

Responses to Young People's 5 Challenges – 2015

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

How will we educate children and young people about CSE and how could we prove that people will act quickly if CSE is reported?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is one of the main priorities for the NSCB and its partner organisations and in May 2015, a Toolkit was developed to help professionals identify and report on CSE. The NSCB also supported a high profile media campaign to raise awareness of CSE to professionals and the public, which included a conference for over 250 people. There was lots of coverage in the media, social media and a second campaign in November 2015 included updated awareness raising posters aimed specifically at young people and these were circulated to all Schools and Colleges across the County.

Northamptonshire Police lead on a project called Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) and involves many different organisations. The RISE unit is a multi-agency team which exists to prevent and protect young people from CSE and to prosecute offenders. RISE includes Police Officers, CAN, youth workers, Children's Social Care workers and professionals within Health and Education.

At this time, the RISE team is supporting 51 young people who are at risk of or who are victims of CSE by offering support and guidance. Children and young people aged between 13 and 15 years are the largest group supported within RISE.

In this year's Police and Crime Plan, the Police and Crime Commissioner pledged an additional £1 million to help strengthen policing to tackle child sexual exploitation.

In September 2015, the NSCB launched Protective Behaviours training in Primary and Secondary Schools across the county to help staff to recognise and report the signs of CSE. In addition, a drama entitled Chelsea's Choice was shown in 28 Secondary Schools in Northamptonshire to raise awareness of CSE with young people.

There is a lot of work being done in the county to help raise awareness and to protect children and young people from becoming victims of sexual exploitation. The Young Northants website has lots of information to help young people recognise signs of online grooming and there is advice about how to keep yourself safe online.

2. Radicalisation

How can we prove that radicalisation is an issue in Northamptonshire?

Radicalisation is where an individual or group has increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that undermine the status quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice. Whilst the threat of radicalisation is quite frightening, it's important that young people and adults feel confident to report their concerns to the Police.

The local profile for counter terrorism shows that there is a low risk in Northamptonshire but during 2015/16, the Northamptonshire Prevent Team received 78 referrals, 39 of which were in relation to concerns about young people under 18 years old. So, although Northamptonshire is assessed as a low risk, there is a need to remain alert and be aware of suspicious activity and how to report concerns.

Northamptonshire Police works closely with local communities and delivers presentations about radicalisation to raise awareness and give guidance and support. Online training for professionals to help them identify extremism is provided by the NSCB for its partner organisations and the Young Northants website has information about radicalisation and how you can report a concern if you are worried. You can find the link to Young Northants at the end of this report.

3. Female Genital Mutilation

Why do different cultures practice female genital mutilation (FGM)?

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of a young girl or women's external female genitalia and is performed as a cultural ritual.

Within practicing cultures, FGM is carried out as a way to control women's sexuality and it is thought to ensure virginity before marriage and fidelity during marriage. FGM is seen as part of a girl's initiation into womanhood and is wrongly thought to increase fertility. In some communities, the external female genitalia are considered dirty and ugly and are removed to promote hygiene and aesthetic appeal and FGM is a prerequisite for marriage and is seen as protecting a girl's honor to ensure that she will marry well.

The practice can be found in communities around the world. In Africa, FGM is known to be practiced among 29 countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia. Certain ethnic groups in Asia, the Middle East and in South America also practice FGM.

The procedure can be very dangerous and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health and there are no medical reasons to carry out FGM.

In the United Kingdom, FGM is classed as child abuse and is a criminal offence. Not only is FGM illegal in the United Kingdom but it is also illegal to take a British National abroad to have the procedure done or to help someone trying to do this. If prosecuted the offender can be sentenced for up to 14 years in prison. It is estimated that nearly 3 women for every 1,000 women in Northamptonshire have undergone FGM.

The NSCB is supporting a media campaign to raise awareness of FGM for adults and young people and you can find information on the Young Northants website to help you understand more about the practice and how you can report it if you think a friend or family member is at risk.

4. Domestic Abuse

How can we encourage young people to speak out about domestic abuse?

There is a Domestic Abuse Notification Scheme running in all Schools and this is where the Police let your School know if there has been an incident in your home so that staff know that a child or young person might need someone to talk to about it.

From November 2016, a theatre company will be performing a play depicting domestic abuse to Secondary Schools in the County and this should help you to understand more about this topic and give you more confidence to speak to someone, if you need to.

If you are worried about domestic violence or abuse in your family or know of a friend that might be experiencing it, you should raise your concerns with a Teacher or your School Nurse. There are lots of organisations that you can talk to and who will give you support and one of these agencies is Women's Aid (you don't have to be female to contact Women's Aid!). Women's Aid deliver a number of different programmes to support children and young people (aged 5 to 19 years) who might have witnessed domestic abuse. You can also find information on relationships on the Young Northants website.

5. Neglect

How can we help young people understand what neglect is and help them to speak to people who have experienced neglect?

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs. This could be where a parent or carer fails to provide enough food, clean clothes or shelter (house/bed) or even not taking their child to the doctor/dentist when needed or failing to protect their child from physical and emotional harm or danger. It may also include a lack of response to a child's basic emotional needs.

To help identify neglect in Northamptonshire, the NSCB launched a Toolkit in May 2016 to support professionals recognise neglect when working with children and young people. Children and young people are included within the assessment and are supported if they are experiencing neglectful situations at home. Through School and other curriculum activities young people are encouraged to talk about their feelings and concerns and should be given support and guidance. Again, information about neglect is available on the NSCB and Young Northants website.

The NSCB provides training to professionals on all of these subjects and can help them identify if the issues are affecting a child or young person.

If you would like to find out more information on any of the topics discussed in this paper, then visit the Young Northants website:

<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/young-northants/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://northamptonshirescb.org.uk/>