

Op Sceptre



November 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

The Wiltshire Police Youth and Early Intervention Team work with schools, colleges and partners to share messages and educate young people. The aim is to keep young people in our community safe from harm and exploitation, whilst educating them where they can go for support.

Op Sceptre, a week-long national campaign aimed at tackling knife crime, is running from 13th November – 17th November 2023. Wiltshire Police's Youth and Early Intervention Team would like to raise awareness of weapons and knife crime within Swindon and Wiltshire. We wanted to give you, as trusted adults, some useful and helpful information on the following subjects:

- How to recognise the signs that may indicate that your young people are potentially at risk of being exploited or vulnerable to carrying/storing weapons.
- Safeguarding and signposting information on who to turn to and which agencies can help you.

Wiltshire Police aims to raise awareness around knife crime and carrying weapons on the streets of Swindon and Wiltshire. We need your help as trusted adults to ensure that every young person knows what the risks are. This will help them make informed and educated choices moving forward in their lives.

Signs that your young person maybe being exploited

- Is your child hanging around with a new group of friends? A group that you don't know or have never met?
- Is your child suddenly wearing new items of clothing that you have not purchased for them?
- Does your child have more than one phone?
- Have they started to become more irritable every time you try to engage with them?
- Are they becoming more secretive, always in their bedroom, not engaging in family activities/outings?
- Is your child missing school? Or having missing episodes from home?

Whilst most of these signs are what you may call typical teenage behaviour, just be mindful that there could be more to it. If your gut feeling is telling you that something isn't right, then have a conversation with them or speak to a friend or professional who may be able to offer you some support.

Things to think about before your young person goes out

- Do you know where they are going?
- Do you know who they are with?
- What time do they need to be back by?
- Ensure you have contact details for their friends and their friend's parents.

Safeguarding and signposting information

Fearless is a site designed specifically for young people. You can access non-judgmental information and advice about crime and criminality. It can also be used as an anonymous reporting tool for young people. <https://www.fearless.org>

Crimestoppers is an anonymous reporting service specifically for adults and is the company of Fearless. <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>, 0800 555 111.

The NSPCC is a children's charity, dedicated to supporting children and trusted adults for most situations providing useful information and resources. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they are going through. You can talk about anything. Whether it's something big or small, their trained counsellors are there to support you. <https://www.childline.org.uk>. Or call on 0800 1111.

The Ben Kinsella Trust aims to educate everyone on the dangers of knife crime ensuring that young people can make educated choices and know where to go to for more help and support. They have resources for young people, school and trusted adults. <https://www.benkinsella.org.uk>

Please take a few minutes to look at the videos below. The aim of these is to highlight what your child/children/young person may be going through, if they find themselves in that situation and to give you, as a trusted adult, an insight into what this might look like. Please be mindful these videos can be emotive for those watching.

- [Kayleigh's Love Story - Full Version - YouTube](#) – Kayleigh's Love Story.
- [Help put 'county lines' out of business - YouTube](#) – National Criminal Child Exploitation.
- [Knife crime: A new way forward - YouTube](#) – Avon and Somerset Police.

If you have any concerns about a young person and wish to contact the Police, please call 101. If there is immediate risk to a young person call 999.

We hope that you have found this information useful and should you have any questions please contact us using the email addresses below.

youth@wiltshire.police.uk

youthswindon@wiltshire.police.uk

Kind Regards,

Youth and Early intervention Team