

# NetSafe appointed as Approved Agency to deal with cyberbullying

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*NetSafe has been appointed as the Approved Agency under the Harmful Digital Communications Act to help people deal with cyberbullying.*

Justice Minister Amy Adams has announced that internet safety organisation NetSafe has been appointed as the "Approved Agency" under the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015.

"NetSafe will play a key role in reducing the devastating impact of harmful digital communications, by providing a timely and effective service for victims to get help from an independent body," says Ms Adams.

The Approved Agency will:

- advise people on steps they can take to resolve a problem
- provide education and advice on policies for online safety and conduct
- investigate complaints where harm has been caused and attempt to reach settlements between the complainant and the person responsible
- liaise with website hosts, ISPs and other internet intermediaries (both here and overseas) and request them to take down or moderate posts that are clearly offensive, and
- advise complainants they can ask the District Court to consider serious, unresolved matters.

Alongside the Approved Agency, the District Court will get a new civil process that will provide a speedy, and accessible, legal avenue for dealing with serious or repeated harmful digital communications.

The court will consider applications from people who allege they have suffered or will suffer harm from a digital communication, and parents, guardians and school principals on behalf of children. However, people will need to go to the Approved Agency before they can apply to the court.

Police will be able to apply to the court when a communication threatens a person's safety. The Chief Coroner may apply for a takedown order about material relating to suicide, if publication is prohibited by the Coroners Act 2006.

It is expected NetSafe will start as the Approved Agency in November 2016. The new District Court orders will be available later this year.

**Related information**

- [Minister's Press Release - NetSafe selected to play key role in anti-cyberbullying law \(external link\)](#)
- [NetSafe website \(external link\)](#)
- Check out the Police "[Words Hurt Too \(external link\)](#)" video launched during Bullying-free New Zealand Week (16-20 May 2016), which demonstrates how harmful a single word can be.

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