Attached is a newsletter from our ICT safeguarding consultants INEQE regarding the new craze Pokémon Go.

Is Pokémon Go safe for children to play?
This month all anyone can talk about is Pokémon Go. In fact, Pokémon Go users are already spending more time on the app than users of WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and Messenger spend on those apps. Now that the initial frenzy has worn off, we thought we would give you the essential information you need to safeguard children and young people playing it.

What is Pokémon Go?
Pokémon Go is an AR (augmented reality) game where you collect and trade creatures called Pokémon (Pocket Monsters). It allows players to use the Location services on their smartphone and the camera to find Pokémon in the real world. In Pokémon Go the aim is to find, catch, battle and trade Pokémon and players are actively encouraged to connect with other players in their area as they do so. You can find a detailed guide to the mechanics of Pokémon Go here.

http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/new-product/game/pokemon-go-out-in-uk-now-complete-guide-pokemon-go-get-pokemon-go-uk-maps-hack-japan-master-future-plans-battles-3625388/

What are the risks?
Although in theory Pokémon Go is a great idea that helps and encourages people to be physically active and requires them to be on-the-go to locate Pokémon, there are several safeguarding risks also.

The game has been designed to bring people together who have a shared interest in catching Pokémon. This often means that using the app will involve meeting strangers face-to-face. This could lead to encounters with people with more dubious intentions, who could use the interactions as a potential means of grooming children and young people. There have been several reports of groups of people actively drawing people to locations using “lure modules”, which appear on the game as a place where players can find large amounts of Pokémon. These lures have been used for criminal activity and for isolating people and bringing them to secluded, unsafe areas where they are more vulnerable.

Despite the app being free to download, the game also has in-app purchases that can be quite costly.
Other potential risks can include minor physical injuries caused due to distraction and the app draining a device’s battery quite rapidly, which is worrying if it the only means of staying in touch with a child.

How do I keep children and young people safe when playing it?
While the game may seem risky or daunting, there are some relatively simple steps parents can take to ensure their child is safe and to allow them to have fun playing the game. A common sense approach is important. Some steps that parents can take include:
Playing the game themselves so that they are aware of the dangers
Accompanying younger children when they play the game
Setting ground rules for older children to ensure that they know the potential dangers, not to speak to strangers and not to wander too far on their adventures
Making sure children stay with their group of friends
Giving the child a battery pack so they are able to contact parents when playing
Ensuring that they know where their child is going
Telling children to be aware of their surroundings
Turning off in-app purchases

http://h2bsafetycentre.com/h2safetysettings-ipad/

Like with any new app or game, by using common sense and setting responsible boundaries, parents can rest assured that their child gets the most enjoyment from this interactive game and can “Catch ‘em all” whilst avoiding the potential risks.

Other app updates this month

Snapchat has introduced “Memories.” This is a new way to save Snaps and Stories on Snapchat, so in essence they no longer disappear. It also enables users to upload photos from their camera roll and includes a section called “My Eyes Only” which allows users to hide embarrassing or even explicit snaps behind a PIN. Learn more about privacy on Snapchat.

http://h2bsafetycentre.com/privacy-on-snapchat/

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