

## What can you do?

If you are worried about a child or young person, you must do something, but it may not be easy to find out what is going on from them

Your child may have been told not to talk about what they are doing or threatened with violence. Or they may think they have an exciting grown-up life with a boyfriend or girlfriend which they don't want to end.

Try to find a time to talk to them calmly about how they feel. Your child may open up and admit they are unhappy about a part of their life. They may even admit they need help.

But if they won't talk to you, please do not let the matter drop. Is there someone else that you both trust that could talk to them; a grandparent, uncle or family friend, or someone from your religion or local community? Tell the trusted person about your concerns and ask them to have a word.

## What can I do?

Sussex Police has set up a dedicated operation to tackle child sexual exploitation called Operation Kite. There are social workers, family support workers and police officers working together who can talk to you about what is going on. From here they will work with you to develop a plan aimed at keeping you child safe and stopping the abuse.



**Protecting children from sexual exploitation in West Sussex**  
**OPERATION KITE**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse, it is where a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in sexual activity. This could be as part of a relationship which to the child or to outsiders might appear loving and normal or, in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay.

It is vital that professionals who work with young people are familiar with the signs that can tell us that a young person is being exploited so that we can identify these children as early as possible. Often, victims are not aware they are being exploited which means that they cannot protect themselves.

**Warning signs to look out for:**

- The child has unexplained gifts or unaffordable new things (clothes, mobiles or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs))
- They have substance misuse problems
- The child often goes missing, runs away or is homeless
- They are not engaged with their school, have been excluded or have long periods of truancy
- The child has sexually transmitted infections or keeps becoming pregnant, having abortions or miscarriages
- The child engages in inappropriate sexual behaviour, sexually risky behaviour or swapping sex for drugs or a place to stay
- They have an association with men or groups who are older than them, or contact with people who are known to commit crime
- They often self-harm, make suicide or overdose attempts or display injuries from physical assault

**If you recognise any of these signs - act now**

**OPERATION KITE**  
Sussex Police  
Serving Sussex  
www.sussex.police.uk

West Sussex Police (WSP) and South Downs Police (SDP) are part of the Sussex Police Partnership. This is a joint venture between WSP and SDP. The Partnership is a joint venture between WSP and SDP. The Partnership is a joint venture between WSP and SDP. The Partnership is a joint venture between WSP and SDP.

Alternatively:  
• Contact the local Sussex Missing Persons Centre on 01323 566022  
• Contact the local Sussex Child Protection Team on 01323 566022

## FOR CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT AND ADVICE

**POLICE:** 101 or 999 in an emergency

**CHILDLINE:** 0800 11 11

**NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000

**STOP IT NOW:** 0808 100 900

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## FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

How to get help if you think your son or daughter is being sexually exploited.



## ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD OR TEENAGER?

- Do they stay out overnight?
- Have they been missing from home?
- Do they skip school?
- Have they come home with money, clothes, jewellery, a mobile phone or other presents they can't account for?
- Do they have an older boyfriend or girlfriend you are concerned about?
- Are you worried they are using drugs or alcohol?
- Have they lost contact with family and friends of their own age?
- Do they lack self-esteem?
- Are they secretive about where they go and who they see?
- Do they chat to people online they have never met?
- Are you worried about unsafe sexual behaviour?

## What is sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation can involve swapping sexual favours for drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and other presents. Or it may be having sex for money with several adults. Young people may feel they must have sex because an adult gives them something or because they feel threatened or frightened.

Some young people may want to have sex because they think the adult is their boyfriend or girlfriend. In reality they are being used for sex and the 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' may pass them on to other people too. (Remember sexual abusers can be women or men.)

Child sexual exploitation is a crime. The police and social services will act to stop it happening.



## How does it happen?

We know from experience that some grown-ups target children and young people and draw them into abusive sexual relationships.

This is how it can happen:

- At the beginning, adults make young people feel special by showing them a lot of interest and affection
- Sometimes they ask groups of young people to come back to their house or go to parties
- Sometimes young people are offered drugs, alcohol and a place to chill out
- They may be given presents like clothes, a mobile phone, or money to buy alcohol or cigarettes
- After adults have gained a young person's trust and affection things change
- They will ask for sexual favours for themselves or other people in return for alcohol, drugs, presents, money etc. All the things they previously gave the young person for free
- The adults stop being nice and can become violent or threatening