

Where's the Harm?

A Guide for Parents
keeping your child safe.



In Partnership with



FOREWORD

Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire

Protecting children and young people in Lancashire is a key priority for me as part of my commitment to supporting vulnerable people and creating safe and confident communities across the county. We all have a part to play in making sure our young people have the knowledge they need to stay safe and that we as parents and carers know what we can do to support them.

By working together we can improve the well-being of our young people, reduce anti-social behaviour and make our communities safer for everyone. Our police officers work hard to protect children and young people every day and a lot of work goes into crime prevention to help equip children with the skills needed to protect themselves.

For those that have been affected by crime, harassment and bullying I have set up Nest Lancashire, a specialist service to support young people and help them recover from whatever it is they have experienced.

This booklet has been produced to provide you with information that will help keep your children or those in your care safe from harm.

Educating young people about risks and consequences is important to their continued safety and well-being and I hope that you find the information useful in discussing the issues covered with young people in your care.

Thank you
Clive Grunshaw – Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner



CRIME



WHERE'S THE HARM - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

People of all ages become involved in anti-social behaviour, it is certainly not just young people. By protecting our young people we hope we can encourage them to change any risky or harmful behaviour before they grow into adults.

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is any aggressive, intimidating or destructive activity that affects another person's quality of life.

Such as:

- under 18s drinking alcohol in parks, open spaces or on the streets.
- under 18s asking adults to buy alcohol for them outside shops.
- shouting, yelling or playing loud music near to people's homes.
- climbing on roofs or property that does not belong to you.
- playing noisy or aggressive games near to people's homes.
- riding mopeds or scooters through estate roads and paths.
- vandalism and graffiti (these are criminal offences for which offenders could be arrested).
- blocking stairways, walkways, entrances or paths.
- littering.

Do you know where your children are?

If you are responsible for children under the age of 18 you can help keep them safe by:

- Finding out what they are doing, where they are going, and when and how they will be getting home. ***If other parents are involved make sure you speak to them to confirm arrangements.***
- Sometimes young people do not think about the consequences of their actions. Ask them to think about whether they could be causing distress to others, causing damage or putting themselves in danger.
- Young people are also often the victims of disorder, so if you or your child experience anti-social behaviour, make sure you report it to the police.

Police cannot send officers to every incident, but if you let them know what is happening in your area they can make sure resources are targeted effectively.

For more information

visit www.lancashire.police.uk

Useful telephone numbers

- To report any incidents of anti-social behaviour, and for non-emergency crime and enquiries, contact Lancashire Constabulary on 101. In an emergency always call **999**.
- To report a crime anonymously call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

WHERE'S THE HARM - ALCOHOL

Keeping your children safe around alcohol

Childhood plays a large role in influencing future alcohol behaviours, as a parent/carer we teach our children by the examples we set. You can encourage sensible attitudes to drinking through being a good role model yourself.

It is important to talk openly about the use of alcohol. Discuss the harms and risks and set some rules around your child's use of alcohol.

"A quarter of young people have not discussed any alcohol rules with their parents"

You may decide to introduce alcohol to your teenager in small amounts so you can supervise their first experiences rather than them drinking alcohol in unsupervised and risky situations.

"Just under half of young people surveyed say their parents/guardians allow them to drink alcohol but not get drunk and one in ten say they are allowed to get drunk"

The current advice from the Chief Medical Officer for under 18's is;

1. Children and their parents/carers are advised that an alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best option. However, if children drink alcohol, it should not be until at least the age of **15 years**.
2. If young people aged 15-17 years consume alcohol it should always be with the guidance of a **parent/carer** in a supervised environment.
3. Parents and young people should be aware that drinking, even at age 15 or older, can be hazardous to health and that **not drinking is the healthiest option** for young people.

"70% of children surveyed in Lancashire who drink alcohol say they are given it by their own parents (2017)."



Supporting Young People (11-17)

At this age it is more likely that they will begin to experiment and drink on a more regular basis. Teenagers like to test rules and boundaries. Drinking alcohol is often a way of doing this.

Why young people drink

- They are curious.
- They want to be accepted.
- Their friends, parents and family are drinking.
- To cope with problems, unhappiness, rejection or low self-esteem.
- To celebrate special events, exam results, birthdays.
- To reduce stress (exam stress or relationship problems).
- To get drunk.

43% of young people think it is normal to get drunk

41% of young people think getting drunk is fun

Keeping Your Child Safe

If you are worried that your child is already drinking alcohol you can work out some ground rules together.

- Know where your child is and who they are with.
- Have you given them alcohol for the evening?
- Do you know or speak to host parents to confirm sleepover arrangements?
- Do you know if other parents have given them alcohol?

Lots of young people are stopped by the police at weekends. They have told their parents they are at a sleepover at a friend's house, when they are not where they say they are.



Getting Home Safely

Make sure your child knows that it is important that you are able to contact them on their mobile.

Encourage them to always travel home in groups and never leave anyone to walk home alone.

Remind them to keep money for bus or taxi fare home. They should never rely on a friend, who has been drinking, to get them home.

If a friend becomes ill, very drowsy or unconscious, they could save a life. Explain that it is ok to call 999, if they need to, and encourage them to get adult help.

What Do I Do If My Child Comes Home Drunk?

Do not over react, it may be better to wait until the next day when you have calmed down and they have sobered up. However if your child seems seriously ill, is very drowsy or falls unconscious, **you need expert help at once; call 999.**

It is important not to panic. Try and find out what your child has consumed and tell the emergency services clearly what symptoms your child has and what alcohol (or drugs) they have had, if you know.

Vital steps to recovery:

- Do not delay.
- Do not leave them on their own.
- If the child is unconscious, lie them face upwards on the floor and check airway and circulation (below).

If they are breathing:

- Place or help them into the recovery position (See below).
- Call 999 for an ambulance, stay with the child and keep them warm.

Airway

Open airway by tilting head back and lifting chin.

The Recovery Position

Place your hand against their cheek, pull on the leg to roll the child towards you on to their side, and adjust upper leg so that hip and knee are at right angles.

Circulation

Look, listen and feel for signs such as breathing, coughing or movement.



CONSEQUENCES AND RISKS

There are consequences and risks for young people when they drink too much alcohol.

Vulnerability or risky situations

“Over a third of 16 and 17 year olds have walked home alone at night whilst drunk”.

Accidents and Injuries

Young people are more likely to get injured or have accidents. They are also more likely to be a passenger in a drink-driving incident.

Education and Truancy

They are more likely to have poor grades, skip school or be excluded from school.

Drug Use

They are more likely to smoke tobacco, use cannabis or other drugs.

Mental health

They are more likely to have issues with mental health including self-harming.

Aggression and violence

There is an increased risk of being involved in violent incidents which could lead to arrest and a criminal record.

Every Action Has Consequences

A family in Blackburn suffered devastating consequences when their young son, Adam Rogers, was killed by a single punch in Blackburn in 2009. He was trying to act as a peacemaker, as his friend was being attacked, he was not drunk but his 16 year old attacker was.

For more information

Real life stories and advice from young people look at: www.youthhealthtalk.org.uk

For more detailed information about alcohol and young people visit: www.drinkaware.co.uk

To see Adams story in film visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancan

For more information about the charity visit www.eahconsequences.com

Courtesy of Drinkaware



ALCOHOL AND THE LAW

What sort of person buys alcohol for a child?

Young people often find someone to buy alcohol for them, this is called 'proxy sales'. They may ask parents, friends, brothers/sisters or strangers.

Proxy sales can lead to unsupervised drinking in public places. If your child is caught drinking in a public place, police can seize their alcohol and are likely to take their details and contact you and their school.

Don't be their supplier, buying alcohol for an underage person is illegal. You could get a £90 on the spot fine or end up in court with a criminal record and an unlimited fine.

It is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to someone under 18.
- For someone under 18 to buy or try to buy alcohol.
- For an adult to buy or try to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18.
- For someone under 18 to drink alcohol in licensed premises, except where the child is 16 or 17 and accompanied by an adult. In this case it is legal for them to drink (but not buy) beer, wine or cider with a meal.
- To give alcohol to children under 5.
- **It is not illegal:** For a child aged 5 to 16 to drink alcohol at home or on other private premises.

If you think your local stores are selling alcohol or tobacco to young people, please report to Trading Standards via Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0345 4040 506.





Help and Advice for Parents and Carers

It is advisable to familiarise yourself with local agencies and professionals who can help.

Young Addaction

Deliver drug and alcohol services for young people throughout Lancashire.

Get in touch

For any questions, queries or to make a referral please contact the office on 0808 164 0074. You can also call, text or Whatsapp on 07760 118681

www.youngaddaction.org.uk

Email for information to:

lancashireinfo@addaction.org.uk

Adult Drug and Alcohol Treatment Providers

INSPIRE

North and East Lancashire

www.inspirelancs.org.uk

DISCOVER

Central Lancashire

www.gmmh.nhs.uk

National Support

Parentline Plus can help with parenting advice.

Visit parentlineplus.org.uk or call

0808 800 2222

To talk to other parents about how they deal with talking to their children about alcohol, you can visit the forum pages of:

www.dadtalk.co.uk

www.mumsnet.com

WHERE'S THE HARM - CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child sexual exploitation affects thousands of children every year. It is a form of sexual abuse where a young person is manipulated, or forced into taking part in a sexual act. This could be a seemingly consensual relationship, or in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay.

Spotting the signs of sexual exploitation

Children and young people often do not realise that they are being exploited. There are a number of signs that a child is being groomed.

Signs to look out for:

- A sudden change in behaviour / or the way they look.
- Going missing or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school.
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Getting constant messages on their phone.
- Being more secretive with their phone, not allowing you to look at it.
- Having older boyfriends / girlfriends.
- Misusing drugs and alcohol.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Use of 'street' language.

Steps you can take:

- Stay alert to behavioural changes or physical signs of abuse such as bruising.
- Monitor late nights out and any unexplained belongings.
- Limit their access to money.
- Understand online risks and try to minimise them.
- Use the parental controls software provided by your internet service provider and keep passwords confidential.
- Use applications such as **'find my friend'** to ensure you know your child's whereabouts.



WHERE'S THE HARM

Understanding online risks: Technology and social media is often used to target and locate vulnerable children. Mobile phones can provide a direct link to a child to start the grooming process.

What can you do:

- Make sure you have a good understanding of the technology your child uses.
- Ask the experts - get your child to explain what apps they use, what they do and why they like them.
- Stay up to date with privacy settings, help them stay in control of their profile.
- Talk to your child about what they share, who they talk to and how they know their online friends.
- Encourage them to think about their online safety.

For more information

For more platform-specific advice, including game consoles, check out www.childnet.com

Report online grooming behavior to:
www.ceop.police.uk

You can also find out more about the apps your child uses from the NSPCC's excellent NetAware site at: www.net-aware.org.uk

Safeguarding pages for Parents and Carers:
www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/online-safeguarding/parents-and-carers.aspx



WHERE'S THE HARM - SEXTING

It may feel awkward, but it's important to explain to children the risks of sexting, how to stay safe and remind them that they can talk to you if something ever makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

What is sexting?

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages.

Why do young people sext?

There are many reasons why a young person may want to send a naked or semi – naked picture, video or message to someone else.

- Joining in because they think that *'everyone is doing it'*.
- Boosting their self confidence.
- Flirting with others and testing their sexual identity.
- Exploring their sexual feelings.
- To get attention and connect with new people on social media.

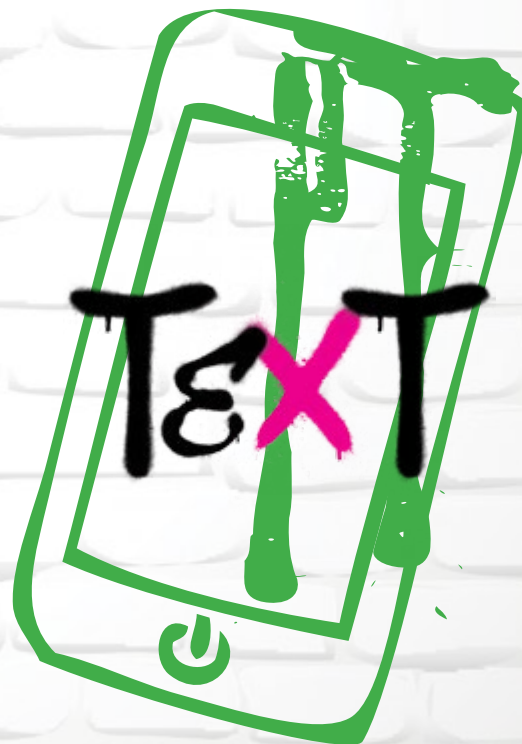
They may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent.

Childline have developed a useful tool to support young people who may feel pressured into sending inappropriate images. - 'Zipit' helps young people to stay in control and get flirty chat back on track.

For more information

Zipit:

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app



WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF SEXTING?

Young people may think 'sexting' is harmless but it can leave them vulnerable to;

Blackmail: An offender may threaten to share the pictures with the child's family and friends unless the child sends money or more images.

Bullying: If images are shared with their friends as a result the child may be bullied.

Unwanted attention: Images posted online can attract the attention of sex offenders, who know how to search for, collect and alter these images.

Emotional distress: Children can feel embarrassed and humiliated. If they are very distressed this could lead them to self-harm or attempted suicide.

How to talk to your child about sexting

- Explain your rules of having a mobile, tablet or smartphone.
- Ask them what they feel is acceptable to send to people, if they'd be happy for you or a stranger or other children to see certain photos. If the answer is 'no', explain that the image, video or message is probably not appropriate to send.

- Make sure they are comfortable saying no and that they know their body is private and being asked to share explicit images is inappropriate.
- Tell them what can happen when things go wrong. Do not accuse them of sexting, but do explain the dangers and legal issues.
- Make sure they know that you are always there for support if they feel pressured by anyone.
- Explain that they can come to you if someone asks to send them a nude picture or if they receive an explicit message.
- Let them know that you won't be angry with them, you are making sure they are safe and happy.

For more information

Search for:

Dont fall for it - Say No

George's Story

Anna's Story

Teaser

Courtesy of NSPCC

GROOMING



WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Sexting can be seen as harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they;

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend.
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age.
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

However, as of January 2016 in England and Wales, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

Crimes recorded this way are unlikely to appear on future records or checks, unless the young person has been involved in other similar activities which may indicate that they are a risk.



For more information

Government guidance

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/
indecent-images-of-children-guidance-for-
young-people](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/indecent-images-of-children-guidance-for-young-people)

VICTIM

WHAT IS LANCASHIRE DOING?

NEST Lancashire (victim support) has been set up to support young people 10-18 who have been affected by crime, bullying or threats of harassment. They offer emotional support and practical help through one to one support or group sessions.

There are dedicated teams across Lancashire from different organisations to help victims escape the cycle of abuse.

They work closely with young people who are being exploited and to find ways of helping them to break free from the position they find themselves in.

How can I get help or find out more?

Anyone with concerns about child sexual exploitation can contact police on 101. In an emergency always dial 999.

For more information

Operation Awaken – covers Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster, Morecambe & Wyre

01253 477 261

email: awaken@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

Operation Engage – covers Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Pendle and Rossendale

01254 353 525

email: engage@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

Operation Deter – covers Preston, Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancs

01772 209 122

email: deter@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

NEST Lancashire

www.nestlancashire.org

Where's the Harm



Lancashire
Constabulary
police and communities together



Lancashire

County
Council

