PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM GROOMING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

HUMBERSIDE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

In response to reports that the COVID-19 social distancing measures are increasing risks young people face from online and other forms of grooming, we are contacting you to highlight a unique package of support we have in the Humberside Police Force area.

Home learning support

To help with home learning during the COVID-19 social distancing measures, Not in our community has selected the most relevant short films and created learning guides for use by parents/carers and children to use individually or together.

All films contain content that some viewers might find distressing. Supervising adults are encouraged to view content in advance of showing to a child.

Lucas's Story

A short film about online grooming and sexual exploitation.

Suitable for viewers aged 11+

Alfie's Story

A drama series about County Lines child criminal exploitation.

Suitable for viewers aged 11+

Becky's Story

A short film about a girl groomed online during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Suitable for viewers 11+

Control

A drama series about sexual exploitation and County Lines child criminal exploitation.

Suitable for viewers aged 15+

All are supported by downloads with questions and activities to help viewers process key learning points such as different types of grooming and exploitation, how to spot the warning signs in the lives of people you know and how to get help.

www.notinourcommunity.org/home-learning

HEIGHTENED GROOMING AND EXPLOITATION RISKS DURING COVID-19 CAN INCLUDE:

- Abusers using online grooming tactics on young people who might be bored and spending more time online. Abusers know how to gain trust and meet the unmet needs of young people from all backgrounds.
- Children can be sexually exploited by being manipulated into sharing sexual imagery or performing sexual acts by abusers who can then go on to control and blackmail them into doing more.
- Organised criminal groups can control and manipulate young people into moving drugs, money and other illegal activity through grooming and child criminal exploitation behaviours.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

Being aware of how abusers control victims, the warning signs and knowing where to get support will help parents and young people protect themselves against risks.

PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP INCLUDE

- Being aware of the apps and games your children are downloading and taking an interest in. This can be done by asking them to tell you about it and asking if it is something they play with friends or meet new people on.
- Explore parental controls, settings and software designed to help keep your child safe (see further online safety resources below for a link.)
- Remind children of what they learnt about stranger danger, e.g. not speaking to a stranger they met on the street or letting them in the home. Teach them to see approaches from strangers on their phone/device in the same way.
- Show your child it's ok to talk to you about this - talk to them. Put scenarios to them; what would you do if someone you didn't know but had said "hi" to you on a game and then sent you a friend request? What would you do if a friend of a friend messages you on WhatsApp?
- Encourage them to identify risks and suspicious behaviour they might have seen or heard about. Not in our community is collecting and sharing insights from young people via their Instagram and Facebook accounts about what to look out for.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED YOUR CHILD COULD BE AT RISK?

Grooming and exploitation is never the victim's fault. It's important to be able to communicate openly about what is happening so that situations can be dealt with appropriately.

IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999

If you have concerns about sexual exploitation, you can call the local police on 101.

Local contacts are listed on the Not on our community website at:
notinourcommunity.org/who-can-help/

FURTHER ONLINE SAFETY RESOURCES

The Government has created a hub of support for parents and carers to keep children safe online covering issues such as child sexual abuse, radicalisation, sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery), cyberbullying, age-inappropriate content and parental controls, suicide content and support for children.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online