



Dear Friends of Media Smart

Earlier this summer, we held an event at Portcullis House in Westminster to bring the issue of media literacy and, particularly, boys' body image, right to the heart of parliament and policy making. You can watch a [highlights video of the event here](#).

We were hosted by Andrew Bowie MP, with an audience that included MPs, NGOs, charities, the advertising industry, and those most affected by this issue – young people themselves.

Andrew emphasised that the importance of media literacy to young men and women cannot be overestimated, especially in today's complex digital world. This was followed by a screening of the [Boys' Biggest Conversation](#), a shocking and funny 15-minute film which I urge you to watch.

It was created with [First News](#) and is part of a wider Media Smart campaign, supported by the NSPCC and Childline, to encourage young men to talk about body image and the effect it has on their mental wellbeing.

The film sparked a thought provoking panel session that included Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield OBE, Nicolette Smallshaw (head of education, First News), Grania Hyde-Smith (National Services Communications

Manager, NSPCC), and Craig Donahy (head of community and insight, [SuperAwesome](#) and editor-in-chief, Popjam).

Anne emphasised that digital and emotional literacy is a missing link in young people's education and that it should be a core part of the curriculum. She also said that the conversation around children and media is maturing and there is an increasing focus on greater responsibility from tech companies.

While schools are good at helping children to understand how to stay safe online, they are not yet preparing them to be ready to be digitally literate and emotionally resilient, she argued. This is particularly of importance around the transition between primary and secondary schools.

Anne said digital literacy should be compulsory for year 6 and year 7 students to help them be ready for the pressure they experience and to address the idea that going offline isn't socially bad. "We need to support children with digital literacy from the age of four onwards and give them the confidence to switch the thing off," she commented.

To download any of Media Smart's free educational resources [please visit our website](#).

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