

An important message for Essex schools

Subject: Child Exploitation with ECSB
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Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) supports children, families, schools and communities to address current physical health, social, emotional and financial issues that may affect the healthy development and future outcomes of young people.

Each month, we promote and support specific local, national and international campaigns by providing information and resources to schools, communities and organisations that can improve health and wellbeing for all. Our campaigns can be interactive with real-life practical learning examples, including web links to resources, which can be used in the classroom or at home.

This month, we are focusing our bulletin on Child Exploitation (CE) as Thursday 18th March is [National Child Exploitation Awareness day](#). CE encompasses sexual and criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery and other forms of adolescent vulnerability. The National Working Group (NWG) are continuing to lead the campaign and their five keys messages for CE awareness day 2021 are as follows:

- Exploitation is about more than just CSE, think criminal exploitation, county lines, trafficking and modern slavery
- Families can be safeguarding partners
- Exploitation and its impact doesn't stop because you turn 18
- The time to build relationships with children and families is crucial
- Communities can tackle exploitation

They are also asking people to write a personal pledge on their hand to show support for their "[Helping Hands](#)" campaign, and share on social media using #CEADAY21 & #HelpingHands.

Safeguarding partners across the County are joining together to raise awareness of exploitation

To mark Child Exploitation Awareness Day (18th March) the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, along with partners, will be sharing information to parents and professionals in order to address the changing threat of exploitation.

Since the start of the pandemic there has been the misconception that children are safer at home. The numbers of children known to be exploited has decreased, but this is likely to be because of under-reporting. Organisations working directly with children locally and nationally believe that exploitation is simply becoming more hidden, taking place in new locations and moving online.

How have exploitation methods changed/become more hidden?

- Girls report finding it easier to travel around the county as they are challenged less than boys.
- Possible increased use of taxis/private hire vehicles by children being exploited.
- More exploitation happening at private addresses and unused business premises.
- Social media has replaced face to face interaction. Young people craving to connect with others. Unfortunately, this includes groomers.
- Exploited children have been finding train travel easier during lockdowns, due to less footfall.

For parents, carers and members of the public, there will be a podcast released on 18th March with a panel of safeguarding experts discussing how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the fight against exploitation. The podcast, along with other resources, will be available on the [Child Exploitation webpage](#).

Family wellbeing

- Talking [PANTS](#) and explaining the underwear rule helps children understand that their body belongs to them and they should speak to a trusted adult if anything makes them feel upset or worried. You can find all the resources from the NSPCC [here](#).
- Having [conversations about difficult subjects](#) with your children can feel very daunting, but the NSPCC have some great tips to support you!
- Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) is a national charity who have a free online course for parents and carers. The free [e-learning](#) course takes around 30 minutes and has been designed to help you learn more about child exploitation. They also have advice on how to [spot the signs of CSE](#).
- The NWG & Marie Collins Foundation have created documents around online harm reduction. There is one for parents titled ["how can I help my child?"](#).
- The Children's Society have created an ["Emoji Dictionary"](#) to help understand when emoji's that are being used might be a cause for concern.
- [The Zipit App](#) has been designed to support young people online who may be pressured into sending something they are not comfortable with. It is free to download & full of funny GIF's that are ready to send.
- Does your child know what to do if an image or video of themselves ends up online that they thought would be private? ["So you got naked online"](#) from the South West Grid for Learning is an excellent source of information for young people if they find themselves in this situation. It was updated in 2020 & they have also created SEND & audio versions of the document.
- The [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) is an organisation in the UK who have the ability to remove child sexual abuse images or videos that are hosted online in the UK. If you are aware of a picture or video that has been shared online, they will review it and if possible take it down. They also work directly with [Childline](#) through their helpline 0800 1111.

To find out more information about us and the wide range of services we offer, please visit www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk

We are always looking for ways to improve and provide you with information that is beneficial and relevant to you. We value your opinion and would love to hear your feedback on our briefings. Please send your reply to Essex.Communications@virgincare.co.uk

