

# **Buckinghamshire child protection agencies launch CSE Promise**

Child protection agencies across Buckinghamshire have united to launch a promise to children and young people that they will continue to work together to help keep them safe from child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Organisations including Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Children Board, the County Council, Thames Valley Police, Barnardo's and the county's Health and Wellbeing Board, signed Buckinghamshire's CSE Promise ahead of National CSE Awareness Day on Friday (18 March).

The Promise sets out the commitment made by all Buckinghamshire agencies working with children and young people to tackling child sexual exploitation through a three-pronged approach:

- Prevent CSE from happening and stop existing CSE from continuing
- Protect those who are at risk of, or who are victims of, CSE
- Pursue the perpetrators of CSE and support victims to safely disclose abuse

Fran Gosling-Thomas, Chair of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board said: "We want to send a strong message to our children and young people that child protection agencies in Buckinghamshire are determined to do everything possible to stop the appalling crime that is child sexual exploitation.

"The Promise our partners are all signing supports our countywide strategy for tackling exploitation. We all have an absolute focus on working together in partnership to stamp out CSE, raise awareness of the signs that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, and support victims to rebuild their lives."

Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, says that safeguarding children from abuse is one of the Council's top priorities: "We are determined to stamp out CSE in Bucks. We've invested a significant amount of funding and staff into developing our CSE Swan Unit – this is a specialist team from police, social care, Barnardo's and health who work together to support children and young people at risk of CSE, and who also work pro-actively to reduce incidences of exploitation.

"The Swan Unit is playing a vital role in tackling exploitation and is one of the ways we're putting our commitment to the CSE Promise into action."

A parent of a Buckinghamshire child affected by child sexual exploitation has spoken of the effect it has had, and urges people to ensure they are well-informed: "The impact that child sexual exploitation has on the victim and their family is catastrophic, and my family is still struggling even after quite a long time. But somehow we are trying to repair our lives and move forwards.

**“The police and councils are working hard to tackle CSE and I think the new Swan Unit is a fantastic new hub aimed at helping victims and their families rebuild their lives. But educating the public on how to spot the signs of CSE has got to be one of the most important things parents and families can do to fight this insidious crime.**

**“I do not want any family to go through what my child and our family has suffered. So my message to every parent out there is: make sure you understand the signs of abuse in a child or teenager, stay alert to it, and most importantly of all, if you are worried about your child - no matter how insignificant it might seem - talk to someone who can help.**

**“Please, you can’t be sure it won’t happen to your family; read up about CSE - it will help keep your children safe.”**

To see the work happening in Buckinghamshire to stop sexual exploitation of children go to <http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/>

**How to report concerns about a child:**

**If you are concerned about a young person you can contact the First Response Team (Children’s Social Care) on 0845 460 0001 or email: [secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gcsx.gov.uk)**

**If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger call 999. Alternatively contact your local police on 101 who will have a dedicated team you can talk to about child sexual exploitation.**

**Buckinghamshire also has a countywide ‘R-U-Safe?’ service for young people run by Barnardo’s, which is able to offer advice and support to any young person worried about these issues. Email: [rusafe@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:rusafe@barnardos.org.uk) or text: 07546 075 638**

Contact: [Helen Fincher](#) Tel: 01296 382891

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