

Police Scotland launch Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign



Police Scotland is today launching its first public information campaign to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

It warns those who prey on children and exploit them for sex that we are on to them.

The campaign – which will run on social media and digital platforms over the next four weeks – alerts sexual predators that Police Scotland knows how they operate, knows where they operate and is aware of the methods used to exploit young people.

CSE is child abuse. It happens to girls and boys in communities across Scotland. Perpetrators of CSE exert power over children using violence, coercion and intimidation. They will target young people offering them anything and everything from food, drugs and alcohol to gifts and even affection in return for sex. Any child or young person regardless of gender, ethnicity, background or sexual orientation may experience this form of child abuse.

Chief Constable Phil Gormley said: “Children across Scotland – both boys and girls – are being groomed for sex by predators. This kind of insidious behaviour can, at times, be hidden under a veil of seemingly innocent contact when in reality the child is being groomed to be sexually abused.

“Sexually exploiting a child will not be tolerated and our message to perpetrators is simple: we know how you operate, where you operate and the techniques you use. We’re on to you.

“It is vital we work together with partners and across communities to raise awareness of CSE, of recognising the signs and focusing on prevention.

“Tackling child abuse in all its forms, including CSE, is one Police Scotland’s highest priorities. Our children deserve nothing less.”

Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said: “Keeping children safe from abuse and exploitation is a key priority for the Scottish Government and we fully support the work of Police Scotland to tackle those who prey on children.

“Police Scotland is doing excellent work to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse and it is important that perpetrators know that exploitation in any form will never be tolerated in Scotland.

“Everyone has a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable in society by reporting signs of child exploitation and abuse so it can be stopped.”

Barnardo’s Scotland Director, Martin Crewe, said: “Barnardo’s Scotland is giving its full support to Police Scotland on this important campaign. Child sexual exploitation is happening to girls and boys across Scotland today and has a huge and long lasting impact on the victims. However, we know more and more about how perpetrators operate and the grooming techniques they use so we are now able to target them more effectively.

“We urge the public to recognise the signs of exploitation and report concerns so that together we can eradicate this awful abuse of children.”

If anyone is concerned about a child who they believe may be being sexually exploited, or has concerns about someone who they think may be sexually exploiting a young person, please call 101, Social Work or report it to Crimestoppers.

Anyone convicted of grooming a child for sex or sexual offences against children faces being placed on the Sex Offenders Register. Even without a conviction we can apply for a Risk of Sexual Harm Order – a civil order through the court so we can minimise the risk that person poses to children in the community.