



Staying safe online

Young people are being reminded how they can help keep themselves safe online by a regional partnership which raises awareness of child sexual exploitation.

The regional see me, hear me campaign encourages all young people and parents to make themselves aware of how to stay safe online as well as identify and respond to risky or dangerous situations.

The advice includes never giving out personal information, understanding the internet makes it easy for offenders to 'hide' behind fake profiles and never meeting up with anyone you have met online. It also encourages young people to consider not posting any pictures or videos online they would not want their parent or carer to see.

Parents are encouraged to talk openly to their children about their online activity and help them understand what is safe and unsafe. This includes making use of parental controls and limiting who young people can speak to via online gaming.

Councillor Anne Millward, cabinet member for children's services at Dudley Council, said:

"It is vital young people understand the importance of staying safe online

"With the internet and, in particular, social media and online gaming becoming such a big part of young people's daily lives, we want them to be able to enjoy their activities without making themselves vulnerable.

"While we can't monitor every click, we should be open with our children and talk to them about online dangers.

"By giving young people a few key safety tips about how to stay safe online and encouraging them to share it with their friends we can stop the perpetrators in their tracks.

“Preventing CSE is everyone’s responsibility and I would urge people to visit our campaign website www.seeme-hearme.org.uk to find out more.”

Online grooming can affect both boys and girls and can happen through social media, gaming, chatrooms or other online communication.

It can take a number of forms and could see children being manipulated into sharing indecent images or agreeing to meet someone wishing to sexually exploit them.

West Midlands councils and West Midlands Police are working together to raise awareness of CSE across the region through the see me, hear me campaign.

Anyone who is concerned about the safety of a young person should call West Midlands Police on 101, speak in confidence to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or in an emergency call 999.

Childline also have counsellors available online at www.childline.org.uk

You can find out more information about child sexual exploitation by visiting the regional campaign website www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

For more information on staying safe online visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>