

A Guide to Parenting

FOR **PARENTS** AND **CARERS** in **PETERBOROUGH**



Working in partnership



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Welcome

Parenting can be challenging but it can also be fun, rewarding, wonderful and exciting. There is something really special about being a mum or a dad, but there is not a set 'how to parent' guide. However, there are strategies you can try to counteract common behavioural and other problems we may face in our journey as parents, from toddler-hood through to teenage years.

It is our responsibility to keep our own (and all children) safe and to offer positive role models. Young lives are affected by parents' actions and attitudes.

There is lots of local support out there. Peterborough's Children's Centres provide a one stop shop that will be able to answer many of your queries as well as provide support, advice, classes and sessions to help you through parenthood. Our Families Information Service (FIS) is a valuable source of information and advice too.

This resource cannot give you all the answers but it might help.

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A guide to services

See which service or professional is best to help you.



Health Visitor

Health Visitors are there to support you and your family during the early years. They will visit you at home or see you in your local clinic. They assess your health and development needs and can tell you where to get extra help if you need it.



GP

You will need to register with a GP - to find a GP in your area, use the NHS Choices Find Services System on: www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories Your GP can advise, give medicines and information on other services. You will need to make an appointment but most GPs will see a baby quite quickly if you are worried. During the evenings, at weekends and public holidays most services are covered by a GP out-of-hours service that can be accessed by calling NHS **111**.



School Nurse

We can help children, young people and their families through our screening and health promotion services which include:

- School entry screening.
- HPV vaccination programmes for girls in year 8.
- Height, weight, vision and hearing checks.
- Drop-in sessions to discuss physical and emotional health.

We are committed to safeguarding children and preventing harm.



Children's Centres

Children's Centres are places where families with children under five years can go for advice and support and to access a range of services. Services available from all centres:

- Child and family health services - Health Visitors to breastfeeding support.
- Advice on local childcare options.
- Advice on parenting, healthy eating and other areas of support.
- Help for you to find work or training opportunities, using links to local Jobcentre Plus offices and training providers.



Families Information Service (FIS)

Peterborough's Families Information Service (FIS) provides free information, advice and assistance to parents, carers and professionals on a wide range of information. The service offered is confidential, impartial and free of charge. Contact Peterborough's Families Information Service: 8.30am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday on the freephone helpline 0800 29 89 121 (voicemail out of hours), or 01733 864446 or email FIS@peterborough.gov.uk



Social Worker

The role of a Social Worker is varied. Generally their job is to guide and support. Their focus is helping a person or a family to support themselves as much as possible. They also work in a variety of places like Children's Centres, schools, local education authorities and hospitals. Others work within voluntary organisations or in the family's own home.



School

Teachers develop skills, not only around the curriculum but also social skills to help our children develop and progress. Our Teachers challenge and inspire pupils to help them deepen their knowledge and understanding of the world around. It is often a Teacher who a parent may first contact if they are worried.



Peteyouth

Peteyouth offers support and advice to young people about bullying, being a carer, health, drugs and sexual health, e-safety, running away, money, careers, housing issues and lots more. There is information about places, clubs and groups your child can attend in a safe and approved environment. www.peteyouth.org.uk



Foster Care

Could you make a difference? If you have enjoyed being a parent consider becoming a foster carer and use your skills and enthusiasm to help other children and families. Contact the Peterborough Fostering Team on 01733 317427 or email fostering@peterborough.gov.uk

All kinds of parents

Your family is unique

There's no such thing as an 'average' family - every family is different. Growing up with one parent can be a good thing, leading to a close relationship. Encourage your child to spend time with their other parent if it's safe and possible. Help them to understand that it's okay to love you both.

Young parents may face extra challenges. Don't be embarrassed to ask for support and advice. Your education may have to be cut short, but don't give up on plans for the future. Make sure that you have good, reliable childcare.

In a new relationship, everyone needs time to get used to things. Change can make us all feel unsafe, so it's important to make sure everyone feels secure. Take things slowly and carefully.

Grandparents can help out and are an important link to family history and a sense of belonging. Their experience can be useful. They have lives of their own so don't ask them to do too much. In family break downs they may lose touch.

1

We are separating and my son will be living with me.

2

Is he feeling insecure? Have you neglected his feelings?

3

A stable family life is important to children. Remind him that you both still love him.



We are all equal

Diversity is all about differences. We are all different - physically, socially, culturally and sexually. You may have a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society. Discrimination is when you are treated differently just because of who you are. Although we're all different we all have the right to equal respect, opportunity and justice.



New to Peterborough

Our services for you

If you are new to Peterborough things will of course seem a bit strange at first but with our help we can work together to support you. Health workers, Teachers and carers can offer a whole host of services to welcome you.

To get the best start, make sure you register with a local GP, Health Visitor and Dentist and find out about schools. Peterborough School Admissions Service will be able to help you. If you have a pre-school child, your nearest Children's Centre may be able to help get in touch with other services to help you.

Going to clubs or local activities will help your child make new friends and begin a new enjoyable learning experience. Young people find it easier to make friends if they have something in common. Peteyouth is a great service to help young people find new friends, information about places to go, things to do as well as support around things like careers, health and safety.

Try to make new friends yourself, once you've made the effort you will be pleased you did - we are a friendly community! You may even wish to become a volunteer, which is a great way to get to know people and add to your work experience.

1

You are new to the area and feel alone. You do not know anyone.

2

Do not shut others out - enjoy meeting new people and seeing new places.

3

Find out about local clubs, schools and Children's Centres.
Try to chat to one new person every day.



Caring professionals will aim to understand your cultural preferences and overcome any language barriers, to help make you feel confident and settled as soon as possible. Remember you are not alone - there is a network of support for you out there.

Families Information Service
01733 864446
www.peterborough.gov.uk/FIS
School Admissions Team
01733 747474



Dads matter

Dads can often be forgotten, but it is important to remember that both parents are just as important as each other. Parents need to work together and keep to the same rules. This applies when disciplining your child, and it is also important that you do not take sides in an argument. Parents should never argue in front of their child, and if you are separated, it's important to agree on your parenting roles and responsibilities.

Positive parenting and self-esteem

Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child. Listen and try to understand their point of view, encourage their efforts and you will really start to form the basis of a good relationship. They will always be your child but allowing them to develop, grow and establish their independence will give them the confidence they need.

In trying to help, it may appear that you are nagging. Learning from their mistakes, where it is safe to do so, is a good thing. It can be easy to point out where you think things are going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. Everyone enjoys a bit of praise and encouragement, so when they do well, tell them.

Children gradually learn to make their own decisions, which may not always fit with yours. That is why tension is normal. Choose your battles and let some go! You might find that their friends seem to take priority as they get older. This is normal but you might feel jealous and even feel a bit left out.

1

They seem unhappy, have mood changes, are unusually secretive and are avoiding you.

2

Could you be doing what you think is right without listening to how they feel?

3

Try to develop an open relationship. Be supportive and let them know you are always there to listen.



Growing & developing

A sense of self-esteem and being aware of dangers is the best protection you can give your child. Let them know you're around to talk about puberty and changes in their body, sexual health and relationships. Let them know that you will always be there as a support through growing up, at exam times and on into adulthood.

Encouraging good behaviour

Establishing good behaviour early on

Every day, your child learns new things. It is what makes childhood so exciting. You have an important job in teaching them about values and beliefs and by being a good role model. Start early and see your hard work pay-off.

Using positive feedback is a great idea. Build up self-esteem by talking about their strengths. Being too critical can damage confidence. When they do something good, praise them and explain why. Rather than saying “Good boy” try saying, “You are a good boy for helping me”. It’s our actions and what we do, not what we say or moan about, which impacts on a child for life.

You can use positive feedback when they are misbehaving too. Tell them you are upset about their behaviour, not them. That way they will not see themselves as a bad person and know they have the power to change the way they act. It is up to you to set boundaries and rules in their life, which will change as they grow. Discuss your parenting styles early on with your partner so you both set consistent rules.

Life is busy but it is important to make time to spend together. Ask for help if you need it, there are many professionals who can give you hints and tips to help.

1

My child’s self-esteem seems low. They may say things like “I cannot do this”.

2

Have you discussed this with your child’s Nursery Nurse or Teacher?

3

Praise them where you can. Try to focus on what they are good at.

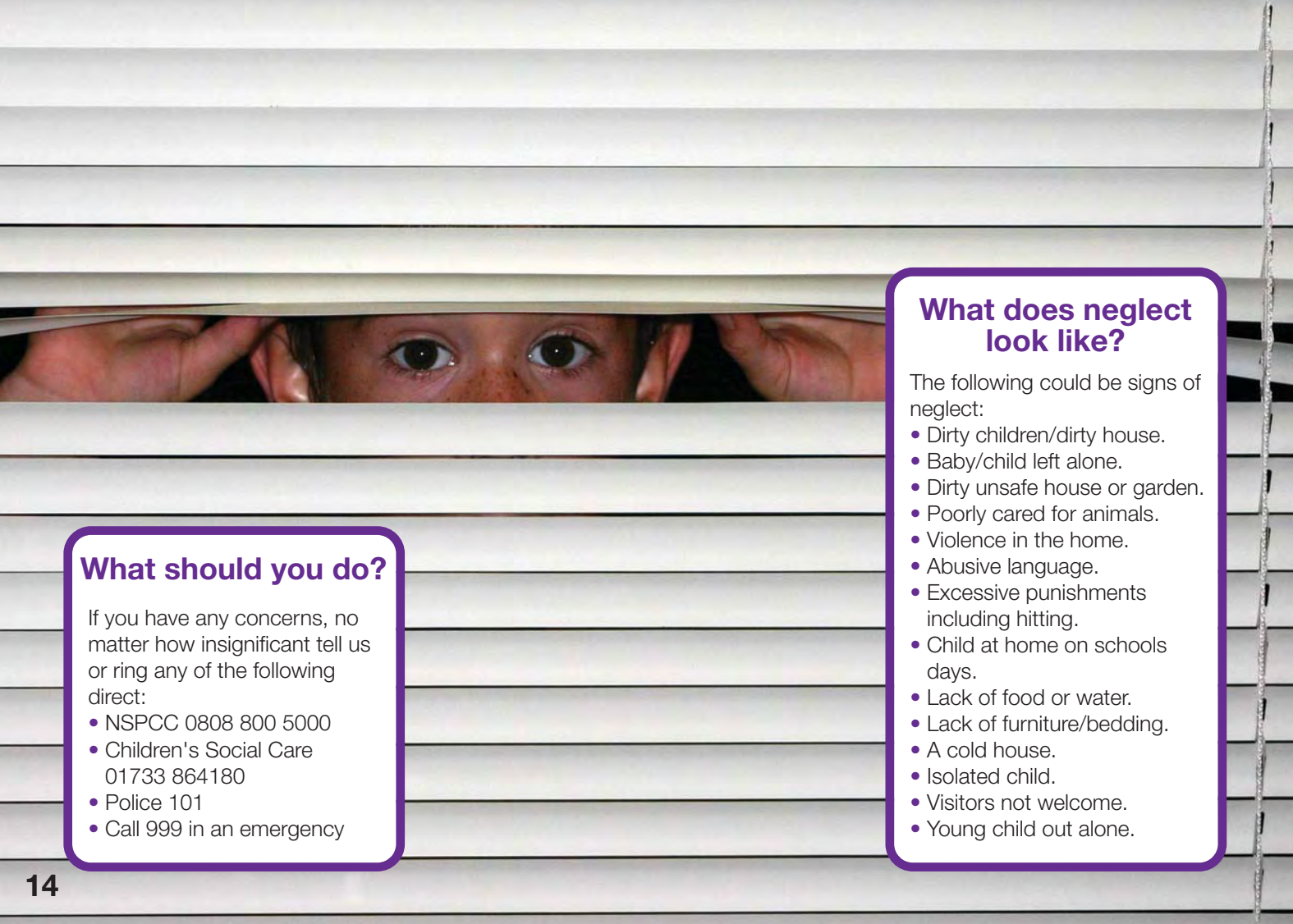
Being a good role-model

Having a child means a lifelong commitment to someone who will need your care and support. If you are a parent then you are responsible in the eyes of the law for the safety, well-being and upbringing of your child. Your children are a reflection of you and your parenting. The most effective parenting tool we have is the example we set as good role models early on. This will help your child grow into a responsible, healthy and happy adult.



Positive feedback:

- Use positive feedback to build up self-esteem.
- Praise your child when they do well and explain why you are pleased with them.
- Children are happier if they have rules to follow.
- Use play to teach your child good behaviour.
- As they grow, change the way you encourage them.



What should you do?

If you have any concerns, no matter how insignificant tell us or ring any of the following direct:

- NSPCC 0808 800 5000
- Children's Social Care 01733 864180
- Police 101
- Call 999 in an emergency

What does neglect look like?

The following could be signs of neglect:

- Dirty children/dirty house.
- Baby/child left alone.
- Dirty unsafe house or garden.
- Poorly cared for animals.
- Violence in the home.
- Abusive language.
- Excessive punishments including hitting.
- Child at home on schools days.
- Lack of food or water.
- Lack of furniture/bedding.
- A cold house.
- Isolated child.
- Visitors not welcome.
- Young child out alone.

Children left alone

It can be a lonely and frightening experience

If a child is left alone it can be a sad, lonely, frightening and dangerous experience. There are possible risks, both physical and emotional.

The level of responsibility which is given to the child to look after themselves and to somehow manage whatever may happen is impossible for a younger child. They may say that they do not mind being left and may find it exciting at first, but they cannot fully know the possible risks and how to handle them.

Everyday things that happen in life such as hunger, a storm, the phone ringing or someone coming to the front door can cause problems. An accident, feeling ill or a power cut may occur and these may not be issues that a child could cope with.

Neglect is a form of significant harm which involves the failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This is likely to affect a child's health or development.

If they are told, the Police and/or Children's Services may take action if they think that a child has been neglected by being left alone.

1

You notice a child who appears to be left alone for long periods of time.

2

Is there immediate risk of harm to the child?

3

If you are worried contact the Children and Young People's Services.



Guidelines

The NSPCC have guidelines advising that children under 13 should not be left alone. This does not have the force of Law but it is suggested as good practice.

As a child grows up and becomes more responsible, leaving them alone after school, or during the day is okay as long as they are prepared. If your child is 13 or over and you feel they can deal with this, it is important that they know where you are and who to contact in an emergency.

What you are entitled to

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). Free early education places are available at a range of early years settings including nursery schools and classes, Children's Centres, day nurseries, play groups and pre-schools and childminders. Finding out about the range of services on offer will help you decide what best suits you and your child's needs. Early learning is available through:

- Nursery classes, nursery schools and day nurseries.
- Children's Centres.
- Pre-school playgroups.
- Reception classes.
- Accredited childminders who are part of an approved network.

Peterborough FIS provides information, advice and assistance to parents, carers and professionals on the range of children, family and young people's services available within the area.

Childcare

Choosing the right childcare

You are responsible for the safety and well-being of your children. It is important that you think carefully about the childcare provision that you choose for your child whether this is an Ofsted registered childminder or nursery/pre-school, or informal childcare such as a relative, friend or babysitter. Ofsted registration is required for any person or organisation who cares for children under eight years for more than two hours per day.

When you leave your child in the care of someone else you want them to be as well cared for and safe as they are with you. Therefore, when choosing childcare take your time and visit a number of different childcare providers. Always ask to see their Ofsted Registration Certificate which should be on display. Talk to other parents.

The law does not specify how old someone has to be to babysit, and they do not need to have any qualifications. The NSPCC recommends that no one under 16 should be left alone to look after young children. If someone under 16 is looking after a child, the parent, and not the babysitter, remain legally responsible for the child's safety. Parents should still use judgement when choosing a babysitter, as some 16 year olds might not be mature enough to look after younger children.

1

What type of childcare are you looking for?

2

Contact the Families Information Service (FIS) who can discuss the different childcare options available 01733 864446.

3

Visit a range of childcare providers with your child. Make sure you are both happy.

Types of childcare:

- **Nurseries** offer childcare for children aged 0-5 often during the hours of 8am-6pm all year round.
- **Pre-schools** offer childcare for children between two and five often for three-four hours a day, term time only.
- **Out-of-school childcare** offers childcare after school or during the school holidays.
- **Childminders** care for children aged 0-7 (and above) in the childminder's own home.

All of the above childcare providers must be registered and inspected by Ofsted.

- **Nannies, au pairs and home child carers** can provide care in the child's own home and may be registered on the Ofsted Voluntary part of the Childcare Register.
- **Babysitters** require no training or inspection. Arrangements are private.



Ways to cope

Some of the ways to cope include:

- Count to ten before doing anything, allow yourself to calm down.
- Hug and cuddle your child.
- Check they are not hungry, too hot or cold or need changing.
- Go for a walk or a drive to help them sleep.
- Make use of a helpline in times of crisis.
- Walk out of the room for a short time, but stay nearby.
- Ask someone else you trust to take over for a while.

Don't shake the baby

Different ways to cope

It is normal to get frustrated sometimes when a baby will not stop crying. It is the way all babies make sure that their basic needs are met. It is neither your fault nor the fault of your baby. A baby with additional difficulties may cry more which can be very stressful.

Shaking can cause death or serious and long-lasting brain damage. Shaken Baby Syndrome is an injury caused as a result of a baby being shaken so that their head wobbles rapidly back and forth. The force of this can tear the blood vessels that connect the brain and skull. A baby's neck muscles are not strong enough to hold their head firmly. Never ever shake a baby for any reason. It is never safe to shake a child, not even in play. It is important for other children at home, your babysitter or any other carer to understand the dangers.

Contact your Health Visitor, GP, local Children's Services or Children's Centres. Do not allow a situation to go on where you feel unable to cope.

1

Your baby will not stop crying and you cannot sleep. You feel tired and frustrated.

2

It is not your baby's fault, they may be feeling upset or uncomfortable in some way.

3

Try to understand your baby's needs when they are having difficulties. Take a break if you can.



The facts

- Shaking is often a response to extreme frustration.
- Shaking can cause damage that you cannot see.
- Shaking can cause damage that is long lasting.
- Never shake a child for any reason.
- There are different ways to cope with a crying baby.
- Do not suffer alone, seek support from others.



Things you can do

Always place your baby on their back to sleep.

- Keep your baby smokefree during pregnancy and after birth.
- Place your baby to sleep in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you for the first 6 months.
- Breastfeed your baby, if you can.
- Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress in good condition.



Call 0800 022 4332 or visit
www.smokefree.nhs.uk

Safe sleeping

Reducing the risks of cot death

A cot in your room is the safest place for your baby to sleep in their first six months. Keep the cot tidy and do not use plastic sheets. Babies can overheat, so try to keep the room between 16-20°C. Do not use duvets, quilts or pillows until your baby is one year old, and never use hot water bottles or electric blankets. Always position your baby in the 'Feet to Foot' position, with their feet at the foot of the cot so that they can't move down inside their blanket.

Unless a health professional has told you to do something different, always put your baby to sleep on it's back. Never let your baby fall asleep propped up on a cushion, on a sofa or chair, and don't let anyone fall asleep while nursing your baby. You should follow the advice for all naps, not just for night time sleep.

Remember - keep the house smokefree.

For further advice or support you could speak to your Health Visitor, GP or contact the Lullaby Trust on 0808 802 6869 www.lullabytrust.org.uk

1

Always place your baby to sleep in the 'Feet to Foot' position.

2

Babies aren't good at keeping their temperature constant, so make sure they don't get too hot or too cold.

3

Keep your baby's cot in your room for the first six months. Keep the room temperature at about 18°C.



Health Visitor says

The safest place for your baby to sleep for the first six months of life is in a cot in your room. If you decide to take a baby into your bed, make sure you or your partner have not taken any medicine, drugs or alcohol that may make you sleep more heavily than usual. Remember, they face a bigger health risk if you or your partner is a smoker.

Sleeping next to you your baby will be warmer anyway, so if they fall asleep they may get too hot. There are extra risks if you or your partner are obese. Taking your baby into your bed is never risk free.



Is it legal?

It is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment' regardless of any individual, cultural or religious justification. There is a grey area in the Law as to whether a 'smack' amounts to reasonable punishment. However, physical punishment will be considered 'unreasonable' if it leaves a mark on the child or if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt*. As a result, child protection professionals will assess incidents of physical ill-treatment of children, in order that they can understand, prevent and explain the consequences of further incidents to parents.

*Source www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Smacking

We do not need to resort to this

It is important that children learn how to behave. Parents have a very important job as role models for their children in helping them to learn how to do this.

Setting limits early on and explaining reasons for these limits helps to instill self-discipline. Smacking has no long-lasting positive effect and in fact smacking usually has to increase in severity in order to have the same impact on your growing child. This is where the fine line between smacking and hitting can be crossed. Smacking does not teach self-discipline and may teach your child to hurt others. It could make them frightened of you.

Every parent gets frustrated at times and it is at these times that it could be easy to smack in the heat of the moment. However this is an outlet for the parent's frustration, rather than a helpful way of influencing the child's behaviour. Try to use different ways to teach acceptable behaviour. Praise them when they are good and try to distract them from misbehaving.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child at risk of abuse or harm call Referral and Assessment on 01733 864180 (out of hours 01733 234724). In an emergency call 999.

1

My child is being so naughty I feel like smacking them.

2

Do not resort to smacking your child.

3

Think about different ways of showing your child how to behave. Explain why you are angry.



How to avoid smacking:

- Try not to let a situation get so bad that you feel you need to smack your child.
- Set limits early on.
- Explain why you may be unhappy with their unacceptable behaviour and praise their good behaviour.
- If you feel so angry you are out of control take time out and walk away.
- Try to take a break, all parents get frustrated sometimes.



Education

Depending upon the disability or Special Educational Need (SEN) that your child has, they may need additional support in their mainstream school. In some circumstances your child may need to attend a special school - a specialist environment designed to match their educational needs. Every school has a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) who can discuss any issues with you. Here in Peterborough we have 10 specialist schools and pupil referral units.

Children with a disability/SEN

Make sure that they get the best support available

If your child has a disability the future can feel like a real challenge, but you are not alone. You can't stop your child's condition, but you can help with the disability they experience by making sure that they get the best support available.

Your GP and Health Board should provide the help you need to understand your child's disability and help plan treatment, therapy equipment and ongoing care.

Peterborough Children and Young People's Services provide a range of support which can include special leisure facilities and short breaks. For further information please contact the Children with Disability Service on 01733 864397.

Your child is especially protected by Law. The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any service provider like schools to treat disabled people differently because of their disability. We support equal rights.

1

You think your child may have some form of disability.

2

Some children do not appear to have a disability at birth, it can develop over time. Do not panic.

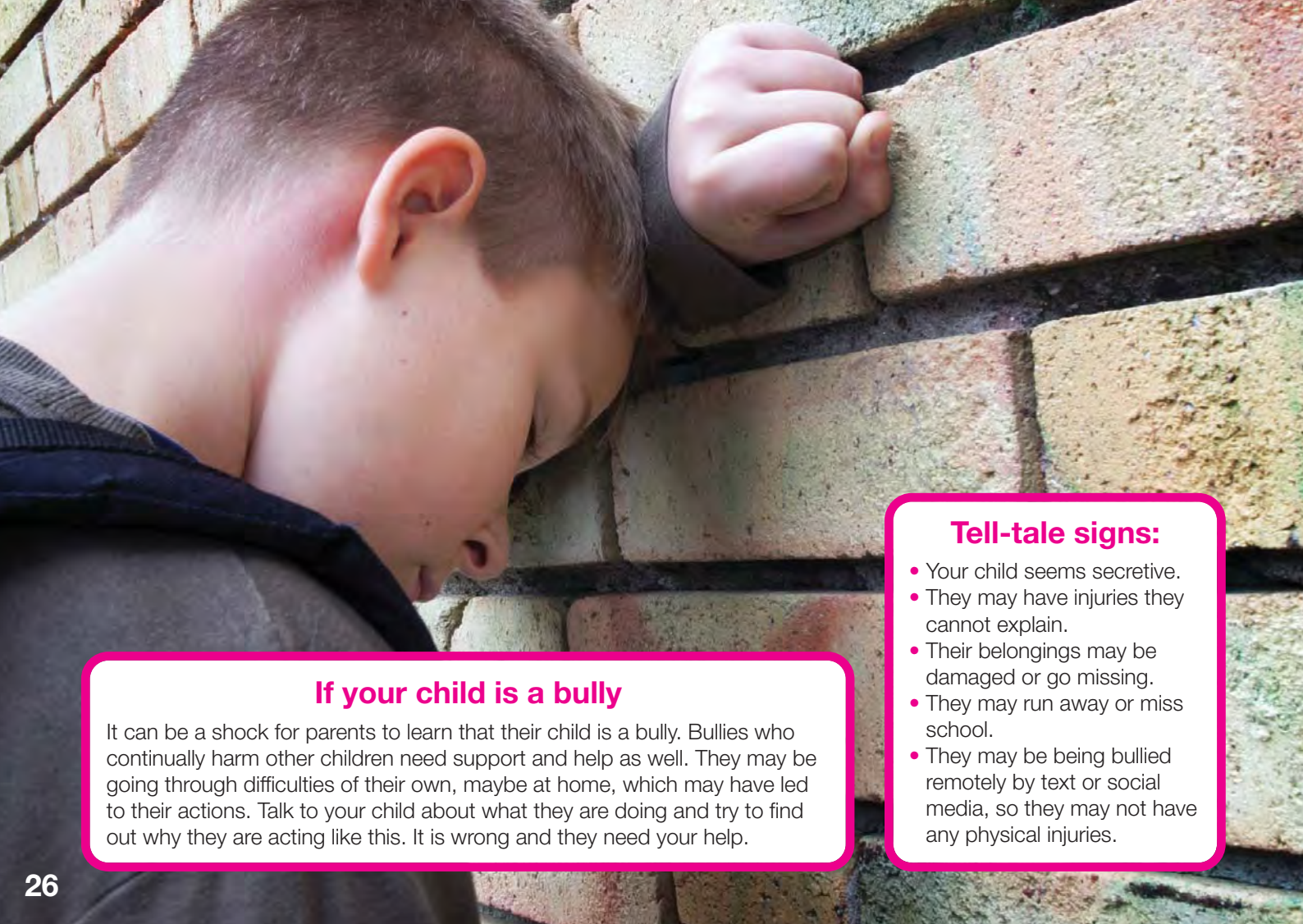
3

Try to understand your baby's needs when they are having difficulties. Take a break if you can.



Benefits

Benefits that you could receive to help you include: Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance, help with extra housing costs, Carers Blue Badge Scheme, free dental treatment, prescriptions and help with the cost of glasses. In some cases travel to hospital, school meals and road tax exemption. There are organisations and charities who provide further help, advice and support. DIAL Peterborough 01733 265551 www.dialpeterborough.co.uk



If your child is a bully

It can be a shock for parents to learn that their child is a bully. Bullies who continually harm other children need support and help as well. They may be going through difficulties of their own, maybe at home, which may have led to their actions. Talk to your child about what they are doing and try to find out why they are acting like this. It is wrong and they need your help.

Tell-tale signs:

- Your child seems secretive.
- They may have injuries they cannot explain.
- Their belongings may be damaged or go missing.
- They may run away or miss school.
- They may be being bullied remotely by text or social media, so they may not have any physical injuries.

Bullying

Children have the right not to be hurt

Bullying is a frightening experience. It can isolate and damage self-confidence. Bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression and even suicidal thoughts and actions.

What other children think is very important to your child and fitting in is a must. Those thought of as different for any reason may be picked on and bullied. Be aware of the possibility of bullying and make sure you know the tell-tale signs.

You may think that your child is unlikely to be bullied but the reality is that bullying can happen at any time and to any child. If your child tells you about a 'friend' who is being bullied listen carefully and take them seriously. They may be trying to tell you that it is happening to them.

All schools in Peterborough have an Anti-Bullying Policy. School action alone cannot guarantee it stops, so it is important that you work together with your child's school.

Bullying can happen anywhere - at school, college or uni, at work or cyber bullying via your mobile or social network sites.

1

I have noticed injuries with no explanation. Behaviour seems different, they may seem secretive.

2

They may be being bullied. You need to do something about it and find out what is happening.

3

See the Headteacher. Outside school consider contacting the Police. Reassure your child.

Source: CEOP



The facts:

- Bullying is unacceptable.
- Bullying can happen anywhere to any child.
- It can take many forms, from cyberbullying or verbal abuse to physical attack.
- Bullying is the repeated abuse of a child by one or several people.
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.
- Bullies may be children who are experiencing bullying themselves, maybe at home.
- Children with a disability or Special Educational Needs (SEN) are more vulnerable to bullying.

Internet hazards:

- **It is easy and fast** - making a decision at the click of a button can cause long-term problems.
- **I am in the privacy of my own home** - because they may be at home, and cannot be seen, children may be more reckless and bold in their actions. The emotional and physical distance of being online gives a false feeling of security.
- **Mob mentality** - social networking groups may have 'pages' specifically designed to target and bully individuals. It is easy to be anonymous and feel less responsible for their actions.

Set ground rules:

- Limit time spent on the internet.
- Talk about age appropriate websites.
- Tell them to never give out contact details or post photos of themselves on the internet.
- They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they do not feel happy about.
- Ensure social networking profiles are set to 'private' so only friends can view them.

Make sure your child understands why there needs to be rules. Because they can not see or hear the people they chat to, they may not be who they seem.

E-safety and exploitation

New technology, old problem

The internet is part of life. It opens up many educational and social opportunities, giving access to a world of information and experiences. Whether on a computer at school or at home, a games console or mobile phone, children are accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are.

Children have a different language that we as parents need to learn and understand. If you and your child understand the risks you can get the most from the internet and stay safe. Chatrooms can be used by paedophiles to meet children and often the child thinks they are the same age. They can also 'groom' children to become victims, either psychologically on the internet itself, or by arranging to actually meet with them, gain their trust and abuse them. Make sure your child does not give away any personal details. The Police and Children's Services have specialist teams trained to counter these forms of exploitation and offer support to children and parents.

The minimum age to open a Facebook account is 13 but it is easy to fib about your age. It is estimated that 30% of children between 8 and 13 have Facebook profiles (Source: BBC News Technology). There are online social networking clubs aimed at children between 6 and 14. You need to know what your child is looking at.

Make sure you, grandparents and other family members are aware of the dangers.

1

Your child is using the internet in secret. He knows his way around the computer better than you do.

2

Could they be visiting unsuitable sites, or chatting with someone who may harm them?

3

Learn about the internet yourself. Keep the computer in a family room. Limit computer time.



The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre is dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children. They are part of UK policing and are very much about tracking and bringing offenders to account either directly or in partnership with local and international forces. If you are in immediate danger contact the Police.

Missing from school

Do you know where your child is today? If you ever suspect they may be missing school contact their school at once. A child who does this and is not where you or the school think they are during the day may be vulnerable. This is when your partnership with their school is most important. They will tell you about suspected absence from school, but you should contact them if you have any concerns too. Together you can find out what is causing the problem and take the right steps to put it right.

Missing

Be aware

Missing school is also a serious matter. By Law parents must ensure their children receive an effective full-time education. Missing school means missing out on valuable learning time, on life skills, fun and friendships. 'Missing' children are more vulnerable to crime by being away from their peers, possibly alone and risk getting into bad company or being exploited. In Peterborough over 140 children were reported missing to the Police in 2012.

Children from all sorts of backgrounds run away from home for a variety of reasons. If your child runs away they need your help. They may be trying to find out how much you care for them.

Children who run away often have problems that they feel they are unable to talk to their parents about. Many also run away because of drug abuse or because they are pregnant. Look for signs that your child might not be happy at home and remember help is available - please don't be too embarrassed or afraid to ask. Your child will be at risk from harm if they are sleeping rough.

If your child is between 8 and 19 and has been missing, they will, once located, be contacted by a Connexions Personal Adviser. They will talk to the child and their family to see if any extra help or support is needed.

1

You suspect your child is missing school.

2

Where could they be going and what could they be doing?

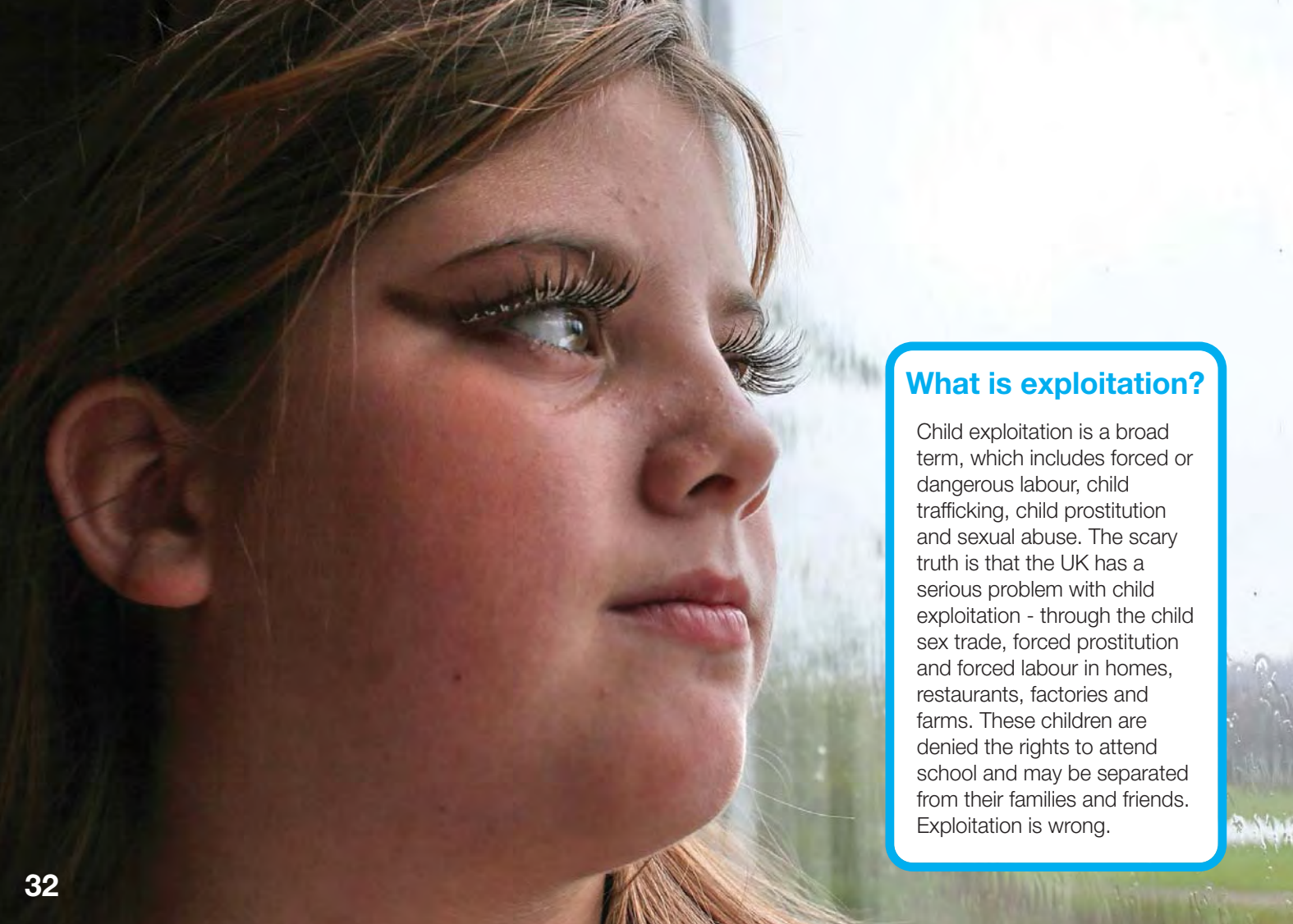
3

Talk to them. Find out why, are they being bullied? Talk to the school (see Bullying pages 26-27).



Missing from home

Make sure that your child knows how important they are to you. If you have to tell your child off, tell them that it's their behaviour that's the problem - not them. If something has gone wrong in the family, don't let your child think that it's their fault. Be aware that if a child goes missing from home repeatedly, receives unexplained gifts and possibly has an older 'friend', it is possible they could be being sexually exploited (see pages 32-33).



What is exploitation?

Child exploitation is a broad term, which includes forced or dangerous labour, child trafficking, child prostitution and sexual abuse. The scary truth is that the UK has a serious problem with child exploitation - through the child sex trade, forced prostitution and forced labour in homes, restaurants, factories and farms. These children are denied the rights to attend school and may be separated from their families and friends. Exploitation is wrong.

Exploitation

Reduce the risks

It is up to us to protect our children. Children are vulnerable to exploitation. Exploitation takes many forms. A close and positive relationship with your child can reduce their vulnerability. Making sure they have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves can stop them falling into abusive relationships.

All children have a right to be safe from harm, wherever they are. If you both understand the risks of the internet you can make sensible and informed choices online. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre delivers a multi-agency service dedicated to tackling the exploitation of children.

Children involved in sexual exploitation can become victims of serious physical and sexual attacks, which can sometimes lead to death. They can easily become addicted to drugs and alcohol and face a high risk of catching Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The emotional and psychological damage can be huge and can lead to self-harm, severe depression and even suicide.

Exploitation usually involves one person (often older) who seems to have total power and control over a child or young person. Young people can be passed through networks (trafficking) and are exploited by a number of people. This crime is serious and well organised.

1

My teenager seems to have extra money and new clothes I didn't buy.

2

Could they be being exploited in some way?

3

If so, get help to make it stop. Talk about what's happening. Offer a supportive home life.



Sexual exploitation

Adults who benefit from child sexual exploitation use many different methods to target children. It can begin with an 'exciting' new friendship with an older boyfriend or girlfriend. The child may receive expensive gifts and be given alcohol or drugs. Before long they create a loyal and dependent relationship with the victim. It is against the Law and a form of sexual abuse, which puts the child at risk from physical, emotional and psychological damage.



Help your child make the right choices

Schools now have systems in place to give young people the help they need to make choices about their future education. This will help them to choose subjects and skills that will keep them interested in their education until they are 18. Support is also given to help work through problems they may come across during that time and to aim for longer-term learning and a better job in the end.

1

You are feeling anxious about your child starting secondary school.

2

Do not let your child know how you feel, be strong for them.

3

Be positive about the exciting change. Talk to your child and reassure them about what is happening.

Preparation for starting secondary school

Getting ready for change and transition

Moving school at any time can be scary but exciting too, so give your child lots of support to make it easier for them. Make sure they know what is happening and make your decisions together. Some children can feel anxious and insecure about the big changes and fear they will miss friends and routines at primary school. Visiting the school with your child to meet their Teachers before they start can help. Find out who else is going to their new school, and if some of their friends will be there.

There are lots of things that your child will need when they start at secondary school, so try to be prepared - think about their uniform (if they wear one), a bag for their books, sports kit, stationery and equipment. During the autumn term of year six, you will receive a booklet to guide you through the process and there will be forms to complete.

If your child feels nervous, talk about how you felt when you changed schools. Explain that it is natural to feel like this and that everyone in their new year group is in the same situation.

Contact Peterborough Schools Admissions Team on 01733 747474. You can apply online using the online application process. It is recommended that parents read the 'Admissions to Secondary School' booklet before completing an application.



Tips:

- Start thinking about your child's learning place well in advance and research their new school.
- Make sure your child knows they can tell you about any problems, especially bullying, exam times can be stressful so be patient and supportive.
- They may feel nervous and say they feel too ill to go to school, they may also be angry towards you - this is all quite normal.



Signs of stress

It is important that you know and recognise the signs of stress. This way you can support your child and get extra help if you need to. Signs can include:

- Mood swings.
- Being unable to sleep.
- Trouble concentrating on schoolwork.
- Sudden stomach aches or headaches and wanting to stay away from school.
- Overreacting and being emotional.

Stress and anxiety

Helping them cope

Children of all ages can get stressed and anxious. They can feel stressed for many reasons but the most common reasons are parental divorce, pressure at school and being bullied or abused. Be careful what you say, even when you do not think your child is listening to you. Children overhear parents talking about money worries or problems they are having at work and they start to feel anxious about these things themselves and take on worries beyond their years.

Many children feel under pressure to do things they are not happy about because of peer pressure. Friendships are very important and children often suffer stress if they have fallen out with a friend.

Children can suffer from stress and anxiety due to high expectations from parents and family. Let them know that as long as they are doing their best that is okay. Support them in getting extra help if they need it. Let them know you are there for them and that they can talk to you if they are worried. Mental health issues and depression can affect children. If you have concerns speak out.

1

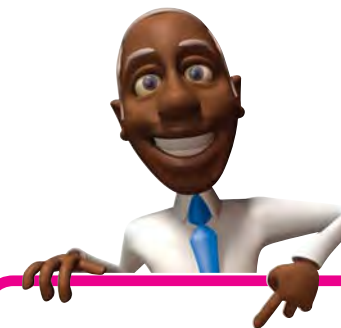
Your child seems stressed out.

2

Have they fallen out with a friend? Are they being bullied? Pick a good time to chat.

3

Talk to their Teacher and ask about friendship groups. If you are still worried speak to your GP.



Relieving stress

There are lots of ways you can help your child overcome or cope with stress and anxiety:

- Talk to your child about what is causing their stress.
- Tell them it is normal to feel stressed now and again.
- Help them learn to relax and cope better when they are upset.
- Do not put extra pressure on your child by expecting too much from them.
- If their anxiety goes on for longer than a month, let them know you will support them in getting help.



How can I help?

It is normal to feel upset, angry and powerless when you find a child is self-harming but remember they need your understanding and support. Listen without judging them and stay calm. This is their way of handling problems. Find ways to help them learn to deal with stress and understand the things that cause them to self-harm in the first place. If they can't talk to you, encourage them to talk to another family member, friend, Teacher, Youth Worker, Social Worker or your GP.

Self-harming

Understanding and support

Self-harming or hurting yourself can take many forms. This may include cutting, burning or scalding, hitting, picking skin, head banging against a wall or other object or taking an overdose. Eating disorders are also a form of self-harm.

While the aim is to hurt, it is not usually to kill themselves and it may carry on for years. People who self-harm often use it as a way of dealing with problems, such as depression, bullying, abuse or feeling unloved. Those who self-harm usually think badly of themselves and need even more attention and support.

Self-harming is not just about getting attention, as it is most often carried out in private and kept secret. Children and young people go to great lengths to cover up their self-harming. What they are doing is a sign that they need help.

Eating disorders are a form of self-harm and there are links between deliberate self-injury and different types of eating disorder. Both behaviours affect a lot of teenage girls in particular who share a lot of the same traits, such as low self-esteem, a perfectionist personality, anxiety and perhaps a history of trauma, abuse or family problems. Of course every person and situation is different and we recognise that although these are the common themes they are not the only reasons behind such behaviours, and not everybody will cross over between the two.

1

I suspect she is hurting herself. She always wears long sleeves and seems secretive.

Source: www.selfharm.co.uk

2

Find out the facts. Try to understand why it is happening. Has something happened at home?

3

Give them time to talk. Do not be cross. Call 999 if it looks serious or they have taken an overdose.



Facts

- Self-harming is a sign of deeper problems such as bullying, abuse or feeling unloved.
- Young people who self-harm say it is a way of being in control and use it to help them cope, as the physical pain takes their mind off their problems.
- Young people who self-harm often do not get help for themselves because they may be worried about what you will think of them and their self-harming.

Advice and support

If you think you or another adult at home has a problem seek advice and support. Your habit could be affecting the following:

- Relationships - has someone spoken to you about their concerns about your drinking or drug use?
- Your commitments - have you failed to do what is expected of you because of your drinking/drug use?
- Your health - are you having difficulty sleeping, feeling unwell or needing to use something to make you feel better?
- You have come into conflict with the law - have you been drinking and driving or arrested for possessing drugs?

These are all signs that you should seek help. All of these things will affect your ability to look after your children, keep them safe and help them develop into adulthood.

Peterborough Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)

Works together with other organisations across Peterborough. Call **01733 746597**.



Call **0800 022 4332** or visit www.smokefree.nhs.uk

Smoking, alcohol and substance misuse

Being a good role model

Your behaviour affects your children. Whether your answer to a problem or a crisis is to have a drink or take some drugs, things can progress to the stage that you are not taking proper care of your children or protecting them. Their safety could be at risk.

Think about the way you act and what it says. If you or someone at home smokes, drinks alcohol or takes drugs remember children learn from what they see and may begin to think that smoking, alcohol or drugs are a solution to problems. Often people start using drugs to relieve stress or tension. No matter how careful you think you are, children are often very aware of their parents' behaviour. Both alcohol and drugs can affect your ability to look after your children and have serious effects on them as they grow up. They could also find drugs and try them - leading to serious problems. Make sure you keep alcoholic drinks out of reach.

It is important that you talk to your partner or other family members who could offer support to you and your children. Children may not want to talk about it because of the shame around alcohol or drugs or fear about what could happen. There is support available for children who live in households where drugs and alcohol are a problem.

1

Using alcohol or drugs at home may result in changes to the way your child acts.

2

Think - what does your use of alcohol or drugs teach your children?

3

Get more information and seek help and advice. Stop smoking now.



Be aware

- When parents smoke, drink or use drugs, it often affects the emotional development and well-being of their children.
- Parental smoking, drug or alcohol use can put children in danger.
- In families where drugs and alcohol are used it is common for children and young people to go on to use them.
- Violence at home is often caused by drug and alcohol misuse.

What is a C-Card?

The C stands for condom. The C-Card is small enough to fit in a pocket and gives access to free condoms.

When they first get a C-Card, on the first visit, and every time they need a new card, they will be seen by a trained member of staff. Often, this is a Nurse who will explain the scheme as well as making sure they know how to use a condom effectively. A few details will be required but no one will be told about their visit unless there is a serious concern that they may be at risk of harm.

The C-Card will have a personal number on it and should be kept safe. It must be produced every time a young person goes for more condoms. They may not be able to get condoms unless they have a card or see a Nurse again. Tel: 01733 317 888

Contraception

Make sure your teenager has access to information and support around condoms and contraception. They have an equal responsibility whether they are a boy or a girl. You may not agree with your teenager having sex at all but it is better they have all the knowledge they need and have protected sex.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is the most common Sexually Transmitted Infection for young people under 25 in the UK. Chlamydia can cause infertility but can be treated easily; you can get free tests to your home by texting 'TEST', your name, age and address to 84010, or you can visit www.ruclear.co.uk for more information.

Teenage pregnancy and STIs

Preventative parenting

We cannot protect children from the society we live in. Sex is everywhere around us and children and young people will learn about sex whether you want them to or not. They will also learn about sex from each other and information that gets passed-on in the playground is not always accurate. The result can be confusing messages that leave them exposed to risky situations, STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and pregnancy.

You have an important role to play in making sure your child has the right information to cope with these pressures, to make positive choices about their relationships and to stay safe. Try to introduce information gradually to your child which you can build on as they mature rather than a one-off talk. You might feel concerned that by discussing sex and relationships, particularly at an early age, you will encourage them to have sex early. However, research has proved that the opposite is true.

1

Your teenager may be having unprotected sex.

2

Make sure they understand what they are doing and are mature enough to cope.

3

Advise and make sure they use protection. Support them in their choices. Find out about the local C-Card Scheme.



If she is pregnant

If you think your daughter may be pregnant, or if she has told you that she is, make sure she visits her GP or a local Sexual Health Service to get the pregnancy confirmed and to access the support available. Talk to her about the choices she has and how these choices will affect the rest of her life (and probably yours).

If you are the victim

Many people find it difficult to understand why people stay in abusive situations. Fear, love, the risk of homelessness and money worries can make it difficult for women with children to leave. If you are a victim of domestic abuse, you are not the only victim - your children are too. You can report domestic abuse to any professional. There are many agencies working in Peterborough who will help you to access support. For more information, call Peterborough Police **101** or Lead Officer Adult Protection 01733 758433. In an emergency call 999.

Even if you think an incident is just a one-off, other professional agencies may already have concerns. So your information could be very important.

Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child or young person as they get older. The longer children are exposed to violence, the more severe the effects on them are. These can include a lack of respect for the non-violent parent, loss of self-confidence (which will affect their ability to form relationships in the future), being over-protective of a parent, loss of childhood, problems at school and running away.

Domestic abuse

Keeping your child safe

You are not responsible for your abuser's behaviour. You or your child do not deserve to experience any form of abuse. Your abuser may blame you and other things like being drunk, pressure of work, unemployment and minimise or deny what they are doing. You may have tried changing what you do, say and wear to try to pacify and not to antagonise the situation. Violence rarely happens only once and will get more and more serious as time goes on. You need to make sure you and your child are safe. It's not easy to accept that a loved one can act in this way and you may be trying to make the relationship work.

Domestic abuse can affect children in many ways. They may feel frightened, become withdrawn, aggressive or difficult, bedwet, run away, have problems at school, lack concentration and suffer emotional upset. Domestic abuse places children at risk of significant harm and professional support is needed. It is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse. Keeping your child safe is your responsibility. Children can often get caught up in the crossfire and become victims.

Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence or abuse. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.

1

I am being abused and it is affecting my child but if I contact someone it may get worse.

2

Don't keep what is happening secret, you have nothing to be ashamed of. The longer abuse goes on the harder it gets to take some action.

3

Don't suffer alone, get help by talking to someone you trust or contact one of the organisations listed. Be a survivor - not a victim.

What is domestic abuse?

Abuse can take many forms:

- Physical including sexual violence.
- Mental and verbal cruelty.
- Financial control.
- Controlling behaviour.

The facts

Domestic abuse affects many families. Women are at increased risk of domestic abuse during pregnancy and the first year after giving birth, even if there has not been any abuse before. Men can also be victims. Children do hear, they do see and they are aware of violence at home, even if you think they do not. Children react in different ways to violence and research suggests that they are more likely to become abusers or victims later in life.



Forced marriage

An abuse of human rights

Forced marriage is a marriage without the full and free consent of both parties. It is a form of domestic violence and an abuse of human rights. Forced marriages are not arranged marriages. In an arranged marriage the family will take the lead in arranging the match and the couple has a choice as to whether to marry or not. In a forced marriage there is no choice.

One of the main motivations for parents forcing their children into marriages is the desire to strengthen families and protect their cultures. This is a difficult and sensitive issue, raising questions of the relationship between vulnerable adults and young people and their parents and carers, and the values of minority communities.

Victims of forced marriage have the same rights to access services as anyone else, irrespective of their cultural background.

Women brought to the UK and married against their wishes find that they lack any support to help them escape their situation. They often suffer violence and degrading treatment by their spouse and his family.

1

I think that a family member is being forced to marry someone they do not want to.

2

Seek advice and help before it's too late.

3

Contact the Safeguarding Adults Team or the Safer Peterborough Partnership Team 01733 747474. Forced Marriage Unit 0207 008 0151



Who can help?

Your local police can offer help and support, especially if there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual is likely to suffer significant harm. Furthermore, if the individual is under 18, they can place themselves under police protection. You can call 999 if you think that there is an emergency. You can call the Cambridgeshire non-emergency contact phone 101 to speak with officers.



Separation and divorce

There is a lot to think about when a relationship ends, especially if you have children. You may be worried about money, where you will live and what the future holds. There can be difficult issues to address with your ex-partner, such as working out when they can see the children. As well as sorting out the practicalities, it is important to remember the emotional needs of your children and to get support if you need it.

What to do straight away:

The following should be dealt with urgently.

1. Protect yourself and your children.
2. Check your immigration status.
3. Know your housing rights.
4. Claim benefits and tax credits.
5. Contact your bank.
6. Protect joint assets.

Depending on your situation, you may also need to get urgent legal advice.

Source: NHS Choices, gingerbread.org.uk

Missing someone

Coping with loss

Loss of a loved one can be through their death, moving away, divorce or separation, or a parent in prison.

Death of a loved one causes a range of feelings as they try to cope with what has happened. They may feel anger at the person who died, at you, at others or themselves. They may feel guilty, possibly blaming themselves in some way. Talk about what has happened as much as they want to.

Separation and divorce is hard. The more your child knows what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope. Children can think that their parents breaking up is somehow their fault and they have done something wrong. Let them know that what has happened is not their fault. Tell them you are both there for them. Tell your child's school what is happening so they can give extra support if needed.

Whoever your child misses is important to your child. Support them and let them know you are there.

1

Has a significant person left your child's life through separation, death or moving away?

2

Have you thought about how this will affect your child?

3

Talk to them, let them know you are there for them. Tell the school and get extra support.



Parents in prison

Encourage your child to keep in touch, perhaps by writing letters or drawing pictures. Let them know that their parent in prison still loves them and talk to them about a possible prison visit. Talk about what you will tell others and how your child feels about that. They may not wish friends at school to know. You may wish to tell your child's school in confidence so they can offer them support.



What can I do?

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer the following:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to cope with problems.
- Encouragement to get help.
- Practical support (for example offering to babysit).

If the family is unable to cope and they do nothing to get help you need to report it.

Speak to Peterborough Referral and Assessment Team on 01733 864180. In an emergency call 999.

Worried about a child?

Getting support

Very few adults harm children deliberately and most often, when harm does happen, families need support, not punishment or the removal of their children. Peterborough Social Workers and other professionals get involved when parents may be unable to protect their child from harm and need some help. In some cases the Police Child Abuse Investigation Teams will work with Social Workers to help protect children and decide whether an offence has been committed.

Speak out and consider how you would feel if it was your child. Discuss your concerns in confidence with Peterborough Referral and Assessment Team on 01733 864180. In an emergency call 999.

When we suspect, witness or are told of a child that is being harmed, action should be taken to stop things getting worse. Even if you think an incident is just a one-off, your information could be very important. Long-term abuse can have a negative affect on a child for the rest of their lives.

1

There are many signs of abuse, from physical and emotional injury leading to changes in behaviour.

2

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with if and when they need to.

3

Seek advice about what practical and emotional support is available from schools and Children's Centres.



Abuse at home

When we suspect abuse of a child in our own home, we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent getting help to a child who needs it. You may not tell others because you fear that the child will be at further risk of harm. You may love the person who is causing the harm and not want to believe what is happening. You need to put your child's safety first.

Useful national contacts

Ask Brook

0808 802 1234
www.brook.org.uk

Barnardo's

020 8551 0011
www.barnardos.org.uk

Beatbullying

0208 771 3377
www.beatbullying.org

Beating Eating Disorders

0845 634 1414
www.b-eat.co.uk

Change4life

0300 123 4567
www.nhs.uk/change4life

Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)

020 7608 3828
www.capt.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

0870 000 3344
www.ceop.gov.uk

ChildLine

0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Childnet International

Helping to make the internet a safe place.
020 7639 6967
www.childnet-int.org

Cry-sis Helpline

08451 228 669 (7 days 9am-10pm)
www.cry-sis.org.uk

Directgov

www.direct.gov.uk

Drinkline

0800 917 8282 (Mon-Fri 9am-11pm)

Families & Friends of Lesbian and Gays (FFLAG)

0845 652 0311
www.fflag.org.uk

Family Lives

0808 800 2222
<http://familylives.org.uk>

Family Planning Association (FPA)

0845 122 8690
www.fpa.org.uk

Family Rights Group

0808 801 0366 (Mon-Fri 10am-3pm)
www.frg.org.uk

Forced marriage

020 7008 0151

FRANK

0800 77 66 00 (24 hour free advice)
www.talktofrank.com

Gingerbread

Single parent helpline
0808 8020925
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Kidscape

Parents Bullying Helpline.
08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk

Lullaby Trust

Promotes expert advice on safer baby sleep and provides special support for bereaved families.
0808 802 6869
www.lullabytrust.org.uk

Message Home

For young people to get a message to their parents.
Freephone 116 000 (24 hours)
www.missingpeople.org.uk

Missing Persons Helpline

Freephone 116 000 (24 hours)
www.missingpeople.org.uk

National Day Nurseries Association

01484 40 70 70
www.ndna.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk
www.refuge.org.uk

NCT

The UK's biggest parenting charity.
0300 330 0700
www.nct.org.uk

Net mums

www.netmums.com

NHS 111

24 hour 111 contact number

NSPCC

0808 800 5000 (24 hours)
www.nspcc.org.uk

Relate

0300 100 1234
www.relateforparents.org.uk

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

0121 248 2000
www.rospace.co.uk

Sexwise Helpline

0800 282930

The Parent Zone

020 7704 0415
www.theparentzone.co.uk

Young Minds

Parents Information Service.
0808 802 5544
www.youngminds.org.uk

In an emergency call 999

Useful local contacts

Attendance Service (Education)

01733 863684

C-Card scheme

01733 317888

Children with a Disability Service

01733 864397

Choice helpline

24 hours advice for anyone who is concerned about honour based violence.
0800 5999 818

Community Drugs Team

01733 898385

Cross Keys Homes

01733 385000
communications@crosskeyshomes.co.uk

DIAL Peterborough

Kingfisher Centre, The Cresset,
Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8DX.
01733 265551
dialpeterborough@btconnect.com
www.dialpeterborough.co.uk

Drink and Drug sense

01733 555532

Families Information Service (FIS)

01733 864446
out of hours 0800 29 89 121
FIS@peterborough.gov.uk

Little Miracles

01733 579008
www.littlemiraclespeterborough.org.uk

Ormiston Community Support

01733 236830

Peterborough Adoption and Fostering Team

01733 317427

Peterborough Domestic Violence Forum

01733 453487

Peterborough Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT)

01733 746597

Peterborough Police

101

Peterborough Rape Crisis

01733 317899

Peterborough Referral and Assessment Team

If you are worried about a child.
01733 864180
out of hours 01733 234724

Peterborough Schools Admissions

01733 747474

Peterborough Women's Aid

08454 103 123 (24 hour helpline)
01733 894 455 Outreach Service
www.peterboroughwomensaid.co.uk/

Peterborough Women's Centre

01733 311564
www.cpft.nhs.uk