

# Father accuses Instagram of contributing to teenager's suicide

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The father of a schoolgirl who took her own life has said that Instagram "helped kill" her by hosting material that glorifies self-harm and suicide.

Molly Rose Russell was 14 when she was found dead in her bedroom in November 2017. She had shown "no obvious signs" of severe mental health issues.

In a final note to her parents and two sisters, she wrote: "I'm sorry. I did this because of me." Her family later found

that she had been viewing material on social media linked to anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide.

Her father, Ian Russell, said that the algorithms used by Instagram had enabled her to view more harmful content, possibly contributing to her death. "I have no doubt that Instagram helped kill my daughter," he told the BBC.

He claimed that the way in which social media platforms are engineered can lead vulnerable young people down a rabbit hole of potentially dangerous

and damaging content. "There were accounts from people who were depressed or self-harming or suicidal. Quite a lot of that content was quite positive... [but some] is shocking in that it encourages self-harm."

In a statement yesterday he added: "In the same way that someone who has shown an interest in a particular sport may be shown more and more posts about that sport, the same can be true of topics such as self-harm or suicide."

An inquest is expected later this year.



Molly Rose Russell viewed material linked to self-harm

The family have set up the Molly Rose Foundation in memory of the teenager, who was a pupil at Hatch End High School in Harrow, northwest London.

An Instagram spokesman said: "We

do not allow content that promotes or glorifies eating disorders, self-harm or suicide and work hard to remove it.

"However, for many young people, discussing their mental-health journey or connecting with others who have battled similar issues, is an important part of their recovery. This is why we don't remove certain content."

Theresa May's official spokesman said that "the prime minister has been clear that tech companies must do more to... address these concerns".

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