



****EMBARGOED, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5th, 2014****

Campaign launched to help Surrey parents and carers prevent child sexual exploitation

A major drive to help Surrey parents and carers better protect their children from sexual exploitation begins this week. Epsom based child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, is leading the campaign which is backed by Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kevin Hurley, and Surrey Police.

The four month public education campaign includes awareness sessions being delivered to parents and carers at secondary schools across the county; targeted information leaflets being distributed; information posted on the Parents Protect! website; and telephone help and advice being provided by the Stop it Now! Helpline (0808 1000 900). The campaign will help parents and carers understand how sexual exploitation can occur, the signs and indicators that a young person may be at risk, how we can help prevent exploitation from happening and provide information on what to do if there is a concern about a child or young person.

The drive to target parents and carers supports activity already underway by Surrey Police and Surrey County Council which is designed to help young people themselves understand the risks associated with sexual exploitation. At the beginning of January a hard-hitting play performed by young people for young people started a tour of secondary schools. Prior to this, awareness sessions were delivered to frontline workers.

In 2012 it was estimated by the Children's Commissioner that 16,500 children were at risk of sexual exploitation in the UK¹. In November 2013 a report by YouGov revealed that parents' lack of knowledge is severely hampering efforts to combat sexual exploitation².

Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kevin Hurley, said:

"Sexual abuse and exploitation is a very real problem and while patterns of offending may vary from one area to another, children and young people across the country are vulnerable, including those in Surrey. My office is delighted to provide funding for this work which supports efforts being made by the police and the council to keep children and young people safe."

Media and Communications Manager at The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Deborah Denis, said:

"Tackling child sexual abuse and exploitation cannot be left to any one agency or group of people. We cannot leave police officers and social workers to deal with problems once an offence has been committed and a child has been harmed. We must work to prevent it from

¹ Findings from the inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012).

² Report commissioned by Ilkley based Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy and Leeds based Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace)

happening in the first place and that means involving everybody; police officers, social workers, teachers and school staff, among others, and, crucially, parents and carers.”

Detective Inspector, Martin Stables, at Surrey Police said:

“This campaign has been created because Surrey is not immune to offences of sexual exploitation. There is much that can be done to protect children and young people and we hope this campaign will go some way to do doing that. Raising young peoples’ awareness of child sexual exploitation is key in helping to prevent them from becoming victims of this crime.”

Head of Learning for Year 9 at Hinchley Wood School, Bryony Dawson said:

“We want to do all we can to protect our children from sexual harm. This means equipping children and young people with the skills and confidence they need to help keep themselves safe and encouraging them to look out for each other. Involving parents in this process is vital, and we are really pleased that we can host an awareness session for our parents and carers.”

Awareness sessions begin in schools this week and will run until the end of April. All residents can access information and advice on the Parents Protect! website (www.parentsprotect.co.uk) and anyone with a concern can call the Freephone Stop it Now! Helpline for confidential advice (0808 1000 900, www.stopitnow.org.uk).

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Notes to editors:

For interview opportunities, or to request to attend a session, reporters should contact Deborah Denis on ddenis@lucyfaithfull.org.uk | 01372 847160 | 07540 690 315

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that involves the manipulation and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status. The manipulation or ‘grooming’ process involves befriending children, gaining their trust, and often feeding them drugs and alcohol, sometimes over a long period of time, before the abuse begins. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power which limits the victim’s options. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. Although it is true that the victim can be tricked into believing they are in a loving relationship, no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused or exploited. (Barnardo’s, 2012).

2. About The Lucy Faithfull Foundation

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation celebrated 20 years of protecting children from sexual harm in 2012. Named after its founder, Baroness Lucy Faithfull of Wolvercote, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is the only UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to reducing the risk of children being sexually abused. It works with entire families that have been affected by abuse including: adult male and female sexual abusers; young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours; victims of abuse and other family members. Drawing on expert knowledge about child sexual abuse the charity offers a

broad range of services for professionals and members of the public. These include: assessments, intervention and treatment of known offenders, case specific advice and support, training and development courses and workshops, educational programmes for internet offenders and their families, circles of support and accountability, internet safety seminars for schools (teachers, parents and children) and Parents Protect! training for professionals, parents, carers and other adults. www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk. It also runs the Stop it Now! Campaign and Helpline (0808 1000 900) www.stopitnow.org.uk and www.parentsprotect.co.uk

3. About Stop it Now!

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland is a national campaign and Freephone confidential Helpline. It aims to prevent child sexual abuse by increasing public awareness and empowering people to act responsibly to protect children. Stop it Now! believes that it is the responsibility of all adults to take positive action to prevent the sexual abuse of children. Stop it Now! is an alliance of leading children's charities including the NSPCC, Action for Children, Barnardo's, The National Association of People Abused in Childhood and Children England working with the government and child protection agencies, to promote public education and prevent child sexual abuse. The Stop it Now! helpline has been operating since 2002 and aims to prevent child abuse by encouraging abusers and potential abusers to seek help and by giving adults the information they need to protect children safely. The helpline is funded by the Ministry of Justice and The Lucy Faithfull Foundation. www.stopitnow.org.uk