

Public urged to keep their 'Eyes Open' for children at risk



Police Scotland has thrown its support behind a child protection initiative which urges everyone in Scotland to keep their 'Eyes Open' for children at risk during the school holidays

That's the message from Child Protection Committees Scotland (CPCScotland) across the country as term time ends and children and young people spend more time unsupervised during the summer months.

CPCScotland, a nation-wide group of child protection professionals, have launched the 'Eyes Open' campaign to encourage the general public to be watchful of children in their local area who may potentially be vulnerable.

The child protection collective believes that we are all responsible for child welfare in Scotland and should take an active role in protecting children, especially when there are

obvious concerns for a young person's well-being.

Encouraging anyone feeling unsettled to speak up rather than stay silent, CPCScotland Chair Anne Houston has highlighted some of the tell-tale signs to look for when it comes to recognising children at risk:

"Signs include seeing children wandering about at all times of day and night, children who are very dirty or unfed, unsupervised children going into "party" flats, or whose parents are drunk in charge of them.

"However, spotting the signs isn't enough. If something doesn't seem quite right for a child, or a family of children, it's better to say something than do nothing."

CPCScotland point out that for many, the end of the school term is a time for fun and family holidays, but it's also a time where parents and carers can face increased stress, and in some cases children can experience serious neglect.

When neglect is suspected, Child Protection Committees recommend contacting a local social work department or Police Scotland.

Backing the campaign, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Maree Todd, commented: "For most children the summer holidays are a time for fun and a hard-earned break from school, but for some this period can bring an increased risk of harm, neglect, and disruption.

"We all have a part to play in protecting children and keeping them safe from harm. I urge everyone to take an Eyes Open approach this summer and report anything you feel may put a child at risk.

"I welcome this important campaign, led by Child Protection Committees Scotland, which will increase public awareness and anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare can contact

their local authority social work department, or the police.”