

## Partner Update from Wiltshire Police to Area Boards

### Spot the Signs Campaign

Young people, their families and friends are being urged to 'Spot the Signs' of child criminal exploitation in a new campaign being launched today (11/11) by Wiltshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The focus on education aims to help stem the instances of child exploitation in our communities and the serious violence often associated with this type of exploitation, including knife crime and gang culture.

The campaign aims to educate young people and those close to them on how to spot that exploitation may be taking over a young person's life by using a targeted social media campaign aimed at both young people and adults, educational visits to schools and real-life case studies from young people who have managed to break the cycle.

Child criminal exploitation is where criminals use children to commit offences for them in exchange for cash and gifts – these can be actual but also online 'gifts' like virtual money in online gaming communities. The young person is then often manipulated and pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons in return.

Tackling serious violence has been identified as a priority by both Wiltshire Police Chief Constable Catherine Roper and the Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson in recognition of the serious harm it causes victims, their families and the wider communities where it occurs.

The Wiltshire Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) – a multi-agency initiative which aims to better understand serious violence in Wiltshire and why it happens – highlights a 2023 schools survey which demonstrated that only 3% of young people admitted to having carried a knife.

However, most young people estimated that around 19% of their peers carried a knife, demonstrating the significant difference between the perceived threat of youth knife carriers versus the reality perpetuating a culture of fear amongst young people. This campaign will also challenge these perceptions.

Young people can find out more by visiting the [Check it Out](#) section of the OPCC website.

Printable leaflet can be accessed here: [County Lines / SVD Campaign Leaflet \(Trifold Print\) V5](#)

Campaign Page can be accessed here: [Spots the Signs. Stop the Crime.](#)

Check it Out info page for young people can be accessed here: [Child Criminal Exploitation](#)

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