# Norway's comment to the General Comment on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment

This is Norway's comment on protection from violence, sexual exploitation and other harm to the CRC's the General Comment on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment.

# Awareness-raising addressed to children

The Norwegian government and key-actors like The Norwegian Media Authority, the Police Directorate, the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, NGOs and content/service providers have increasingly prioritised information and awareness-needs related to online risks. Self-produced material of sexual content being shared online, are among the topics identified as one of the current challenges for Norwegian children and youth. A number of resources have been allocated, of which some initiatives targets this issue in particular, while a greater amount of the resources have a more general approach encompassing a range of online risks concerning children and youth.

## *Ung.no* – general information and campaigns

On behalf of The Ministry of Children and Equality, The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) provide governmental information to children and youth. [*Ung.no*](http://www.ung.no)(“ung” means young) is a site for governmental information on rights, possibilities and obligations of young people. The target group is youth between 13 and 20 years of age. All materials made available on *ung.no* are updated and quality controlled.

In addition to general information about topics like sexuality, sexual abuse and online safety, *ung.no* has developed a campaign concerning sharing nude material online in 2018. The campaign *#Ikkegreit* (meaning #not okey) includes i.a. updated articles and videos on the topic, providing information on the legal and moral aspects of sharing nude material of others, advice on how to withstand pressure to share such material as well as providing information on where to get help. The campaign has so far demonstrated effective outreach and attention among youth, using channels like YouTube and in a youth-friendly and adapted discourse.

## Norwegian Police online police patrol (Nettpatrulje) and educational resources

The Norwegian police is promoting its presence online, as part of a national police reform. Moreover, the National Police Directorate has established a National Cybercrime Centre (NC3) with a purpose to coordinate national and cross-border cybercrime law enforcement activities. NC3 will also act as a centre of technical expertise and provide support within the Norwegian police.

*Nettpatruljer* (online police patrols) provide crime prevention advice, offer guidance on particular issues and foster dialogue. Advice concerning the sharing of sexually explicit content online is one of many topics being adressed. Other salient topics are general online safety and security issues, children's rights online, as well as crimes such as online scams, internet viruses and online blackmail. All 12 police districts will have an online presence in 2019, following the practice by The National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) since 2015.

The Norwegian Police has its own educational programme for youth between the age of 13 and 16 concerning the sharing of sexually explicit images, videos or content of sexual coercion and extortion. It is called [*Delbart*](http://www.politiet.no/delbart)*?* ("delbart" means shareable). The initiative *Delbart?* was launched by Norway's National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) 28th of January 2019.

The goal is to provide youth with more knowledge about the legal aspects, as well as personal consequences of sharing sexually explicit images, videos or content. The objective is to improve young people's ability to make informed choices for themselves and other people. A part of the educational programme *Delbart?* is targeting parents with an aim to encourage adults to have conversations with their children about the risks related to the production and/or sharing of sexually explicit images, videos or content, and to guide parents in helping their children in difficult situations.

## The Norwegian Safer Internet Centre – awareness raising and helpline

The Norwegian Media Authority receives funding from the European funding instrument Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to coordinate the Safer Internet Centre (SIC) in Norway. An important aim is to help children and young people stay safe online and promote media literacy. SIC - Norway coordinates initiatives and collaboration for children and media at a national level, collaborating with directorates/ministries, non-profit and voluntary organizations, private businesses and industry organizations.

Along with the helpline *Cross my heart*, the Norwegian Media Authority is the Norwegian Safer Internet Centre (SIC Norway). Norway's Safer Internet Centre has a separate Advisory Board, providing advise for the professional work of the center.

The “[*Brukhue*](https://brukhue.com/)*” (use your head)* campaign is a prominent example of awareness raising including the topic of self-generated sexually explicit material/self-generated sexual content. The campaign is carried out through a partnership with the private company Telenor, Norway's largest company of tele-services, the helpline *Cross my heart* (The Red Cross) and the organisation "Children's watch" (Barnevakten).

## *Du bestemmer* (You Decide)

[*Du bestemmer*](http://www.dubestemmer.no/en/13-18-ar/unwanted-occurrences)(You Decide) is a teaching resource about privacy and digital responsibility for children and young adults aged between 9 and 18. The objective of the resource is to increase awareness, reflection and knowledge about privacy and the choices young people make when using digital media. Unwanted situations and experiences is one of four main topic categories and in the section for the age-group 13-18, this category deals with cyber bullying, digital violations, blackmail and the sharing of initimate material (sexual content).

# Awareness-raising addressed to parents and persons who have regular contact with children

Complementary to the above-mentioned *ung.no* (cf. reply 1.1.) for children/youth, *foreldrehverdag.no* (meaning everyday life for parents) is an online resource for parents, provided by The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). It addresses more general issues concerning sex, sexual assault, how to talk about behavioural boundaries with your child, as well as advice for social media and online behaviour.

*Foreldrehverdag.no* is developed by professionals and based on the International Child Development Program (ICDP). ICDP focuses on the relationship between adults and children, and is used by UNICEF, WHO and many Norwegian municipalities and health centres.

The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family affairs (Bufdir) has developed two digital tools aimed at preventing violence and abuse:

[*JegVet*](http://www.jegvet.no)(meaning “I know”) is a digital platform for teaching children aged 5 to 18 years about bullying, violence and sexual abuse. It is developed for use in schools and day care facilities. The digital platform is adaptable to different age groups and didactical settings.

[*SNAKKE*](http://www.snakkemedbarn.no)(meaning “talk”) is an interactive simulation game where adults can practice talking about sensitive issues with children, for example if they are worried that a child might be exposed to violence or sexual abuse. Using a gamification approach, the simulation creates a realistic setting making adults feel a genuine discomfort talking about violence, practising in the context of the game. It facilitates discussion about various possible responses, building confidence and collegial trust.

# Research

In order to provide updated research and insights, the Norwegian government funded the 2017/2018 [EU Kids Online](http://www.eukidsonline.net) data collection for Norway. This was carried out by the University of Oslo/ Department of Media and Communication (UiO). This department is also the European coordinator of developing the framework and preparing the survey internationally.

Financed by relevant ministeries, the National Media Authority bi-annually provides the survey [*Barn og medier*](https://www.medietilsynet.no/barn-og-medier)(Children and Media). The survey includes data concerning the sharing of sexually explicit material.

Norwegian Social research (NOVA/OsloMet) launched a [report](http://www.hioa.no/Om-OsloMet/Senter-for-velferds-og-arbeidslivsforskning/NOVA/Publikasjonar/Rapporter/2018/Nettovergrep-mot-barn-i-Norge-2015-2017) in 2018 following a commission for research concerning online abuse with a focus on perpetrators, financed by The Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The report provide insights about dynamics online, also concerning young people and children who are pressured and groomed into sharing self-generated sexual material.

Norwegian centre for Violence and traumatic stress studies (NKVTS) participates in [STIR - Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships](http://www.nkvts.no/prosjekt/safeguarding-teenage-intimate-relationships-stir-connecting-online-and-offline-contexts-and-risks). This is a European project in cooperation with universities and research institutions in five different countries, Norway, the UK, Italy, Cyprus and Bulgaria. The topic of the study is the prevalence of physical, emotional violence as well as sexual abuse between young people in the ages of 14-17 who have or have had an intimate relationship, as well as the phenomenology of the violence. Of interest is both the violence that is conducted face to face, and the violence and threats on digital media. One example of a relevant report from this project is [*Pornography, sexual coersion and abuse, and sexting in Young people’s intimate relationships: A European study*](https://www.nkvts.no/english/academic-article/pornography-sexual-coersion-and-abuse-and-sexting-in-young-peoples-intimate-relationships-a-european-study)

The Ombudsman for Children is an advocate for children and young people's rights launched a [report](http://barneombudet.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Barneombudets-rapport-om-seksuelle-krenkelser-enkeltsider-pdf-lowres.pdf) in 2018 concerning how young people experiences sexual offences. Part of the report describes this problem in the digital context.

# Assistance to victims

The Norwegian police has a [hotline](http://www.politiet.no/tjenester/tips-po) – a reporting mechanism that the public can use to report (tip-off) the police. Norway's National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) is responsible for handling reports regarding sexual coercion and extortion, sexually offensive conduct on the internet and webpages containing child abuse material. The category is named "Sexual exploitation of children on the Internet". The hotline is staffed within normal working hours, but reports are checked frequently day and night time to ensure the handling of urgent tip-offs, where swift action is required.

As the Norwegian hotline, NCIS has a strong relationship with the Norwegian Safer Internet Centre (The Media Authority), it is part of the national Advisory Board, participates in network meetings and contributing to joint events.

The Norwegian police receives only to a smaller extent tip-offs regarding self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos and self-generated sexual content through the hotline.

The collaboration with National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the United States generates many reports regarding self-generated sexually explicit images, videos and content. This is largely due to the obligation online service providers in the United States has to report child sexual exploitation to NCMEC. The service providers that generate most of the information about sexually explicit images, videos and content for the Norwegian Police are Snapchat and YouTube.

The information received may depending on the case at hand, whether the victim can be identified, legal deliberations etc. result in a criminal case with the involved child as the aggrieved person. Through a criminal case, the police will often involve child welfare authorities and other support services to help the child.

The Criminal Procedure Act (2008) ensures the rights of victims in criminal procedures. Victims are granted procedural rights equal to that of the defendant. Victims are also rendered compensation through state funded compensation schemes. Children as a vulnerable group is well acknowledged in the justice system and measures to take special care of victimised children have been developed.

The Government has established a nationwide network of Children’s Houses, a service for children and young people under 16 years of age, and adults with intellectual disabilities, believed to have been victims of violence or sexual abuse, or to have witnessed such violence. Children’s Houses are child advocacy centers where judicial examination, medical examinations, treatment and follow-up are carried out in the same place. They are also focal points for enhancing the skills of professionals who work with children or with adults with intellectual disabilities, and for improving cooperation between agencies in violence and abuse cases.

## “Cross my heart” (helpline)

The Norwegian Red Cross' service [Kors på halsen](https://korspaahalsen.rodekors.no) (Cross My Heart) is the national helpline for children under the age of 18. The service offers dialogue through many different channels, and on any subject concerning the children who call, chat or send emails to Cross My Heart. Cross My Heart is staffed by volunteers who offer consolation and provide support and advice to children. Professionals who run the service make sure that the volunteers receive the information and schooling they need to assist the children in topics related to digital bullying, sexual comments, family relations, substance abuse, and other matters.

## Alarmtelefonen (“The Alarm Telephone”)

The child helpline “The alarm telephone” (116 111), as in several other European countries, provides emergency assistance on a range of different urgent situations. The service is funded by the Ministry of Children and Family.

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## Cooperation with civil society

At present no NGOs or other relevant representatives of civil society engaged solely in assistance to victims of the offences covered by this questionnaire. However, many NGOs and others engaging in child protection or victim support, can offer help to children affected by such offences. For example, “Cross my heart” (cf. 6.1) and “Deleteme.no”. In their annual reports these services do not explicitly state how many children who made contact, posing questions or concerns regarding sexually explicit images. However, in 2017 “Cross my heart” reported that 2,6 % of the inquiries they received from children were related to social media. In 2017 “Deleteme.no” reported 6,3% of their inquiries were related to images/videos, with the age group of 12 to 18 being the second largest group (after 18 to 25). It is a possibility that production, possession and distribution of sexually explicit images and/or videos are represented in these categories.