# The impact of media on teenage boys: a growing concern



The release of the much-anticipated Netflix drama 'Adolescence' has sparked significant concern regarding the portrayals and realities of teenage boys in contemporary society. Since its debut earlier this month, the series has prompted discussions among parents and educators about the challenges facing young males, particularly in their online interactions.

Keir Starmer, the leader of the UK Labour Party, weighed in on the issue, positing that the country "may have a problem with boys and young men." This statement reflects a growing unease among parents who have begun engaging in conversations about their sons' digital lives and the influences that come along with them.

Michael Conroy, an expert in boys' personal development who has conducted training in schools for several years, indicates that there has been a notable change in the behaviour and discourse of boys. He remarked, "Just 10 years ago, we didn’t have young men speaking in very sexualised ways to female teachers, quite a few in the same school.” Conroy attributes this shift largely to the pervasive access to pornography, revealing that boys as young as 11 are increasingly using such material obsessively. He expressed concern that this exposure fosters unrealistic and often harmful perceptions of girls and relationships. "I’m getting invited to work with primary schools now," he said, highlighting the urgency of addressing these issues at a younger age.

To gain insights directly from the youth, Helen Pidd from The Guardian visited a sixth-form college in Manchester and conversed with five pupils about their experiences. The discussions revealed a range of topics, including the pressures they feel, the complexities of friendships with girls, and their opinions on social media influencers. The boys expressed scepticism, with one noting that "a lot of it is just rubbish," reflecting their critical stance toward the narratives often presented online.

The interplay between modern media, adolescent behaviour, and gender dynamics appears to be at the forefront of discussions surrounding young men today, as both educators and families navigate the implications of these evolving norms.

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

## References

* <https://happyfamilies.com.au/articles/review-of-adolescence-netflix> - This article discusses the Netflix series 'Adolescence' and its portrayal of the challenges faced by teenage boys, especially in the context of their digital lives and perceptions of masculinity. It supports concerns raised by parents and educators about the impacts of social media.
* <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/03/27/netflix-adolescence-tv-show-review-moral-panic/> - This review of 'Adolescence' highlights how the show raises questions about the role of social media in shaping adolescent behavior and societal norms. It connects to broader discussions on toxic masculinity and modern teenage life.
* <https://theguardian.com/society/uk-news> - While not directly linked, The Guardian is known for covering social issues and education, which could include discussions with students about their experiences with social media and gender dynamics. This type of content would align with Helen Pidd's visit to a sixth-form college in Manchester.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-60942785> - BBC Newsbeat often covers topics related to young people and social media, providing insights into the pressures and influences faced by teenagers. This type of reporting could corroborate the changing behaviors and discourse among young males.
* <https://press.researchportal.ch/project/realboys> - This link may not directly relate but suggests that projects focusing on boys' personal development and challenges associated with their social media interactions exist. It symbolizes the broader concern about how digital environments affect young males.