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NEW £1 MILLION CAMPAIGN TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

The Home Office will tomorrow (Sunday 15th January) launch a £1 million awareness campaign to make parents and children aware of the dangers posed by online paedophiles.

The campaign will feature adverts specifically targeted at teenagers through the internet and radio, designed to make them think twice about giving out personal details to people they meet online. It will include newspaper, magazine and radio adverts, which will run over the next 6 weeks.

Over the past three years, the Government has spent £3 million on raising awareness about online safety with children, parents and carers. The new adverts will build on previous campaigns by giving more up to date advice on new and emerging dangers, such as what information to include in a blog and safer use of instant messaging services and webcams.

Parents and guardians of children will be encouraged to visit www.internetsafetyzone.com, where practical advice and information about new technology and ways of using the internet is available. Children will continue to be referred to www.thinkuknow.co.uk.

Home Office Minister Paul Goggins said:

"The internet can be a great tool for children, allowing them to learn and communicate in ways we wouldn't have believed possible twenty years ago.

"But just like the real world, the virtual world can contain dangers for children. Sadly, some people online are not who they say they are, and are out to harm or prey on children.

"Parents should familiarise themselves with our advice on safety online, and children need to know how to protect themselves. Together, we can make the internet a safer place for children."

The Home Office website www.thinkuknow.co.uk offers five simple tips children can follow to protect themselves online:

1. People on the Internet may not be who they say they are.
2. Whatever you do, don't give out contact info, like your phone number and address.
3. Be careful what you say about your friends and their personal info. They've told you as a mate, so you shouldn't pass anything on to people they don't know.
4. If you're posting a profile, don't include any info which could help to identify you offline - again that means your personal email address, mobile phone number, home or school address and also pictures of yourself.
5. You should never really meet up with someone you chatted to online - even if you think the person is OK. Paedophiles online are seriously clever and will often spend months gaining your trust before asking to meet you. If you do decide to meet someone, tell an adult exactly where you are going, don't go alone, meet somewhere busy and take your phone.

Notes to editors

1. Images of the new Home Office awareness campaign are available from the Home Office press office on 020 7035 3850.
2. For more information on the Government's Task Force on child protection on the internet, see <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/crime-disorder/child-protection-taskforce>.