

Online Safety: Technology as a tool of coercion and control



About Refuge

Refuge is a registered charity and the UK's largest single provider of specialist support services for women and children fleeing all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence, stalking, trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery.

- ✓ The 24/7 Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline (including Live Chat)
- ✓ Refuge accommodation and support for women and children fleeing domestic abuse
- ✓ Support in the community such as independent domestic and sexual violence advocacy and outreach
- ✓ Support for children and young people
- ✓ Specialist Technology-Facilitated Abuse and Economic Empowerment team

TRIGGER WARNING

- We will be discussing sensitive topics – please look after yourselves
- The content includes references to different forms of domestic abuse and technology-facilitated abuse
- If at any time you feel triggered by the content of this session, please feel free to leave the space and prioritize your wellbeing
- Please do not share any personal information in this session

Objectives

Recognise ways
in which
abusers **misuse**
technology

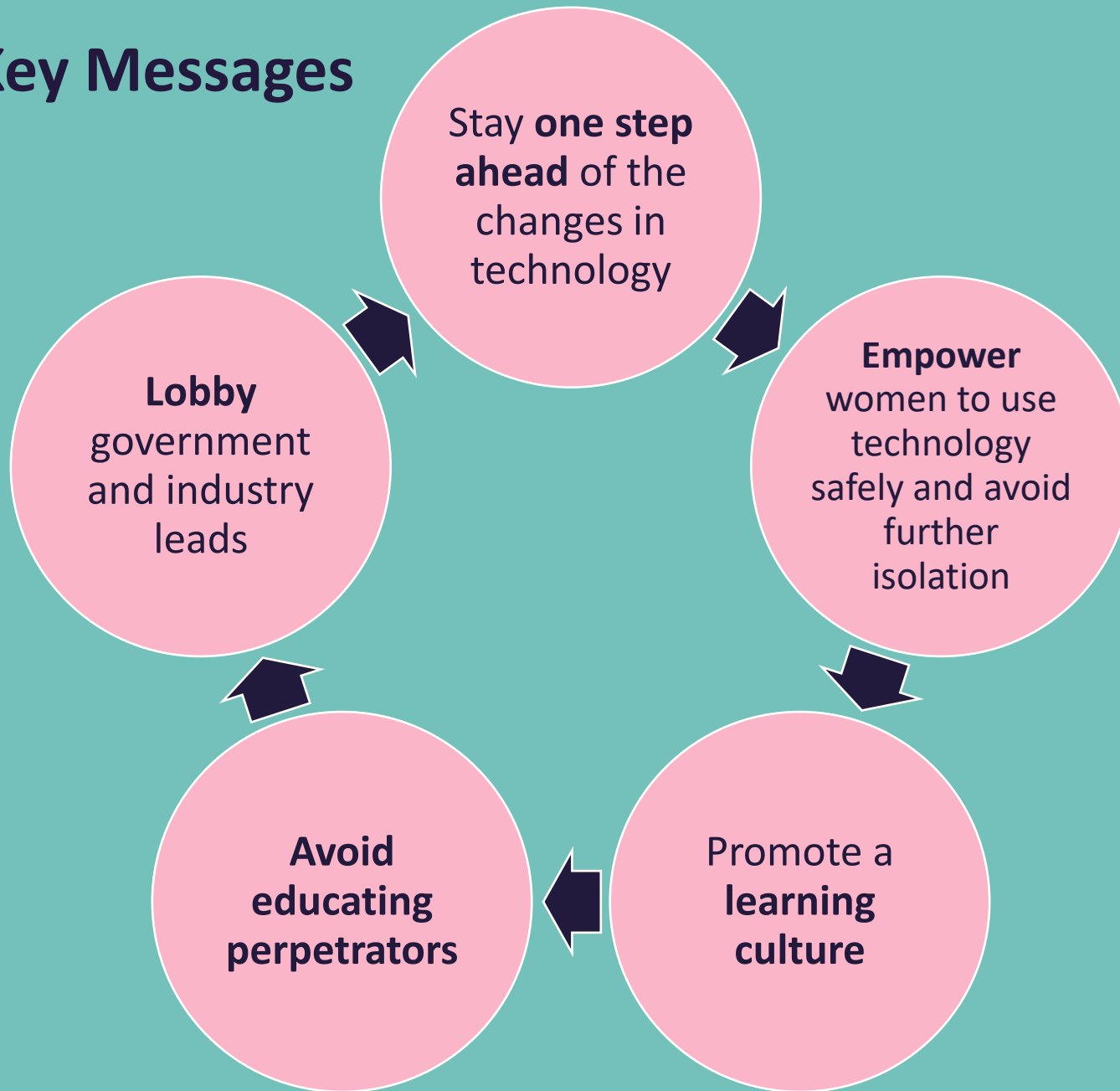
Know how to
respond to
victims of tech
abuse and
develop a safety
plan

Understand the
emerging trends
of technology-
facilitated
abuse

Understand
what the **Online**
Safety Bill is and
why a VAWG
Code of Practice
is needed



Our Key Messages





What is Technology-Facilitated Abuse?

Technology-facilitated abuse typically is not as “high-tech” as the news articles suggest.

It is the **everyday abuse** that we as advocates are familiar with which is facilitated by technology:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Financial abuse

Physical

- Destruction/ removal of tech devices
- Monitoring tech use
- Location tracking
- Recording devices
- Microchipping

Sexual

- Sharing intimate images
- Threats to share images
- Online grooming
- Deep fakes
- Recording without consent

Psychological

- Gaslighting
- IoT misuse
- Online impersonation
- Stalking and harassment
- Constant calls and texts

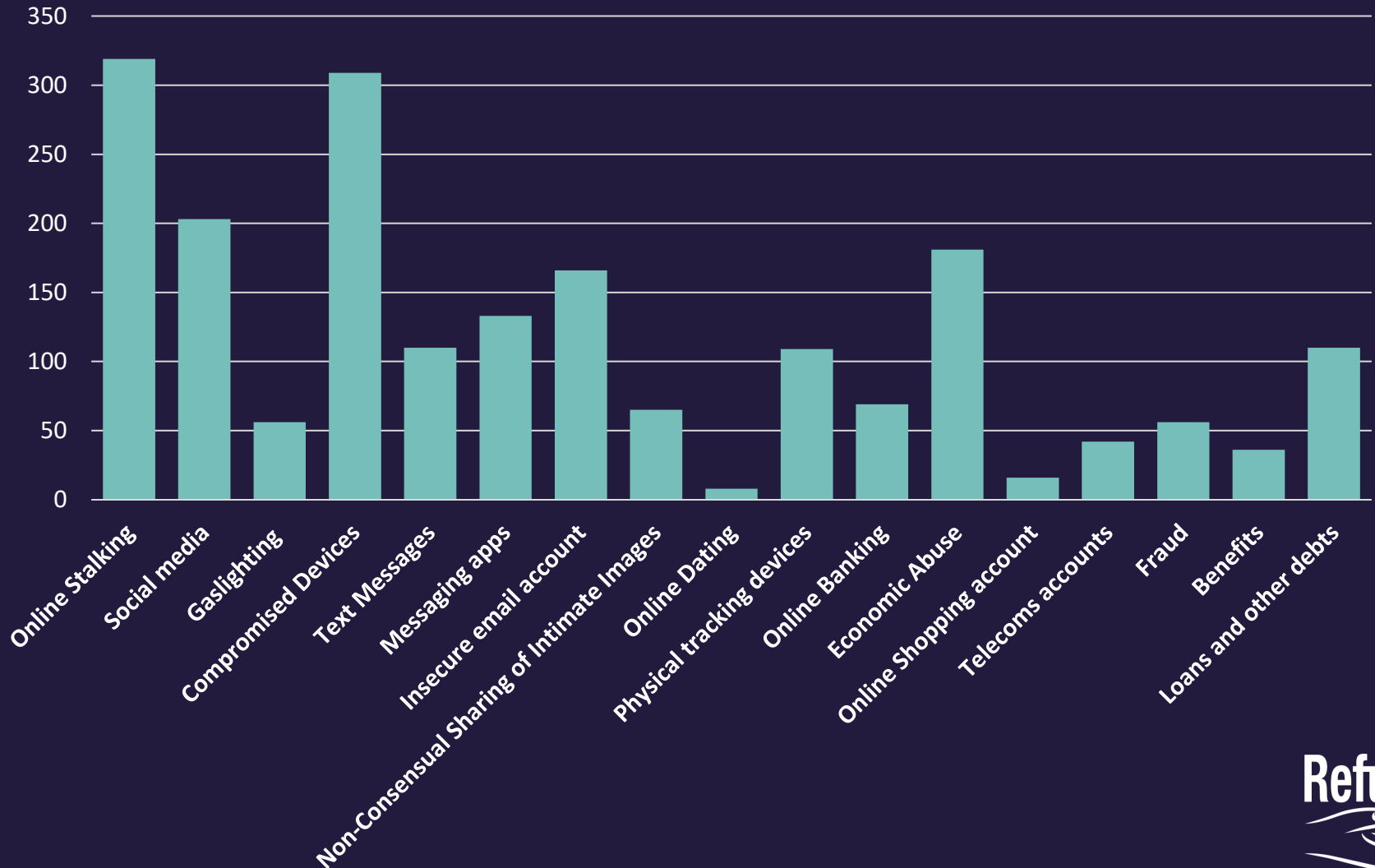
Economic

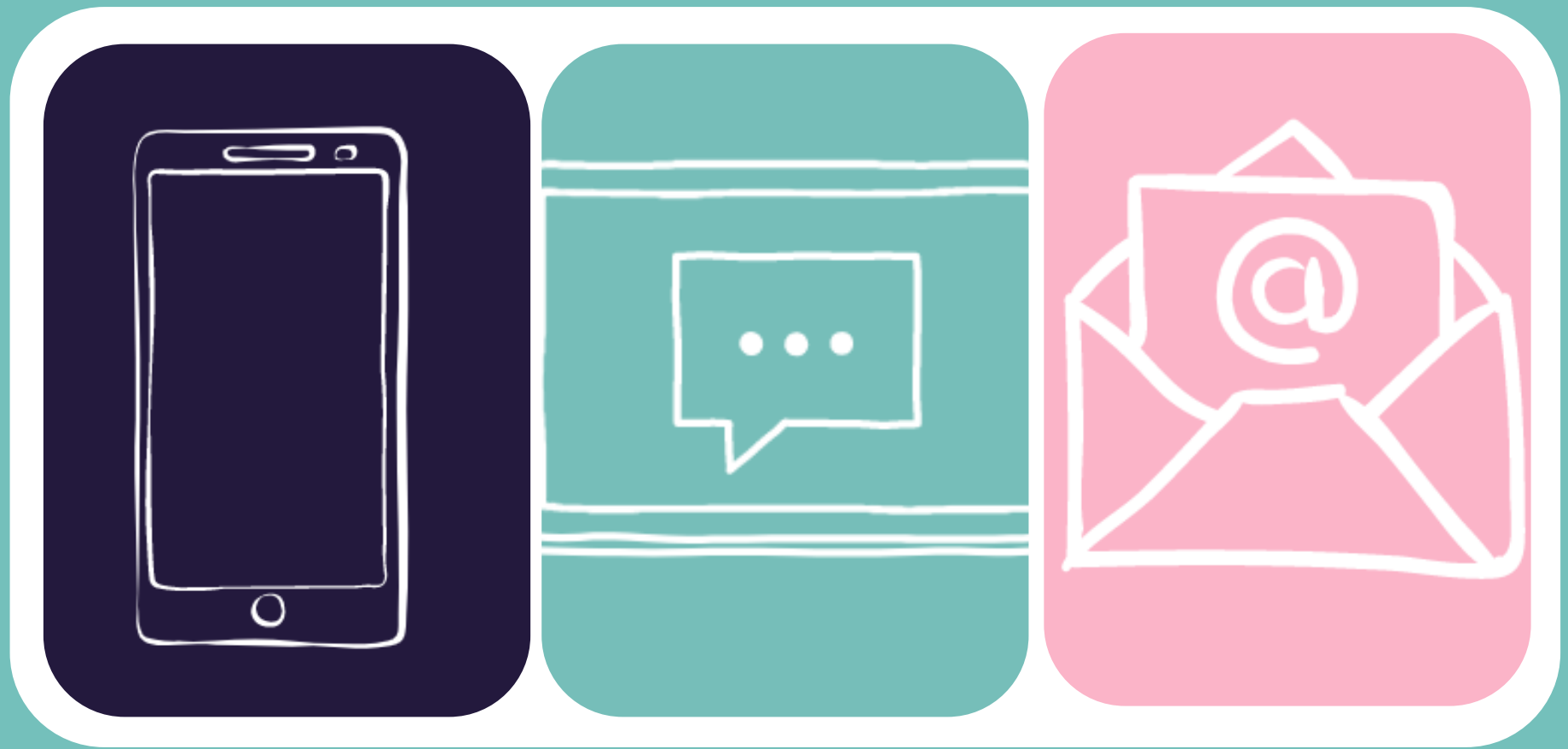
- Fraudulent debts
- Controlling resources
- Enforcing spending limits
- Limiting earning potential
- Misuse of Online banking



Emerging trends

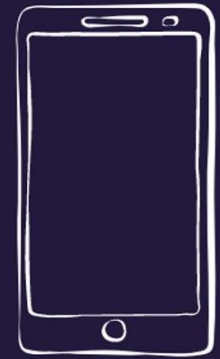
Emerging Trends





Initial contact with survivors

Making Safe Contact – Calls



RISKS

Client's phone calls might be listened in to

Client's phone records might be accessible to the perpetrator

WHAT TO ASK?

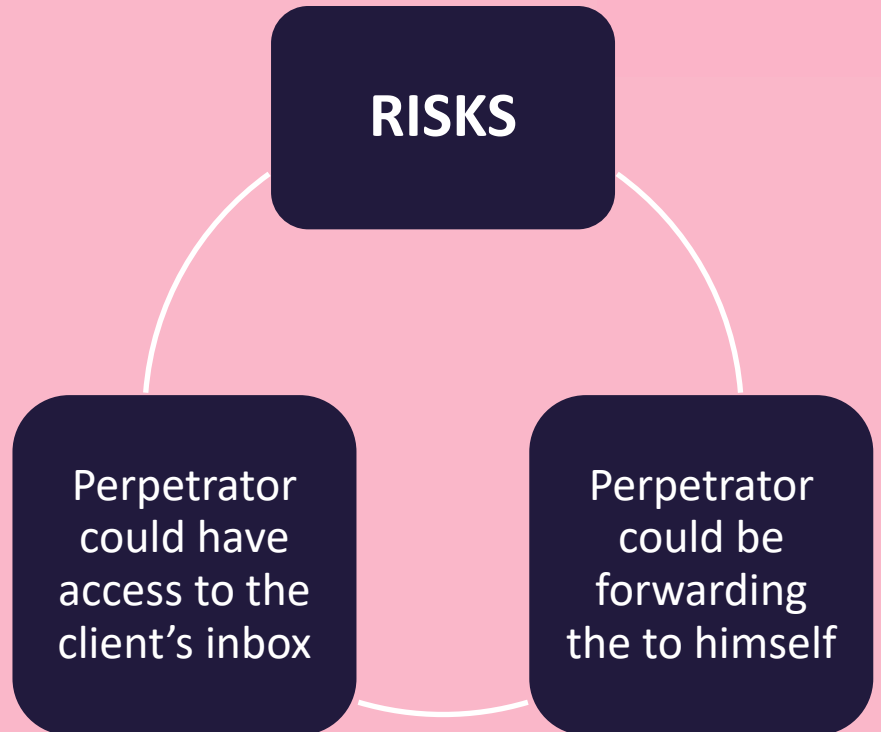
- Open questions about if there's any **pattern of the perpetrator knowing about calls**.
- Whose name is the client's **phone contract** in?
- If the client accesses her phone contract details online, would the perpetrator know the **log in details** for this?
- If the **conversations at home are overheard**, is this only when the client is on the phone?

Making Safe Contact – Emails



WHAT TO ASK?

- Is there a history of the perpetrator knowing the **content of client's emails**?
- Is there a chance the email account is logged in on **perpetrator's devices** or on a **device left behind**?
- Would the perpetrator know the **passwords** for the email account or be able to guess the password?



Warning!

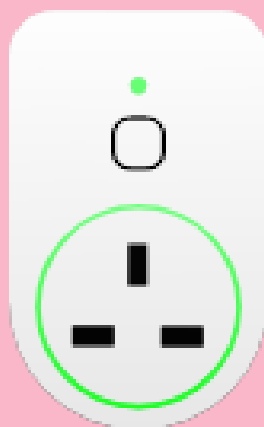
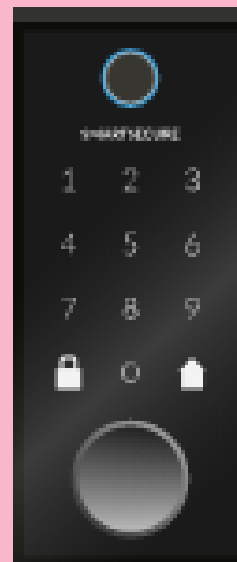
Before advising a survivor to make any changes to their device or accounts - consider if it is safe to do so now!

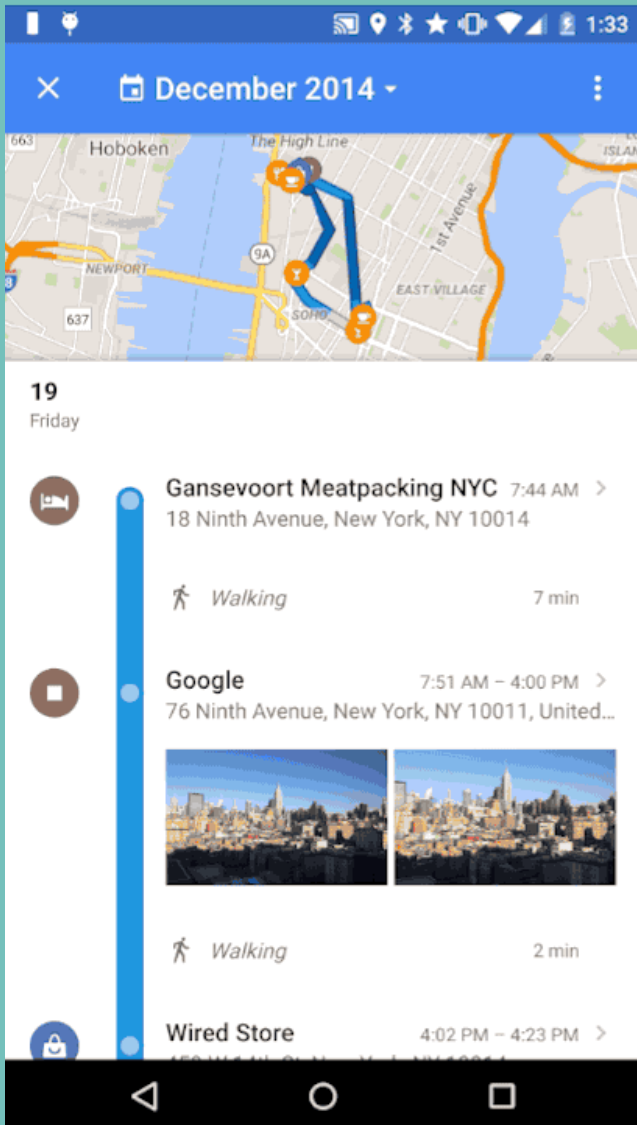
If you are at all unsure and want some advice,
call the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**
0808 2000 247

Refuge's Home Tech Tool



Home Tech



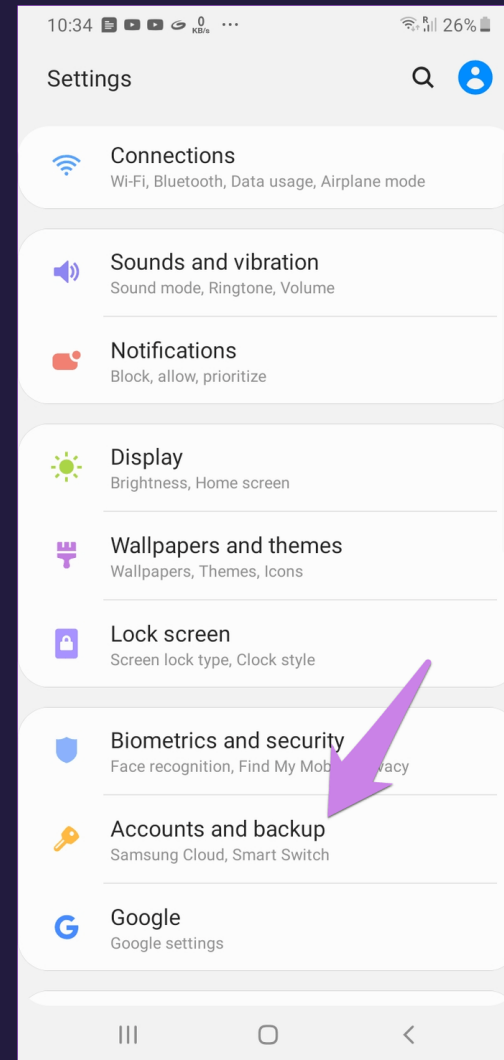


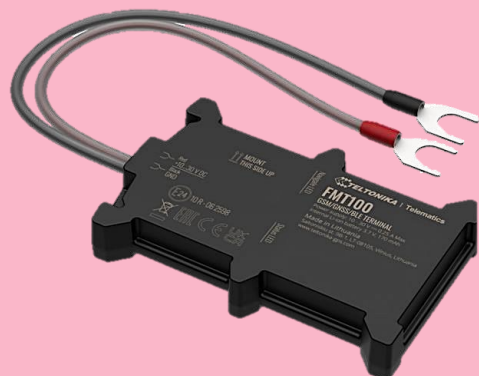
Location settings

Clients should be helped to **turn off location** in their phones settings and for other devices they carry with them, or wish to bring to a safe place.



Linked Devices





GPS trackers -

What do they look like?

Supporting clients with trackers

Identify patterns

Assess where the physical tracking device is located by identifying patterns

Help to search

Advise the client what the device may look like, and places to search.

Safety planning

Establish where is safe/ unsafe to speak with the client i.e. when she is at home

Evidence

Advise on the best way to gather evidence:

- If it's safe keep a log.
- Photograph any devices found, and hand them over to police

Link between tech and economic abuse - online financial accounts



Assessing for technology-facilitated abuse



Assessing for technology-facilitated abuse


What **phone** do you have? Who is the **network provider**? Who set it up?

What **other devices** do you have? Who owns them and who set them up? What devices have been left behind?

What **accounts** do you use/have? Who has access to these? Who has had access to these? Who set them up? Shared or known passwords?

What devices and accounts do your **children** have/use?

Do you have a **car**? Does it have a sat-nav (consider in-built ones too)?




Does anyone else know your **passwords**? Do you use the same password across multiple accounts?



What has been happening which leads you to believe your devices or accounts are compromised?

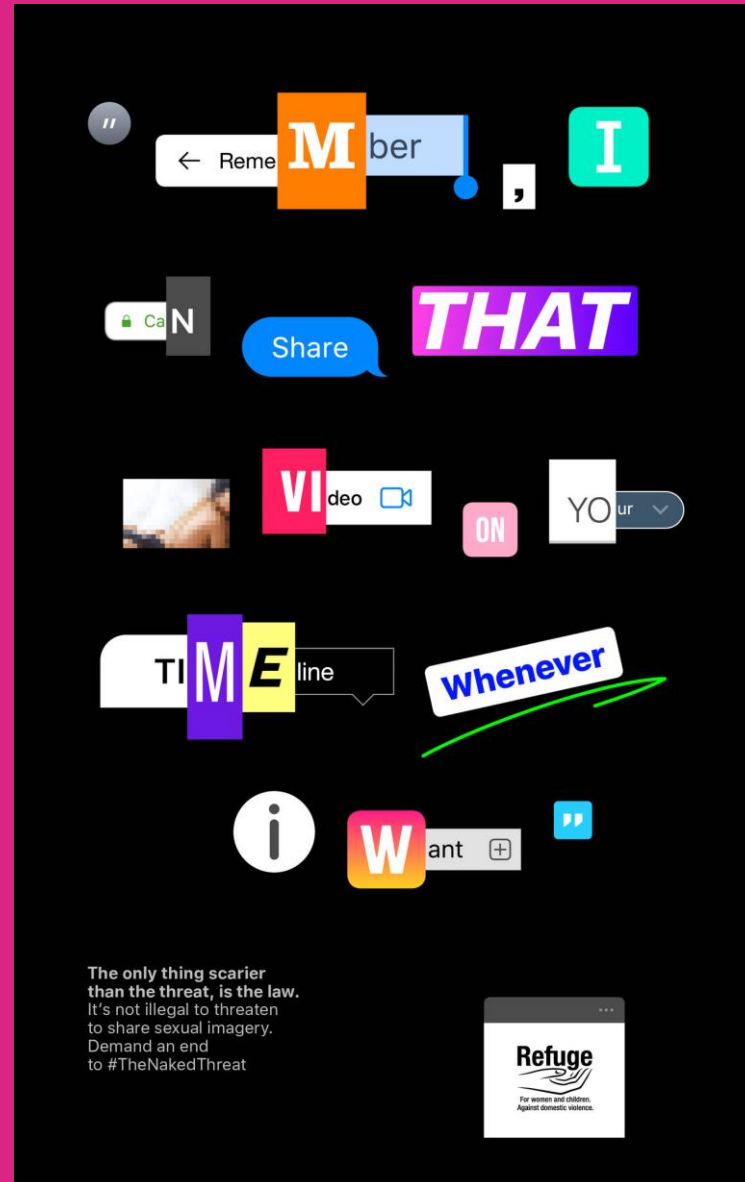


Is there a **pattern of behaviour or concerns** that may indicate some devices/accounts are being used by someone else?



How **"techy"** is the perpetrator? What is your **level of tech knowledge**?

Tech- facilitated abuse: policy and legal change



Research: Unsocial Spaces and Marked As Unsafe

- 1 in 3 women (36%) has experienced online abuse or harassment on social media or another online platform
- 1 in 6 (16%) experienced this from a partner or former partner
- 95% of survivors were not satisfied with support from social media companies
- Over half of survivors did not receive a response from the platform



Online Safety Bill

- Illegal content
- Terms and Conditions
- User empowerment
- Child safety



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology



Ministry
of Justice



Home Office



Parliamentary Bills

HOUSE OF LORDS

[UK Parliament](#) > [Business](#) > [Legislation](#) > [Parliamentary Bills](#) > [Online Safety Bill](#)

[Bill feed](#)

Online Safety Bill

Government Bill

Originated in the House of Commons, Sessions 2021-22, 2022-23

Last updated: 14 March 2023 at 17:46

Commons

Lords

Final stages



[See full passage](#)

Strengthening the Bill

campaign.refuge.org.uk/page/112780

Violence Against
Women and Girls (VAWG)
Code of Practice



GLITCH

NSPCC



Professor Clare McGlynn

Professor Lorna Woods

GLAMOUR



The House of Commons returns from recess today, so will Parliament take the online safety bill seriously?



Rachel Maclean MP
@redditchrachel

A brilliant round table (with more people on teams!) listening to the voices of victims of #VAWG and #DomesticAbuse as the #onlinesafetybill continues its passage through Parliament. Many groups here: @nicolejacobsST @RefugeCharity @EVAWuk @live_life_safe thank you to all



Women are not safe online. Will you stand with us and demand change?

Every day, women are abused, stalked, intimidated and harassed online.

The government has an opportunity to act now and prioritise women's safety by ensuring the Online Safety Bill protects women online.

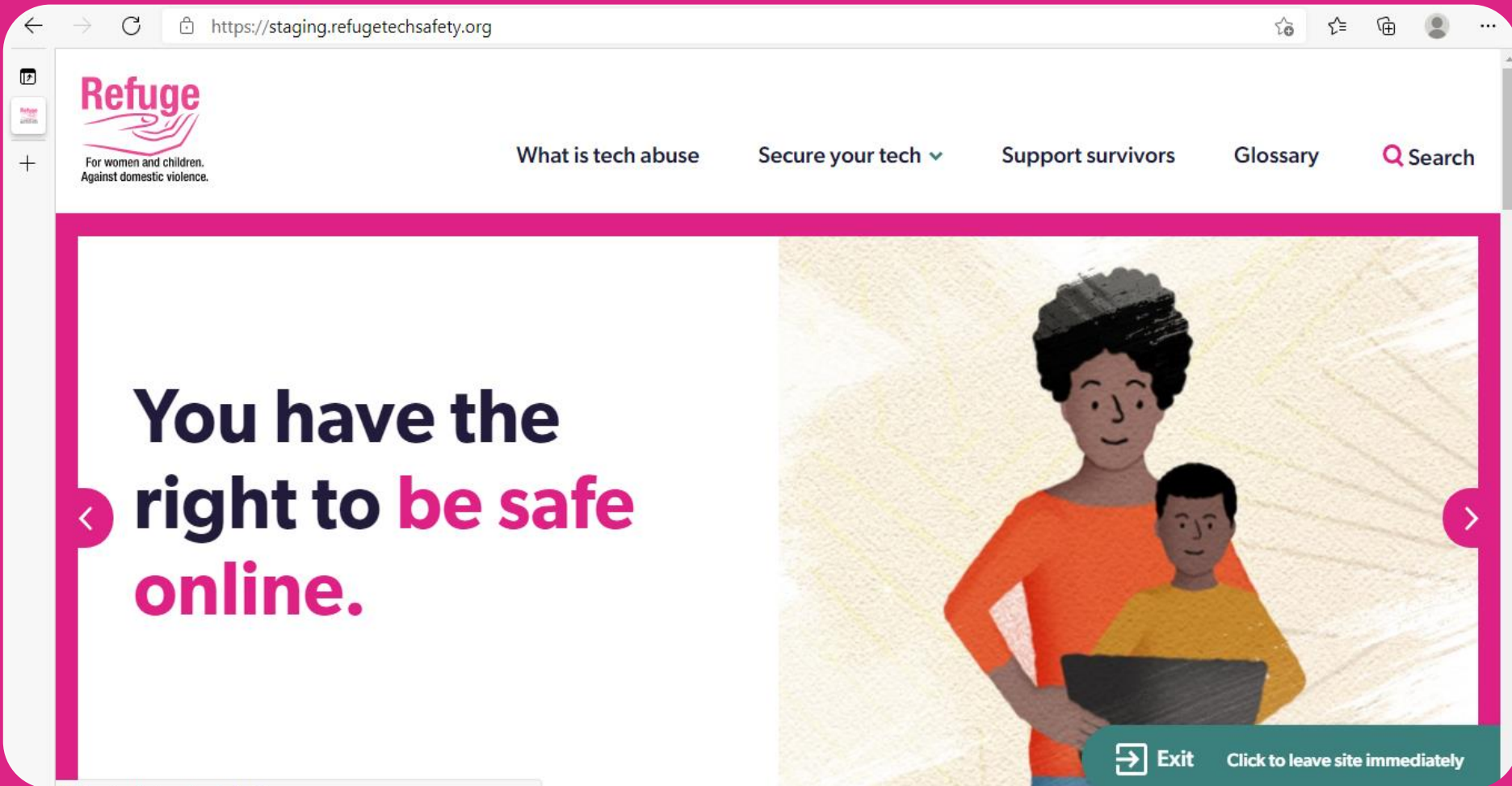
Let's urge the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to protect women and girls.

Tell them to act now!

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE

Refuge Tech Safety Website

www.refugetechsafety.org



Multilingual Tech Safety Tool

English

Urdu

Polish

Spanish

Want advice on how
to secure your device
settings?



The Naked Threat

Sign now to make imaged based abuse illegal

Keep your devices safe

Click the pink icon to learn how to secure your devices

Get Help Now

National Domestic Abuse Helpline Website

Recognising abuse

Learn about the warning signs of abuse

About Refuge

Find out more about Refuge's specialist services

Donate

Support women and children escaping domestic abuse

Keep your devices safe

Click the pink icon to learn how to secure your devices



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247



Live chat

Webform

BSL

**Women are not safe online. Will
you stand with us and demand
change?**

