# Keir Starmer highlights dangers of toxic masculinity and social media influences on youth



Prime Minister Keir Starmer has recently expressed his concerns over issues surrounding toxic masculinity and the negative influences of social media on young men, in light of the Netflix show "Adolescence". In an interview with BBC Radio 5 Live, Starmer revealed that he had been watching the four-part crime drama, which narrates the story of a boy accused of murdering his female classmate. He highlighted the importance of not overlooking these pressing societal issues, stating, "We should not shrug our shoulders" at problems affecting the attitudes of boys and young men.

During the discussion, Starmer mentioned his personal connection to the topic, noting that he is a parent to a 16-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl. He explained that the emerging debate reflects a broader acknowledgment among parents and educators that there is indeed a problem that requires attention. "I am worried about this... a lot of people who work with young people at school or elsewhere, recognise that we may have a problem with boys and young men that we need to address," he remarked.

The Prime Minister indicated that role models play a crucial part in young men's development and that figures from sports, such as footballers and athletes, could serve as positive examples. However, he acknowledged that many young people might relate more closely to individuals within their immediate environment, such as teachers or coaches. "If you actually ask a young person, they're more likely to identify somebody who's in their school," he noted, emphasising the need for accessible role models within communities.

Starmer's remarks follow a significant lecture given by Sir Gareth Southgate, the former England football manager, who spoke about the detrimental influence of "manipulative and toxic influencers" on young men. In his address at the University of London, Southgate highlighted the dangers of young men turning to unhealthy role models, which he argued contributes to a culture that can lead to misogynistic attitudes and violence. He claims that such influences can lead young men to perceive women adversarially, stating, "young men end up searching for direction and fill the void with a new kind of role model who do not have their best interest at heart".

"Adolescence," co-created by Jack Thorne, integrates these themes of social media's role in shaping perceptions of masculinity and the impact of incel culture—which has been associated with instances of misogyny and violence online. Thorne expressed hopes that the show will spur the government to consider legislative changes addressing the risks associated with social media usage. He drew attention to the Australian government's decision to impose restrictions on young children's access to social media platforms and suggested similar measures could be implemented in the UK to promote better safety for teenagers.

In summation, Starmer's comments and the surrounding discourse highlight a growing recognition within political and societal discussions regarding the influences shaping young men's behaviours and attitudes, particularly through the lenses of social media and cultural role models. As these discussions evolve, they underline the complexities of addressing masculinity in contemporary society.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://borkowski.substack.com/p/borkowski-media-trends-starmer-adolescence-snow-white> - This article discusses Prime Minister Keir Starmer's concerns about toxic masculinity and social media's influence on young men, as reflected in the Netflix show 'Adolescence'. It highlights Starmer's call for the show to be used as an educational tool to address these issues.
* <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/03/20/adolescence-how-young-men-are-being-radicalised-by-social-media> - This report explores how the show 'Adolescence' highlights the radicalization of young men through social media and toxic masculinity. It mentions the influence of figures like Andrew Tate and the potential for legislative changes to protect young people online.
* <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a64237753/keir-starmer-adolescence-parliament> - This article discusses Keir Starmer's support for showing 'Adolescence' in schools and Parliament to address toxic misogyny and online radicalization. It underscores the importance of tackling violence influenced by online content.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source providing background on Prime Minister Keir Starmer's comments regarding toxic masculinity and the Netflix show 'Adolescence'. The article is not available publicly, but it likely discusses Starmer's concerns and role models in shaping young men's attitudes.
* <https://borkowski.substack.com/> - This website hosts Mark Borkowski's analyses on media trends, including discussions on PR, politics, and communication, which can provide insights into how figures like Keir Starmer and Gareth Southgate address societal issues like toxic masculinity.