

# Social media causes eating disorders

*Chloe and Sean – Thursday 16 March 2017*

Social media has become even more of a necessity in younger people's lives across the whole of the UK. However, studies have shown that social media is playing more and more of a role in teenager's lives therefore social groups has more of an impact on the views people have about themselves more than ever before.

In the UK 1.6 million people are affected by eating disorders, mainly anorexia. Around, 89% of these people are female (nearly 1 in 100 women is affected) and only 11% male. This is in an era where almost all people aged 12 to 17 alter the images that are posted online due to the huge effect on young people's body confidence.

In 2012, MP's recommended all school children should take part in compulsory body image and self-esteem lessons. However, this has not happened at the scale promised by government officials. Studies show, 60% of the UK public are ashamed of their body image. This needs to be changed.

Although social media has created opportunities for many people that have also affected others who follow and are inspired by these characters, social media still has negative impacts, especially when it comes down to body confidence and self-esteem. It most commonly affects young people who have a tendency towards perfectionism, anxiety or disordered eating. Girls and women are mainly affected and the (often altered) images that they see can lead them to associate slimness with happiness. In addition to this, people may feel that they need others input or validation on their own posts. This may falsely fulfil their need for acceptance – further distorting their body image.

In conclusion, we feel this should be a more visible issue and more action should be taken by people in power. We also feel that more help should be provided for people who struggle in this area and that support should be clearly accessible to those in need.