

TREES Newsletter

Together Reducing & Ending Exploitation in Shropshire

Issue 17 • Spring 2025



QUICK LINKS



Welcome to the Spring edition of the TREES Newsletter 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the TREES Newsletter. So much for April showers—hope you've all appreciated the sunshine as much as we have the last couple months.

There has been some significant change in the last quarter— CE/CSE prevention services previously offered by our partners at the Children's Society (CLIMB & Branch) are now commissioned by Catch 22 and their STEPS programme. Further information can be found further in the newsletter.

Referrals have increased on the whole into the Local Authority—however a review has identified that overall in the last 3 years, referrals have increased 42% into triage.

This will be due to a combination of better awareness of the pathway, wider understanding of exploitation (in particular online harm) and re-referrals and reviews being better managed. However, we remain ever vigilant to any emerging trends and will update as soon as we know.

We've got a new, clearer, central email for referrals— childexploitation@shropshire.gov.uk. Please make sure you use this one (the tree management team in the LA will be thankful...)

Look out for (another—sorry!) review of the CE Risk Assessment— this has been adapted to include Catch 22, but also some new partners that have joined the venture of using the assessment as a single referral form for support. This enables a better service for young people and saves professional time.

TREES WEBSITE



Current patterns and emerging themes

Update from Clare Jervis, CE & Missing Operational Lead

During this quarter—total referrals received are 37% female and 63% male. Referrals have been exceptional during this period—for February, a shorter month, we received almost double what we normally have in one month! 52% of these referrals were young people who were unknown to the TREES team.

Worryingly - the concerning rise in knife related incidents noted previously continue to be a concern, with preparations underway for further knife amnesty bins in Harlescott/Sundorne/Grange area as well as Market Drayton. Steer Clear are not seeing the concerns reflected in referrals - so please use their service, further information is available later in the newsletter.

We continue to see increased concerns around children who are NEET (Not in education, training or employment) as well as those who are home-educated. Indicators could also include consistent absences, being late or truancy, disengagement and refusal. Please see the strategies suggested in the previous Newsletter.

There has been a rise in the number of referrals received of children with diagnosed disabilities this quarter (on average it's 30% of the referrals we get). Snapchat, the chat app most popular amongst young people, is consistently noted in CE Risk Assessments as problematic, or indeed a tool to groom children by adults.

Increasingly, the referrals we get are increasingly complex—with children having diverse needs requiring a multi-agency response. Peer on peer exploitation is now very common, as well as young people becoming involved in criminality, ASB and CE all together.

There is NEW extensive training via Joint Training/Leap into Learning, provided by Shropshire Council's training team, TREES and Early Help which is now available to professionals. Modules include Online Safety, the CE Pathway, Drug & Alcohol Use in young people.

Hot Spots of concern

Recent referrals and intel have identified the following areas of concern. Disruption tactics will be considered as part of regular multi-agency meetings, but if you hear about or witness anything concerning in these areas, please be alert and report any concerns as intel (please see [Page 3](#) for more information on how to do this)

Shrewsbury

Sundorne/Grange/Harlescott, Meole Brace, Bayston Hill, (Quarry—although quiet at the moment, this always spikes during the summer), Ditherington, Monkmoor

Other areas

Crewe, Birch meadow Park in Broseley. Telford—Lightmoor. Wem, Jubilee Park, Whitchurch. Fairfield's Estate, Nr Rugby Club—Market Drayton. Ellesmere, Cae Glas Park—Oswestry, Whittington





There may be behaviour that you witness in communities that cause you to be concerned that unknown children are being exploited, such as activity around associates, addresses or locations.

If you have information about any anti-social or criminal activity or behaviour (even where you do not know who is at risk or of concern) which indicates that child exploitation may be occurring, please ensure you pass this information to West Mercia Police as soon as possible to enable them to prevent and detect crime (s115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998). Please provide names if you are aware of them, and as much detail as possible—in particular children and young people who may already be known to children’s services or the police.

The below methods can also be used for reporting concerns:

- Where you think there is an immediate risk to a person or you witness a crime taking place, phone **999** (or dial 55 if you are unable to talk).
- Report under the **“Tell Us About” section on the West Mercia Police website** or phone **101**.
- Anonymously to Crimestoppers online at **<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>** or by calling **0800 555111**.
- Children, their families and/or other members of the community may be worried about sharing information about crime with the police, but you can encourage them to do so anonymously by signposting them to Crimestoppers, or Fearless for young people - **www.fearless.org**
- If you are a professional, please email the information directly to the Shropshire CE Team at: **CETeamShropshire@westmercia.police.uk** (please note that this inbox is only monitored on weekdays between 8am – 4pm) or call the team on 01743 237413.

Please note: Where you have child specific information which suggests that a child is at risk of or experiencing harm as a result of exploitation, you must follow the Child Exploitation Pathway and pass information related to criminal activity or behaviour posing a risk to West Mercia Police.

What is classed as intelligence?

Both information and intelligence are welcome, here is a useful summary to describe each:

Information: *Something that is learned or provided about something or someone. Information is defined as knowledge gained through experience or study; facts or knowledge provided or learned; knowledge of specific and timely events or situations, news. Information can relate to all forms of processed data and can include intelligence.*

Intelligence: *The analytics (interpretation of meaningful patterns) of information gathered from many sources. This is information that has been compiled, analysed, and/or disseminated to anticipate, prevent, or monitor criminal activity. It is information that has been subject to a defined evaluation and risk assessment process in order to assist with police decision making. This is to supply robust, verifiable information which can be evaluated, assessed for risk and then acted upon.*



When completing a Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool and you identify that a child has engaged in sexual intercourse, or sexual activity, with another child / peer please ensure that this is reported to police via 101 or online reporting.

It is an offence to have sex when you are under the age of 16, regardless of whether this is with consent.

The age of consent to engage in any form of sexual activity is 16 years.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 creates offences in relation to rape and sexual activity with children under 13 and children under 16.

Please ensure that you report these matters to police and provide the reference number within your risk assessment. Police and CPS do not seek to prosecute young people when they are or a similar age / no aggravating factors, however, the incidents still need to be recorded and the young people visited to explore the circumstances.

- DS Jonathon Statham, Child Exploitation Team

NEW—TREES Central Email

childexploitation@shropshire.gov.uk



Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership update



Please note that the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures moved to a new host site on 3rd March 2025.

All safeguarding procedures, including copies of the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment, can be found at the following link:

<https://westmids-shropshire.trixonline.co.uk/>

The High Sheriff of Shropshire

Empowering Marginalised Youth

Youth Awareness Day

Thursday October 16th 2025

Available to all schools throughout
Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

A request from Jane Trowbridge, High Sheriff of Shropshire:
Please help me in my Youth Led initiative to raise money for the
young, *by the young*.

During my Shrieval year I am focusing on “**Empowering
Marginalised Youth**” and I am asking the youth of the County to
stand up and support their generation. Please support them, and
me—in this journey.

We already have support from a significant number of schools,
colleges, Youth Clubs and Cadets from across Shropshire, Telford
and Wrekin. Do not miss out and get in touch to find out more at:

shropshire@highsheriffs.com





Sometimes
young people
feel they have
no option
but to carry a
weapon
if they live somewhere
they don't feel

safe

Steer Clear

Steer Clear is an early intervention programme which supports young people aged 10-17 living in West Mercia who are on the periphery of becoming involved in knife crime. We provide early intervention through group work and 121 intensive support.

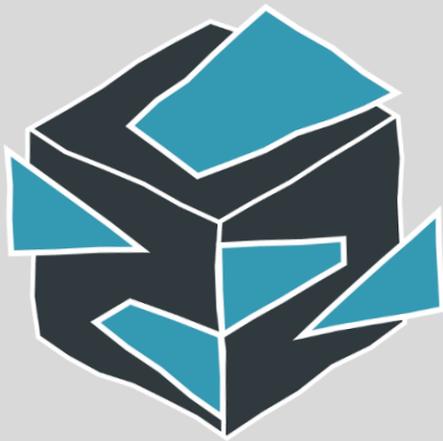
We also offer parent workshops to raise awareness about the risks and consequences of knife crime, supporting parents to be able to hold trauma-informed/child-centred conversations about knife crime with their families. We explore the teenage brain, the importance of diversionary activities and discuss the use of language to hold these conversations about knife crime.

We offer group sessions for young people and their carers, as well as targeted one-to-one support for young people. We help improve their understanding of knife crime and work with schools, police, family services, activity providers, and others to build communities where every child can be hopeful about their future.

Refer now

The service is free of charge, and anyone can make a referral. If you're concerned about a young person, get in touch today. You could help keep them safe from harm – today and tomorrow.

For more information or to make a referral, contact us at steer.clear@childrenssociety.org.uk



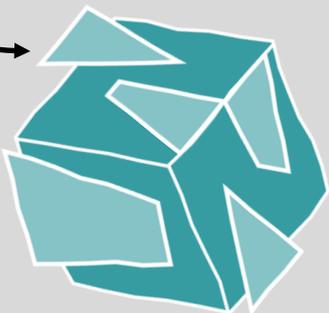
CATCH22 WEST MERCIA STEPS

Click for
Website

Supporting children aged 8-18 and young people up to the age of 24 with additional needs, who are impacted by Child Criminal Exploitation or Child Sexual Exploitation.

- 1:1 early intervention support for CYP at risk of CCE
- 1:1 support for CYP at risk of, currently experiencing, or have experienced CSE
- Awareness and prevention for CCE and CSE in the form of group training and workshops

Click to refer for Young
Person 1:1 Support



Click to refer for professional
awareness and prevention





Assessment

- ✓ Initial screening assessments for children presenting with sexualised behaviours
- ✓ AIM3 and Aim Under 12's Assessments
- ✓ Capacity to protect Assessments

Therapeutic Interventions

- ✓ Individualised education and therapeutic Intervention packages including:
- ✓ Inappropriate/ Problematic and Harmful Sexualised Behaviours
- ✓ Children who experienced sexual harm and displayed sexualised behaviours (Dual experience)
- ✓ Child on child abuse
- ✓ Sibling sexual abuse
- ✓ Child sexual abuse
- ✓ Therapeutic interventions

Training and Education

- ✓ A range of accredited/ non accredited courses/ workshops / eLearning products for professionals, children and young people and organisations.
- ✓ Responding to a Disclosure of sexual violence.
- ✓ Sexualised behaviours and child on child abuse in schools
- ✓ Harmful sexualised behaviours
- ✓ Sibling sexual abuse
- ✓ Preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace
- ✓ Bespoke packages available on request

Consultancy

- ✓ Advice, Guidance and consultation for professionals and organisation
- ✓ Advice and guidance for professional working with children/ families affected by sexual harm.
- ✓ Consultation for organisation to embed legislations/ guidance around sexual violence and harassment

For further information, advice or to make a referral please:
Call - 01905 677444

Email Enquiries@purpleleaf.org.uk or hannah.cooper@wmrasc.org.uk

Website: <https://www.wmrasc.org.uk>

Referrals: <https://www.dpmscloud.com/external/referralformorgwestmerciarc>

Location Tracking for Families: Practical Tools and Advice for Parents

By Stafford Mason, Early Help Exploitation Lead

When and How to Start Using Location Sharing

Introducing location tracking works best when it's just part of the normal conversation you have when your child first gets a phone. Making it an expected feature of owning a phone helps it feel routine rather than intrusive.

Here are some tips:

- **Be transparent:** Talk about why it's helpful—for peace of mind, safety, coordinating pickups, etc.
- **Start early:** As soon as your child gets a phone, introduce location sharing as a standard family safety tool.
- **Be transparent:** Talk about why it's helpful—for peace of mind, safety, coordinating pickups, etc.
- **Avoid sanctions:** Try not to use tracking as a punishment, as it can lead to resistance or attempts to avoid being tracked.
- **Keep checking in:** Revisit how it's going, especially as your child gets older. Make it part of wider conversations about trust, independence and privacy.

Consent and Privacy

Location sharing relies on consent. All of the apps listed here require mutual agreement between the child and the parent or guardian. Consent should be:

- ✓ **Ongoing:** Regularly reviewed and agreed upon
- ✓ **Respectful:** Children should know when and how their location is being shared
- ✓ **Age-appropriate:** What works for a 10-year-old might feel restrictive to a 16-year-old, so it's about adjusting as they grow

Being open about how these tools are used and building them into your family's everyday routines helps build a sense of shared responsibility and trust.

Geofencing

Geofencing is a feature that lets you set up virtual boundaries around specific locations, such as your home, your child's school, or a friend's house. When your child's device enters or exits one of these set zones, you receive an alert. It's a useful tool for keeping tabs on daily routines and ensuring safe arrivals and departures.

Below is a practical guide to the most accessible and useful location tracking options available. Most of these are free or offer free versions, cross-platform, and easy to use.

Google Maps (Good for Cross-Platform Android and Apple)

Google Maps allows you to share your real-time location continuously with trusted contacts. It works just as well on iPhone as it does on Android, making it a practical option for families using different devices.

Features:

- Share your location for a set period or indefinitely ("Until you turn it off")
- View live locations within the Maps app
- Works across Android and iOS devices
- Geofencing: Not available
- Cost: Free
- Link to [Google Maps Location Sharing Guide](#)



Life360 (Great for Detailed Reporting and Alerts)

Life360 is a purpose-built family tracking app, widely used and trusted. While there is a free version, many of its best features require a subscription.

Features:

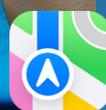
- Real-time location tracking
- Driving safety alerts and crash detection
- Geofencing and movement history
- Geofencing: Yes, free version allows up to 2 places
- Movement history: Not available in free version
- Cost: Free version with basic tracking and limited geofencing, paid tiers from £6.99/month (Silver) to £19.99/month (Platinum)
- Link to [Life360](#)

Google Family Link (Best for Younger Children)

Google Family Link gives parents more control over their child's device usage and also includes live location sharing.

Features:

- Location tracking via the Family Link app
- Screen time limits, app management, and content filters
- Ideal for younger users with Google accounts
- Geofencing: Yes, free
- Cost: Free
- Link to [Google Family Link](#)



Find My (Apple ios app) (For Apple only)

If your family uses iPhones or other Apple devices, the built-in Find My app is a simple and reliable way to track locations.

Features:

- Real-time location sharing with any contact
- Geofencing (e.g. alerts when someone leaves school or gets home)
- Lost device tracking
- Geofencing: Yes, free
- Cost: Free (built-in on Apple devices)
- Link: [Apple Support – Share Your Location](#)

Snapchat Family Center (A Helpful Add-on for Teen Users)

While not a dedicated tracking app, Snapchat's Family Center is a useful feature if your teen already uses the app.

Features:

- Request short-term location sharing (15 min to 8 hours)
- Get alerts when they enter/leave key locations
- See who they've been talking to (but not message content)
- Geofencing: Yes, free
- Cost: Free
- Setup Help: A video walkthrough is available on the [Snapchat Family Center page](#)



Findmykids (Tailored for Child Safety)

This app is designed with child safety in mind. It can be used with smartphones or GPS-enabled watches.

Features:

- Real-time location
- Geofencing
- Remote sound signal and audio listening
- Battery level monitoring
- Geofencing: Yes, premium only
- Movement history: Premium only
- Cost: Free basic plan, premium starts around £2.99/month
- Link: [Findmykids](#)

Further Support and Advice

If you'd like to explore more about monitoring apps and GPS tracking advice, these UK-based organisations provide helpful, trusted guidance:

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) – A clear guide for parents on monitoring apps and how to use them responsibly.

[Action for Children](#) – Advice on discussing tracking apps with children and maintaining trust.

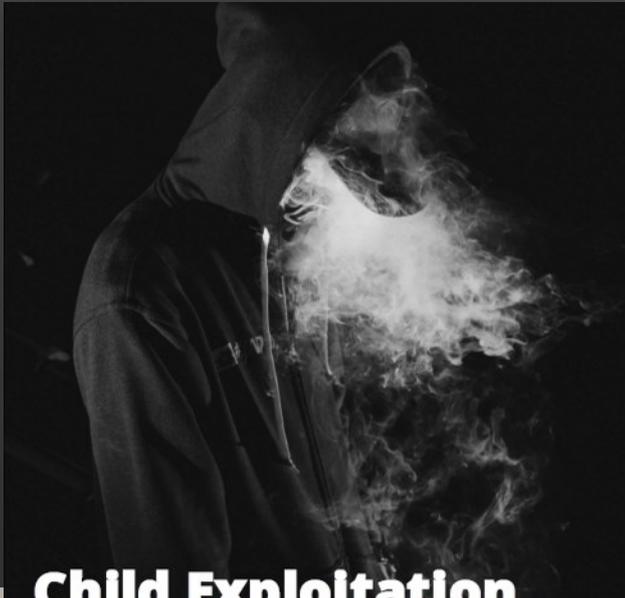
[NSPCC – Parental Controls](#) – Tips on device and app safety, including guidance for parents on setting up parental controls.

[CEOP \(Child Exploitation and Online Protection\)](#) – While not app-specific, CEOP provides essential online safety information, particularly around exploitation risks.

These resources offer trusted, practical insight from established organisations. If you're thinking about how best to introduce tracking apps, or want to explore broader online safety support, they're a good place to start.

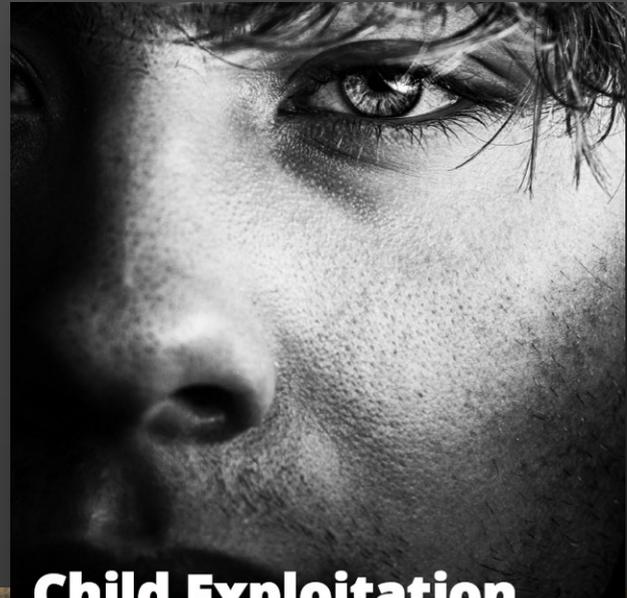
Exploitation Leaflets

TREES have leaflets for anyone affected by exploitation—please visit ;
[How can we support children who might be being exploited? | Shropshire Council](#)



Child Exploitation in Shropshire

How to recognise signs in your local community
and report concerns



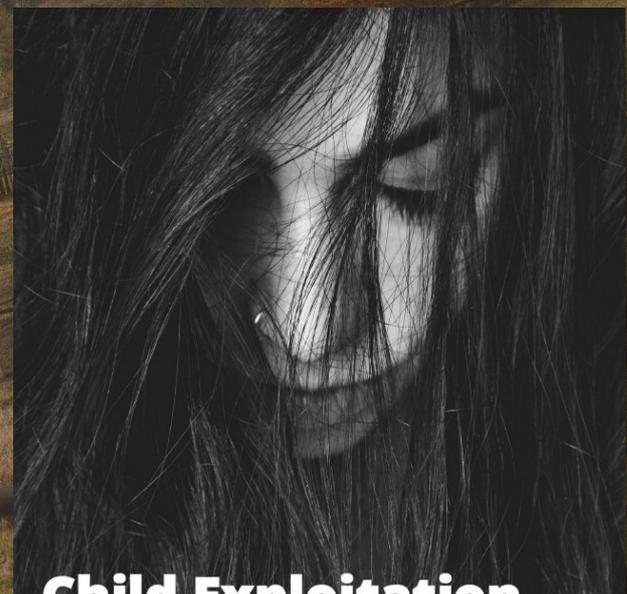
Child Exploitation in Shropshire

How to recognise if you are being targeted



Child Exploitation in Shropshire

A guide for care providers



Child Exploitation in Shropshire

How to recognise if your child is being exploited, and
what you can do to reduce the risks



IMPORTANT FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS: Raising Awareness of Child Employment

The Law governing child employment exists to ensure that children are protected and not exploited if they have a part-time job while still of compulsory school age.

By law - no child under the age of 13 is allowed to be employed.

Young people aged between 13 and 16 require a work permit to work on a part-time basis and/or during the school holidays. Additionally, the legislation contains limits on working hours and provides restrictions on the types of employment children can undertake.

Children are considered to be employed if they assist in a business which operates for profit, if they are paid or unpaid. This also applies to an employer's own children.

There are also strict regulations regarding hours of work – no child may be employed before 7.00 am or after 7.00 pm on any day.

No child may work for more than 4 hours without a break of at least 1 hour and no child can work for more than 2 hours on a Sunday between the hours of 7.00 am and 7.00 pm.

During term time, no child can be employed for more than 12 hours per week and there are also other guidelines for the number of weekends and hours during holiday times that children can work.

The permits are free of charge from the local authority and will legally allow children between 13 and 16 to undertake part-time work.

Employing a young person without a permit is a criminal offence and employers may be subject to legal action. In addition, the young person will not be covered by the employer's liability insurance.

Schools and other professionals have a duty to refer any reports or concerns that a child or young person may be working illegally or without a permit.

In the first instance most Shropshire schools have a named EWO who can offer initial advice and guidance. Anyone wishing to refer concerns about a child working unlawfully or a child performing without a licence, can contact the council's child employment officer by email: Child.Employment@telford.gov.uk or calling 01952 385223. Further information can be found at https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/728/child_in_employment

From the 1 April 2025 the cost of a Volunteer Chaperone Licence will increase to £30. Professional Chaperone Licences will increase to £79.50 (Administration fee - £30 and DBS £49.50)

All Licence Applications have now moved online, please use the link [Synergy - Enquiry \(telford.gov.uk\)](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/728/child_in_employment)

Training Offers

For internal Shropshire Council staff (book via Leap):

- > Online Safety
- > Exploitation Pathway
- > Young Person's Substance Misuse, AI, Addiction and Exploitation

For external partners (book via Joint Training website):

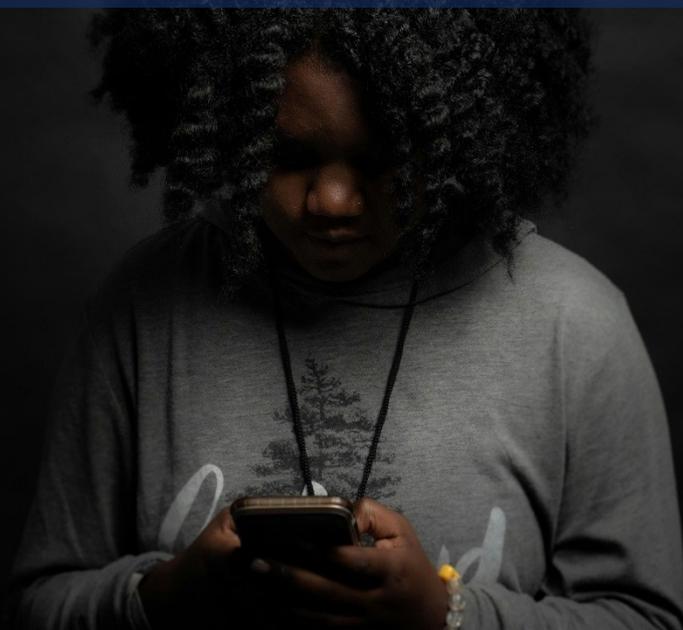
- > Exploitation Pathway
- > Young Person's Substance Misuse, AI, Addiction and Exploitation

Partner Exploitation Training :

- > Exploitation and vulnerability training | West Mercia Police

TREES Website

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/childrens-social-care-and-health/child-exploitation/>





***1st June 2025
Single-Use Vape Ban***

[Read More](#)

Drug & Alcohol Updates

By George Davies, Drug & Alcohol Advisor



Great infographic video on why Vaping Is Too Good To Be True - YouTube (By Kurzgesagt)



SNUS



Small sachets that sit under the lip—easy to get hold of, largely unregulated, very addictive due to the synthesised nicotine content. Increasingly popular with school & student populations as it helps with nicotine addiction withdrawal (in that the causation was likely vaping) Have a quick watch to learn more 1minute 20sec — **The rise of 'snus' nicotine pouches among teens - BBC News**



BRIGHTSTAR PROGRAMMES

Our mission is to Empower a brighter future!

Through our programmes we specialise in working with young people to thrive, using the combination of boxing, community and education. Here are some of our programmes that can support:

FUTURES

Our Futures programme offers alternative education for young people struggling in traditional settings, providing specialised support to help them achieve their potential. Each group includes a teacher, youth worker, and boxing coach, combining education, qualifications, mentoring, and boxing. Schools must refer students to this programme, which is available at venues across the West Midlands.



BOXING CLUB

We now have venues in Shifnal, Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton where we offer evening boxing sessions. We offer sessions for people of all ages and there is no need to complete a referral form.

Its £6 a session or £35 a month. The timetable is available on our social media and website.



MAKE SPORT WORK

We have partnered with Shrewsbury Town in the Community, Shropshire Cricket Board, and Embrace PE to offer a fully funded programme for individuals aged 16+ who are not in education, employment, or training. This 6-week programme combines qualifications, sport, and mentoring, running one full day per week to build confidence and prepare participants for employment. It's available at various locations across Shropshire, and participants need to be referred into the programme.



BELIEVE

Believe is a 12-week programme for young people aged 8-16, combining boxing and mentoring. Based in Shifnal, participants learn about control, emotions, thoughts, relationships, role models, and triggers, while also working towards their boxing awards. The programme runs on Tuesday evenings from 4-5:30 PM, with 12 places available and three staff members per session. The cost is £150 per participant, and referrals are required.



COUNTERPUNCH

Counterpunch is a mental health support programme for young people aged 11-16 and is based in our Shrewsbury site. This programme combines boxing and mentoring and is every Tuesday 5:30-6:30. This programme is £4 per session and there is no booking required.



TO FIND OUT MORE CONTACT JOE LOCKLEY ON JOE.LOCKLEY@BRIGHTSTARBOXING.CO.UK

WWW.BRIGHTSTARBOXING.CO.UK

Child Exploitation Consultation Sessions

We are here to support you :)

Do you have a particular young person who you would like to discuss in more depth? If so, we are offering weekly consultations every Tuesday 2pm – 4pm.

The following professionals will be on hand to offer advice and support regarding all CCE, CSE and substance misuse queries:

- Donna Richards, Senior Social Worker, TREES Team
 - George Davies, Young Persons Substance Misuse Advisor, TREES Team
 - Stafford Mason, CE Lead for Early Help
 - Jo Smith, Education Access Service
 - Bob Powell, West Mercia Police
- + Any professional, service or provision can be invited for consultation

To book a 30 minute timeslot, please use the self-booking service at: <https://shorturl.at/P6DRh>



Useful Links

Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool

To be completed if you have concerns about a particular young person (parental consent required):

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/4cjN/exploitation-tools-and-pathways/?b=Shropshire>

Reporting Intelligence

Professionals are welcome to email non-urgent information directly to the police CE Team at:

CETeamShropshire@westmercia.police.uk

For full guidance on Intelligence Reporting please visit:

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/4cjN/exploitation-tools-and-pathways/?b=Shropshire>

TREES Website

Full of information, advice and guidance—the website also sets out what we are doing to prevent child exploitation;

[Child exploitation | Shropshire Council](#)

Child Exploitation Leaflets & Child Exploitation Directory

All leaflets related to child exploitation can be found on our website, as well as the CE Directory which outlines the support available to children and young people in Shropshire, including the parents, families and carers who support them;

[How can we support children who might be being exploited? | Shropshire Council](#)

Smarter Screening Tool

To be completed if you have concerns regarding a young person's use of substances:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/21573/with-you-smarter-screening-tool-vnov21.doc>

Partner Organisations

Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership - www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk

Early Help - www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help

West Mercia Police - www.westmercia.police.uk

West Mercia Youth Justice Service - www.westmerciayouthjustice.org.uk

With You - www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/shropshire

Catch 22 - [STEPS \(Support Through Exploitation and Prevention Service\) | Catch22](#)

Purple Leaf - www.purpleleaf.org.uk

Steer Clear - [Steer Clear | The Children's Society](#)

NWG - www.nwgnetwork.org

For support or advice, or to be added to the mailing list for this newsletter, please contact george.r.davies@shropshire.gov.uk or Magdalena.Glonek@shropshire.gov.uk