millions more people engaged with the day online: we saw people across the UK sharing their celebrations on Twitter and Instagram, there was a custom Safer Internet Day Snapchat filter, and over 30,000 young people tested their online safety knowledge with safer internet quizzes.

Safer Internet Day is also a celebration – of everything the internet has done and can do for us all. Imagine a world without the internet – how would your life change?

As part of this annual celebration, we encourage everyone - including children and young people, parents and caregivers, teachers and educators, policymakers, industry, and others - to join "Together for a better internet". Save the date for **Safer Internet Day 2024** which will take place on **Tuesday, 6 February 2024**.

This year's theme will be **'Inspiring change? Making a difference, managing influence, and navigating change online'**. For 2024, the UK Safer Internet Centre is looking to see 'thousands of organisations get involved to promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people.' Safer Internet Day is looking to encourage children and young people to shape the online safety support that they receive whilst exploring the following areas:

- Young people's perspective on new and emerging technology
- Using the internet to make change for the better
- The changes young people want to see online
- The things that can influence and change the way young people think, feel and act online and offline

This Safer Internet Day we're encouraging you to take three simple actions when approaching online safety: Connect. Reflect. Protect.

**Connect** safely by keeping apps and devices secure and reviewing your privacy settings regularly.

**Reflect** on how your actions online may affect others or your safety.

**Protect** yourself and others by visiting <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide> to find out how to stay safe online and report online abuse.

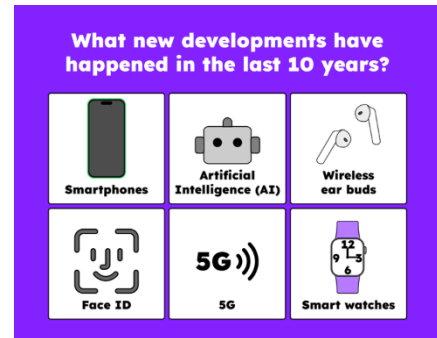
By doing these things and sharing the Connect. Reflect. Protect message, we can work towards making every day a Safer Internet Day.

## Change online

The theme for Safer Internet Day this year all about change online.

Technology is changing all the time, often at a rapid rate. Think about how technology has changed in your lifetime alone. What new developments have happened in the last 10 years?

- Smartphones
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Wireless ear buds
- Face ID
- 5G
- Smart watches



## *How many of these have you used?*

Of course, we can also think about this theme in another way: how the internet is changing us. What we see online, who we see it with, how long we see it for, how we see it... all of the content we come across and interact with has the potential to influence the way we think, feel and act.

- What you spend your time doing?
- What you spend your money on?
- Your interests?
- Your opinions?
- Your ideas?
- The decisions you make?

It's likely that all of these have been influenced or even changed by your use of technology and the internet in some way. So, let's start by thinking about how the internet can change our lives for the better.

Who or what online has allowed you to change, learn, or grow in a positive way? You might be thinking of:

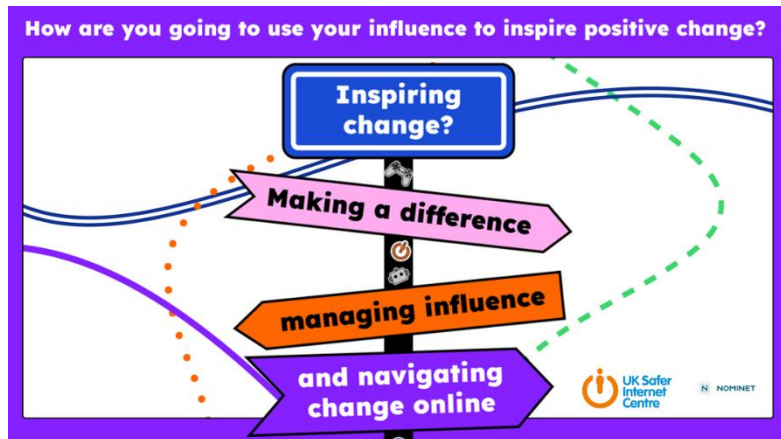
- Creating communities or connecting with others
- Hearing about important issues
- Insights into lived experiences different to your own
- Content that builds your confidence
- Being inspired to try something new

There are some great things on this list, but we know that technology and the internet can also have a negative influence on us too...



In turn, this can lead to feeling negative emotions, so it's important to be able to identify these negative influences and manage them in a way that will help each of us to thrive online.

Here at the Sysco group we want to make sure you are safe, in all parts of your life including online. If something you've seen online or something that happened online is worrying you or affecting you, please come to us for help and advice by speaking to your safeguarding office or by speaking to Sysco's safeguarding lead. ([Nadine.Mcenuff@sysco.uk.com](mailto:Nadine.Mcenuff@sysco.uk.com)).



In this briefing we have looked at how technology and the internet are changing all the time. These changes mean that we can access and consume content in ways that have never been done before, which can influence us in lots of positive ways but also in some negative ways as well.

However, many of you will also be using the internet to message, share and post your own content online. That means you're not just being influenced online, but also potentially influencing others too. So, one thing we challenge you to reflect on this Safer Internet Day is: **How are you going to use that influence to inspire positive change?**

**For more information on safer internet day visit;**

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2024>

