



Child Sexual Exploitation – warning signs – ‘SAFEGUARD’

Often children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise that they are being abused. There are a number of warning signs that can indicate a child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation. To assist you in remembering and assessing these signs and behaviours, we have created the mnemonic - ‘**S.A.F.E.G.U.A.R.D.**’

	<p>Sexual identity, wellbeing and choice</p> <p>Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy; terminations; changing or out of character sexual behaviour; exploring sexual relationships in an unsafe context or environment; unable to disclose sexual orientation and fearful of societal responses.</p>
	<p>Absence, truancy and going missing</p> <p>Truancy from school, including during the school day; missing from home or care, and repeat incidents; travelling outside borough/town when missing; unexplained absences.</p>
	<p>Family and home</p> <p>Sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect; risks of forced marriage or so-called honour-based violence; female genital mutilation; domestic violence; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; bereavement; parental and sibling criminality; experiences of homelessness or sofa surfing; living in care or temporary accommodation; immigration status.</p>
	<p>Emotional and physical health</p> <p>Suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts, self-harm; low self-esteem/confidence/worth; learning difficulties; changing emotional wellbeing and signs of poor mental health, unexplained injuries and changes in physical appearance.</p>
	<p>Gangs, groups, age gaps and crime</p> <p>Involvement in gangs or gang affected family, peers or siblings; concerns of abusive peer groups; involvement with older individuals or groups, lacking friends in the same age groups; older ‘boyfriends’; sudden changes in peer groups; bullying, both on and off line; friends or young people experiencing CSE.</p>
	<p>Use of technology and sexual bullying</p> <p>‘Sexting’, both sending and receiving; being listed on social network pages in relation to sexual activity and, or named in videos; secretive use of the internet/phones/social networking sites; sudden behaviour changes when using the phone or internet; control via phone or internet; multiple or secretive social networking profiles.</p>
	<p>Alcohol and drug misuse</p> <p>Reliance on and changing use of substances, both legal and illegal.</p>
	<p>Receipt of unexplained gifts or money</p> <p>Unexplained money, mobile phones, phone credit, items, clothes, money; new nails; travel in taxis; gifts where payment is required at a later date; worries about having debts.</p>
	<p>Distrust of authority figures</p> <p>Resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social services, health, police and others.</p>

IF CONCERNED OR NEED ADVICE, RING HARROW CHILDREN’S SERVICES:

020 8901 2690