

## **Nominet and Parent Zone join forces to tackle financial exploitation of children online**

**LONDON, UK – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023:** [Nominet, the public benefit internet company](#), has funded a programme with [Parent Zone](#) to address the growing problem of children being exploited financially online. Over a three-year period, Parent Zone will receive £930,000 in funding to design and deliver a programme focussed on understanding and addressing Child Financial Harms (CFH).

Due to digital technologies, children have the opportunities, incentives and means to make, spend and lose money beyond the oversight of parents and carers. According to [recent research](#), more than a fifth (22%) have paid for things online, and nearly four in ten (38%) of those did so without adult supervision.

Children are now in control of their own money and make many financial decisions in their own right. As a result, they are exposed to risk at multiple points in their daily digital life. For example, through phishing, micro-transactions, gambling mechanics in games, scams, or virtual currencies.

A joined-up response to online child sexual abuse and exploitation has been achieved through years of research, investment and strategic coordination from the government and other stakeholders. The financial dimension to online harms has been missing from this work until now.

With Nominet's backing, Parent Zone aims to bridge the gaps between parents, policy and platforms, providing insights and knowledge in order to shape a better future for children. This includes innovating solutions to new and emerging categories of harm that affect children and young people. The programme, funded solely by Nominet, aims to bring together a unique combination of expertise and experience from different sectors to innovate new interventions for sustained impact.

Partners will include the PSHE Association, the national body for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, UK Finance, Cifas, Dr David Zendle, an active researcher into the effects of both video games and gambling, and Reason Digital. The consortium will identify areas for positive systemic change, then collaboratively design, test and review new interventions, with a view to scaling up the most successful outputs.

Vicki Shotbolt, founder and CEO of Parent Zone commented: "The UK is facing an increasing number of children living in poverty. It's likely that an unprecedented surge in the cost of living and an imminent recession will lead to more children experiencing risk online and possible harm. As children are able to buy, trade and earn online more easily, those risks and harms will increasingly include financial harms. The response from the system to CFH is still at a

nascent stage compared to other areas of harm – but with Nominet’s funding, this can be changed.”

Mike Haley, Chief Executive of Cifas added: “Collaboration is at the heart of what we do at Cifas, and we believe that the consortium provides us with an excellent opportunity to engage and educate young people about the serious consequences of fraud and financial crime. Cifas has played a key role in helping to raise awareness of financial harms among young people since 2018, and we look forward to working with others in the consortium to share our knowledge and build this important work going forward.”

Paul Fletcher, CEO, Nominet, commented: “Our children are faced with increasingly sophisticated ways to encourage them to part with their money. But there is a darker dimension where platforms include financial mechanics that are now encouraging young people to engage in dangerous behaviour for reward, while also providing new avenues for abusers to engage, manipulate, and control children. As a society, we are currently ill-equipped to understand and respond to this issue. I'm proud that Nominet is able to give critical funds towards the development of solutions that will prevent and mitigate this rising category of harms.”

### **About Nominet**

Nominet is driven by a commitment to use technology to improve connectivity, security and inclusivity online. For 25 years, Nominet has run the .UK internet infrastructure, developing an expertise in the Domain Name System (DNS) that now underpins sophisticated threat monitoring, detection, prevention and analytics that is used by governments to mitigate cyber threats. Our Social Impact programmes provide support and opportunities to tackle some of the most important digital issues facing young people in the UK today.

### **About Parent Zone**

Parent Zone is a social enterprise that sits at the heart of digital family life, providing advice, knowledge and support to shape the best possible future for children as they embrace the online world. We bridge the gaps between parents, policy and platforms, providing insights and knowledge in order to shape a better future for all. Since 2005, we have worked with partners such as Google, Children in Need and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to develop innovative projects, giving families information, support and advice.

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