



# SAFEGUARDING

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ISSUE 6

*Welcome to our Parent Safeguarding Newsletter Issue 6*

## SAFEGUARDING TEAM

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# KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL CLUBS

With out-of-school settings and clubs about to be given the go ahead to re-open, we felt it was important to mention the information that you should be aware of, along with safeguarding questions you should be asking.

The guide drawn up by the government gives parents and carers all the knowledge needed before their child attends any extra-curricular sports club, tuition, or youth club. It will help you choose a safe out-of-school setting for children to attend. An out-of-school setting can mean many things, from places like community and youth centres, sports clubs, places of worship, to individuals offering tuition in their own home, or providing one-to-one coaching at a playing field or local park. A typical provider may be a tutor who works alone from their home or coach who runs training sessions in a sports field for children.

The full guide can be accessed via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-safeguarding-children-in-out-of-school-settings/keeping-children-safe-during-community-activities-after-school-clubs-and-tuition-questions-to-help-parents-and-carers-choose-out-of-school-settings>

The guide contains:

- questions you may wish to ask a provider.
- examples of the types of good answers you should expect to hear back.
- warning signs you may wish to look out for when choosing a provider.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL CLUB

If you have concerns about a setting your child attends, first raise concerns with the provider. If the situation is not resolved, please escalate the issue by calling the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 or contacting the local authority designated officer (LADO).

To find your local authority, search 'Find your local council' and enter the postcode of your setting. If you believe a child is in immediate danger of harm, please call the police on 999.

### SHARING OF PHOTOGRAPHS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The evolving nature of online technologies and the ways they are used can put young people's safety and wellbeing at risk. The increased use of technology and the widespread collection of personal and sensitive data is now at an all time high. Sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives.

This increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Producing and sharing sexual images of under-18s is also illegal.

Below highlights the risks associated and how to ensure safe practices of your child online:

## TIKTOK UPDATE PARENTAL CONTROLS WITH FAMILY PAIRING FEATURE (SWGFL)

TikTok is used by many teenagers and sometimes children younger than 13, despite its terms and conditions. Using the new Family Pairing feature can allow parents to guide their child's TikTok experience in a safer way.



Features include:

- Search: Decide what can be searched for. This includes content, users, hashtags, or sounds.
- Screen Time Management: Sets how long your teen can spend on TikTok each day.
- Discoverability: Decide on the account being private (you decide who can see their content) or public (anyone can search and view content).

To find out more information about TikTok's Family Pairing feature and go to:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/tiktok-update-parental-controls-with-family-pairing-feature/>

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## SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images for a limited number of seconds, chat with users before messages disappear and share images with their friends list through a 'story'.



As an adult it is easy to understand how these messages, images and videos can cause significant harm, even if they are only 'temporary'. But this is not the understanding that young people have. Some young users assume that their 'Snaps' are totally harmless as they disappear in just a few seconds.

The truth is, however, that anyone can save a screenshot of a 'Snap' to their phone. What they then do with it is completely out of the original 'senders' control. We know that children and young people lack a true and clear understanding of the repercussions of their actions. This then opens the door to all sorts of issues including online bullying, predators and much more. Click on the link below for a guide which will inform you with tips on several potential risks such as location privacy, sexting and addictive features. <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

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## INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a free to download photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. Released back in 2010, the app has gained over 1 billion monthly users. The minimum age requirement to use the service is 13 years old.



For keen instagramers the app provides a channel to share their photography skills and daily life events.

Content posted can be amplified using hashtags, which means masses can be reached in a matter of minutes.

Click on the link below for a guide which will inform you with tips on several potential risks such as exposing your child's location in-app purchases and poor mental wellbeing. <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

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The below link provides access to many useful checklists to help you ensure that your child is as safe as possible whilst using the different social media platforms that are currently available. <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/>

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# COUNTY LINES

As the summer holiday approaches and young people want to become more independent and spend more time with their peers and away from home, parents might worry about them becoming involved in drug dealing and violence associated with “county lines”. For many young people, becoming involved in county lines happens because they are being exploited by others.

## WHAT IS COUNTY LINES AND CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION?

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County lines is when gangs and organised crime groups exploit children to transport and sell drugs, normally between big cities where the exploiters are based to smaller towns, sometimes across county boundaries but also locally and within the borough. The young people have dedicated mobile phone ‘lines’ for taking orders for drugs; young people are used as they are less likely to be stopped by police, allowing adult dealers to avoid the risk of arrest.

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation; this occurs where a person or a group of people takes advantage of their contact with, and influence over, a young person to coerce or manipulate them into carrying out a criminal act. Other examples of criminal exploitation are:

- Benefit fraud
- Cannabis cultivation
- Money mule
- Forced theft

## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME INVOLVED?

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Young people may be recruited for county lines and other forms of criminal exploitation by a process of grooming:

- **At the targeting stage**, the exploiter befriends the young person and gains their trust. Young people may also be recruited through social media and/or through their peer group.
- **At the experience stage**, the young person is initiated into the lifestyle by being offered gifts, money, drugs or alcohol as a way of gaining control over them.
- **At the hooked stage**, the young person becomes more involved in criminal activities and taking on more responsibility within the group. Young people may initially feel like they are undertaking activities by choice.
- **At the trapped stage**, the young person may find they are trapped and unable to leave; they may be controlled through threats against themselves and their family and physically attacked to ensure they are too scared to tell anyone.

# POSSIBLE SIGNS A YOUNG PERSON IS BEING EXPLOITED

Some parents of young people who have been exploited through county lines involvement have reported that they went through a sudden change in behaviour.

Possible indicators of involvement include:

UNEXPLAINED  
MONEY,  
CLOTHES OR  
GIFTS

HAVING SEVERAL  
MOBILE PHONES,  
BALACLAVAS,  
WEAPONS OR  
DIGITAL SCALES

FREQUENT,  
UNEXPLAINED  
PHONE CALLS,  
SEEMING EDGY  
AND ANXIOUS  
AFTER RECEIVING  
CALLS AND TEXTS

HAVING A NEW  
FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE  
INCLUDING OLDER  
YOUTHS/ADULTS

UNEXPLAINED  
INJURIES

CARRYING  
WEAPONS

APPEARING  
IN ONLINE  
(MUSIC) VIDEOS  
WITH  
WEAPONS

RETURNING FROM  
BEING AWAY  
FROM HOME  
LOOKING TIRED  
AND DIRTY

STAYING OUT  
OVERNIGHT OR  
GOING MISSING  
FOR DAYS

SUDDEN AND  
UNCHARACTERISTIC  
CHANGES IN  
BEHAVIOUR OR  
INTEREST (E.G.  
INTERESTS IN  
POSTCODE  
BOUNDARIES)

BEING FOUND IN  
AN AREA OR AT AN  
ADDRESS A DISTANCE  
FROM HOME THAT  
THEY HAVE NO  
CONNECTION WITH

BEING IN  
TROUBLE WITH  
THE POLICE AND/  
OR FOUND IN  
POSSESSION OF  
DRUGS



## WHAT TO DO

Talk to your child, stay calm, ask them questions about what's going on, tell them that you want to help them and keep them safe; try to get them to see the reality of their situation; be open, honest and non-judgemental; remember they may be scared.

Report if necessary. If you have any concerns that your child is being exploited by criminals, you should report this to the Police as this can help them end the situation; remember, they are victims and should be treated as such.

If your child stays away from home you should report them as missing to the Police immediately.

If you are worried about your child's safety report these fears to Rutland County Council Childrens' Services team.

For more information please click here <https://cscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/4206.1-County-lines-leafletfinal-web.pdf>

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