

Exploited young people don't always look and act vulnerable

Look closer

If something doesn't feel right, it may not be. Young people can be exploited anywhere and may be most visible in public spaces.

Help us protect children and young people from exploitation and abuse.
Don't wait. Report it:

- If you are concerned about a child and think it's an emergency, dial **999** or **101** if it's not an emergency.
- On a train text British Transport Police on **61016**.
- If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers** online or call **0800 555 111**.

childrensociety.org.uk/lookcloser
[#LookCloser](https://twitter.com/lookcloser)





The Children's Society



Charity Registration No: 20204 © The Children's Society 2018 8453264/2018

This is **criminal exploitation**, and it is never the young person's fault.

Signs to Look Out For

Whether you're a parent, carer, teacher, or friend, these changes may be cause for concern:

- Sudden new friends, gifts, or money
- Going missing or staying out unusually late
- Being secretive about calls or messages
- Unexplained travel or taxis
- Increased anxiety, fearfulness, or withdrawal

If something feels "off", it's always worth checking in.

What Young People Need to Know

Criminals often use:

- **Promises** ("You'll earn loads of money"). These may look inviting at first, but the reality is, it turns into a world of trouble and hurt.
- **Gifts** (food, clothes, small amounts of cash)
- **Fear** (threats to them or their family)
- **Pressure** ("You owe us" or "It's too late to back out")

But help is always available, and no child has to manage this alone.

Where to Get Support

If you're worried about a young person, you can contact:

- Your school's safeguarding team
- Thames Valley Police via 101 (or 999 in an emergency)
- **Crimestoppers** (anonymously): 0800 555 111
- **Fearless.org** – a safe place for young people to share concerns anonymously

Every young person deserves to feel safe, supported, and free from exploitation. By working together—schools, parents, and communities—we can help stop county lines from harming the most vulnerable.



Anti-Social Behaviour: Respecting Our Community

We continue to see anti-social behaviour taking place in our community, and we are dedicated to reducing this – we share this community as one, and believe we should all be able to enjoy it without being fearful of ASB.

As the weather improves and more young people spend time outdoors, it's important to remember how our actions affect the people around us. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) isn't just "serious trouble" — it can include things many people don't realise cause distress, like shouting late at night, damaging property, littering, or intimidating behaviour in parks or shopping areas.

For students:

- Most people in the community want to enjoy the same spaces you do.
- Small choices — like keeping noise down or treating places with respect — help everyone feel safe and welcome.
- If your friends start doing things that make you uncomfortable, you can step away and speak to a trusted adult.

For parents/carers:

- Young people often don't realise something could be classed as ASB.
- Calm conversations help them understand how their behaviour impacts others.
- If you're concerned about local ASB, speak to school staff or neighbourhood officers — early support makes a big difference.
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Working together helps keep community areas safe and enjoyable for everyone.



Lighter Evenings, Brighter Days, Smarter Choices - Staying Safe in Lighter Evenings: Travel & Meeting Up

As spring arrives and the evenings brighten, young people naturally spend more time outdoors with friends. This is great — independence is a healthy part of growing up — and a few simple habits can help keep everyone safe.

For students:

- Keep your phone charged before heading out.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be home.

- Stick with friends and choose well-lit routes.
- If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and move to a safe place.

For parents/carers:

- Agree on check-in times or sharing locations if appropriate.
- Encourage travel in groups, especially after dark.
- Teach young people what to do if they feel unsafe — including safe places they can go.

Small safety steps make a big difference in building confidence and independence.



Online Safety – Don't Get Caught in the Web!

There's a rising issue where criminals contact young people online, build trust, and then use pressure or threats to gain money or information. This can involve images or messages — but talking about it does not require any graphic detail.

For students:

- No one has the right to pressure you into sharing anything private.
- If someone online suddenly becomes demanding, angry, or threatening, that's a major warning sign.
- If this happens to you, speak to a trusted adult straight away — you will not be in trouble. Support is here to protect you.

For parents/carers:

- Keep communication open about online interactions.
- Reassure your child they can always come to you without fear.
- Know where to seek help — schools, the police, and CEOP can respond quickly and safely.

You are never alone, and there is always support available.



What's On This Spring: March – May 2026
As we head into spring, here are some key cultural and seasonal events taking place over the next few months:

March

- **St David's Day – 1st March**
 A national celebration of Welsh culture and heritage.

- **Holi – 4th March**
The Hindu "festival of colours," marking the arrival of spring.
- **Hola Mohalla – 4th – 6th March**
A Sikh festival involving martial arts displays, poetry, and community gatherings.
- **St Patrick's Day – 17th March**
Celebrating Irish culture with parades and community festivities.
- **Eid al-Fitr – 19th/20th March**
An Islamic celebration marking the end of Ramadan.
- **British Summer Time Begins – 29th March**
Longer evenings return as the clocks go forward.

April

- **Easter Weekend – 3rd – 6th April**
Christian celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- **St George's Day – 23rd April**
England's national day, commonly observed with local events.

May

- **Vesak – May**
One of the most important Buddhist festivals, commemorating the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha.
- **May Day – 4th May 2026**
A traditional spring celebration often marked with fairs and community activities.



Thank you for taking your time to read this newsletter!

Your feedback is really important to us, and helps form our policing priorities. Have Your Say! Meetings are a great forum to feedback your concerns, and also anything positive! You can find a list of upcoming meetings on our TVP Website:

[Didcot](#)
[Wallingford, Berinsfield and Cholsey](#)

If you haven't done so already, you may like to sign up to Thames Valley Alert, so that you can receive free crime alerts and information about where you live. To do this you can either go to www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk or use the following barcode:

