

# 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](http://www.sussex.police.uk)

Phone Sussex Police on **101** and quote Operation Kite, a log will be created which will be passed to the local Child Protection Team. This is the agreed county-wide referral mechanism and information shared will be subject to multi-agency consideration.

### Alternatively:

- ◆ Contact the West Sussex Missing Persons Coordinator on **101** extension **586322**
- ◆ Seek advice from Barnardo's - **01293 610660**
- ◆ Speak with Social Services Children's Access Point - **01403 229900**