



## **SOCIAL MEDIA APP BULLETIN – October 2018**

Author – Diane Howells (CSE Analyst at South West Regional Organised Crime Unit)  
[Diane.Howells@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Diane.Howells@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk)

This document contains apps/websites of note that have appeared in Child Sexual Exploitation or Abuse cases in the South West region for the month stated above. The document may also contain apps/websites that are prominent in other regions or are believed to be an emerging issue.

If you have any apps you believe may be used in the facilitation of CSAE please send an email to the above address.

This bulletin is for use within your own organisation and for staff only. Not to be shared with outside agencies however can be used for parental bulletins. If in doubt if this can be shared please send an email to the above address.

### **Kik**

Kik is a free messaging app similar to WhatsApp and popular amongst young people it's an alternative to standard texting.

Features include video, sketch, code scanning and there are no adverts. Users can join this app anonymously without a phone number and message other people just via a username making it easy to connect with strangers.

The hashtag #kikme has been seen used on several other social media apps and sites as a way to share usernames publicly. Kik has a minimum age of 13 to join; users must enter a date of birth to register an account although there is nothing in place to verify this.

Kik allows users to block anyone they don't want to chat to and also have the option of reporting a chat history to Kik's content moderation team to take action.

Safety Information can be found on the below website

<https://help.kik.com/hc/en-us/categories/202634398-Safety>

### ***Case Study***

A 12yr old girl has been messaging an adult male who she does not know on Kik and WhatsApp. The suspect has requested that the victim send him explicit videos of herself, the victim has done this and has also been sent explicit videos of the suspect.

## **MyLOL**

MyLOL has been advertised as a teen dating app following on from the teen-dating site MyLOL.com.

The app states that users must be 17 or over but it does allow users to post if they are underage. People over 20 are not permitted to use the app; users must enter a date of birth to register an account although there is nothing in place to verify this.

Profiles on MyLOL are public and users are able to enter which gender and age range “interests” them, there is little in place to prevent strangers from viewing profiles.

Users are able to chat publicly and privately to one another and there is a blocking option available.

For safeguarding concerns contact [support@mylol.com](mailto:support@mylol.com)

### ***Case Study***

A 14yr old girl was unknowingly messaging an adult male pretending to be 16yrs old on MyLOL. The victim had sent several indecent images of herself to the suspect who saved them to a file on his computer. The male had arranged to meet the girl but fortunately she did not show up and the incident was reported to the police.

## **Pikii**

Pikii is a free anonymous random stranger chat app that allows users to search for people, groups and topics that interests them.

The app also allows users to watch people broadcasting live videos and has the function to message anonymously to any other user all over the world. Similar apps are “Chatous”, “Omegle” and “Chatroulette”. Pikii does not offer the option to block unwanted chats but does have the option to give the app feedback, there are little safety features available on this app and users are able to post pictures and videos anonymously.

Terms of the app can be seen here <https://pikii.com/terms>

Below are a number of resources to help educate adults and young people around the issue of online safety and app security:

The **UK safer internet centre**; where you can find e-safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online. For help and advice contact: 0344 3814772 or [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)

The **Revenge porn hotline**; the only organisation providing such a service in the UK, providing support and advice to the victims of the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and cyber-enabled blackmail (known as sextortion). <https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/>

**POSH (The Professionals Online Safety Helpline)**; The Professionals Online Safety Helpline is a free service for all professionals and volunteers working with children and young people. It provides signposting, advice and mediation to resolve online safety issues staff face about themselves, such as protecting professional identity and online harassment, or problems affecting young people, for example cyber-bullying or sexting issues. Where appropriate we can also provide advice or facilitate in the removal of harmful content. POSH have created good relationships with many of the giant tech companies and are a great place to start if you have any concerns with a particular site or App.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline>