



# Parent Info User Interview Report

from London Connected  
Learning Centre



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**“Trusted partner for communications with parents”**

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**“Not biased”**

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**“Quick to get an article out with advice”**

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so is accessible to parents”**

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coming back to the school site”**

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# Summary

In summer 2018 London Connected Learning Centre conducted telephone interviews with a range of users of the Parent Info service to gauge how successfully Parent Info has been achieving its purpose, and to establish whether there are differences in the ways in which users deploy the service. A sample of non-users was also interviewed by telephone and face to face, including at the Digital Families October 2018 conference.

The Parent Info users interviewed for this report were overwhelmingly positive about the value of the service as a trusted source of up to date online safety (and wider) advice. They use the advice in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes with different categories of stakeholders in the wider education and children's services sector.

The non-users interviewed said it sounded like a service that would match or exceed other services they value and they were likely to become users of it.

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# 1. Context

Children and young people are increasingly using online services and platforms, apps and social media, with a variety of positive, negative or simply unknown impacts, according to recent reports from a range of organisations. Many children and young people have access to a variety of connected devices and spend time on them on a daily (and nightly) basis as well at the weekend and holiday times. They also use devices in school, though these may be workstations with keyboards and mice, or laptops, and are likely to be subject to a range of restrictions or safeguards put in place by the school or on its behalf by its service or support provider.

The National Curriculum Computing Programme of Study and Keeping Children Safe in Education (both the 2018 version and its predecessor) place a statutory requirement on schools to provide effective online safety education. Recent non-statutory guidance published as part of the government's ICT Strategy provides a framework with links and progression that encompasses not just the online safety strand of Computing but also the relevant aspects of PSHE and Citizenship. A number of organisations now provide high quality materials to support schools in this important aspect of teaching and learning which intersects with safeguarding responsibility. In addition, some advice is available directly to children and young people from a range of sources and organisations.

Traditionally, children and young people, schools, parents and guardians are held to be key stakeholders in a child's education and growth. Where all three are joined in positive dialogue and mutual understanding, this can lay a

powerful foundation for a child or young person to thrive. This level of positive engagement is needed when it comes to online safety and parental advice to overcome ignorance, fear or indifference to the issue.

Where, then, can a school turn to for support if it wishes to develop this partnership with parents? Some schools have developed successful strategies for engaging with parents, sometimes in challenging circumstances; others may be on the path to doing so. Some have received accreditation through schemes such as the 360 Safe award for which demonstrating community and parental engagement is a requirement.

However, often school staff may feel that they themselves are out of touch with what advice should be given to children, young people and their parents.

Enter Parent Zone and its partner CEOP (part of National Crime Agency (NCA)) - the originators of Parent Info. These organisations have regular contact with children and young people, their parents, guardians and schools, and recognised the need for an advice service. Parent Info was launched in 2015 after an initial pilot phase, and has recently been further developed as a website. The content on Parent Info is produced by leading experts and specialist organisations and carefully edited and curated for schools by Parent Zone. Topics covered include sex, relationships and the internet, body image and peer pressure, as well as broad parenting topics such as **'how much sleep do teenagers need?'**

## 2. Aims of the study

In spring 2018 Parent Zone commissioned London Connected Learning Centre (London CLC) to conduct telephone interviews with a range of users of the Parent Info service over the summer months.

London CLC has a long history of supporting schools with online safety advice and activities in school such as online safety workshops for pupils and parents. We have experience of training teachers and school staff and governors, running events and conferences, and developing curriculum materials. We work directly with children and young people, as well as their schools, families and the community and a number of partner organisations. We have a good understanding of the context in which Parent Info is providing its service.

The purpose of this evaluation project has been to gauge how successfully Parent Info has been achieving its purpose, and to establish whether there are differences in the ways in which users deploy or 'signpost' the service and what some of those differences may be, in respect of the sample group of users questioned.

# 3. Methodology and scope

We interviewed a range of respondents:

- Class teacher (primary)
- Computing coordinator
- Digital curriculum leader
- Member of school SLT
- ICT coordinator
- School business manager
- Designated safeguarding lead
- Head of pastoral
- IT technician
- Prevent and safeguarding officer
- Local authority role
- Police community support officer

Not all of those interviewed had direct contact with parents themselves, though many did and many were responsible for other staff who did.

Most interviews were around 30 to 40 minutes long, some shorter. We were seeking qualitative or evaluative responses rather than quantitative data and did not as a matter of course challenge or push for further information. Some respondents had little to say about some questions. Those questions may not have been applicable to their own context or they were not able to recall full information (for example in response to how long they had been using the service).

In some cases respondents were relaying their perceptions or impressions of the service rather than actual accurate information. However, these responses are also of significance.

Generally questions were followed in sequence, but where a respondent was more discursive, and more than one question addressed in a given answer, a reasonable approach was adopted to avoid unnecessary repetition/revisiting topics already covered.

Alongside those institutions and organisations who have used the service for a considerable time, those who have adopted more recently and those who would count as new users, a sample of non-users was also interviewed to gauge their views and opinions.

It is important to note that while our overall sample happened to include interviewees who divulged that they were parents, we set out to interview schools and other relevant user organisations, and not parents directly themselves. Parents and their children are the ultimate beneficiaries of the service (and, in the long-term, society as a whole). Parent Info regularly invites feedback from parents but this has not been included in this report.

# 4. Findings

## 4.1 KEY FINDINGS

- Parent Info is a trusted and valued resource.
- Users overwhelmingly reported a high level of satisfaction with the service.
- They return again and again to meet a number of needs and support a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- For many it supported their school or institutional objectives as well as statutory obligations.

***“SLT use it with Ofsted to ensure that they meet safeguarding items”***

School-based respondents reported that the service benefited them in their specific professional capacity (of which there was a range) as well as their teaching colleagues, in addition to the expected target stakeholder group of parents and carers.

Many also added that they had also found the service of value to themselves, family and friends, though this was not a direct question in the survey.

The main recommendation for improvement was to raise awareness of the existence of the Parent Info service and resources with more people in various ways. Some respondents had no suggestions for improvements or requests for alteration or development. Some made observations that could be taken into account when future versions of the site are considered, though

in a small number of cases respondents recognised that these requests might go beyond the scope or capacity of the Parent Info service.

When the service was launched the ability to incorporate a Parent Info newsfeed into a school website was highlighted, but it seems that relatively few schools take advantage of this option. Those who do value it highly.

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## 4.2 THEMES HIGHLIGHTED BY ONE OR MORE RESPONDENTS

Parent Info represents a service that:

- Is a highly trusted source of information for dissemination and as a reference point, from two well-established and reliable organisations: Parent Zone and CEOP.
- Is not just for parents but for a range of other audiences/stakeholders too.
- Is accessible, up to date, concise.
- Saves time and money.
- Can be a 'third' space that is neutral.
- Can be deployed in a range of ways, offering different routes for the information to reach the ultimate beneficiaries.
- Can support professional roles as well as parents.
- Can be preventative versus reactive (education/advice versus intervention/remedy).
- Is often part of a broader 'toolkit'/portfolio but 'does what it says on the tin', which is information for parents.

We discuss each of these themes below.

***Is a highly trusted source of information for dissemination and as a reference point, from two well-established and reliable organisations: Parent Zone and CEOP***

Respondents indicated that they trusted advice from CEOP as an organisation, and that Parent Zone was also a known or familiar quantity (used by some interviewees for some time), valued for other services such as producing and distributing the Digital Parenting magazine in partnership with Vodafone.

This was usually mentioned in connection with two points. To paraphrase: firstly, I use Parent Info as a reliable source of reference for my professional role; secondly, I often disseminate the information which I find to other groups (whether colleagues, including teachers, or parents).

***Is not just for parents but for a range of other audiences/stakeholders too***

Although most of the users we interviewed represented organisations that had direct contact with parents, many spoke of disseminating information to other colleagues (eg in a school context that includes a whole range of professional roles), either in their organisation or institution, or in wider networks. One respondent spoke of using some materials as the basis for classroom teaching materials. It was mentioned that the materials could be relied upon not to be sensationalist or inappropriate for an education context and that difficult subjects are sensitively handled.

***Is accessible, up to date, concise***

Not all respondents spoke in detail about their experience of accessing the materials, though more than one spoke about searching, successfully finding what was being sought, and then lighting upon other useful topics in a serendipitous way. Several commented that the amount of detail in the articles was usually just about right, whether for their own specific needs or, in their view, for parents to receive. More than one mentioned the impression that information is up to date and regularly posted. For instance, no sooner does something become a hot topic in the media than Parent Info has posted some advice.

### ***Saves time and money***

Some respondents mentioned this but not all. One respondent explained that it saves her large amounts of time and that it would be impractical for her to scour a range of sources for factual information and then write suitable articles herself of comparable quality. Another commented on the iframe tool saving considerable time which would otherwise be spent uploading new information, reviewing what was already there and making amendments. In terms of money saved, those who commented were thinking of the cost of staff time to undertake a range of tasks (those mentioned above, for example) independently.

### ***Can be a 'third' space or a neutral and impartial party to conversation***

Sometimes discussion or engagement with parents and / or children and young people can become emotionally charged or influenced by a range of complex tangential factors. One particular respondent highlighted the benefit of Parent Info being a disinterested third party to such discussions where clearcut advice is presented in a matter of fact but authoritative way.

### ***Can be deployed in a range of ways, offering different routes for the information to reach the ultimate beneficiaries***

Many respondents gave generalised examples of how they used the service in different ways, including using it in their own roles, but also sharing with colleagues.

### ***Can support professional roles as well as parents***

These roles are not mutually exclusive and the way in which articles are presented and made accessible facilitates this.

***Can be preventative versus reactive (education/advice versus intervention/remedy)***

***Is often part of a broader 'toolkit'/portfolio but 'does what it says on the tin' - Info for Parents***

Many respondents spoke of Parent Info as one of a number of resources used on a regular basis in a range of online safety contexts. Other sites mentioned as useful or confirmed as part of the general online safety 'toolkit' included NSPCC, Childnet, CEOP Thinkuknow and some very specific and more specialist resources such as <https://thatsnotcool.com/> and <https://diana-award.org.uk/>. Those with a wider safeguarding remit saw Parent Info as the online safety 'one stop shop' alongside advice sites relevant for other topics or concerns eg <https://www.talktofrank.com/>; <https://www.drugwise.org.uk/>; and <http://c-card.areyougettingit.com>.

A small number of respondents mentally conflated a range of resources from different providers and more than one referred to Digital Parenting magazine, for which Parent Zone is the producer and distributor in partnership with Vodafone, and Parent Zone's other services such as training.

***Supports school or organisational priorities or plans and assists with statutory requirements***

One user mentioned that, 'SLT use it with Ofsted to ensure that they meet safeguarding items'.

### 4.3 Non-users

A number of non-users were surveyed as part of the review. Most had previously been unaware of Parent Info but once informed about the service, all intended to sign up with almost all committing to using the embed service on their school website. For those already aware of the existence of the Parent Info website, this specific feature was not always known about, but once outlined it was sufficient to prompt the intention to sign up.

All but one respondent already included online safety information on their school website but most felt it was underused and several were concerned that their information was inaccurate or out of date. *'I would rather not include information on our site if I felt we were giving out the wrong message. Sometimes I just don't upload things [to the website] as I don't know when I'm going to have time to refresh the content'* (computing lead, primary school)

Computing subject leaders or digital learning leaders were most likely to be responsible for curating content for the site although safeguarding leads were also involved and, in one instance, the headteacher took on this responsibility.

### 4.4 SUBSIDIARY THEMES

Busy school-based staff do not necessarily differentiate between offerings from different organisations or different services from same organisation (eg respondents sometimes conflated Digital Parenting magazine, for which Parent Zone plays a production and distribution role in partnership with Vodafone, Parent Zone's other services and CEOP training and resources).

From the school user's point of view, when something useful has been sourced, recalling the actual provider or portal may be of lesser significance. However, for non-users misperception may prove a barrier to engaging with the service.

Many users highlighted the value of receiving the regular email updates. For some it was these which prompted them to disseminate information, as well as alerting them to information crucial for their own and colleagues' awareness.

## **4.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Content and functionality**

Although some respondents wanted Parent Info to have more functionality (ie a chat forum for teachers, additional materials or packs to help teachers support parents around highlighted issues) most liked the simplicity of the format as it enabled them to personalise the information and focus on articles and materials that addressed their school's issues.

One computing leader commented, *'My issue is getting the right information to the parents who need it. I can pick and choose from what's available on Parent Info and target it at those parents who may never attend one of my online safety meetings or look at content on the website'*. Another from an all-through school said, *'I want information that I can put a wrapper around. Parents see things in the news and relate it to things that might be going on in school and that's what they then worry about. I can use this and then pull out articles from Parent Info to raise awareness and help our families.'*

Some schools indicated how useful the service was in supporting statutory requirements such as safeguarding (KCSIE, 2018 appendix C). Perhaps tips or highlighted case studies from individual users could assist with recognition of this and other benefits of the service.

Some additional features could be welcomed by some groups of users. These include the information being available in languages other than English, such as for use with refugees; information geared towards SEND audiences, for parents or teachers of students with SEND needs, though it could be a challenge to meet all needs; better publicity of the resource. Further publicity and or promotion (to different potential audiences) so that it reaches an even wider base of schools and other users was also mentioned.

## **Branding**

A key issue for Parent Info is confusion over branding. Parent Zone and its other services including training, Digital Parenting magazine, which it produces and distributes in partnership with Vodafone, and Parent Info were frequently used interchangeably by the respondents and there was a lack of understanding about the relationship between the organisations involved and the initiatives, services or products. Most respondents who were aware of the involvement of CEOP regarded this as a guarantee of quality, so raising awareness further about the collaboration is crucial, as well as the fact that schools do not have to pay to use the Parent Info service. One respondent had seen Parent Info at BETT but hadn't explored further as she had thought it was connected to a management information service for schools. In another instance, a school with very established connections to Parent Zone didn't know of the existence of Parent Info. Another school had heard of Parent Info but assumed it was a paid for service.

## **Cascade effect**

It was apparent that, within a school community or indeed other institution, the range of users may be broad and, frequently, the respondent took some responsibility for signposting or sharing information within their organisation, sometimes having received an email update. Some respondents spoke of actively promoting to other schools or organisations, or colleagues and friends, as well as to the target audience of parents. While this may be within certain individuals' role and job function, clearly every person that views the Parent Info website has this potential. In addition to its existing presence on social media, Parent Info might wish to consider ways and channels to more regularly encourage users to share with other potential users, to achieve an even wider reach and coverage among target audiences and other potential groups of beneficiaries, perhaps yet to be identified.

# 5. Conclusion

Parent Info successfully reaches many different types of user and beneficiary. The range includes parents and schools, but is much broader. The spread of roles represented by the respondents for these interviews includes professionals based in schools, such as school business manager, digital curriculum leader, IT technician, local authorities, police community support and more. Whatever the role of the respondent, very positive feedback was received about the quantity, range and quality of information, the accessibility with which it was written and presented and the fact that it is kept up to date. Where users took advantage of the 'automatic' function offered by the widget they spoke of time savings and the benefits of information always being up to date.

Parent Zone and CEOP are both held in high regard by respondents and the communities and organisations that they represent, and respected as authoritative providers of information and guidance. These are firm foundations for the next stage of development for the service truly to become a national safety tool as envisaged by the DfE in 2015. To achieve this, Parent Info will need to maintain the flow of advice and information from its contributing leading experts and organisations, and seek ongoing support at a national level, to enable it to continue to spread the message, so that every school and every community of parents – and therefore children and young people – can benefit.

# 6. Appendix

This appendix provides commentary and further detail on the responses from existing users of Parent Info to individual questions. It is organised by question.

## **1. Contact's role**

A range of roles included:

- Class teacher (primary)
- Computing coordinator
- Digital curriculum leader
- Member of school SLT
- ICT coordinator
- School business manager
- IT technician
- Prevent and safeguarding officer
- Local authority role
- Designated safeguarding lead
- Head of pastoral
- Police community support officer
- Regional grid safeguarding officer (LGfL)

Drawn from schools, local authority, charity, police.

Some mentioned that they were also parents or foster carers themselves.

## **2. When did you start using Parent Info?**

A range of responses:

- As long as I can remember
- Two or three years ago

Three to four years ago - used more in the last two years  
Five years plus  
18 months ago  
About a year  
Just under a year

Some longer-term users noted improvements had been made

Some mentioned that heard of Parent Info via CEOP, some via Parent Zone, one person via attendance at a conference.

### **3. How do you deploy Parent Info?**

Depending on their role, respondents went into more or less detail on this, but responses ranged from simply giving the Parent Info url in a variety of media, or extracting information for use in a range of contexts, to using the iFrame functionality and creating a parent dashboard in the school's learning platform.

Technical deployment

Provides a URL to users

Share a link through a presentation

Used in printed and electronic newsletters

Linked on school website

Signposting people

Uses as a reference point in talks

Use the RSS iFrame option

Benefits noted: feed is managed by someone else

More general use

Use in training role

ICT computing teacher makes some use of in lessons

### **4. Tell us about your experience using Parent Info**

Overwhelmingly met or exceeded the expectations of users overall (as indicated also in response to Question 7).

### **Interviewees' descriptions or perceptions:**

One of the first places I would look I'm very happy with it. It's on the ball.

Quick to get an article out with advice

Central source

Usually up to date

Updated regularly

Reliable source of information

Parent friendly

Not going to contain inappropriate content

High quality accessible information

Well put together, not long winded

Nothing is lacking

Pretty comprehensive and explains information in layman's terms so is accessible to parents

Easy to direct to

One interviewee's perception was that sometimes an item of content is 'a bit generic, not like a news item'

Issues with modern slavery getting across without frightening children. That's why the website is so good.

### **Specific features that were valued:**

Reliable and respected established providers of authoritative information (CEOP and Parent Zone)

Up to date

Succinct and accessible for wide range of users (including parents and school staff)

Time saving (and therefore money saving) obviating need for busy staff to reinvent the wheel or repurpose materials from other sources

Option to automate via iframe

Busy agenda/shortage of time

Emails from Parent Info valued as prompts - 'nice to have a reminder'

### **5. Has your use of Parent Info changed over time?**

Some respondents indicated no. Others had found ways to make more extensive use, for example linked to the school's growing use of other channels such as social media and blogs.

### **6. Can you describe how you hoped it would help your school/organisation?**

Most respondents to this questions had either located the service themselves or been given information about it from eg a CEOP Ambassador course and were looking to source a ready made service. Only a minority mentioned the iframe functionality.

'We are trying to educate and get round problems before they begin. We use Parent Info and Digital Parenting magazine in a two-pronged approach (plus regular work with pupils - peer to peer).'

'We received an email forwarded on, and looked into it - yes, looks good for what we need, should do it. Our website already has links but this is regularly updated automatically.'

'We got a link or email. That's useful - it has developed over the time. Grows as using more.'

'It has clear explanations on "this is how this works, these are the pitfalls, this is what you can do to protect yourself".'

'We saw the potential for what was described.'

'Hoping to have a source of information to signpost parents to. Magazine is also popular and useful too.'

'Use to develop across the workforce - foster carers, carers. We intend to embed it in wider areas - county lines for example.'

## **7. Thinking about your aspirations for the product has it met your expectations? Is there anything more you would like from the product?**

The main response to this was that yes it has met or exceeded expectation - easy to use, easy to find information, including on subjects that could be perceived as 'challenging to handle'. Some longer-term users noted how the service has been developed over time.

One person specifically noted the effectiveness of the search function and liked the fact that additional useful suggestions were presented.

Another felt that always being kept up to date was the best feature. Another highlighted the cost savings in time and effort, compared with what would be needed to produce in-house materials.

## **8. How has Parent Info supported your school development priorities/organisational priorities?**

Respondents talked in general terms about improving communications with parents and better engagement with community; alongside this where the service is being used in school to address issues when they arise, as well as in a preventative way, respondents mentioned safeguarding as a high level priority.

At a school level it is possible that individual respondents might be thinking in terms of departmental, individual subject leader or designated safeguarding leader or pastoral leader, or indeed safeguarding committee objectives or actions rather than higher level organisational objectives, even if these are identified in school or organisational development plans. A range of interesting specific responses below:

'Yes, it supported priorities around Operation Sanctuary, child exploitation and learning and skills.' 'Yes, last year school achieved Naace ICT mark'

'Helps meet safeguard requirements as well as building community links and improving parent relationships.'

'We have an e-safety committee which supports this. We're doing well at 360 Safe [using the framework]. Parent Info has helped us to get to the point of getting accreditation.'

'Yes for the community eg we sent out a survey - we're doing a review about now to check whether more or less info is needed'

'Confident that "we're doing the right things" - Parent Info is a safety net.'

'Personal priorities as digital curriculum leader involve engaging parents. Waiting for technology to catch up to hooking schools in. Now Frog [learning platform] is up to date we can plug in Parent Info more easily.'

'No not specifically in a new way, it's just one of the first places for up to date info.'

'It's the trusted partner for communications with parents.'

'Yes - safeguarding. Engagement with parents is important in maintaining safety.'

'We use it to mould the safeguarding policies'

'Yes we're looking at trying to support own staff in digital resilience. Also emotional aspect of digital world - YouTube clip to show effort taken to have a good time - presented as consistently enjoying themselves.'

'Great advice and guidance and background information to support teaching and education of parents. Signposting tool.'

### **9. Have there been any unexpected benefits?**

Most respondents were not able to identify any 'unexpected' benefits initially, but some reflected on their own circumstances.

One spoke of her realisation that she now spent less time spent writing articles; sometimes she wishes to adapt content to the school context but found the ready available and packaged information very useful.

Another spoke of the articles around mental health and wellbeing being an unexpected and beneficial find.

A governor/parent found it helpful personally and discusses content with friends, and indicated that the community is using the content and highlighting issues among themselves.

Another spoke of additional 'finds' in terms of the extra bits of associated information as beneficial to the respondent and others in the organisation.

**10. Tell us about how Parent Info has helped the school/organisation's relationship with parents/stakeholders? Can you provide specific examples?**

For some the service functioned as an authoritative 'safe place' or 'neutral partner' to help bring issues out into the open (in other words creating more informed dialogue with parents), with a recent example cited being around Fortnite game.

Others spoke of safeguarding as a school priority, alongside general health and safety and community well being, and Parent Info helping with this particular focus of the relationship with parents/stakeholders.

One respondent working with the wider community said: 'Some of the learners are parents so they might do creative writing but they'll see posters about Prevent. We'll invite every learner to come to training centres and there's lots of crossover with relevant Parent Info content.'

One respondent bemoaned lack of communication with parents in general but saw the service as a way to bring school and parents closer together and improve communication, and hoped to get feedback at parent consultation meetings.

One respondent spoke in wider terms about Parent Zone's perceived range of offering such as the Vodafone Digital Parenting magazine, courses and other information sent out to users, and mentioned extracting materials to use at parents' evening.

Although this was not explicitly mentioned by all respondents, implicit in many responses was the school's or organisation's wish to help parents to help themselves independently.

## **11. Thinking about how parents/staff/stakeholders use the service, is Parent Info used more as a tool for preventing issues or for responding to issues as they arise?**

Most respondents mentioned that it was used in both a responsive or reactive way and a preventative way. 'Intention for prevention' was how one put it. Another, looking ahead, could envisage a situation where in the longer term the use would become more preventative as education has an impact. Another spoke of being able to maintain a preventative function by regular mention in the newsletter, keeping awareness high.

One cited the fact that the ICT teacher draws on the service for preventative lesson content.

Another mentioned that since parents access content independently the school would not always be aware when preventative action by parents has been successful.

Another mentioned that 'what tends to happen when you talk to a parent they say that's really good because my kid is doing x y z. You're giving them a tool to say "have a look at this, have a look at your browser, have a look at your wifi".'

## **12. What is the value to the people using Parent Info?**

Many respondents by this point in the interview had already identified benefits for each of the three groups below, so this question was not laboured and in the main only additional points have been included below.

### **Parents**

Here is a sample of responses.

'Parents love the parenting guides. Particularly with reference to mobile phones.'

'Does have value - lots of up to date information.'

'Filling a gap. Other staff who are parents use it.'

'Ready made content.'

## **School staff**

One respondent spoke of the links being there for colleagues to use as a consistent and ever-ready source of advice to unite colleagues. One indicated how it could be highlighted on special occasions: digital week, online health - use it for resources as part of Safer Internet Day.

Another that teachers have access; when the school business manager becomes aware of an issue, she emails relevant staff.

Value to senior leadership teams (SLT) was identified as a resource when dealing with safeguarding issues, and for continued reference or reading. Other staff see benefits depending on the issues in their specific year groups. Another mentioned that SLT uses the service to explain specific situations and create plan with parents for educating a child at home.

Although some respondents in non-teaching roles passed on information to teaching colleagues they were not always sure if individual teachers made use of it in teaching, whether PSHE teachers, ICT or computing, or class teachers. Another knew that colleagues were aware of the existence of the resources, but was not sure if they had spent time individually looking at them. A comment on this would be that this is symptomatic of the severe shortage of time in school for discussion among colleagues, not indicative of apathy or lack of concern.

Another respondent perceived that many teachers had gaps in their knowledge and was confident that Parent Info can fill these if they have time.

One interviewee has proposed to schools that they use Parent Info and wishes to link in with teachers and is hoping to start training courses with teachers.

## **Other stakeholders**

Some schools spoke of the role of safeguarding governors and awareness of online safety issues for which Parent Info is used. A school with an e-safety committee mentioned that governors on that group make use of the service. In some schools the business manager has good awareness and acts as conduit for alerting or asking opinions.

One school respondent explained how the relevant section of the school website/learning platform is being redeveloped to provide a dashboard for relevant stakeholders in the school including governors as well as parents - Parent Info will be a key ingredient in this.

A respondent from a local authority spoke about meeting with other councils in a forum that he chairs and that Parent Info is often mentioned as although it is perceived as for schools it is of benefit for anyone working with children and young people.

Another spoke of using the service for workforce development and as a reference point for top tips, latest thinking and more in-depth treatment. One respondent highlighted how Parent Info can be useful for other organisations such as business and voluntary organisations with the example of how they can take information from the website and use it in other contexts, and for specific groups of stakeholders such as refugees - in that person's words, 'good advice but needs translating'.

### ***13. Would you recommend Parent Info to other schools/organisations?***

The overwhelming response to this was an affirmative 'Absolutely!'

Many mentioned already doing so (and that they would continue to do so in future) . For example, regarding Parent Info articles, 'I always read and share with colleagues and am active within the LA regarding safeguarding in education. I have recommended them to other schools.'

'Yes, we deliver training to other service providers - we do recommend this site.'

A business manager who has meetings with other school business managers would mention it in that forum and would be likely to recommend.

One respondent had recommended it to her child's secondary school.

A number of respondents confirmed that they had already done so and would continue to do so in future whether or not that might be a formal part of their job responsibilities

**14. Is there a need that you think Parent Info should cater for that it does not already?**

When considering the responses for this question It is important to recognise that respondents were answering from memory and their experience of the site will have varied - so anything mentioned is a perception of what is or is not included, from a range of individuals.

*'Broad range of advice for families.'*

*'Information on children and young people's development, with regard to health and wellbeing and mental health.'*

*'Maybe more linked to any areas where kids are are concerned in general*

*I would like to see more on Prevent. Has a good mix of content.'*

*'Targeting resources at the right level so that post-16s can make the most of content.*

*'Specific special needs content.'*

*'No. Special needs would be interesting.'*

*'Actually it's wider than what I require it for. There are some bits which are less relevant to me in my role'*

*'Pretty good across the board including mental health and sexual health'.*

*'Not sure. Privacy policy - not sure if on there. GDPR issues with the use of their info - so they know what to expect.'*

*'Not that I have found. Complex issue, there are different angles.'*

*'Definitely hitting a market that's not really accessed efficiently. Other sites have elements within them but this is the only site specifically focused for parents.'*

*'Looking to create resources around what devices can offer - guides and videos about using hardware, software, apps etc. Great if Parent Info could provide'*

*'Computer game information for specific games and how they might impact children'*

*'Would it be possible to have an AI or a live chat?'*

*'Entry level phone use information - some people need the ABC of phone use. Go back to basics. This should be something that Parent Info should do - could combine with chat.'*

*'SEND students' needs and the needs of their parents and carers.'*

*Additional advice and guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects was indicated as a possibility.*

**15. Besides Parent Info what other digital support materials do you share with parents/stakeholders?**

**16. Do you know about and regularly make use of other websites that provide online safety info for parents/stakeholders (eg Childnet, NSPCC)?**

Although these two questions were intended to elicit separate responses, in practice respondents understood them in the same way, which perhaps indicates that there are relatively few other providers of digital support materials (ie materials via a digital channel) for parents in an education context.

The range of mentions included:

- CEOP Thinkuknow
- CEOP
- Internet Matters
- Google resources
- LGfL resources (London schools)
- TES
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Share aware (NSPCC)
- Safer Internet Day website
- Childnet
- Toot toot
- NetAware
- Childline
- Kidsafe

One response was along the lines of 'we have very focused activities which require specific sites for projects'.

Some respondents, but not many, referred to local safeguarding children board websites.

**17. Are there good examples of parental advice online services specific to other concerns/interests that you recommend? (If so any names)**

The range of resources included:

Local authority or council services specific to drugs and SRE. Mental health content and family support groups specific to local area. Autism support groups in local borough.

Google resources on online health.

One respondent explained that they are going through the process of thinking about health and wellbeing and mental health and will possibly signpost to those resources.

Ask Frank (drugs)

Drug wise (drugs)

C card (safe sex)

Parent Zone, mental health and wellbeing

*'ISP details are used and recommended to parents. Not my role to talk people through how to set things up...'*

*'Our associated children's centre tends to give advice on family / financial needs so don't have specific recommendations...'*

*'Diana Awards - a year ago which was about student-led sessions at being strong online*

***(bestrongonline)' 31 'KS4 - thatsnotcool.com'***

*'Making sure more people are aware. Adverts in the press and campaigns etc.'* *'More info about thinkuknow.'*

*'The pictures are often stock images but it's the nature of things.'*

*'Handouts and flyers would be great to order ready printed or to pass on at forums etc. Visual support for SEND etc.'*

*'Visually very good. Making sure it is up to date. No massive improvement needed.'*

*'Advice of what to think about when giving a child a new device. Entry level information.'*

### **18. Do you have any suggestions how to improve the website/widget/content?**

A wide range of responses was received of which some are listed below, though often without the respondent having the service open in front of them so some comments are perceptions.

*'So much on there. Limited time to explore. Usually signposted by promotional emails...'*

*'Widen remit into health and wellbeing - help parents make decisions not telling them what to do.'*

*'Don't know how the new iframe - being able to customise at the moment have selected to show primary - some of the content could be relevant - pick and choose - especially as year 6 going to move on.'*

*'Website is really easy to navigate. I think of Ofsted '2-click'. Sometimes the front page is hard to navigate. It's hard to say what's best. I don't use mobile I use it in my office but it doesn't work so well. On mobile I'm sure it works fine. I use desktop but parents probably don't.'*

*'Other languages - Syrian refugees. Could you download that in another language?'*

*'ESOL - using content to support education.'*

*'Suicide issues - content for this subject is scarce.'*

*'Lovely seeing so much access for schools. More for post 16 would be wonderful. Maybe schools/colleges. We need that little bit extra. There's lots of stuff on virtual private networks. There's stuff for a wide range of ages but it's not always obvious. Professionals tend to think it's just for schools but actually if you stayed longer you'd find it had content for adult learners.'*

*'How does it work through a mobile? I've never used it through a mobile. Parents use this but does it work well? I use desktop to view content.'*

*'Aware of the update.'*

*'Mention re date of publication; news specificity.'*

*'Asking for login details for Parent Info when going in to the pages online on the phone. Annoying!'*

*'Sometimes people don't have a computer but just a phone so they like the magazine as a backup to the materials online.'*

*'Good advice but needs translating'.*

*'For more from the service it is about how it is marketed.'*

*'Could be good to have an app which parents could use.'*

*'Want information on how to educate children in using smartphones. 'Would you let your child cross the road without teaching them how to do it safely? Why are we not teaching children how to use a smartphone. Does Parent Info have any content on this?'*

*'Questionnaire for parents tool.'*

### **19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Parent Info?**

There were very few responses in this section.

*'SLT use it with Ofsted to ensure that they meet safeguarding items.'*

*'Parent Info is not biased.'*



The report was commissioned by Parent Zone, the experts in digital family life. Parent Zone provides support and information to parents, children and schools, working globally to help families to navigate the internet safely and confidently. Parent Zone also works with parents, schools, governments and businesses to study, understand and address the impact of emerging technologies on young people.



This report was authored by London Connected Learning Centre, part of Education Development Trust, an award-winning organisation that helps schools and other settings use digital technologies to improve learning.