



This One Page Briefing was published in February 2026

One Page Briefing: Com Networks

This briefing is aimed at raising awareness amongst professionals only and must not be shared directly or discussed with children or their families.

Community 'Com' Networks are online groups involved in child sexual abuse, cybercrime, serious violence and extremism. Com Network offenders often use grooming and extortion tactics to coerce a victim, with the aim of obtaining intimate images to humiliate, degrade or control them. In extreme cases, victims have been coerced into self-harm or attempting suicide; including the ingestion of toxic/harmful materials, or burning themselves. Victims may also be forced to record or livestream these acts, which are then shared within the groups to increase the status and notoriety of the perpetrator. In addition, there is a risk that victims are coerced into recruiting others into Com Network activity and/ or harming others including their siblings and even strangers in the most extreme cases.

Com Networks are present on virtually all **social media** and **online gaming platforms**. Those involved (victims and perpetrators) are predominantly (but not always) children under the age of 18.

It is essential that professionals across South Gloucestershire who are working with and supporting children are aware of Com Networks and the safeguarding risk they pose to children. Raising awareness across all agencies is key to early identification and prevention of Com Network activity.

There has been an [alert](#) produced by government agencies which is designed to raise awareness and assist professionals in recognising and responding to the emerging threat of Com Networks. Professionals working with children should familiarise themselves with this alert and share this briefing with relevant colleagues. **Please be aware that this alert contains material which some people may find distressing.**

What should you do if you are worried that a child has been exposed to a Com Network?

This is not an exhaustive list but provides some ideas around next steps you can consider progressing if you have concerns that a South Gloucestershire child who you are working with or supporting has been exposed to Com Network activity:

- Complete [South Gloucestershire's Risk Outside The Home \(ROTH\) Tool](#) for the child, to explore and evidence the risks.
- Make a referral for the child to the [South Gloucestershire ROTH Tactical Group Meeting](#).
- Contact/ make a referral to the [Access and Response Team \(ART\)](#), if the child does not have an allocated worker in Children's Services.
- Together with the child/ their family, report the concerns to [Avon and Somerset Police](#). Advise the child not to delete anything that could be useful in an investigation such as messages, images, usernames.
- Consider what wellbeing support may be required for the child; this could include pastoral support through school or a referral to CAMHS. For more ideas check out [One You South Gloucestershire](#).
- If there is more than one child implicated in the same Com Network activity, consider undertaking a [Peer Mapping](#) to explore whether a wider response is needed to safeguard a number of children.
- Explore resources available at [Internet Matters](#) and [CEOP Safety Centre](#) to support you and/ or parents/caregivers to talk to the child about what has happened to them. Marie Collins Foundation has a [free resource](#) for professionals to use with children who have been sexually harmed through use of technology.
- If you feel that a child is at immediate risk of harm, the police should be contacted on 999.
- Professionals should be aware that during an interaction with a child involved with or a victim of Com Network activity, you may be exposed to distressing behaviour, disclosures or material. Any wellbeing concerns you have about yourself, or colleagues should be discussed with your line manager or through your organisation's supervision and wellbeing processes.