

Thursday 14 March 2019



Events to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation

The Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) and Government departments are joining forces to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as part of a national awareness day on Monday, 18 March.

The National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day kicks off a week of activities to educate people about what CSE is, how to spot it and how they can help.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves them being pressured into performing sexual activities. It is a form of child abuse and can damage a young person's physical, emotional and psychological health.

Awareness-raising activities during the week include:

- States of Jersey Police, Jersey Youth Service, Prison! Me! No! Way!!!, You Matter and Brook delivering school and college assemblies to all year nine students between Monday, 18 and Friday, 22 March
- Youth workers, police officers and representatives from other agencies staffing an information stall in St Helier all day on Monday, 18 March, providing information about what CSE is and answering questions
- an interactive information stall in all of Jersey's secondary schools and colleges
- CSE awareness-raising adverts airing on Channel TV during peak times between Thursday, 14 and Thursday, 21 March
- Youth Projects across the island providing fun interactive workshops on the topic of CSE and sharing videos with young people who attend Youth Projects.

The Youth Service has also developed a resource pack for schools to hold extra sessions and run activities to help young people understand more about the issue and give them the confidence to protect themselves from harm.

Throughout March, there will also be information displays, posters and banners in various locations across the island, including the General Hospital, to reach as many people as possible.

From August 2018 to date, the MASH has received 12 CSE focused enquiries, with two young people subject to the MASE (Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation) process.

The Safeguarding Partnership Board offers a rolling programme of training to a range of professionals and volunteers across the island. This one-day training course aims to highlight the issues around CSE and how to spot the signs.

Children's Minister Senator Sam Mézec said: "It's important that we educate young people and islanders with information like this, even though it is a difficult subject. Children and young people need to be in a position to make good life decisions and keep themselves safe when they encounter challenging situations. I would like to thank all of departments across the Government who are working together to raise awareness and help protect our young people from this type of abuse."

Head of Crime Services at States of Jersey Police and SPB lead for CSE, Detective Superintendent Stewart Gull QPM, said: "This year will be the fifth annual awareness day and since it began in 2014, there's been considerable change in both understanding and guidance on tackling CSE. Working with partner agencies, continuing to raise awareness of CSE and helping people understand it, is critical if we are to protect our young people from this type of abuse. Victims often think they are involved in a consensual relationship, for example, with an older boyfriend, but it is a manipulative rather than loving relationship, and it is still child abuse. Identified cases of CSE remain low here in Jersey, which is why education and awareness raising is so important. We do live in a safe community, but we shouldn't be complacent. We would be naïve to think CSE doesn't exist here in Jersey – it does, which is why we need all sections of our island community to remain vigilant and report any concerns to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)."

Principal Youth Officer, Mark Capern, said: "Through this campaign we aim to reach as many young people as possible with important messages about the risk of CSE and where help and support is available. It is also crucial that we inform parents, teachers and the wider public to increase their understanding of the signs of CSE and the action they can take if they are concerned about any young person."

Any parents who have concerns about suspected Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation can contact the MASH on 519000 or the Public Protection Unit at Police Headquarters via 612612.

Young people can contact the Youth Enquiry Service (YES) at www.yes.je, drop in to the advice centre, which is open 12noon to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, or call 280530.

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre at Dewberry House also provides expert independent and confidential support to victims of sexual abuse and can be reached on 888222.

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Notes to Editors

1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or pressoffice@gov.je