



A Parent's Guide to Keeping Children Safe!



Council of the
ISLES OF SCILLY

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Keeping your children safe from sexual exploitation

How to spot child sexual exploitation

Each year in England thousands of children and young people are raped or sexually abused. This includes children who have been abducted and trafficked, or beaten, threatened or bribed into having sex.

Media coverage of police investigations into the crimes of Jimmy Saville and other prominent figures have brought child sexual abuse and exploitation to public attention.

But while police tackle the problem, child sexual exploitation continues to happen every day. It's important to understand what child sexual exploitation is and to be aware of warning signs that may indicate a child you know is being exploited.

What is child sexual exploitation?

Before explaining child sexual exploitation, it is helpful to understand what is meant by the age of consent (the age at which it is legal to have sex). This is 16 for everyone in the UK. Under the age of 16, any sort of sexual touching is illegal.

It is illegal to take, show or distribute indecent photographs of children, or to pay or arrange for sexual services from children.

It is also against the law if someone in a position of trust (such as a teacher) has sex with a person under 18 that they have responsibility for.



Child sexual exploitation is when people use the power they have over young people to sexually abuse them. Their power may result from a difference in age, gender, intellect, strength, money or other resources.

People often think of child sexual exploitation in terms of serious organised crime, but it also covers abuse in relationships and may involve informal exchanges of sex for something a child wants or needs, such as accommodation, gifts, cigarettes or attention. Some children are “groomed” through “boyfriends” who then force the child or young person into having sex with friends or associates.

Sexual abuse covers penetrative sexual acts, sexual touching, masturbation and the misuse of sexual images – such as on the internet or by mobile phone.

Part of the challenge of tackling child sexual exploitation is that the children and young people involved may not understand that non-consensual sex (sex they haven’t agreed to) or forced sex – including oral sex – is rape.

Which children are affected?

Any child or young person can be a victim of sexual exploitation, but children are believed to be at greater risk of being sexually exploited if they:

- are homeless
- have feelings of low self-esteem
- have had a recent bereavement or loss
- are in care
- are a young carer

The signs of child sexual exploitation may be hard to spot, particularly if a child is being threatened. To make sure that children are protected, it’s worth being aware of the signs that might suggest a child is being sexually exploited.

Signs of grooming and child sexual exploitation

Signs of child sexual exploitation include the child or young person:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- skipping school or being disruptive in class
- appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that can’t be accounted for
- experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection
- having mood swings and changes in temperament
- using drugs and/or alcohol



- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone (“sexting”)
- they may also show signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising and cigarette burns

Preventing abuse

The NSPCC offers advice on how to protect children. It advises:

- helping children to understand their bodies and sex in a way that is appropriate for their age
- developing an open and trusting relationship, so they feel they can talk to you about anything
- explaining the difference between safe secrets (such as a surprise party) and unsafe secrets (things that make them unhappy or uncomfortable)
- teaching children to respect family boundaries, such as privacy in sleeping, dressing and bathing
- teaching them self-respect and how to say no
- supervising internet, mobile and television use

Who is sexually exploiting children?

People of all backgrounds and ethnicities, and of many different ages, are involved in sexually exploiting children. Although most are male, women can also be involved in sexually exploiting children. For instance, women will sometimes be involved through befriending victims.

Some children and young people are sexually exploited by criminal gangs specifically set up for child sexual exploitation.

What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited

If you suspect that a child or young person has been or is being sexually exploited, the NSPCC recommends that you do not confront the alleged abuser. Confronting them may place the child in greater physical danger and may give the abuser time to confuse or threaten them into silence.

Instead, seek professional advice. Discuss your concerns with your local authority’s children’s services (safeguarding team), the police or an independent organisation, such as the NSPCC. They may be able to advise on how to prevent further abuse and how to talk to your child to get an understanding of the situation.

If you know for certain that a child has been or is being sexually exploited, report this directly to the police.



Child Sexual Exploitation on Scilly???

Sexual exploitation on Scilly will not look the same as it did in Rotherham or Rochdale. However young people can be exploited in other ways without realising it.

Young people can often be flattered by older peers, seasonal workers, having parties at staff houses and on the beach. They may be offered alcohol, cigarettes or drugs for sexual favours. They may be flattered and feel mature having older boyfriends/girlfriends. They may be groomed by someone on line and send pictures of themselves.

Young people often feel guilty and ashamed and worry that they may have given the wrong impression to someone that they were willing to have a sexual relationship or were drunk when this happened. They may not think they are being exploited at the time but with hindsight and maturity they may regret or feel bad about something that has happened in the past.

Find out more...

www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns

www.parentsprotect.co.uk/files/pp_exploitation_leaflet.pdf

Domestic abuse and its impact on children

What is domestic abuse?

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Key findings

Children who live with and are aware of violence in the home face many challenges and risks that can last throughout their lives.

There is increased risk of children becoming victims of abuse themselves.

There is significant risk of ever-increasing harm to the child’s physical, emotional and social development. Infants and small children who are exposed to violence in the home experience so much added emotional stress that it can harm the development of their brains and impair cognitive and sensory growth.



There is a strong likelihood that this will become a continuing cycle of violence for the next generation. The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence.

What children need

- Children need a safe and secure home environment
- Children need to know that there are adults who will listen to them, believe them and shelter them
- Children need a sense of routine and normality
- Children need to learn that domestic violence is wrong and learn non-violent methods of resolving conflicts
- Children need adults to speak out and break the silence

What a child said to us about what she thinks of her life with domestically abusive parents...

Hope aged 5 says that mummy and daddy always fight and that she needs to tell them to stop.

Hope said **“I tell them, daddy go back to your flat and mummy stay here with me”**

Hope said that daddy has ripped things up and thrown them around the house.

Hope said that this scared her. Hope also said that daddy has pushed mummy over and this really hurt her.

Hope said that she wishes her daddy would go fishing and never come back because **“he makes me too sad and scared”**.

Support and useful contacts

Twelves Company REACH: 0300 777 4777

CLEAR – Children linked to Experiencing Abusive Relationships 01872 540 366

West Cornwall Women’s Aid 01736 367 539

Freephone 24 hour helpline 0808 2000 247

Children’s Social Care 01720 424 354 Out of Hours 01720 422699

If your children are in immediate danger PLEASE call 999 and ask for Police Emergency Service.

Teenagers and alcohol

With so many drugs available to young people these days, you may wonder, “Why worry about them drinking?”

Alcohol is a drug, as surely as cocaine, heroin and marijuana are.

Young teens and alcohol: The Risks

For young people, alcohol is the drug of choice. In fact, alcohol is used by more young people than tobacco or illicit drugs. Although most children under age 14 have not yet begun to drink, early adolescence is a time of special risk for beginning to experiment with alcohol.

While some parents and guardians may feel relieved that their teen is “only” drinking, it is important to remember that alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. Not only does alcohol affect the mind and body in often unpredictable ways, but teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. As a result:

- Alcohol-related road accidents are a major cause of death among young people. Alcohol use also is linked with teen deaths by drowning, suicide, and homicide.
- Teens who use alcohol are more likely to be sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex than teens who do not drink.
- Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.



- Teens who drink are more likely to have problems with school work and school behaviour.
- The majority of boys and girls who drink tend to binge (5 or more drinks on an occasion for boys and 4 or more on an occasion for girls) when they drink.
- A person who begins drinking as a young teen is four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol.
- The message is clear: Alcohol use is very risky business for young people. And the longer children delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop any problems associated with it. That’s why it is so important to help your child manage their alcohol use.

Do I really need to worry that much?!

Early adolescence is a time of immense and often confusing changes for your son or daughter, which makes it a challenging time for both your youngster and you.

Understanding what it’s like to be a teen can help you stay closer to your child and have more influence on the choices he or she makes – including decisions about using alcohol.

Changes in the Brain

Research shows that as a child matures, his or her brain continues to develop too. In fact, the brain's final, adult wiring may not even be complete until well into the twenties. Furthermore, in some ways, the adolescent brain may be specifically "wired" to help youth navigate adolescence and to take some of the risks necessary to achieve independence from their parents. This may help explain why teens often seek out new and thrilling - sometimes dangerous - situations, including drinking alcohol. It also offers a possible reason for why young teens act so impulsively, often not recognizing that their actions - such as drinking - can lead to serious problems.

Growing up and fitting in

As children approach adolescence, "fitting in" becomes extremely important.. They look to friends and the media for clues on how they measure up, and they begin to question adults' values and rules. It's not surprising that this is the time when parents often experience conflict with their children. Respecting your child's growing independence while still providing support and setting limits is a key challenge during this time.

A young teen who feels that he or she doesn't fit in is more likely to do things to try to please friends, including experimenting with alcohol. During this vulnerable time, it is particularly important to let your children know that in your eyes, they do measure up - and that you care about them deeply.

Tips for parents

- Be a good role model. Surprisingly, parents' drinking habits actually have a greater impact on their child's use of alcohol than a child's friends. If you display a healthy attitude towards alcohol, it's more likely your child will too.
- Teach your child the dangers of alcohol from an early age. Talk about peer pressure and why people drink – the good and bad reasons.
- Think about why your child is drinking. Could family or school problems, low self esteem or bullying be an issue?
- If your child comes home drunk, or has begun to drink to excess, don't choose that moment to discuss drinking. Concentrate on getting them safely to bed and wait until the next day.
- Find a time when you are both relaxed – perhaps while driving or eating a meal, and chat honestly about drinking – the effects and dangers. Talk about peer pressure and encourage them to be open with you about their behaviour.
- Teach your child about sensible drinking – pacing drinks, alternating alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks and always eating a decent meal before drinking.
- Drinking alcohol is closely linked to unprotected and early sex in young people. Make sure your child understands how alcohol impairs people's judgment and talk about how it would feel to regret something the next day.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of drink driving/boating and plan alternative ways of getting home before they leave the house.
- Make sure your child knows that no matter how angry or disappointed you may be, you are always there for them – and they can share their concerns with you or call if someone gets hurt.

Are you worried your child might be using drugs?

Why do young people use drugs?

Although many kids are likely to be offered drugs, most of them still refuse. For those that choose to take drugs, there can be several reasons:

Curiosity - Of course some will choose to ignore the warnings. They may do this out of simple curiosity or as part of a desire to take risks.

Frustration - Sometimes, the decision to experiment with drugs might stem from frustration over personal or family problems.

Environment - Young people's experience of drugs can vary a lot depending on where they live. In some urban areas, drug misuse is common; but drugs are also available in rural and isolated areas like Scilly.

What's the best way to talk to my kids about drugs?

You don't have to be an expert to talk to your kids about drugs. And there's no harm in admitting that you know less than they do. Try showing an interest in the subject to get an open discussion going.

Get Involved

If the opportunity comes along, helping your kids with research for a drugs project at school is a great way for both of you to learn the facts and to discuss them together. It's also a chance to involve younger or older members of the family in the discussion.

Stick to the Facts

Plain facts speak for themselves and making too much of the dangers can make drugs seem more glamorous.

All drugs are potentially harmful and kids need to be aware of this, so discussing the facts can help dispel some of the myths and misunderstandings.

What if I'm worried my child is using drugs?

Try not to jump to conclusions

Your son or daughter may not show obvious signs of having taken drugs, so you can't always tell for sure. **The best thing you can do is find out the facts.** You will need to be able to talk, listen and understand.

If you think your son or daughter is under the influence of drugs, wait until they recover before trying to talk.

Conversation do's and don'ts:

- Don't force the issue. Some of the best conversations come out of the blue - like when you're clearing up after a meal, or watching TV.
- Do listen with an open mind.
- Do say what you believe.
- Do show you care.
- Don't preach.
- Don't use scare tactics



What if I've found something suspicious?

If you're worried, or you find drugs or any equipment to do with drugs, ask for help. You shouldn't feel you have to deal with this on your own.

Here are some of the warning signs to look for:

Physical and health signs of drug abuse

- Eyes that are bloodshot or pupils that are smaller or larger than normal.
- Frequent nosebleeds could be related to snorted drugs (meth or cocaine).
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or weight gain.
- Seizures without a history of epilepsy.
- Deterioration in personal grooming or physical appearance.
- Impaired coordination, injuries/accidents/bruises that they won't or can't tell you about- they don't know how they got hurt.
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing.
- Shakes, tremors, incoherent or slurred speech, impaired or unstable coordination.

Behavioural signs of alcohol or drug abuse

- Missing school, getting in trouble at school.
- Drop in attendance and performance at work - loss of interest in extracurricular activities, hobbies, sports or exercise - decreased motivation.
- Complaints from co-workers, supervisors, teachers or classmates.
- Missing money, valuables, prescription or non-prescription drugs, borrowing and stealing money.
- Acting isolated, silent, withdrawn, engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviours.
- Clashes with family values and beliefs.
- Preoccupation with alcohol and drug-related lifestyle in music, clothing and posters.
- Demanding more privacy, locking doors and avoiding eye contact.
- Sudden change in relationships, friends, favourite hangouts, and hobbies.
- Frequently getting into trouble (arguments, fights, accidents, illegal activities).
- Using incense, perfume, air freshener to hide smell of smoke or drugs.
- Using eye drops to mask bloodshot eyes and dilated pupils.



Children affected by parents' drinking

Psychological warning signs of alcohol or drug abuse

- Unexplained, confusing change in personality and/or attitude.
- Sudden mood changes, irritability, angry outbursts or laughing at nothing.
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity or agitation.
- Lack of motivation; inability to focus, appears lethargic or "spaced out."
- Appears fearful, withdrawn, anxious, or paranoid, with no apparent reason.

Useful numbers

www.talktofrank.com

YZUP - www.wchl.org.uk/getproject - 01872 300816

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/family-health/Pages/worried-about-your-teenager.aspx

When drinking is a problem...

Anthony is already in bed when he hears the front door slam. He covers his head with his pillow to drown out the predictable sounds of his parents arguing. Anthony is all too aware that his father has been drinking again and his mother is angry.

Many teens like Anthony live with a parent who is dependent on alcohol, a person who is physically and emotionally addicted to alcohol. Alcohol dependency has been around for centuries, yet no one has discovered an easy way to prevent or stop it. It continues to cause anguish not only for the person who drinks, but for everyone who is involved with that person.

Why Won't My Parent Stop Drinking?

Denial can play a big role in an alcohol dependent person's life. A person in denial is one who refuses to believe the truth about a situation. A problem drinker may blame another person for the drinking because it is easier than taking responsibility for it. Some alcohol dependent parents make their kids feel bad by saying things like, "You're driving me crazy!" or "I can't take this anymore."

An alcohol dependent parent may become enraged at the slightest suggestion that drinking is a problem. Those who acknowledge their drinking may show their denial by saying, "I can stop anytime I want to," "Everyone drinks to unwind sometimes," or "My drinking is not a problem."



Do you know what your child thinks about your drinking?

More than 100 children a week are contacting the ChildLine helpline with worries about their parents' drinking or drug use.

Lots of parents might be horrified to learn of the number of young people seeking help as a result of parental alcoholism, but the news should serve as a timely reminder that you don't have to be an alcoholic to have a direct impact on your children.

“Regularly drinking to excess in front of children will only normalise alcohol misuse but it's important this pattern within the family unit is broken to ensure young people grow up to have a healthy relationship with alcohol.”

How do children feel about their parents drinking?

- I feel too embarrassed to take friends home
- I feel confused when my mum or dad change when they drink
- I feel nobody really cares what happens to me
- I feel guilty and don't know why
- I feel different from other children
- I keep secrets about problems in my family
- I tell lies to cover up for their drinking
- I worry that mum or dad will die and I will be left alone
- They care more about alcohol than they do about me.
- I can't talk to you when your drunk
- Why don't you keep your promises not to drink?

Useful resources...

National Association for Children of Alcoholics
helpline@Nacoa.org.uk - 0800 358 3456

Addaction - www.addaction.org - 0333 2000 325

Drinkaware - www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-support-services

Home alone

At what age can I leave my child home alone?

There's no legally set age at which it's ok to leave your child at home alone. It depends on whether they are mature enough to cope in an emergency and feel happy about being left alone. Children mature at different ages and every child is different. However, it is an offence to leave your child at home alone if it places them at risk and parents can be prosecuted for neglect.

Remember...

- Never leave your baby or young child home alone, not even for a few minutes, regardless of whether they are sleeping or not.
- If your child is under the age of 12, they may not be mature enough to cope with an emergency. They should not be left alone for more than a very short time.
- Even when leaving older children alone, make sure they are happy about the arrangement and they know who to contact in an emergency.
- If your child is under the age of 16 they should not be left alone overnight.
- Teach your child about what to do if there is ever a problem.



How to choose a babysitter

- Check the potential babysitter's age – although there are no laws about the age of babysitters you should, where possible, choose someone over 16. You can use a younger person, but if harm came to your child when in their care you may be held responsible.
- Follow your instincts – If you have any doubts about a babysitter or other carer don't use them. Ask other people whose children they have cared for.
- Talk to your child – if they seem unhappy about a particular babysitter find out why and use someone else.
- If your child ever tells you that they have been hurt or harmed by their babysitter tell Children's Social Care, NSPCC or the police.

Useful Telephone numbers

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - 0121 248 2000

NSPCC - 0800 800 5000

Keeping your children safe online

Advice if your child is under 5 years old

- Start setting some boundaries, even at this early age ... it's never too early to do things like setting limits for the amount of time they can spend on the computer.
- Make sure devices like your mobile, tablet or laptop are out of reach. Set up passwords/PINs and make sure you keep these details to yourself.
- On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age, and enabling access to only appropriate content.
- Buy or download parental control software, switch it on and keep it updated. There are many versions on the market, which work in different ways and available at a range of prices, starting at free.
- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Buy or download only apps, games, online TV and films which have age ratings, which you should check before allowing your child to play with or watch them.
- Share your technology rules with grandparents, babysitters and your child's friends' parents so that they know what to do when looking after your child.

“Innocently letting your child play with your mobile or tablet while you're enjoying a latte may result in them accessing inappropriate content or revealing personal information.”

- When using public WiFi – for example in cafés or hotels – remember that it might not include parental controls. Innocently letting your child play with your mobile or tablet while you're enjoying a latte may result in them accessing inappropriate content or revealing personal information.
- If you have a family computer or tablet, set the homepage to an appropriate website such as Cbeebies.

Advice if your child is age 6-9

On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age, and enabling access to only appropriate content.

- Buy or download parental control software, switch it on and keep it updated. There are many versions on the market, which work in different ways and available at a range of prices, starting at free.
- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Agree a list of websites your child is allowed to visit and the kind of personal information they shouldn't reveal about themselves online, such as the name of their school or their home address.

- Set time limits for activities such as using the internet and games consoles.
- Make sure your child is accessing only age-appropriate content by checking out the age ratings on games, online TV, films and apps.
- Discuss with your older children what they should or shouldn't be showing their younger siblings on the internet, mobile devices, games consoles and other devices.
- Discuss with other parents subjects such as what age to buy children devices that connect to the internet.
- Don't be pressured by your child into letting them use certain technologies or view certain online content, if you don't think they are old enough or mature enough... no matter how much they pester you or what their friends' parents allow.

Advice if your child is aged 10 to 12

Set some boundaries for your child before they get their first 'connected device' (mobile, tablet, laptop or games console). Once they have it, it can be more difficult to change the way they use it or the settings.

- Tell your child that it's very important to keep phones and other devices secure and well hidden when they're not at home, to minimise the risk of theft or loss.
- Discuss with your child what is safe and appropriate to post and share online. Written comments, photos and videos all form part of their 'digital footprint' and could be seen by anyone and available on the internet forever, even if it is subsequently deleted.

- Talk to your child about the kind of content they see online. They might be looking for information about their changing bodies and exploring relationships. They also need to understand the importance of not sending other people - whoever they are - pictures of themselves naked.
- Remember that services like Facebook and YouTube have a minimum age limit of 13 for a reason. Don't bow to pressure, talk to other parents and their school to make sure everyone is in agreement.
- Explain to your child that being online doesn't give them anonymity or protection, and that they shouldn't do anything online that they wouldn't do face-to-face.

Do you really know everybody on your 'friends' list? Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings? Can you show me how? Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them? Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online? Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say? Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were? Has anyone at your school, or anyone else you know, taken naked or sexy photos and sent them to other people, or received photos like that?



Advice if your child is aged 13 or over

It's never too late to reinforce boundaries... your child may think they are adult enough, but they definitely still need your wisdom and guidance.

- You may be starting to think your child knows more about using technology than you do, and you may be right. Make it your business to keep up to date and discuss what you know with your child.
- Talk frankly to your child about how they explore issues related to the health, wellbeing, body image and sexuality of themselves and others online. They may be discovering inaccurate or dangerous information on online at what is a vulnerable time in their lives.
- Review the settings on parental controls in line with your child's age and maturity and adjust them if appropriate. They may ask you to trust them sufficiently to turn them off completely, but think carefully before you do and agree in advance what is acceptable online behaviour.
- Also talk frankly to your child about how they behave towards others, particularly with regard to what they post online. Be willing to have frank conversations about bullying, and posting hurtful, misleading or untrue comments. Make them aware of the dangers of behaviours like sexting and inappropriate use of webcams.
- Give your child control of their own budget for activities like downloading apps and music, but agree boundaries beforehand so that they manage their money responsibly. Don't give them access to your payment card or other financial details.
- Be clear in your own mind on issues such as copyrighted material and plagiarism so that you can explain to your child what is legal and what isn't.

- If your child has the technological know-how – and with sufficient influence from others – they could be vulnerable to experimenting with accessing confidential information from the websites of other people or companies. Hacking amongst this age group is very rare, but it does exist. Explain the dangers and consequences.

Here are some questions you could discuss with your children, now that they are older:

- Do you really know everybody on your 'friends' list?
- Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings? Can you show me how?
- Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them?
- Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online?
- Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say? Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were?
- Has anyone at your school, or anyone else you know, taken naked or sexy photos and sent them to other people, or received photos like that?

Useful advice...

<https://ceop.police.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/clickceop>

www.stopitnow.org.uk/

Keeping your children safe on bikes

Most children love to cycle, and it's a great way for them to keep fit and healthy. It takes a while to learn, but once they've got a bike many children will want to push the boundaries, cycling further and faster. With a few safety tips, you can help them learn to cycle responsibly.

Safety reminders - keeping your children safe on their bikes

Babies, toddlers and very young children.

These little ones aren't ready to cycle yet, although some parents like to take their children out on bikes with them.

Baby cycle seats. There are a number of cycle seats you can buy for babies and young children. If you're buying a seat for your baby, it should comply with the safety standard BS EN 14344:2004. If you get them a helmet too they'll be protected even if you do have an accident.

Road safety. If you're an experienced cyclist you'll probably know the roads well. It goes without saying that if you cycle carefully and make sure you wear reflective clothing, your baby or toddler will be much safer in their cycle seat. If you ride in poor light make sure you have good bright working lights and check them regularly.

Practice. Having the extra weight on your bike can change the way you cycle. You might want to have a practice on quiet roads or off the road before heading out. It can also be a good way to get your child used to the helmet and child seat.



First bike

Children will have started riding a tricycle or even a bicycle, usually with stabilisers. They will get better balance, but can still fall off very easily!

Helmets are a must for everyone, including toddlers in child cycle seats. A helmet can prevent serious head injuries if your child falls off a bike. It's also a good idea for them to see adults setting a good example, so if you wear a helmet you can help them see how 'cool' helmets are!

Off-road. It can be fun to explore your local area and find some safe places for your child to practice cycling. Local paths, and gardens can all give your child a safe place to ride until they're old enough to cycle on the road.

Exploring by bike

Children will probably try to push the boundaries a bit - they want to ride further and faster! But with the right equipment and safety tips they can have great fun on their bikes while staying safe.

Helmets! They'll probably be tired of hearing this by now, but they need to put their helmet on every time they go out. Some children might still need help doing up the straps and making sure the helmet is secure. It's not worth the headache if they have an accident without one!

Remember though a helmet doesn't make you invincible! You still need to ride safely.

Cycling confidence

Many children will want to cycle to and from school, or go out on their bike with friends. It's OK for them to ride on the road – but they should be properly trained to cope with traffic – and there's lots you can do to help prepare them for the risks.

Most schools now offer cycle training for children. If you can encourage them to do the training, they'll build their confidence and be able to deal with the road risks more easily.

A working bike is a safe bike! Doing tyre checks, brake checks, and looking for damage are all part of owning a bike. If you do these checks with your child you can teach them how to recognise problems and (if you know how!) help fix them.

It might not always be stylish, but high-visibility clothing saves lives – fluorescent for daytime and reflective for after dark. Even during the daytime, bright jackets are easier to spot than dull ones. Make sure drivers can always see your child by making them stand out.

It's easy to forget that cyclists can be dangerous too. Help your child learn about the risks of the road by talking to them about their responsibility. Not riding on pavements and checking for pedestrians and other cyclists is a crucial part of their learning to ride.



Safety on the water

Boating and alcohol can be an even more dangerous combination than drinking and driving.

When drinking in charge of a boat, the dangers are never more so obvious than when driving speed boats, RIBs or other fast moving boats.

Boating while intoxicated can be deadly even though it might not be illegal.

Mixing drinking with boating or swimming can be fatal. Two out of every five teens who drown have been drinking.

While you might expect collisions to be the leading cause of alcohol related boating fatalities, it isn't so. Falling overboard, capsized boats, missteps at quayside, and entering or exiting vessels are a much greater threat.

Alcohol can and does cause serious accidents on the water. We estimate that over 20% of the boating deaths that occur each year in and around the UK are alcohol related. To summarise therefore, please take 'on board' this advice;

- You need to be able to concentrate without distraction of alcohol.
- Never let anyone drive your boat who has been drinking, they endanger all
- Use your common sense, be considerate to the safety of others (not to mention yourself)

Effects of Alcohol on the Water

The effects of alcohol are frequently compounded on the water. Bright sun, wind, adverse weather, noise, spray and the constant motion of the waves add to the expected effects of alcohol on balance, vision, coordination and judgment. Making matters even more dangerous is a lack of brakes, speed limits, traffic control points and good night time illumination.

Situations calling for decisive action such as a person overboard, water obstacles or oncoming vessels can quickly become deadly, especially at night. Passengers can easily fall overboard. An intoxicated person, even an excellent swimmer might swim downward and be unable to find the surface.

Ten reasons to wear a life jacket.

1. **Life jackets save lives**
2. **Weather doesn't matter**
3. **I'm a good swimmer is a common excuse...**

... The reality is that no matter how good you are at swimming when faced with fear your mind may react differently than you think it would, causing you to have high levels of anxiety and less ability to swim well. Studies have shown 2/3rds of drownings were people who were considered good swimmers, but didn't wear anything to protect them in the water.

4. **Life jackets keep you warm** - Many life jackets designed today are made to keep your body temperature warm while out in the water.

5. **Life jackets aren't just for kids** - About one in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger. That leaves the other 4 to be older!
6. **Drinking and boating don't mix** - Wearing the life jacket can help you stay afloat when you aren't all there!
7. **They can turn you around the right way** - Let's say you get knocked out unconscious and your face is in the water. This would be serious bad news, however there are jackets made that turn you over to a face-up position when in the water. Amazing!
8. **Be an example for others** - People like to be a part of the group and if more people are wearing their life jackets the more lives will be safer. Be the person to start the safe trend in your crowd.
9. **Accidents happen close to land** - It doesn't matter if you are on a quay, boat, or just swimming, accidents happen in all levels of water. It's better to be prepared for anything if you are around water.
10. **Make sure it fits before you go out** - Jackets that are too big or too small will cause the life jacket not to work.



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