

'If you would like more information about Safe Parenting in your own language please contact us at the address shown in the bottom box.'

Cantonese

如果你需要用中文印成的資料，
請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯系。

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਡਿਫਾ ਕਰਕੇ
ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Hindi

यदि आप अपनी भाषा में कुशल लालन-पालन हेतु और जानकारी चाहते हैं, तो कृपया नीचे बॉक्स में दिए गए पते पर हमसे संपर्क करें।

Urdu

اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم
ہم سے اس پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے بکس میں درج ہے۔

Polish

Jeśli chciałbyś uzyskać więcej informacji w Twoim języku, prosimy
o kontakt pod adresem podanym w ramce na dole.

**This handbook is provided by:
The Office of the North and South Lanarkshire Child
Protection Committees
Regent House
9 High Patrick Street
Hamilton
ML3 7ES
Tel: 01698 452859 / 452860**

This booklet was given to you by

who can be contacted on

Parenting Handbook

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS
of 12-18 year olds in Lanarkshire



Introduction

North and South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee's would like to welcome you to the Lanarkshire Parenting Handbook - A Guide for parents/carers for 12-18 year olds in Lanarkshire.

The Handbook contains a range of useful advice and guidance for parents and carers of young people. Bringing up children and young people is an experience, which brings both enjoyment and stress, challenges and rewards. There is no such thing as a perfect parent this applies to single parents, step parents, foster or adoptive parents and same sex couples.

Most young people love their parents and feel that they get on well with them, but at the same time many people find adolescence full of challenges. It's a time of rapid physical development and emotional changes. These changes can be exciting, but also confusing and unsettling for both parents and young people alike.

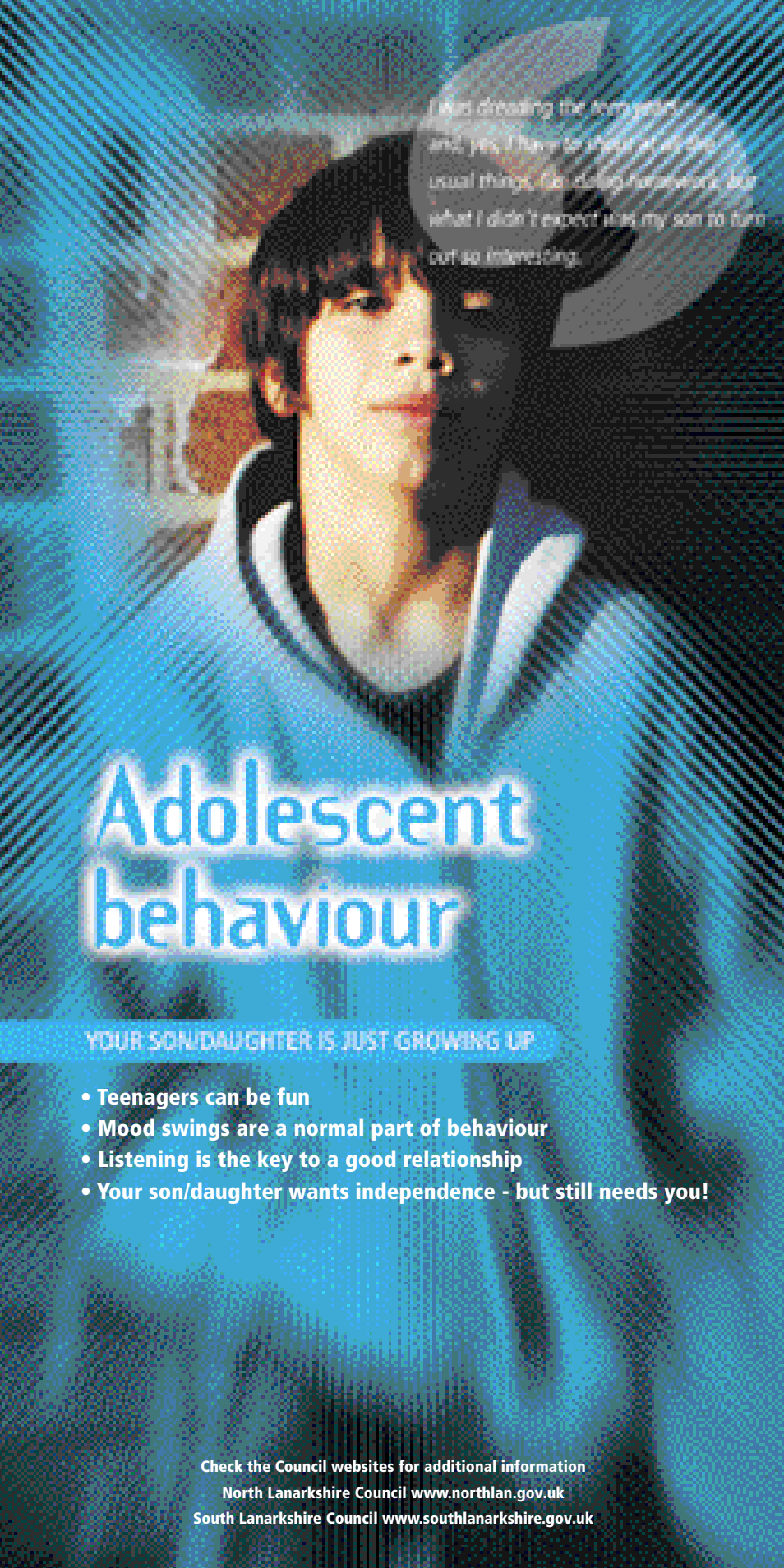
This guide provides some useful advice and support. You will find information about the changes that occur in adolescence, the issues and problems that arise and ways in which they can be managed. It gives helpful, contacts, which you can follow up for advice and support if you need to.

You'll find information on warning signs that your son/daughter may have a problem, as well as ideas and tips on how to tackle specific issues. This can be a difficult time for a young person. However, by understanding them a little better and giving them time to develop you will build a closer and ultimately more rewarding relationship with your son/daughter.

The Child Protection Committees hope that you find this guide helpful and worth keeping for future reference.

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I was dreading the term starting and, yes, I have to shout at all the usual things, like doing homework, but what I didn't expect was my son to turn out so interesting.

Adolescent behaviour

YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS JUST GROWING UP

- Teenagers can be fun
- Mood swings are a normal part of behaviour
- Listening is the key to a good relationship
- Your son/daughter wants independence - but still needs you!

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Indicating the teenage transition

Mood swings, arguments, talking back, an 'over-the-top' interest in hygiene, or a complete lack of it are quite normal. Difficulty in saying what they feel calmly and untidiness are all warning signs that your son/daughter has become a teen! As well as coping with emotional changes brought on by hormones, your son/daughter will have to deal with physical changes.



Listening and talking to your teen will help you understand what they are going through emotionally and physically. One of the best things you can do for your son/daughter is to let them know that you are there for them. It is therefore important to make time for them and make them understand that you value this time with them, that it is not given grudgingly as something you have to fit in because you are busy.



Teenagers can be clever, interesting and thoughtful as well as having set ideas, being sarcastic and sulky. Bring out the best in them by talking things through rather than arguing. You will probably have to answer lots of questions about puberty. Don't be embarrassed and be well prepared with simple facts.



Remember you are the adult! All too often you may find yourself having temper tantrums! Being flexible and bargaining/reasoning works better than rules and demands. The more information your son/daughter has the better he or she will be able to cope with the changes that come with puberty. Talk together to stop any worries or problems getting out of control.



- www.raisingkids.co.uk
- www.ukparents.co.uk
- www.e-parents.org
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.co.uk
- Childline Scotland
0800 1111
- NHS 24
08454 242424

This time is often seen as a time of arguments and bad family relationships as young people either hardly leave their room or are never home. They won't answer the most simple question about school or how their evening went and are totally unpredictable.

Yes, that is normal adolescent behaviour, but it is not all bad news. It is also normal to find out that you have a young person living with you who is clever, interesting and funny.

The most likely cause for the mood swings of your son/daughter is hormones. At the start of puberty, hormones are triggering physical changes and emotional feelings that are not only hard to deal with, but hard to talk about.

Your son/daughter is also forming deeper and more complex relationships; any worries or arguments, for example pressure from mates to do things they may not feel comfortable with, can affect their sense of well-being and confidence. They will also be experiencing new sexual feelings which they may find difficult to handle and concerns about their looks.

Your son/daughter will also be trying to work out who they are. Your son/daughter is learning about views, opinions and beliefs that may be different to those they have grown up with. On top of all this, they also have to cope with school or college work, which can make them worried and stressed. They will take it out on those closest to them - you!

How you can help

How you deal with your son/daughter can make the difference between a close relationship and a difficult one.

Untidiness, doing homework, letting you know where they are and helping around the house can cause arguments. Reasoning with your son/daughter works better than making demands: "If you tidy your room, I'll put this wash on for you."

Talking to your son/daughter will help you understand each other and develop your relationship. It will also help build up their confidence. Listen to their ideas and try to understand their thoughts and feelings. Respect their privacy - remember you were young once! Be open-minded and do not judge your son/daughter so they trust you and feel they can turn to you when they need help.

These years can be tough and your son/daughter needs to know they have your support. It's common for them to argue or even ignore you at times, because they know that, on the whole, you will take the bad moods with the good. If they upset you, don't forget a lot of it is just for show and that when things go wrong, the person they'll often turn to for comfort is you.



I love my son, but I just don't understand why he's always getting into trouble. I need help to get him back on the right track.

Anti-social behaviour*

WHEN EVERY DAY IS A DIFFICULT DAY

- Good parenting can help your son/daughter's behaviour
- Prevention is better than cure
- Peer pressure and boredom are reasons given by teens for offending
- Your local council can advise you about ways of solving problems in your community

Look up a word

*Anti-social behaviour - Acting or speaking in a way which is not acceptable.

*A Parenting Order sets rules (for example making sure your son/daughter is home by a certain time) for up to 12 months and possible attendance at parenting support classes and a parenting group for 3 months.

Although you love your son/daughter, you may not always like their behaviour. As young people grow up, they will test their own and your limits.

Anti-social Behaviour is a phrase used very regularly these days. It can vary from high spirits to damaging and frightening behaviour. People have the right to live without fear, including teenagers affected by the behaviour of others.

There are many causes of anti-social teenage behaviour. Lack of opportunity in education or employment or living in an area with few things to do and few family activities could be another. Pressure from friends can also be a problem with mates encouraging them to join in. Problems at school or bullying may also be a factor.

It is a parent's responsibility to provide the best care they can for their son/daughter. This does not mean you have to cope alone. There are many places that can help families with teenagers who are in trouble.

If your son/daughter is involved in anti-social behaviour a variety of actions might be taken. The local Housing Association, Council or other agency might suggest that you and your son/daughter sign an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC).

If this contract is broken, the Council or Children's Reporter might apply for an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) and/or Parenting Order. An ASBO is similar to an ABC but breaking the rules of the ASBO or a Parenting Order* is a criminal offence.

If your son/daughter is involved in anti-social behaviour they will also probably be referred to the Children's Hearings System. For some young people in trouble the Children's Reporter will decide that intervention is needed. If this happens it could involve you and your son/daughter seeking help voluntarily (for example from the Social Work Department, or from a parenting class). In some cases the Reporter will call a Children's Hearing to decide if a supervision requirement (a legal order) needs to be made, which would mean that you and/or your son/daughter would have the help that is offered.

Lots of help is available for young people involved in antisocial behaviour or offending, either from Social Work, Education or other Council departments, Voluntary Agencies and Health Services. This help could include assessments, direct work with your son/daughter to help stop them offending, direct work with you and your family to help sort out any problems that you have, parenting classes, education, training and leisure opportunities for your son/daughter to gain skills and use up some of their free time. Your son/daughter may also be invited to join in some type of "restorative justice" service to meet any victims of their crime or do some work in the community e.g. cleaning up graffiti which they have made.



Missing school or being in trouble at school, stealing, having unexplained amounts of money, mixing with a bad crowd, using drugs and/or alcohol, rudeness or violence towards you or others are all signs of bad behaviour that need to be dealt with as soon as possible.



Talk to your son/daughter about their behaviour, why they are doing it and what action can be taken to stop it. Do not feel you are alone. There are schemes in place to help your son/daughter to aim towards education, training or employment rather than crime.



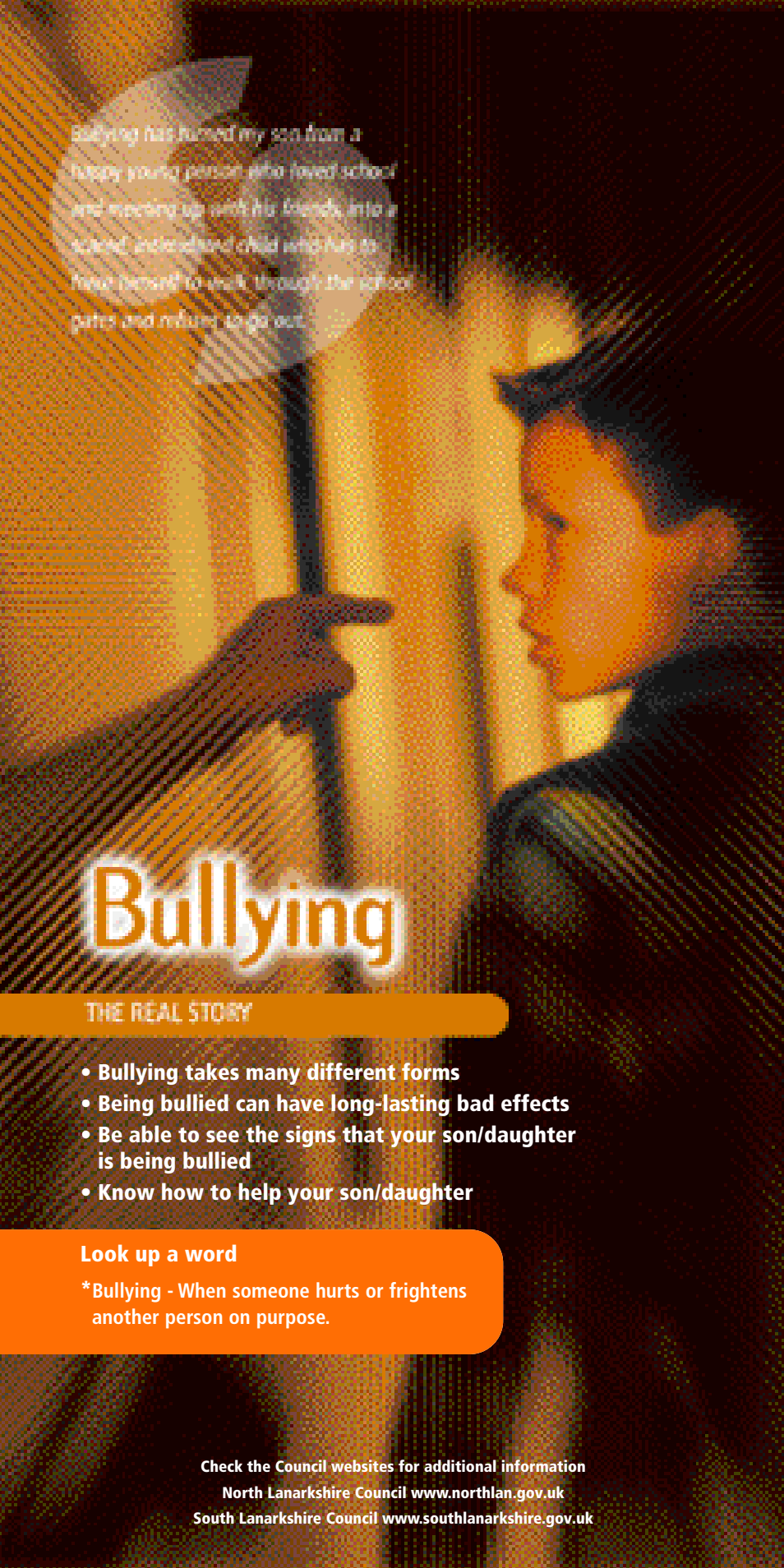
Try not to judge, but explain that you want to help stop this behaviour and you need to work together, maybe also with outside help, to steer him or her back onto the right path. Explain where this behaviour could lead unless it is stopped now.



Keeping an open relationship and talking to your son/daughter will help them. Young people from homes where communication is open are less likely to offend. Take an interest in schoolwork and encourage after-school activities such as sports, art programmes or courses.



- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk



Bullying has turned my son from a happy young person who loved school and meeting up with his friends, into a scared and isolated child who has to force himself to walk through the school gates and refuse to go out.

Bullying

THE REAL STORY

- Bullying takes many different forms
- Being bullied can have long-lasting bad effects
- Be able to see the signs that your son/daughter is being bullied
- Know how to help your son/daughter

Look up a word

*Bullying - When someone hurts or frightens another person on purpose.

Bullying* happens when someone hurts or frightens another person on purpose.

Bullying can include teasing or name calling as well as hitting and kicking or stealing and damaging another person's things. Spreading rumours, ignoring someone, cruel text or email messages, being picked on because of race, religion, sexuality, disability or just seeming different.

Being bullied breaks down a person's self-confidence, leaving them feeling alone, scared and powerless. Schools can be seen as places to fear rather than places to enjoy. Being bullied affects schoolwork due to stress, missed lessons, not being able focus and time off school for illness caused by worry or through injuries from being hurt. For a small number, it may lead to thoughts or attempts of suicide.

Look out for signs, as your son/daughter may not be able to or want to tell you what is happening to them, because they are scared that you may just make things even worse.

Warning signs

- Things like headaches or stomach aches, caused by stress and worry.
- Not sleeping well.
- Being more bad tempered than usual or over-reacting and taking it out on brothers and sisters.
- Missing or damaged belongings.
- Bad results at school.
- Worrying about going to school in the morning, or a change in routine with friends.

What you can do

If your son/daughter tells you that they are being bullied, don't ignore them. Listen to what they are saying and first try to discuss ideas to help them sort the problem out for themselves.

If this doesn't work, suggest your son/daughter keeps a diary of things that happen and that they talk to their school pastoral care teacher or head teacher. You should write to the school about your worries. By law, every school must have an anti-bullying policy. If you feel the school is not doing anything about the problem, write to the Board of Governors and the Local Education Authority or contact the School's Education Welfare Officer.*

Make your son/daughter feel better about themselves by inviting friends they can rely on home and suggest activities or clubs where they can meet new people. Let them know they can talk to you and make them feel loved and secure.

If your son/daughter is a bully

Bullies often feel unwanted or uncared for. Bullying makes them feel powerful or popular. It can be upsetting to know your son/daughter is a bully but you need to understand why they want to do it. Problems at home, divorce, pressure from friends or being bullied themselves may all be causes. Without judging them, let them know that what they are doing is hurtful and wrong. Discuss ways they can change their actions and ask the school for help if you need to.



Changes such as: becoming more of a loner, more violent, regular headaches, stomach aches, worrying, a change of routine (such as the route to school) or not wanting to go out with friends, poor results at school, damaged belongings, missing money, injuries and poor sleep patterns.



Try to get your son/daughter to talk to you, a teacher or to contact help groups. Talk about bullying with the school and find out how they handle situations. Don't ignore any signs of bullying.



Talk about ways that they can deal with bullying themselves, to help build up their self-confidence. If this doesn't work, talk to the teacher or Headteacher about what can be done. Encourage your son/daughter to always tell someone if they are being bullied. Back up concerns to the school in writing.



Help your son/daughter by spending time with them and listening to any worries they have, showing an interest in their activities, supporting them with schoolwork and encouraging friends. This will help them to build up the self-confidence to deal with what life throws at them.



- www.antibullying.net
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.childrenscotland.org.uk
- www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk
- www.youngscot.org
- www.bullyonline.org
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Childline 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
- Kidscape 08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk

It took me a long time to accept it when my son told me he was gay. I don't like it, but if that's the way he is, then I want him to know the support I'm in.



Coming out

IS YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER GAY?

- **'Coming out'*** is a big step for young people
- **Accept your own feelings**
- **Discuss your worries**
- **Your son/daughter needs your support**

Look up a word

- *Gay - Men who have sexual feelings for other men/can also be used to describe someone who has sexual feelings for someone of the same sex.
- *Lesbian - Women who have sexual feelings for other women.
- *Bisexual - To have sexual feelings for both men and women.
- *'Coming Out' - Telling people that you are gay or bisexual.

However much you love and think you know your son/daughter, you may find yourself feeling a range of emotions when finding out that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

You may feel shocked, worried, ashamed or horrified. Even if you had an idea they may be gay, it can still be difficult to accept the truth. Learning that your son is attracted to men can be unsettling. Some parents and carers might be completely fine, but many fathers in particular find this news difficult. There is nothing you can do or should do to try and stop your son/ daughter from being who, they naturally are. Hiding feelings can only do long-term damage to their self-confidence and well-being.

Many young people start to become aware of their feelings at age 11 or 12, but may take years to admit it to themselves or anyone else. They often feel lonely and scared. People often do not accept people who are 'different'. It will have taken a lot of courage for your son/daughter to tell you about their sexuality and now is the time they need your understanding and support.

Your concerns

It is normal as a parent to have concerns. You may feel you no longer know your son/daughter and that they are not the person you thought they were. You may feel you have to give up the hope of grandchildren. You may worry about the danger of HIV, especially for men. You may worry about the problems they may have to face in their lives. You may also feel embarrassed or ashamed to tell family, friends and neighbours. All of these concerns are natural. These are things your son/daughter may be worried about too.

Common misunderstandings

There are many things people do not understand about same sex attraction. People often think that it's 'just a phase'. While many young people experiment with other young people of their own sex, if your son/daughter tells you they are gay, you should try to accept it, as they won't have said it lightly. Another belief people have is that same sex attraction is an illness that can be cured. It's not - it's the way your son/daughter is. Some parents also believe that their son/daughter has been 'turned' by mixing with gay friends, but it is unlikely your son/daughter would tell you about their feelings unless they were absolutely sure. Parents should not worry that it is because of something they have done (maybe being an over-caring mother or absent father) that has 'made' their son/daughter gay. It's not - you can't make your son/ daughter gay.

Giving support

It may take some time for you to get used to the fact that your son/daughter is gay or lesbian, especially if it goes against your culture or religion. But your son/daughter still needs your support. Let them know you are there for them, as they may want to discuss issues or problems they are facing. There are support groups aimed at parents of gay, lesbian and bisexual young people and you may find it easier to understand and support your son/daughter if you contact one of these agencies. The more you find out about same sex attraction, the more you will understand your son/daughter's lifestyle and be able to support them.



You may have your suspicions but it can take people a long time to come to terms with their sexuality and to 'come out'. Your son/daughter may be confused about their feelings and try to ignore them. Admitting that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual will be difficult for your son/daughter and you may find that your they try to give you signs without having to tell you outright.



If you believe your son/daughter is gay and having difficulty either coming to terms with this or telling you, start up conversations that will give them an opportunity to bring up the subject.



It may be hard to accept your son/daughter is lesbian or gay, but their sexuality doesn't change the person you have brought up and loved. Let them know you will be there for them and support them as they find their way.



- Parents Enquiry Scotland
Helpline 0141 427 3897
if you would like to speak to another parent, please phone central helpline 0131 556 6047 between 9am and 10pm
www.parentsenquiryscotland.org
- Lesbian and Gay Switchboard
Helpline 0141 847 0447
www.sgls.co.uk
- Breathing Space
0800 838 587
6pm-2am (confidential helpline)

At first I thought she was just being a moody teenager. But as time went on I realised some thing was really wrong. She's getting counselling now - it's slow but I'm hopeful she'll get out of this terrible black hole.

Depression & mental ill health

DEALING WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES OF LIFE

- Four-in-100 young people suffer from depression
- Many things can set off mental ill health
- Your son/daughter needs you to listen
- Get professional help

Look up a word

*Depression - Feelings of sadness and loss of hope that won't go away, which stop you enjoying things, and make you feel tired all the time.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Not sleeping, mood swings, eating disorders, not caring about their appearance, dropping friends and hobbies, staying in their room, crying; not doing so well at school, finding it hard to work, or being self-critical.



If you think your son/daughter is depressed, talk to them and find out if there is any way you can help. Be patient and understanding - what may seem like small problems to you can be too much for a young person.

Talk to your Doctor and discuss what treatment (such as counselling) may be helpful. You could speak to your son/daughter's school to see if they have noticed any differences in your son or daughter.



Listen to and talk to your son/daughter. Help and encourage them to get their lives together. Depression can't just be switched off, it takes time and understanding to overcome it. Try to get them to contact useful organisations they can talk to in private.



A supportive and understanding family means your son/daughter may feel more able to talk to you about any problems, rather than bottling them up. Chat about their interests, hobbies, friends and schoolwork so they feel you understand the different parts of their lives.



- YoungMinds Parents' Information Service
0800 018 2138
www.youngminds.org.uk
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- GP
- NHS 24
08454 24 24 24
www.nhs24.com
- www.feelgoodtips.com
- www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk
- www.healthscotland.com

The teenage years are a difficult time and young people have a lot to deal with physically, mentally and emotionally. While every young person feels highs and lows, for some, about four or five in every hundred - this turns into depression*.

Young people are more vulnerable and sensitive to what is happening to them and are less experienced at being able to deal with problems and anxieties.

Depression can be started by a number of things, such as: parents divorcing or separating, feeling ignored and unloved, or not being listened to, losing friends, changing school or moving home, worries about their looks, sexuality, health, exams or abuse.

What may seem like small problems or worries to an older person can seem like a much bigger problem to a young person. Boys are more likely to get depressed than girls and suffer from serious mental ill health.


What are the signs

While young people can sometimes seem unhappy and quiet, you may feel that this is more than just a phase. Signs may include being unable to sleep, eating too much or too little, mood swings, staying in their bedroom all day, or giving up interests and hobbies. Crying, avoiding friends and family, finding it hard to do their schoolwork, or not caring about what they look like are other things to look out for. They may talk about death or have suicidal thoughts.

To escape from their feelings or let them out in the only way they know how, young people may start taking drugs or drinking, not going to school, becoming violent or carrying out crimes such as shoplifting.

How to help

If your son/daughter is suffering from depression they need help. Don't ignore their worries and take any talk of suicide seriously. You need to listen, try to understand what they are going through and get professional help if you need to. Get them to talk about their worries. If they don't feel they can talk to you, there are a number of helplines they can contact. If you are concerned, help them to see their Doctor or School Nurse. They may want you to come with them or may like to go alone (remember they will still need your support). The Doctor can discuss ways to help, often a referral to a trained therapist or counsellor.



I don't think he really meant to hurt me... he just can't help himself. He doesn't do it in front of the kids, but I know they can hear and I try to keep quiet.

Domestic abuse

IT COULD BE HAPPENING AT HOME

- 500,000 cases of domestic abuse are reported each year
- In most cases, children are in the same or next room when it happens
- Domestic abuse causes damage to young people
- Get advice, support and help to stop the abuse

Look up a word

*Domestic - Something that happens in the home.

*Abuse - When one person inflicts harm on another person.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Domestic* abuse* is when one person hurts another physically, emotionally or sexually in the home.

Physical abuse includes hurting someone by kicking, pushing, or hitting them. Emotional abuse includes putting someone down, saying things to make him or her frightened or lack self-confidence. Sexual abuse is making someone take part in sexual acts they don't want to or are not happy with.

Stress, money problems, alcohol or drug misuse can lead to abuse within the home. Abusers were often abused as a child. This is no excuse, abuse is wrong and can have a major impact on children in the home.

One in five women experience domestic abuse at some time in their lives (Scottish Executive). It is hard to build up the courage to take action against domestic abuse. If you are a victim, your children become victims too.

The children's charity, Childline, say that in nine out of ten cases of abuse, children are in the same or next room when the abuse is going on. In half of all reported domestic abuse cases, children get hurt too.

Whether they are being physically hurt themselves or not, young people are still harmed by living in a home where it happens. They are always in danger of being hurt and they will be deeply upset by what is going on in their family. It can only make things worse if parents pretend that nothing is wrong and can make it harder for them to come to terms with the situation. Your son/daughter may feel forced to take sides, even though they love both parents. They are more likely to be ignored as the parents deal with the problems in their own lives leaving them feeling unloved and unsupported. This in turn will affect their self-confidence.

There can be serious effects. Young people may get angry, blaming one parent (not always the person being violent) or even themselves which can cause the situation at home to become worse. They may become violent themselves. They may experiment with drugs or alcohol as a way of escaping. Schoolwork can suffer and it can be hard to focus.

How to get help

Building up the courage to change the situation is hard but it can be done. The law protects victims of domestic abuse. You owe it to yourself and your family to get help. Contact the Police and your local Council's Social Services department for advice on what steps you can take. There are also a number of groups that can give advice and support (see Contacts).



Victims of domestic abuse can often feel that they have caused the problem and that it is their fault. Verbal abuse can often lead to physical abuse and it is important that it is stopped before it reaches this point.



It may take time to admit to yourself or others that you are a victim of violence. Contact one of the help groups or organisations for advice on what to do next. Many offer 24-hour helplines, giving support and help as well as practical advice.



Children cope with difficult situations better when they understand what is going on. Even if they are not in the room when violence occurs, they will know it is happening. You are not protecting them by saying nothing as this only leaves them confused, so explain what is going on and what steps are being taken to change what is happening.



You can't stop a partner from being violent but you can try to stop the bad effects this will have on your children. No-one has to cope alone with this. Contact a local help organisation or your local Council for advice.



- National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247 (24hr)
www.womensaid.org.uk
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Refuge 0808 2000 247
www.refuge.org.uk
- Police 999
- National Domestic Abuse helpline
0800 027 1234
- Sandyford Initiative 0141 211 6700
- Women's Aid Lanarkshire
North 01698 321000
South 01355 249897

I can't bear to see what my daughter is doing to herself. I wish I could turn the clock back and could have helped her before anorexia took over her life.

Eating disorders

THE TELL-TALE SIGNS

- **Young people are more likely than adults to have eating disorders**
- **Controlling food is a way of controlling their lives**
- **Recognise the problems that set off eating disorders**
- **Get support - your son/daughter needs help**

Look up a word

- * **Binge-Eating** - Eating a lot of food at once, usually in secret.
- * **Anorexic** - Person who weighs 15% less than they should through not eating.
- * **Bulimic** - Person who binge-eats and then makes themselves sick.
- * **Obsessing** - Thinking all the time about a particular thing.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Food is an important part of our lives. For some, more often young people, how much or how little food they eat becomes the most important thing in their lives.

Eating disorders develop when food is used as a way of dealing with personal problems. How much is eaten, when, and where, can sometimes seem like the only thing they can control in their lives and have a say about.

Recognising the signs

There are two main eating disorders: Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. People with Anorexia or Anorexics*, weigh at least 15% less than they should. Anorexia is a serious condition, which if not dealt with, can cause life-long problems and in rare cases even death.

People with Bulimia or Bulimics* tend to maintain their body weight by binge-eating* in secret. The main warning signs for both disorders are listed on the right.

Who is affected - and why?

Most of those who experience eating disorders are women, although young men can also have these types of problems. There are many reasons why people have eating disorders and if your son/daughter has a problem, you will need to try to understand what started it in the first place. For many, having control of what they eat is the only control they feel they have in their lives. Triggers may include:

- Abuse - physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
- Bullying.
- Family problems.
- Parents pushing their son/daughter too hard at school - people with Anorexia are often high achievers.
- Not being able to express feelings.
- Lack of self-esteem, feelings of self-hatred, guilt.
- Wanting to look like women in magazines and on TV.
- Wanting to be popular - believing being slim will make them more popular.

How to help

People with an eating disorder are usually the last ones to recognise they have a problem. If you think your son/daughter is suffering from Anorexia or Bulimia, then they need your help. Try to get them to eat sensibly, but just as importantly, try to find out what are the real problems.

If they don't feel they can talk to you, try to get them to talk to a friend, relative, Teacher, School Nurse or Youth or Social Worker. You should also talk to their Doctor, to discuss any further treatment. Counselling, self-help groups and therapy are all helpful. In very serious cases, they may need to go into a hospital or clinic.



People with anorexia: excessive weight loss, avoiding food while obsessing* about it, pretending to have eaten already, hiding body shape, loss of periods, feeling cold, sleep problems, moodiness, not growing, thinning hair growth and dental problems due to being sick.
People with Bulimia: binge-eating, sore throat and related infections, dental problems from vomiting, missed periods, disappearing after meals, puffy skin, not drinking enough and using laxatives.



You can't make somebody eat, but you can give your son/daughter the chance to talk about his or her problems. Let them know that you are there to help them, no matter what. It may also help for you to speak to other parents who have gone through similar experiences with their son or daughter and to share and support each other.



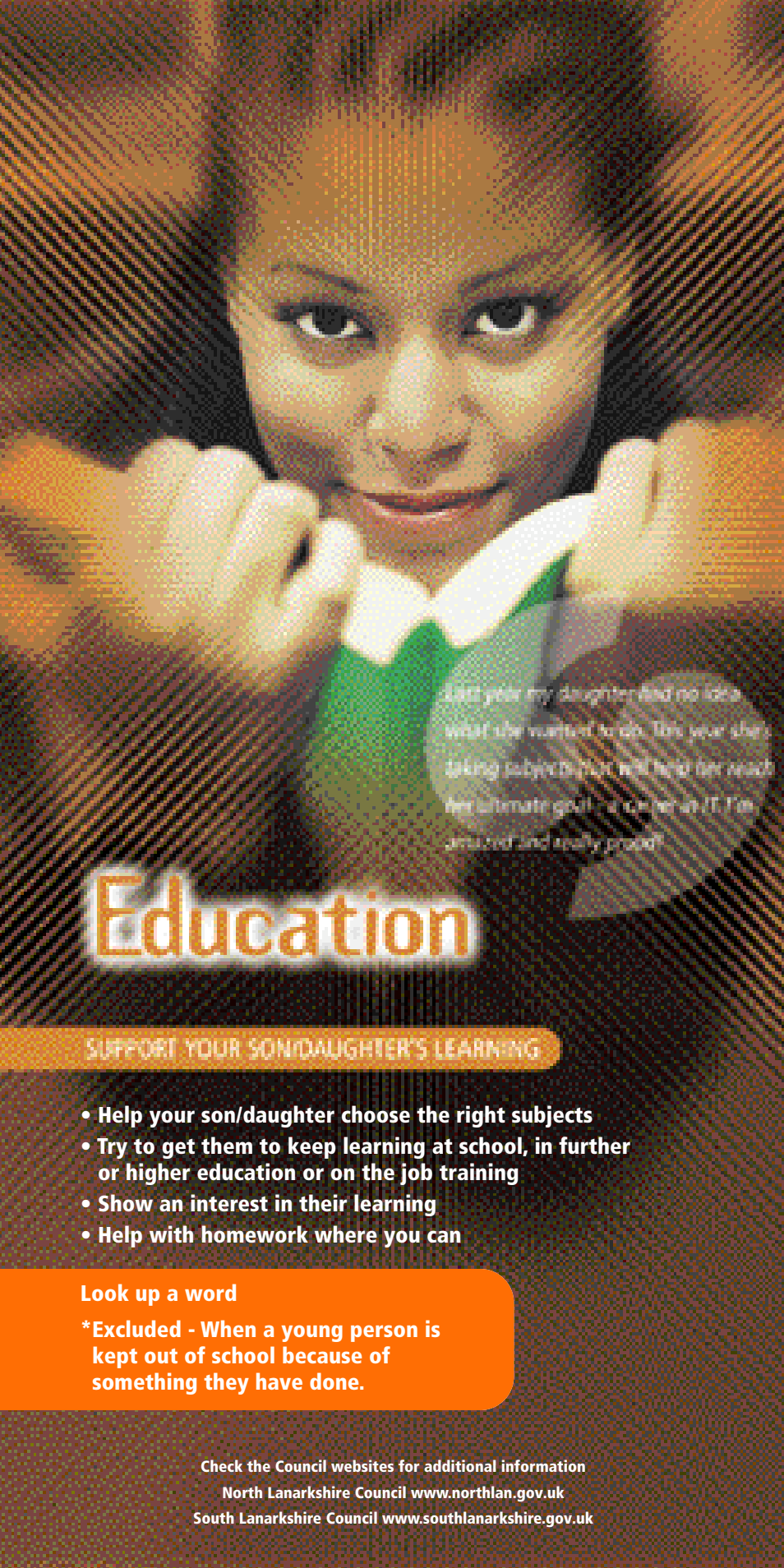
Try to get them to talk about any problems that may be setting off the eating disorder. If they feel they can't talk to you, encourage them to talk to a friend, relative, Teacher or Social Worker.



Girls are more likely to develop eating disorders during their teenage years. If your son/daughter knows she can talk to you about any worries, she is less likely to use food as a way of dealing with her problems.



- Eating Disorders Association
0845 634 7650
www.edauk.com
- Young Minds
0800 018 2138
www.youngminds.org.uk
- NHS 24
08454 24 24 24
www.nhs24.com
- www.healthyliving.gov.uk

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a school uniform with a green tie, is looking directly at the camera through her fingers which are held up to her face. The background is a dark, textured pattern of concentric lines.

Last year my daughter had no idea what she wanted to do. This year she's taking subjects that will help her reach her ultimate goal - a career in IT. I'm amazed and really proud!

Education

SUPPORT YOUR SON/DAUGHTER'S LEARNING

- Help your son/daughter choose the right subjects
- Try to get them to keep learning at school, in further or higher education or on the job training
- Show an interest in their learning
- Help with homework where you can

Look up a word

***Excluded - When a young person is kept out of school because of something they have done.**

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Secondary schools offer a wide range of learning choices for young people. Offering subjects they are interested in or enjoy often means young people will stay in education for longer.

Schools have systems in place to give young people the help they need to make choices about their future education. This will help them to choose subjects and skills that will keep them interested in their education until they are 18. Support is also given to help work through problems they may come across during that time and to aim for longer-term learning and a better job in the end.

While the choice of subjects and skills taken is up to your son/daughter there are things you can do to back-up their interest in education. Spending time helping in your son/daughter's education will give them the support they need to make choices about learning and help them to get the career or job they want. Find out what their school's plan is and how you can help your son/daughter. Take an interest in the subjects they have decided to take and help with homework when you can. As it is probably some time ago that you were in school yourself, ask the school for advice or use some of the many websites that contain education pages (see Contacts).

If your son/daughter is excluded*

If your son/daughter is getting into trouble at school and has lost interest in learning, talk to them and their teacher as soon as you can. Try to find ways to get them to act reasonably before it gets to a point where they could get excluded. If your son/daughter is excluded but you do not agree, please contact the head teacher as soon as possible.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

The Scottish Executive's EMA can be used by young people aged 16-19 who are staying on in some form of education. EMA is intended to help with the day-to-day costs of staying on at school, college or training.

The funding is for young people with a bank account, living in a household of less than a fixed amount and young people who are UK nationals or granted a stay in this country.

Small weekly payments are made in line with the family's income.



If your son/daughter is getting into trouble at school, discuss ways of getting them interested again in their education. If they still behave badly they could be excluded, so make sure they know the results their actions will have on their future education and job.



Find out about the subjects your son/daughter is studying and take an active interest in their school and homework. Use course material and educational websites to help you. Try to get them to think for themselves and encourage them to express their own ideas.



Support your son/daughter's education whenever you can. Talk to the school about their education and career choices and how you can best help your son/daughter.



Children who have a stable home life and parents who take an interest in their education and future career tend to stay longer in education and do better. Try to get them to talk about any problems to stop them becoming too worried and stressed.



- www.raisingkids.co.uk
- www.qca.org.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/schools



I don't agree with my son leaving school at 16, but he's proved to me that he's serious about getting training on the job while also getting money to give him independence.



Employment

BRIGHT FUTURE, BRIGHT PROSPECTS

- Work-related training can offer a progression route with the chance of a better job
- Jobs with training often offer work and qualifications
- Prepare your son/daughter for post-school options by accessing Careers Scotland website www.careers-scotland.org.uk and using the parents centre
- Work experience while still at school can on occasion lead to a job offer

Look up a word

*C.V. - A brief description of the person's education, qualifications, experience and interests, sent with a job application.

Young people may have more opportunities open to them by remaining in education after 16. This doesn't always mean your son/daughter won't find a good job they find interesting and rewarding should they decide to leave at the earliest opportunity

Your son/daughter may want to leave school at 16 and get out into the adult world to earn money. In the school year they are sixteen they may leave school on the 31st May if their birthday is before the 31st of September or the 23rd December if their birthday is before the 28th February. It is the law that young people cannot leave school any earlier.

If they really want to make this choice, try to get them to apply for a job that also has the chance to train. Modern Apprenticeships offer work-based training and a vocational qualification (VQ) for young people so that they can learn while on the job, building up skills and qualifications as well as earning money. They may spend part of their training in college or company based training facilities to complete their VQ.

How you can help

There are many ways you can help your son/daughter to apply for a job that's right for them. Talk about their interests and hobbies and suggest how they could be adapted to types of work. They will complete a CV* in school during PSE or they can ask for advice from the school based Careers Adviser. Examples are available on the Careers Scotland website. Before any job interview they should find out about the company so that they can ask sensible questions, think through how to present their skills, explain why they are interested in the job and find out what is expected. Make sure they have sensible clothes for the interview, that they know where they are going and who is to interview them and to leave plenty of time to get there. Their Careers Adviser can advise on assistance with costs for travel and for those eligible for the cost of interview clothes.

Work experience

Most schools encourage young people in 4th year to do up to two weeks work experience. Although unpaid, it gives young people a chance to be treated as an adult, to learn what is expected of them, follow instructions and to use their key skills.

Another way of getting experience and earning money is to have a part time job before or after school, or during the school holidays. This may help to gain employment in the future.

Young people must have a Work Permit that allows them to work. Application forms are issued by schools and approved by the Local Authority. It is against the law to employ someone without a Work Permit. This includes working for parents, whether the work is paid or not (maybe in a family owned shop).



If your son/daughter tells you they want to leave school at 16, make sure they know the effect this may have on opportunities available to them



If your son/daughter is sure they want to leave school, get them to choose a job that offers training or options to train, that will improve their chance of a good job.



Try to get them to take a serious look at the impact of their actions and the impact on future earning capacity their school. Speak to a Careers Scotland Adviser for information. Discuss different job ideas, such as an apprenticeship or work-related education and training.



There is a lot you can do to make your son/daughter feel good about their education before they reach 16. By choosing the right subjects at 14, they are less likely to want to leave at the first chance and by staying in education they will gain useful skills.



- www.careers-scotland.org.uk
- www.scottish-enterprise.com/modernapprenticeships
- www.psybt.org.uk/ for self employment information
- www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk



My son's learning diff. He doesn't need me to tell him that everybody's different. But I do want him to understand that everybody's equal too.

Equality, ethnicity & diversity

DIFFERENT AND EQUAL

- Your son/daughter is protected by the Human Rights Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Sex Discrimination Act
- Your local Council, Education and Health Authorities are there to help
- Ask your son/daughter's school how they deal with racism and other forms of discrimination or abuse, and ask them to talk through their policies with you
- Support groups, parent groups and other organisations (Voluntary and Statutory) are out there to help you

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Diversity is all about differences. We are all different – visibly, physically, socially, culturally and sexually. Diversity means variety, it means a rich and vibrant culture. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society.

You could experience discrimination from an individual or from a business, a service, an agency or even a school. Although we're all different we all have the right to equal respect, access, opportunity and justice, so there are laws in the UK to prevent discrimination on all levels. If you feel you or your son/daughter has experienced discrimination, your local authority, local organisations and the legislation are there to help you.

Racism

Thanks to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 all public bodies have a clear duty to stop unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equal opportunity and good relations between 'racial groups'. This includes schools, so the curriculum and the teaching in our schools should reflect racial diversity and should have clear processes for handling, reporting and watching out for racist incidents. This act looks closely at the effect of action and not the intent.

Homophobia

We live in a diverse country with a lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community. Diversity should be welcomed and reflected across all services. It is not acceptable that anyone is targeted for abuse or discrimination because of their sexuality or the sexuality of their parents, carers or family members. Sex Education in schools helps young children understand and respect sexual orientation.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says it is against the law for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less well than other people because of their disability. It also means they should make reasonable adjustments to make their services suitable for disabled people to use.

Sexism

Sexism arises from common stereotypes of male and female roles in society. Sexism can be experienced in and out of the home leading to discrimination including serious forms of physical or psychological abuse. The Sex Discrimination Act is there as a legal framework for promoting gender equality.



Young people notice differences all the time, in everything in everyone, everywhere. They need to know that we are all different but that we are all equal, and that difference should not be met with suspicion, envy or fear, but should be positive, advantageous and valued.



You should expect every place your son/daughter is in to have made a visible commitment to equality and diversity. All should listen and act at once if something happens or you have worries. It is important that we are proactive in our actions and consider effects too.




There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents, including parents of vulnerable children or children from overseas. If there are language communication issues these can be supported with the help of Lanarkshire Interpreting Services. Contact them.



All parents have a right to expect a safe place and support for their son/daughter whatever their individual needs, experiences or background. Schools are becoming even more inclusive with diversity and equality expected in all areas of school life and encouraging citizenship issues throughout the curriculum.



- Equal Opportunities Commission
0845 601 5901 www.eoc.org.uk
- Disability Rights Commission
08457 622 633 Helpline 8am-8pm
www.drc-gb.org



Every time my daughter's best friend has the hair cut, she gets her hair cut in exactly the same way. Why doesn't she try to be more individual?

Friendships & peer pressure

COPING WITH DEMANDS

- Friendships help your son/daughter to develop in many ways
- Most young people like to look the same as everyone else and be part of the crowd
- Pressure from other young people to act in a certain way can be powerful
- Family support is important - but be prepared, your son/daughter could turn to their friends first

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Friendships are very important to all of us. Having a close friend or group of friends and belonging to a group helps them feel good about themselves, learn to deal with people, and develop their own identity. This helps them learn about the values and ideas of others.

The meaning of friendship

Girls tend to have smaller groups of friends. Fitting in with a group and sharing secrets is very important, and how you look, what band you like and the length of your hair all need to be just 'right'.

Friendships are important to boys too, but they usually form larger groups of friends. They may play sports with some mates or just hang out with others. Boys want to look good but they don't talk about fashion as much as girls do. Worries about who's 'doing it' and who's not are more important!

Peer groups

Peer groups (or groups of young people of the same age) often form in school or out on the street. Belonging to a group is very important. Young people may want to be part of a group because their friends are, even if they don't really like what everyone else does. As they get into their later teens, they will probably make up their own minds rather than going along with the crowd.

Putting on the pressure

Many young people feel under pressure to do things they are not happy about because they don't want to stick out from the crowd. This might mean wearing certain clothes or shopping in the 'right places'. On a more serious level, this might mean being absent from school, trying alcohol or drugs, shoplifting or going further with a boyfriend or girlfriend than they feel ready to.

Worried about friends

You may feel worried about the effect certain friends are having on your son/daughter. They may also be worried about what they are doing and do not know how to talk to you about it. Support your son/daughter by letting them know they can talk to you and that you will help. You can help your son/daughter trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.



If your son/daughter is unusually quiet or seems unhappy, there may be friendship problems. Suddenly having money or new clothes, unusual behaviour that you think may be caused by drink or drugs and not wanting to tell you about what they are doing are all signs that your son/daughter may be getting into trouble. It's unlikely that they're doing it alone.



Find out if your son/daughter is having any problems at school or with friends. Ask if there is anything you can do to help and let them know you are always there for them. If the problem carries on, talk to the school or a Social Worker.



Talk to your son/daughter calmly and try not to judge them, as this will only make it less likely that they open up to you and feel they can trust you. Problems or friendship break-ups that may seem small to you are very important to your son/daughter.



Even though you may not be the first person your son/daughter turns to when in trouble, your support is still important. To help stop your son/daughter from keeping problems in, let them know you are always there for them when they need you.



- www.bbc.co.uk/parenting
- www.raisingkids.co.uk
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

My 14-year-old son was spending hours on the computer every evening. As well as worrying that he might become addicted, he was so secretive I realised I had no idea who he was contacting and what sort of personal information he might be giving out.



Internet abuse & exploitation

NEW TECHNOLOGY, OLD PROBLEM

- The Internet can be fun and is useful
- It is important that parents monitor their son/daughter's internet use
- Stranger danger exists online as well as in the real world
- Children and teenagers can be bullied online

Using the internet is part of daily life for a lot of young people. It's great for finding information quickly, chatting to people with similar interests, playing games and keeping in touch with friends.

Unfortunately there are risks attached to using the internet from, for example, sites that contain violent or sexual content and from child abusers who use chatrooms to become friendly with young people. It's also possible for children and young people to be bullied online through email, instant messaging and websites.

Get involved

If you have a computer at home, keep an eye on what's going on by keeping it in a family room, not hidden away in a bedroom. Take an interest in the websites your son/daughter visits and encourage them to talk about how they spend their time online. If you're not confident about using internet yourself, why not ask your son/daughter to show you how? Limit the amount of time they spend online and encourage them to have other interests and hobbies.

Contact from strangers

Remind your son/daughter that strangers on the internet can be just as dangerous as strangers on the street. People online might not be who they say they are. They should never give out their full name, address, e-mail or personal information (name of school, where they hang out with friends, mobile number) to people they meet in chatrooms online as this could allow someone to locate them.

They should be very wary about agreeing to a face-to-face meeting with someone they have met online. If they really want to meet up with an online friend you should insist on going with them and make sure you meet in a busy public place. Warn your son/daughter not to open e-mail attachments from senders that they don't know as they could contain a virus.

Bullying

Increasing numbers of young people are victims of 'cyber bullying'. This can mean getting threatening or hurtful emails or text messages or having abusive things written about them on websites or chatrooms. Try ignoring these messages as the bully may get bored and stop. If not, it may be possible to block messages (see contact list). If the messages are coming from someone at school, report it as the school will have an anti-bullying policy. If threats seem serious, contact the police.

Inappropriate content

Your son/daughter may come across websites with disturbing sexual or violent content. Encourage them to tell you if they are distressed or concerned about anything they have seen online. Don't over react - remember that it's possible they came across it accidentally. Software filters can help block inappropriate material but are not 100% effective and are not a substitute for good adult supervision.



Keeping it secret when using the internet, changes in how they act, unusual sexual questions, leaving clues (such as emails) that they are having chats with others which seem sexual or you are not comfortable with, or problems at school and not telling you where they are going or who they are meeting.



Encourage your son/daughter to discuss how they spend their time online. Learn how to use the internet yourself so you can understand what your son/daughter is viewing and whether it is suitable.



Discuss with your son/daughter the dangers of chat rooms and looking at unsuitable websites. Make sure they know that any personal information, including their real name, should not be passed on to anyone else. Be open-minded about the teen-websites they are viewing, but let them know that if they are worried about anything they see or read on the internet they can ask you about it.



Keep the computer in a family room, with the monitor facing outwards, so you can always see what's on screen. Discuss which websites your son/daughter is looking at and take a look for yourself. Make sure your son/daughter is aware of the dangers.



Useful websites on Internet use and safety:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) 0870 000 3344
- www.stoptextbully.com
- www.kidsmart.org.uk
- www.websafecrackerz.com
- www.chatdanger.com
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk

I'm excited for my son now that he's leaving home, but I also worry about how he's going to cope with paying the rent and bills. He's never had to manage money before.

Living away from home

BEING PREPARED

- When they decide to leave home make sure your son/daughter is ready
- Teach your son/daughter about how much things cost
- Ask them to stay in touch
- Get support from family and friends when they leave



Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

If your son/daughter leaves home to live away from you for the first time, it's a big step for both of you. They may be going because further education such as college or university is taking them to another city or because of training or work. This means your relationship is moving on to a different stage. The change may be exciting and difficult for both of you.

Some young people don't think twice about the fact that their meals are cooked, their clothes are washed and ironed, their phone calls are paid for and the house is clean. When they move out of home it can be a big shock to realise that they've got to do all these things themselves and they will probably not realise how much things cost.

There are many things your son/daughter needs to understand before setting out on their own and you can help them by chatting about:

- Paying rent: setting up standing orders or a direct debit, signing a contract, and rights as a tenant.
- Paying bills: putting money aside for Council Tax, bills such as gas, electricity, water and telephone, travel, as well as food and going out.
- Eating healthily: you can't expect miracles, but you can explain what makes up a balanced diet with a range of fruit and vegetables. Help them to cook a few simple meals before they go.
- Living with others: they will need to understand how to take into account others' wishes, share jobs around the home and share living expenses.

While your son/daughter will be enjoying their new freedom, try to get them to stay in touch and come home for visits.

Difficulties of being at home

It can be hard to live with someone who has bad moods and there can be lots of arguments. You may not like the fact that you are paying for their lifestyle and may wish your son/daughter no longer lived at home. However they would like to appear, a teenager is still young and needs you, so the longer they live at home, the more chance they have to build up the confidence to deal with the outside world on their own. Even as they are growing up and changing they will still need your love and support.

If your son/daughter wants to leave home against your wishes, put them in touch with the local Council. If they are disabled, unemployed or homeless, the Social Housing department may be able to help them.



Problems at home can leave you both wishing they lived somewhere else. Try to discuss and solve problems - the longer a young person lives at home, the more prepared they will be when they do move out. If your son/daughter is keen to leave home, make sure they know exactly what to expect when they have to look after themselves.



Make sure your son/daughter is ready for living away from home. This means learning how to budget, how to cook healthy meals, learning about keeping themselves safe and learning to live with others.



Get your son/daughter to talk about any worries about living away from home. Remind them that if they get lonely they can always call you and return home for visits. They should also be able to talk to their college, university, training or workplace.



Talk to your son/daughter about leaving home too soon or if you feel they are too young to deal with looking after themselves. Not paying their rent or bills could lead them to being fined or made homeless.



- Connexions Direct
www.connexions-direct.com
- www.thesite.org
- Shelter 0800 800 4444
(24-hour advice line)
www.shelter.org.uk
- www.housemate.org.uk

Since his father died, my son seems to have disappeared into his own little world. I desperately want to help him, but I don't know what to do. He just doesn't want to talk to me about it.

Loss & bereavement

COPIING WITH GRIEF

- Share your loss
- Loss or death affects everyone differently
- Talking helps ease the pain
- Understanding the grieving process will help your son/daughter
- Be there for each other

Look up a word

*Bereavement Counsellor - Trained professional who can help people to come to terms with feelings when someone close has died.

*Grief - Word used to describe the feeling of loss when someone dies.

Loss, such as divorce or separation from a boyfriend or girlfriend, someone leaving or death is difficult for everyone. For young people, not quite being a child anymore but not yet an adult can make it difficult for them to deal with their emotions.

The death of a loved one can seem overwhelming. The death of a pet who has been a part of the family for many years or the loss of a close friend moving away can also be extremely traumatic for young people.

Young people need a lot of patience and understanding to help them work through their grief*.

There is no right or wrong way to react and everyone responds in different ways. There will be a range of emotions your son/daughter is likely to go through:

- Numbness as they try to understand that someone is really not coming back.
- Anger at the person who left or died, at you, at others or themselves.
- Blaming themselves for their loss. Thinking they may have driven someone away.
- Guilt possibly blaming themselves in some way, or feeling guilty because they don't think they're grieving 'enough.'
- Fear that the world as they know it has changed forever.
- Sadness at never seeing that person again.
- Relief, if the person who died was in pain or suffering.
- Depressed, feeling that life has lost all meaning.

Their behaviour may change as they deal with their emotions and try to come to terms with their loss. They may find it hard to cope with day to day realities. They may take their anger out on you, get into trouble at school, find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork or want to go out with friends more, pushing the boundaries and maybe experimenting with alcohol or drugs, as a way of forgetting. Grief can take many different forms.

How you can help

It is easy for young people to think they are the only ones who have suffered bereavement and that no one else understands, but talking to other people will help ease the process. Talk to your son/daughter about what has happened as much as they want to, but they may find this hard, so encourage friends or a teacher to be there for them, too. They may also benefit from talking to a bereavement counsellor*.

Make sure the school knows of their loss and that they will need time, understanding and help as they work through their bereavement. The bereavement organisation, Cruse, also has a website specifically aimed at young people (see right).

If you too are suffering, then it is going to be particularly hard for you to not only deal with your own emotions, but those of your children, too. Try to keep talking to each other, so you can share your grief, rather than each of you grieving alone.



Everyone reacts to death differently and it takes some people longer than others to come to terms with a loss. Give your son/daughter as much time and patience as they need, but if you think they are having long-term difficulties, you may want to think about talking to a bereavement counsellor.



Take your cue from your son/daughter. You may not be the person they find it easiest to talk to, so encourage others to be there for them. But always let them know that you are there for them if they need you.



Your son/daughter may think it's too painful for you to talk about a loved one who has died. Let them know that there are times when you want to talk. Talking about someone who has died helps keep his or her spirit alive. Remember to let them know it's alright to still laugh or have fun - it doesn't mean you're grieving any less.



Keep the lines of communication open as the more you talk, the easier the healing process will be. As a parent you can help your son/daughter through this difficult time. You can tell them if someone you know has died, and how you felt.



• Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline
0870 167 1677
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

I don't mean to keep hitting her, but she makes me so angry when she doesn't do what she's told that I just lash out. Now she won't talk to me or tell me where she's been.



Missing from home

AND RUNNING AWAY

- Know where your son/daughter is
- Give family support - your son/daughter is at risk
- Physical and sexual abuse can make young people run away
- Get help for your family

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Young people love being able to do what they want and part of that is not having to always tell you where they are or answer to you.

This is fine if you have built up trust and you can usually rely on them to be sensible and to be home at a time you both agree on. Problems may happen if your son/daughter often stays out late or is missing for a night or two, or they will not tell you where they have been or who they have been with. If this happens they may be trying drugs or alcohol and could be open to sexual abuse or may be getting into trouble with the Police. Do not panic, but try to talk to your son/daughter in a calm supportive way.

Home sweet home

If your son/daughter is spending a lot of time out of the house and does not want to be at home with family you need to look at the reasons why. Are there fights at home? Are there money or personal problems? Do family members have trouble talking to each other calmly and sensibly? Are you worried about your son/daughter's friends or where they might be hanging out? Have you set fair rules that will make everyone's life easier?

What could happen

If your son/daughter doesn't come home when you ask them to and often stays out later, or at times doesn't come home at all and says they have been 'staying with mates' do not panic. Try to understand why they are acting this way. It may be because they do not feel they are getting the family support they need or there is mental, physical or sexual abuse. If they are out all hours and don't want to tell you where they've been it is possible that they could be mixing with people involved in drugs, alcohol, anti-social behaviour or crime. They are also more likely to be missing school. You must tell the police if your son/daughter goes missing.

Running away

Running away is a call for help from young people. Most run away because of arguments or violence at home, because of pregnancy, or physical and sexual abuse. The charity, Childline says 37% of boys and 63% of girls who call them about running away or being homeless also talked about being physically or sexually abused. If your son/daughter has run away and you want to find them, contact the Police or local help organisation.



Staying out late, not telling you where they've been, not coming home at night and not going to school are all signs that your son/daughter could be getting into trouble.



Setting ground rules such as what time to be in by will let your son/daughter know what is expected of them. Your son/daughter may have reasons for not wanting to be at home, such as family problems or physical or sexual abuse. Let your son/daughter know you are there for them if they want to talk about problems.




If your son/daughter doesn't want to be at home and can't talk to you about what's going on in their life, you need to get communication started again. Choose a time when you can sit quietly together, talk about any issues and how you can re-build your relationship.



Talking is the key to a good relationship. If your son/daughter knows they can talk to you about any problems, they can often be dealt with before it gets too late. It is up to you to keep your son/daughter safe, so if you have a good relationship they are more likely to tell you where they are going and what they are doing.



- Childline 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
- Shelterline National Helpline
0808 800 4444 www.housemate.org.uk
- Missing Persons Helpline
0500 700 700
- Running - Other Choices (ROC)
Freephone 0800 783 6686



I couldn't understand why my 15-year-old daughter's arms were always covered in cuts. When I found out what she was doing, I went mad. She's just attention-seeking... isn't she?

Self-harming

UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORT

- One in ten young people hurt themselves
- Self-harm is a sign of deeper problems
- Understand the reasons why your son/daughter self-harms
- Find out how to help your son/daughter

Look up a word

*Self-harm - To hurt yourself on purpose.

Self-harming* or hurting yourself can take many forms.

This may include: cutting; burning or scalding, hitting, picking skin, head banging against a wall or other object, or taking an overdose.

According to the charity Samaritans, one-in-ten young people self-harm and girls are more likely to self-harm than boys. While the aim is to hurt, it is not usually to kill themselves and it may carry on for years without getting any worse.

People who self-harm often use it as a way of dealing with problems, such as depression, bullying, abuse or feeling unloved. Young people who self-harm say it is a way of being in control and use it to help them cope, as the physical pain takes their mind off their problems.

Self-harm is not just about getting attention, as it is most often carried out in private and kept secret from family and friends. What they are doing is a sign that they need help. Those who self-harm usually think badly of themselves and need even more attention and support. Young people who self-harm often do not get help for themselves because they may be worried about what you will think of them and their self-harm. Hurting yourself is a serious problem even if the person only lightly cuts themselves. A person who self-harms can't just decide to stop - they need help to get over their problem. Most cases of harming do not lead to death, but can be a sign that your son/daughter may be thinking about more serious harm or even suicide.

How you can help

If you know that your son/daughter hurts themselves on purpose it is normal to feel very upset, angry and powerless. Your son/daughter needs your understanding and support. Listen to what they are telling you without judging them and try not to show you are angry or upset or try to force them to stop. If this is their way of handling problems then other ways of dealing with them need to be found and tried before they can stop harming themselves. Helping them learn to deal with stress and stopping the things that cause them to self-harm in the first place will be more useful.

If your son/daughter finds it difficult to tell you about their feelings try to get them to talk to another family member friend, Teacher, Youth Worker or Social Worker.

Make sure your son/daughter can get first aid supplies to treat injuries and stop infection. If a wound looks serious or your son/daughter has taken an overdose however small call 999. You should also try to get your son/daughter to call you or the emergency services if they ever self-harm and hurt themselves seriously.

Try to get your son/daughter to talk to their Doctor, who can tell them about other ways of dealing with stress and who can tell them where to get more help. One-to-one counselling, support groups and practical support can all help.



Look out for injuries such as cuts, burns, scalds or bruises. Your son/daughter may try to hide them from you.



Try to find out if your son/daughter is self-harming. Think of reasons why they might be doing this so that you can talk through problems and other ways of dealing with them.



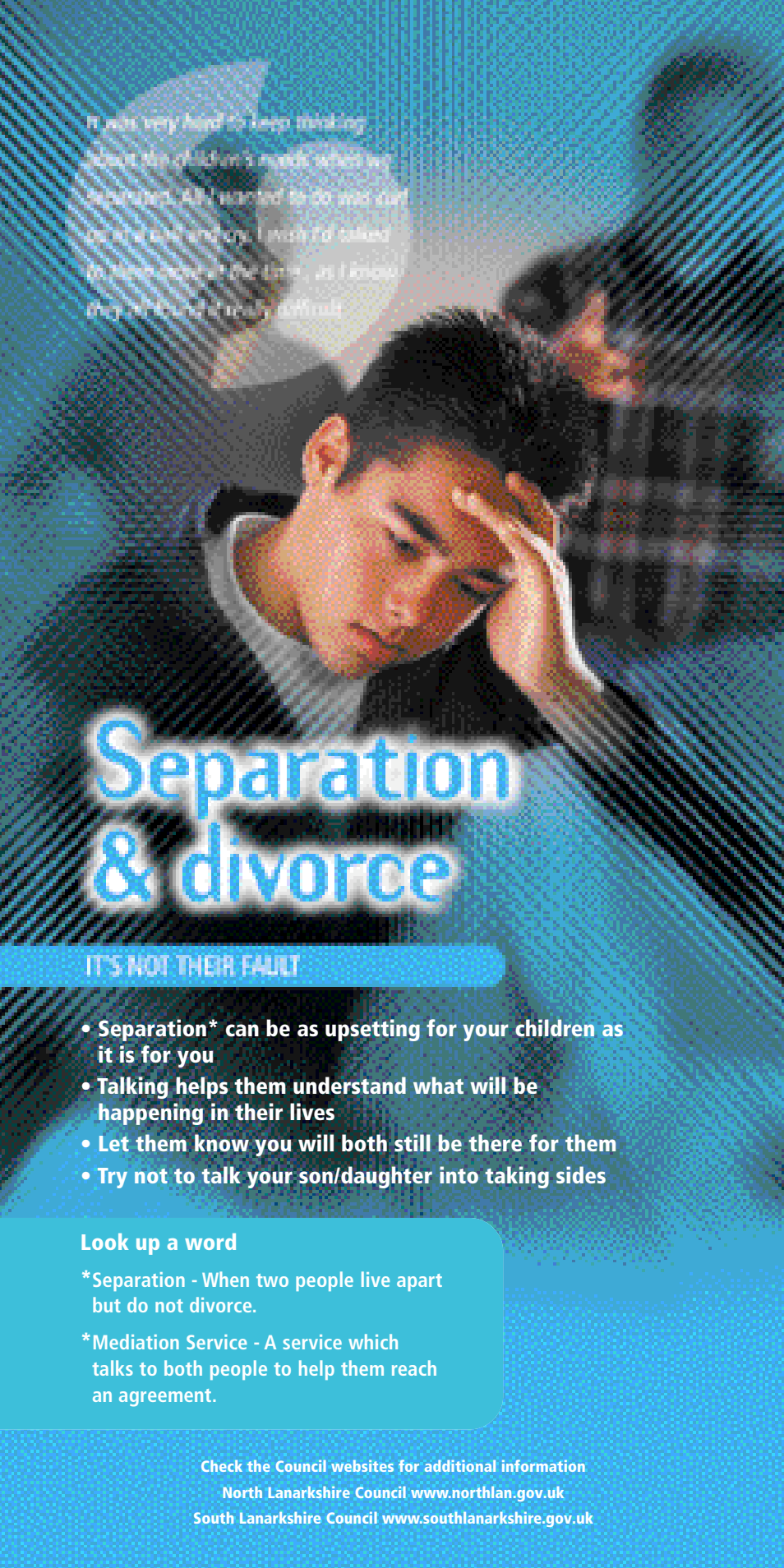
You will be upset but try not to judge them, show them you are angry or try to force them to stop. Make time to really listen to them and try to get them to talk about their problems. Suggest they see their Doctor who can get them more help if needed. You could ask your son/daughter if they would like you to go with them or maybe try talking about things as a family.



People who self-harm feel lonely and unloved. Giving your son/daughter time to talk to you, discussing difficulties they have and letting them know you are there for them will help. Your support will make them feel better about themselves.



- Childline 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
- The Samaritans 08457 90 90 90
(24-hour helpline)
www.samaritans.org/know/selfharm
- NCH (The Children's Charity)
www.nch.org.uk
- National Self-Harm Network
www.nshn.co.uk
www.helen.ukpet.com
- National Children's Bureau
www.selfharm.org.uk



It was very hard to keep thinking about the children's needs when we separated. All I wanted to do was visit and see them and one I wish I'd talked to more often at the time, as I know they are finding it really difficult.

Separation & divorce

IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT

- Separation* can be as upsetting for your children as it is for you
- Talking helps them understand what will be happening in their lives
- Let them know you will both still be there for them
- Try not to talk your son/daughter into taking sides

Look up a word

*Separation - When two people live apart but do not divorce.

*Mediation Service - A service which talks to both people to help them reach an agreement.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

When a relationship breaks down it is hard for the whole family. While you may think it is kinder to try and protect your children from the details, the truth is that the more your teen understands what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope.

If possible, have both parents there when you explain what's going to happen and why. Try not to fight in front of them and make clear that even though you will be living apart you will both be there for them whenever they need you. They may have mixed feelings during this time including feeling hurt, confused and unloved. You both need to be patient and understanding of their needs as well as your own.

Young people often think that their parents' breaking up is somehow their fault and that they've done something wrong. They may also feel that if they do things differently in the future you may get back together. They need to understand that what's happened is not their fault.

While most young people want contact with both their parents, a young person can view what's happened differently and may blame one of you for the break-up. You may find your son/daughter taking the side of one parent. Hopefully, this will pass and by explaining the facts, a good relationship can be kept with both parents.

Learning to listen

Talk to your son/daughter and listen to what they have to say. How you handle the break-up is important for their well-being. Try to get them to talk about their feelings and involve them in making choices about the future. As well as feeling like they are losing a parent in some way, they may also be worried that they will have to move house or change schools, so tell them about what may need to happen. Talk to your son/daughter about who they will live with, where and what other changes may happen. Even though you are going through a difficult time yourself, your son/daughter will also be feeling a sense of loss and hurt, so let them know what is happening to help them deal with their own feelings.

Making arrangements

If you and your partner are finding it hard to talk and agree you can get help from your local Mediation Service*.



Saying bad things or fighting with your partner in front of your children is only going to hurt them. Try to keep calm when talking about what's going to happen as how you handle things will have a big impact on their future. Your son/daughter may take the side of one parent, or become withdrawn and keep secrets.



Tell your children about what's happening and how it will affect their lives. Show them that their well-being is important to you both by listening to their feelings and wishes.



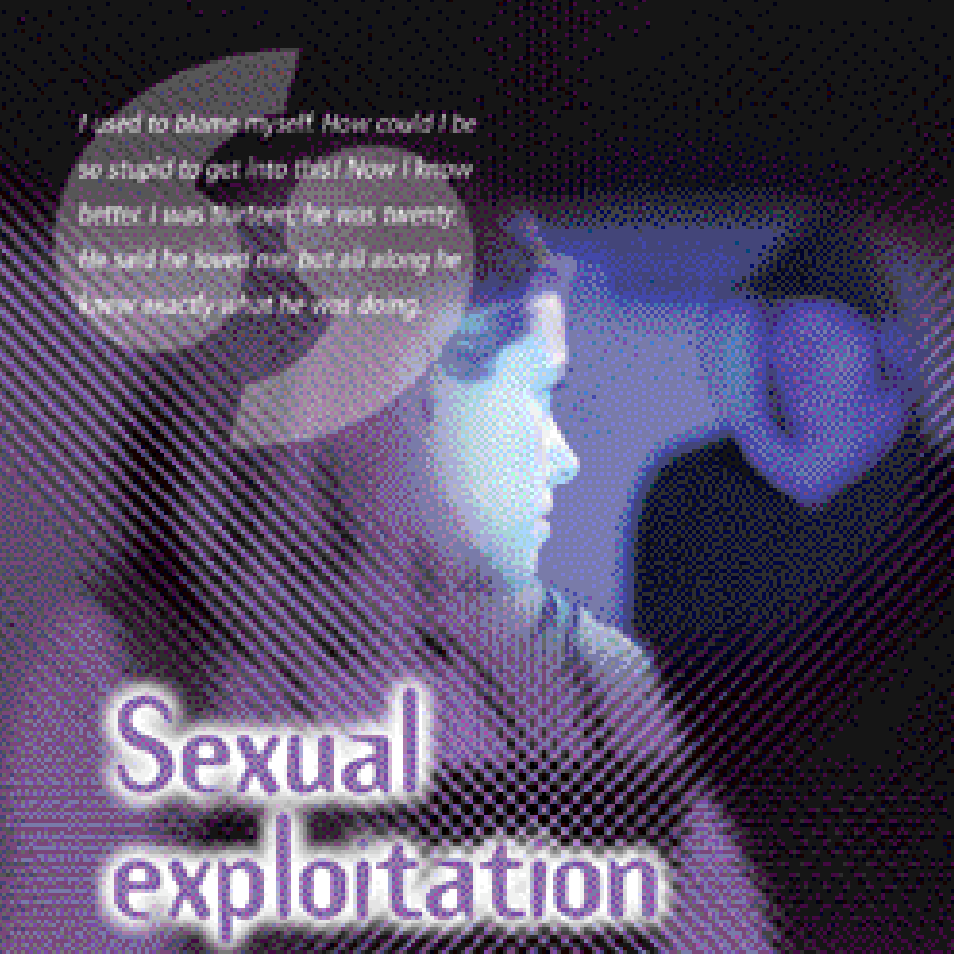
Children often think the break-up of their parents is somehow their fault. Explain why you are breaking up and that it is nothing to do with things your son/daughter may have said or done. Always give them a chance to talk about their feelings and worries.



If you do separate or divorce try to stop your children feeling hurt, guilty, or unloved. Talk to them so they understand why you are breaking up and how this will affect their lives. Let them know that both of you will do what you can to keep their lives as normal as possible.



- www.dca.gov.uk/family
Government website with tips for handling separation
- www.itsnotyourfault.org
Advice and support for both parents and teenagers
- www.relate.org.uk
- Family Mediation Scotland
0131 558 9898
www.familymediationscotland.org.uk



I used to blame myself. How could I be so stupid to get into this! Now I know better. I was drunk, he was fixated. He said he loved me, but all along he knew exactly what he was doing.

Sexual exploitation

DRAWN INTO PROSTITUTION

- **The prostitution of children is a form of sexual exploitation and abuse**
- **Young people can be drawn into prostitution by manipulative* adults who wish to make money**
- **Adults who abuse young people should be held responsible, rather than blaming the young people**
- **Young people involved in prostitution face devastating physical, emotional and psychological* risks**
- **It is never too early or too late to get help**

Look up a word

*Prostitution - Sexual activity that people are paid for.

*Manipulative - Controlling a situation to benefit yourself.

*Psychological - In your head/mind.

*Dependent - Relying on someone or something.

*Vulnerability - At risk of harm.

*Addicted - Unable to cope without something.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

It may be hard to imagine how any young person could be drawn into prostitution*.

The sad fact is that those adults who benefit from young person prostitution use clever methods to catch their victims, and keep them. It can begin with an 'exciting' new friendship with an older boyfriend who may in fact be, or become, a pimp. The child or young person may receive expensive gifts and be given alcohol or drugs. Before long the pimp creates a loyal and dependent* relationship with the victim and can then get them to make money for him by giving sexual services. This is not a business relationship, it is against the law and a form of sexual abuse, which puts your son/daughter at risk from severe physical, emotional and psychological damage.

The damage

Children or young people involved in prostitution can become victims of serious physical and sexual attacks, which can sometimes lead to death. They can easily become addicted* to drugs and alcohol and face a high risk of catching sexually transmitted infections. The emotional and psychological damage can be huge and can lead to self-harm, severe depression and even suicide.

How to spot it

There are some warning signs detailed on the opposite page that could show that your son/daughter is at risk from or is involved in prostitution. If all or even some of them apply to your son/daughter, you should seriously think that they might be at risk. All children and young people are at risk from harm.

How to stop it

Keeping or getting children and young people out of child prostitution can need specialist help. A close and positive relationship with your son/daughter can reduce their vulnerability*. Making sure that they have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves can stop them falling into abusive relationships. However, even with the best parents in the world, some young people will find themselves open to this form of abuse. Parents can often feel powerless to stop what can be a difficult and dangerous situation.

There are agencies who work with families to help stop child prostitution (some detailed right). If you feel your son/daughter is at risk they can provide information and support for you and your son/daughter to help stop dangerous relationships. If your son/daughter is involved in prostitution they will work with you and your son/daughter to form a plan and package of support to make sure that they are no longer left open to those who wish to take advantage of them. It is never too early or too late to get help.



Not going to school or staying away from home, unexplained money, clothes, jewellery or other gifts, new relationships with older men, evidence of drug or alcohol abuse, changes in mood or behaviour, loss of contact with former friends and new relationships with an older age group, lack of self-esteem.



Try to get your son/daughter to tell you about what's happening, do not ignore your son/daughter or make them feel that they are to blame. Get in touch with information and support agencies that can help you and your son/daughter.




Make sure that your son/daughter knows that you are there to help them, no matter what has happened. Let them know that they shouldn't feel ashamed, that they are victims of abuse and that you understand how difficult it must be for them.



Offer a positive and supportive home life. Watch out for low self-esteem and other warning signs. Get information and support from local agencies if you feel your son/daughter may be at risk.



- NSPCC
0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk
- Save the Children (National)
020 7703 5400
- Barnardo's (National)
020 8550 8822
www.barnardos.org.uk
- Police
0141 532 2000
- Family Protection Unit Lanarkshire
North 01698 483095
South 01698 202538



My parents explained so little to me about sex. I had to find out from friends, and half of what they said was wrong. I wish someone told my kids how, exactly, what to expect and learn about safe sex.

Sexual health

KNOW THE FACTS

- **Talking to young people openly about sex can help to delay the age at which they first have sex and make it more likely that they will use contraception when they do**
- **Many sexually transmitted infections (STIs) do not have any symptoms, therefore you may not know if you have one. Testing is the only way to know for sure**
- **If left untreated some sexually transmitted infections can cause problems with fertility**
- **If a young person is sexually active condoms help protect against STIs and pregnancy**

Look up a word

*Contraception - Form of protection from pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infections.

*STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections (such as HIV or Chlamydia).

Why should I talk to my son or daughter about sex?

Young people receive many different messages about relationships and sex. They get information from TV, magazines, friends and Sex and Relationship Education.

Some of this information will be accurate, other bits will not. As a parent you have an important role in ensuring that your son or daughter learns about relationships and sex and that the information they get is appropriate and factually accurate.

Even though it can be difficult to talk about sex with your son/daughter - it is important. Not having accurate and/or sufficient information about relationships and sex can result in negative outcomes for your son or daughter. The rates of sexually transmitted infections including HIV are on the increase with approximately 1-in-10 young people under the age of 25 having chlamydia. The UK also has the highest rates of teenage conception in Western Europe. Good parent-son/daughter communication about relationships and sex can help delay the onset of sexual activity and reduce these negative sexual health outcomes. Young people who talk to their parents openly about relationships and sex are more likely to practice safer sex when they do become sexually active.

It's important that your son/daughter learns about relationships, love, sex, STIs and using contraception* before they have sex. Although the law says that both boys and girls can have sex at 16 one third of young people under this age are already having sex. Therefore it is important to start talking to young people from an early age to make sure they are informed. They should know that it is okay to say 'no' to sex even if their friends say that they are doing it but they should also have information on where to go for advice and support and for testing and treatment.

How to tell them

Answer questions your son/daughter has with simple, clear, accurate answers. If you are not sure about something they ask be honest - tell them you don't have the answer but that you are happy to try and find out or maybe suggest that you find out together. Use magazines and TV programmes to help bring up subjects and to use as examples. Remember there are plenty of useful books and leaflets, as well as websites for both parents and young people that can help you.



Young people are starting to have sex younger and younger. Don't think that this won't happen to your son/daughter. By the time you see the warning signs it may be too late to give them the help they need. Make sure they learn about sex early on.



There are many leaflets, books and websites that can give you advice on how to tackle the subject of sexual health with your son/daughter. The more you read, the more comfortable you will be talking to them about it.



Rather than sitting down and having a one off talk about sex, STIs and relationships it may be better to have regular chats, like when doing the washing up, for example. Use magazines and TV programmes to help bring up subjects and to use as examples.



One third of under-16s are already having sex. The more your son/daughter knows about sex, the longer they are likely to wait for their first time. They are also more likely to use contraception to stop STIs and pregnancy. Young people want their parents to talk to them about sex so make sure you have the information to help them.



- Sexwise Helpline 0800 28 29 30
- Brook Advisory Centres 0800 0185023 www.brook.org.uk
- FPA Scotland 0141 576 5088 www.fpa.org.uk
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- NHS 24 08454 24 24 24 www.nhs24.com
- Sense CDs www.sensecds.com
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service 08457 30 40 30 www.bpas.org
- National Sexual Health Helpline 0800 567 123

At first I thought she was just being a moody teenager. But as time went on I realized something was really wrong. She's getting worse and worse - it's scary but I'm hoping I can get out of this terrible black hole.

Stress & anxiety

HELPING THEM COPE

- Four-in-one hundred young people suffer from depression
- Many things can set off mental ill health
- Your son/daughter needs you to listen
- Get professional help

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Not sleeping, mood swings, eating disorders, not caring about their appearance, dropping friends and hobbies, staying in their room, crying; not doing so well at school, finding it hard to work, or being self-critical.



If you think your son/daughter is depressed, talk to them and find out if there is any way you can help. Be patient and understanding - what may seem like small problems to you can be too much for a young person.

Talk to your Doctor and discuss what treatment (such as counselling) may be helpful. You could speak to your son/daughter's school to see if they have noticed any differences in your son or daughter.



Listen to and talk to your son/daughter. Help and encourage them to get their lives together. Depression can't just be switched off, it takes time and understanding to overcome it. Try to get them to contact useful organisations they can talk to in private.



A supportive and understanding family means your son/daughter may feel more able to talk to you about any problems, rather than bottling them up. Chat about their interests, hobbies, friends and schoolwork so they feel you understand the different parts of their lives.



- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Mind info line
0845 766 6163
www.mind.org
- www.hebs.com
- www.workingfamilies.org.uk

The teenage years are a difficult time and young people have a lot to deal with physically, mentally and emotionally. While every young person feels highs and lows, for some - about four or five in every hundred - this turns into depression.

Young people are more vulnerable and sensitive to what is happening to them and are less experienced at being able to deal with problems and anxieties.

Depression can be started by a number of things, such as: parents divorcing or separating; feeling ignored and unloved; or not being listened to; losing friends; changing school or moving home; worries about their looks; sexuality; health; exams or abuse.

What may seem like small problems or worries to an older person can seem like a much bigger problem to a young person. Boys are more likely to get depressed than girls and suffer from serious mental ill health.


What are the signs?

While young people can sometimes seem unhappy and quiet, you may feel that this is more than just a phase. Signs may include being unable to sleep, eating too much or too little, mood swings, staying in their bedroom all day, or giving up interests and hobbies. Crying, avoiding friends and family, finding it hard to do their schoolwork, or not caring about what they look like are other things to look out for. They may talk about death or have suicidal thoughts.

To escape from their feelings or let them out in the only way they know how, young people may start taking drugs or drinking, not going to school, becoming violent or carrying out crimes such as shoplifting.

How to help

If your son/daughter is suffering from depression they need help. Don't ignore their worries and take any talk of suicide seriously. You need to listen, try to understand what they are going through and get professional help if you need to. Get them to talk about their worries. If they don't feel they can talk to you, there are a number of helplines they can contact. If you are concerned, help them to see their Doctor or School Nurse. They may want you to come with them or may like to go alone (remember they will still need your support). The Doctor can discuss ways to help, often a referral to a trained therapist or counsellor.



She keeps hinting that she's tried drugs once or twice. I'm trying to keep cool about it, but I am worried that she'll end up trying something addictive.

Substance* misuse*

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- It's normal for young people to want to try out new things
- Having the right knowledge leads to safer choices
- Know the signs to look out for
- Be supportive and do not judge your son/daughter

Look up a word

*Substance - A chemical or drug.

*Misuse - To use in the wrong way.

It's natural for young people to be out more often and to have friends you don't get to know, and go to places you know little about.

It is also likely that your son/daughter will mix with some people who use alcohol, drugs or other chemicals (such as sniffing glue). While most young people will want to try things out, you can give them advice on how to say no if they are offered drugs or alcohol. Those who have been told about the dangers are less likely to drink heavily or take any drugs.

Studies by the charity Alcohol Concern show that levels of drinking among young people are going up. In one study, 47% of 15-year-olds had drunk alcohol in the last week. Research also shows that one in three 14-year-olds have tried drugs and by the age of 16, four out of ten young people will have tried at least one type of drug. It is also a known fact that young people are more likely to have risky sex (e.g. without contraception, with lots of different partners or unplanned sex) when they have been drinking or taking drugs. As many as one in fourteen 15-16 year olds said they'd had unprotected sex after drinking. Up to 40% of sexually active 13-14 year olds were 'drunk or stoned' when having sex for the first time.

Should you be worried?

Although drinking and drug taking is serious, for most young people it is a phase they go through and grow out of as they get older. While it may be an issue for you, your son/daughter probably won't see drinking or occasionally taking drugs as a problem. This is a natural age to want to try out new things, testing boundaries and being part of the 'in-crowd'.

However, there may be signs that your son/daughter's drinking or drug taking is more than just trying it out. They may keep secrets, steal and find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork or be absent from school. Their moods may change and they may become more lazy or difficult.

Being supportive

You can help your son/daughter by making sure they are given the facts and know about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Building up a good relationship with your son/daughter means they are more likely to talk to you about any concerns they have, which also means they are less likely to turn to drugs or alcohol as a way of getting away from problems.

If you think your son/daughter does have a problem, choose a quiet time to talk. Don't over-react, accuse or threaten, but try to get them to talk about what's happening. If they find it hard to talk to you, try to find another adult, such as a family friend or teacher they can open up to. Talk to your Doctor if you feel your son/daughter needs more help. There are also many organisations that offer information and advice to help you and your son/daughter (see Contacts).



Changes in behaviour, such as stealing, being absent from school, getting into fights, being moody, lazy and keeping secrets can all be signs that your teen is taking drugs or drinking.



Try to get your son/daughter to talk to you about what they are doing, without pushing them. If you think that there is a serious problem, talk about the issue without judging them, as your son/daughter will need your help and understanding.



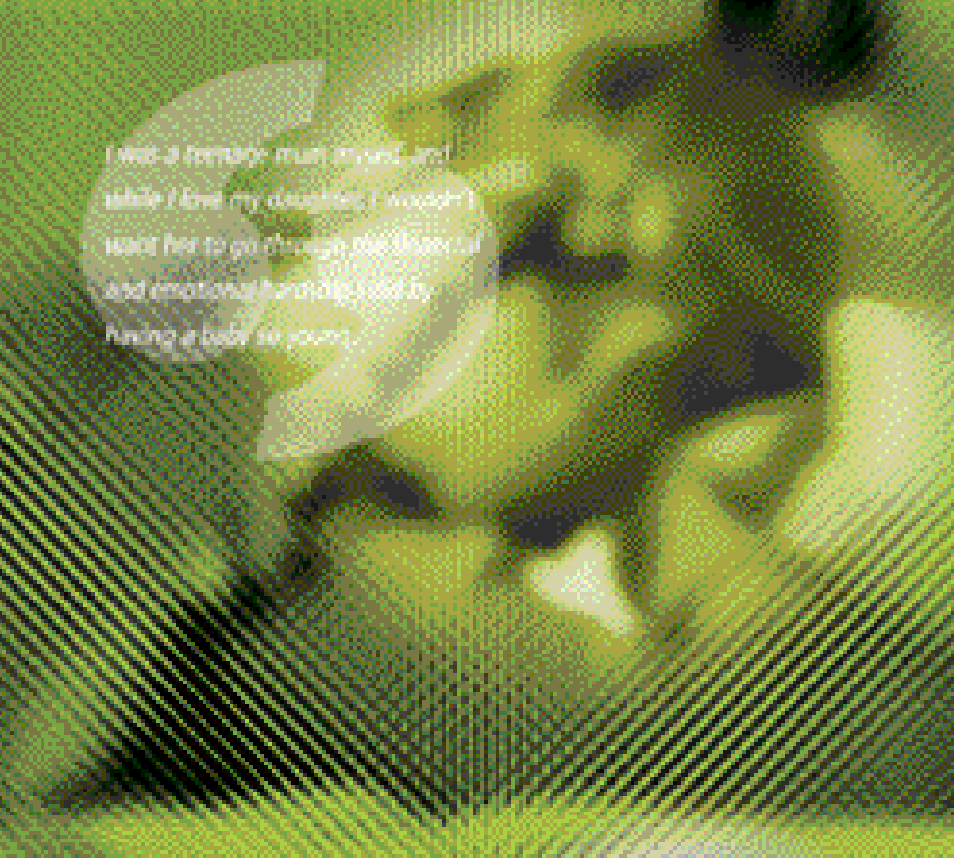
A good relationship between you means that your son/daughter will make safer choices. Make sure they know about the different drugs they may come across and their dangers. The more informed you are, the more you will be able to help them.



Being educated about drugs and their dangers from an early age means it's less likely that they will have serious drug or alcohol problems. It's also good to lead by example. If your children see you getting drunk or using drugs, it increases the chances of them doing the same.



- ADFAM 020 7928 8898
www.adfam.org.uk
- Drinkline National Alcohol Helpline
0800 917 8287 www.wrecked.co.uk
- National Drugs Helpline
0800 77 66 00
www.talktofrank.com
- www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk
- www.sad.org.uk
- www.knowthescore.info
- www.healthscotland.com/drugs



I was a teenage mum myself, and while I love my daughter I wouldn't want her to go through the physical and emotional hardships I had by having a baby so young.

Teenage pregnancy



pregnancy test

PREVENTATIVE PARENTING

- The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe
- Last year over 7,000 girls under 16 got pregnant
- Lack of information is a common problem for young people
- Talk to your son/daughter

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

B

ritain has the highest rate of teenage conceptions in Western Europe.

Talking openly with your children about relationships and sexual health is important. Good parent-child communication about relationships and sexual health can help delay the onset of sexual activity and reduce unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Young people who talk to their parents openly about relationships and sex are more likely to practice safer sex when they do become sexually active.

What your son/daughter should know

It's important that your son/daughter knows that it is okay to say 'no' to having sex. Young people receive messages about sex on a daily basis from television, magazines and friends and it is important that they do not feel that they have to have sex just because all their friends say that they are, or because their boyfriend or girlfriend wants them to. It is important to let them know that relationships are about love and friendship and not just about having sex.

However young people also need to know about sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, how to protect themselves if they are sexually active and where to go for advice, support and testing and treatment.

Young people often don't understand the types of contraception available, how to use them (such as how to put a condom on) and how to access them. Males and females both have a responsibility for contraception and should be taught that using condoms in addition to other forms of contraception is best, as contraception such as the pill only protects against unwanted pregnancy and not against sexually transmitted infections.

Young people should be made aware that it is not legal for anyone under the age of 16 to have sex. However many young people under this age are sexually active. Under 16s can access advice, contraception and can consent to medical treatment including termination of pregnancy without their parents knowledge, as long as the doctor they see decides that they have understood what is involved and the possible effects of the treatment. Doctors and other health professionals will try to encourage young people to talk to their parents/carers but they must respect the young person's right to confidentiality.

Unprotected sex

Emergency contraception is a form of contraception that can be used up to 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent a pregnancy. There are two types: the emergency contraceptive pill and the emergency IUD (Intra uterine device). The emergency contraceptive pill can be taken up to 3 days after unprotected sex but is most effective if taken within the first 24 hours. It is free of charge from family planning clinics and some chemists. You can also get it from your local GP. The emergency IUD can be fitted into the womb by a doctor up to 5 days after unprotected sex. If your daughter has taken emergency contraception and has not had a period within three weeks they should take a pregnancy test and see their doctor.



One third of under-16s are already having sex, so don't think your son/daughter is any different. Warning signs that your son/daughter may be pregnant include keeping secrets, missed periods, morning sickness, worrying and changes in body shape.



If you think your daughter is pregnant, the sooner you talk about it and she can make an informed choice the better. The longer she does nothing about it the less choices she will have. Try to get her to go to her Doctor or a local clinic and offer to go with her if she wants you there.




While it may be a shock to learn that your daughter or your son's partner is pregnant, they need your help and understanding, so try not to judge them. Talk about her options of abortion, adoption or keeping the baby and the good and bad points about each choice. Whatever you think, the final choice must be hers alone.



The more young people are informed: the less likely they are to have sex too early and they are more likely to use protection when they do. This reduces the risk of pregnancy as well as STIs.



- NHS 24 - 0845 24 24 24
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) 08457 304030
- Family Planning Association Scotland Helpline 0141 576 5088
- GP
- School Nurse



I had no idea my daughter was skipping school on a regular basis, until they called me about her attendance levels. Now I'm making more effort to be involved in her schoolwork and she feels more supported.

Truancy

ARE THEY AT SCHOOL?

- Young people not going to school is a big problem
- Try to understand why they are not going to school
- Missing school affects the chances of getting a good job
- It is your job to make sure your son/daughter goes to school

Look up a word

*Truancy or playing truant - Staying away from school.



Notice what times your son/daughter is around, if they should be in school and check up if they say school has allowed them out. You may not even know until you are told by the school or Police.



Find out why your son/daughter is missing school and talk about any problems such as bullying or fear of failure. Discuss what your son/daughter wants for their future and how to reach short-term goals.



Talk to your son/daughter about any school problems and listen to their worries. Take an active interest in schoolwork or activities such as arts or sports clubs.



It is your job to make sure that your son/daughter gets an education. Always take an interest in their school life and what they are doing, so your son/daughter knows they can talk to you about any problems before they get out of control.



- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- www.parentcentre.gov.uk
- www.ukparents.co.uk

Truancy is a national problem. Every day 50,000 children miss school. If your son/daughter regularly misses school it can have a big effect not only on your son/daughter but on you, the school and even the community.

The results of missing school are serious for your son/daughter. The more schoolwork they miss, the harder it is to catch up and the more likely they are to skip days or even want to drop out. They are missing out on building and keeping friends who are often a real support during the teenage years.

Truancy also reaches into the community, as there is a knock-on effect of higher levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. If your teen misses school they are more likely to come across situations where there are drugs or alcohol and are more exposed to possible sexual abuse.

It is a problem when parents allow their son/daughter to miss school. Some parents need their son/daughter's support at home more than others, perhaps they have an illness or other younger children at home. Any time away from school, even for a short family holiday can affect their education. Please consider the unspoken message you might give your son/daughter if you let them think it is acceptable to miss school.

How to stop truancy

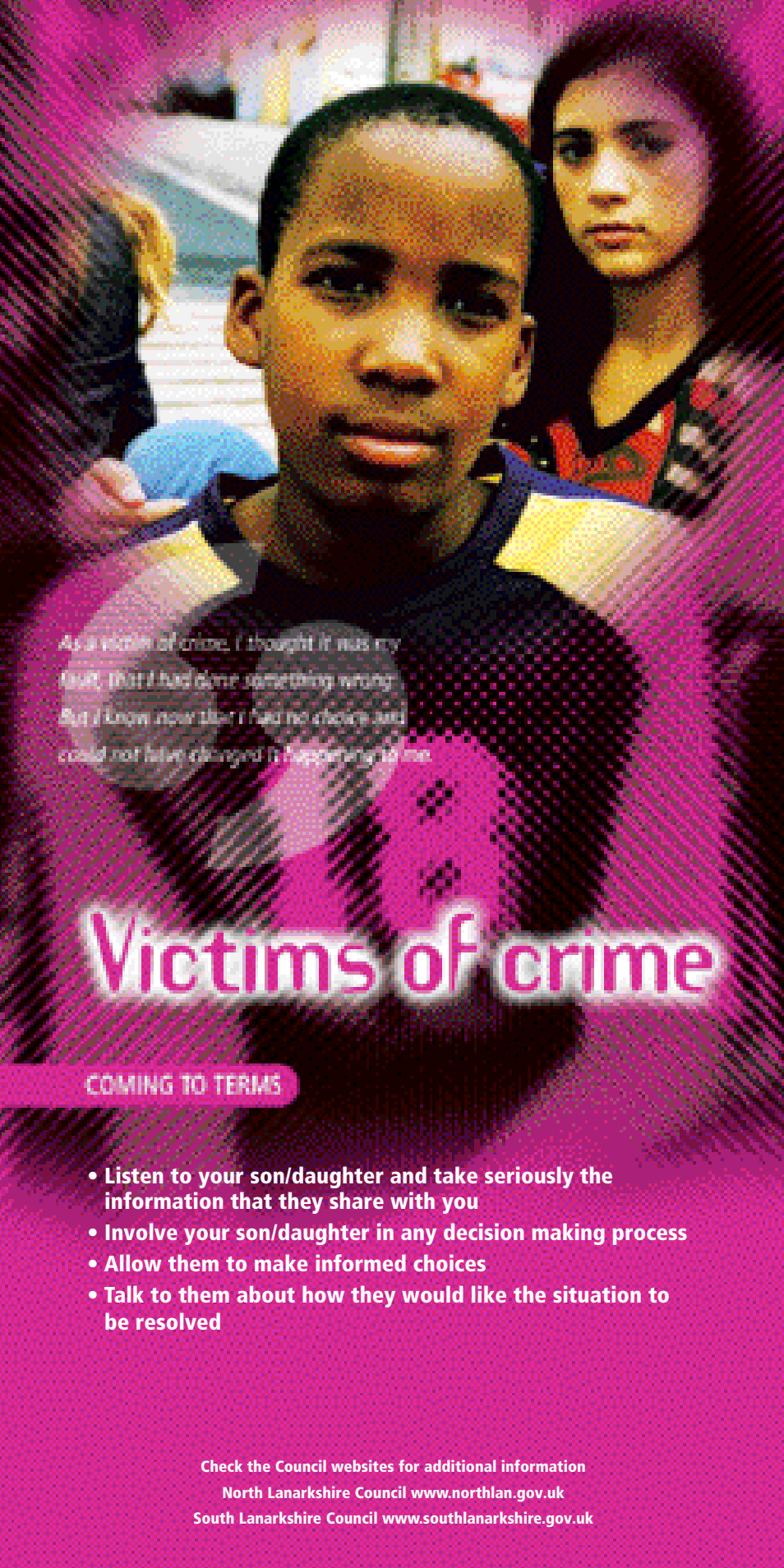
If truancy is a problem, you need to find out why they want to miss school. They may find school frightening, lack self-confidence, feel they are failing or maybe they are being bullied. If you are struggling to get your son/daughter to attend school, please let the school know. The school provides a range of support for parents on tackling attendance problems.

Once you understand the causes, it may be easier to get your son/daughter to return to school.

Make sure your son/daughter understands the importance that education and going to school everyday has on their future. Take an interest in what happens during their school day and with homework. Praise them when they do well and listen to any concerns they may have. Talk to teachers about how they are getting on.

Attendance & the law

Parents of school age children must provide education for their children either by attendance at school or by other means. Where a young person fails to attend, without reasonable excuse, the local authority has the power to refer the son/daughter to the children's panel and/or prosecute the parents in the sheriff court.



As a victim of crime, I thought it was my fault, that I had done something wrong. But I know now that I had no choice and could not have changed it happening to me.

Victims of crime

COMING TO TERMS

- Listen to your son/daughter and take seriously the information that they share with you
- Involve your son/daughter in any decision making process
- Allow them to make informed choices
- Talk to them about how they would like the situation to be resolved

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Despite impressions from the Media, it is far more likely that son/daughters will be the victims of crime than being responsible for it.

Victims can often feel angry, ignored, rejected or even abused by the justice process if their need for information about an offence against themselves is not provided by the appropriate agency. An important element in healing the experience of crime is an opportunity to 'tell their story' of what happened. Receiving acknowledgement about what has happened to them often helps victims put their own feelings into perspective.

Often it is important to tell their story to those who caused the harm and have the offenders understand the impact of their actions. This can result in the victim feeling empowered again, since the offence left them with a feeling of loss of control over their property, their body, their emotions and their dreams. Also, if a young offender makes the effort to right the harm if only partially, it is a way of saying to the victim "I'm taking responsibility and you are not to blame."

When faced with a traumatic event like becoming a victim of crime, your son/daughter may experience a range of emotions such: as anxiety; worry; fear; tension; depression; anger or irritation. There are physical symptoms too. Your son/daughter may feel nauseous, shaky or dizzy. They may find it difficult to sleep, eat, relax, or lose interest in what is going on around them. These are all very normal reactions.

Your son/daughter may move quickly or slowly through the recovery process. They may come to terms very quickly with what has happened and then another unrelated incident may trigger the emotions felt at the time of the incident. These emotions can often be intense and again this is very normal. Tell your son/daughter it is normal to experience physical and emotional symptoms whilst moving through the recovery process and offer your help and support.



If your son/daughter appears withdrawn; anxious; angry; depressed; tense; irritated or worried. Are they finding it difficult to sleep, eat, relax or losing interest in what is going on around them



Talk to your son/daughter about their feelings. Re-assure and support them with the decisions/choices they make. Remember they may not react in the same way as you.



Explain that what they are experiencing is a normal way to feel. Tell them that everyone reacts differently and that you and also victim support organisations are there to support them.



Make your son/daughter aware of how to keep themselves and their belongings safe. However, it is important to remember that it is only possible to take steps to reduce the risks of being a victim or crime and that overall prevention is about addressing the offender's behaviour not the victim's.



- National Victim Support
020 7735 9166
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Young Victims Project
0800 458 3319
- Victim Supportline
0845 30 30 900



She didn't say anything, but I could tell that having to look after me was having an impact on her. But how could I care for my daughter when she was caring for me and my baby brother?

I made a few phone calls and discovered that even with my illness, I can still be a good parent!

Young carers

WHO CARES?

- 3% of carers are young carers
- One in five of young carers miss school because of their caring responsibilities.
- The government and Education and Health Services are there to help and become involved, once concern is raised.
- There are many forms of support to help you both cope with their caring responsibilities.
- You care about your young carer! So make contact with the support groups and organisations that are out there to help.

Check the Council websites for additional information
North Lanarkshire Council www.northlan.gov.uk
South Lanarkshire Council www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Many people need special care provided in their homes. They may be ill, disabled or elderly, or they may be experiencing drug or alcohol problems.

Receiving care from a member of the family can be one solution. However, when the carer is a young adult, it is especially important to make sure that their needs are properly cared for too.

If your son/daughter carries out any caring role, either for yourself or another member of their immediate family, it is essential that their well-being does not suffer as a result of their responsibilities. Most importantly, tell Social Services, Education or Health Services about your situation. You don't have to cope alone; they can help you both get the support and advice you need.

Education

Naturally you will want your son/daughter to do well at school. Whilst many young carers achieve good results, national research has shown that caring can have a negative effect on education. To prevent this, it is normally helpful if your son/daughter's school or college are informed of their caring role. That way they can allow for the needs and pressures that your son/daughter may be under and offer sensitive advice and support.

Health

Sometimes young carers can be so busy looking after others, that they forget to look after themselves, and can become ill, stressed or depressed. The best way to avoid this is to get help from your GP and local Health Centre. Let them know all about your individual situation so that they can provide the help and advice that you both need.

Extra support

This can include special breaks for carers and additional support services for particular needs. There are local and national organisations, specially set up to help young carers and their parents.



Late homework, absence from school, over-tiredness and behavioural problems may be signs that your son/daughter is struggling with their caring role. It is vital that you talk to, and listen to your son/daughter and take the action needed to help them cope.



Don't think that you and your son/daughter have to deal with this situation alone.

Get as much information as you can and find out what services, support, benefits and advice is available. You're not alone - make contact!



Make sure Social Services, Education or Health Services/your GP know about your situation - keep them up to date if things change.



The government and Education and Health Services are there to help and become involved, once concern is raised.



- Young Carers Lanarkshire
North 01698 258801
South 01698 455455
- www.carers.net
- www.childrenscotland.org.uk
- www.carers.org
- www.youngcarers.net
- www.enquire.org.uk

Helpful national organisations

ADFAM - Advice for Families and Friends of Drug and Alcohol Users

020 7928 8898
www.adfam.org.uk

Barnardo's

020 8550 8822
www.barnardos.org.uk

Beating Eating Disorders

0845 634 1414
www.b-eat.co.uk

Brook Advisory Centres

0800 018 5023
www.brook.org.uk

British Victims of Abortion

0845 603 8501
www.bvafoundation.org

Child Accident Prevention Trust

020 7608 3828
www.capt.org.uk

Care for Scotland

0141 322 7212
www.care.org

Childline

0800 1111

CRUSE-Bereavement Care Helpline

0870 167 1677
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

CRY-SIS Helpline

08451 228 669
www.cry-sis.org.uk

Day Care Trust

020 7840 3350 (Parents helpline)
www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission

08457 622 633
www.drc-gb.org

Drinkline National Alcohol Helpline

0800 917 8287

Equal Opportunities Commission

0845 601 5901
www.eoc.org.uk

Family Friends of Lesbian and Gays (FFLAG)

01454 852418 (central helpline)
www.fflag.org.uk

Family Mediation Service Scotland

0113 558 9898
www.familymediationscotland.org.uk

Family Planning Association (FPA) Scotland

0141 576 5088
www.fpa.org.uk

Family Rights Group

0800 731 1696
www.frg.org.uk

FPA Scotland

0141 576 5088

Gingerbread

0141 576 5085
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Internet Watch Hotline

0845 600 8844

Kidscape

08451 205 204
(parents bullying helpline)
www.kidscape.org.uk

Mental Health Line

0800 387 034

Message Home (for young people to get a message to their parents)

0800 700 740

Missing Persons Helpline

0500 700 700 (24 hours)
www.missingpersons.org

National Council for One Parent Families

020 7428 5400
Lone Parent Helpline 0800 018 5026
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk

National Debtline

0808 8084 000

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk

National Drugs Helpline (FRANK)

0800 77 66 00 (24 hour free advice)
www.talktofrank.com

NHS 24

08454 24 24 24
www.nhs24.com

NSPCC

0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)

08457 023867
www.pada.org.uk

Parentline Plus

0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

0121 248 2000
www.rospa.co.uk

Samaritans

0845 790 90 90

Sexwise Helpline

0800 28 29 30
7am-12 midnight (12-18 year olds)
www.ruthinking.co.uk

Young Minds

020 7336 8445
Parents Information Service
0800 018 2138
www.youngminds.org.uk

South Lanarkshire

Addiction Service

Hamilton
01698 286777
Clydesdale
01555 773620

Drug & Alcohol Projects

Blantyre - Substance Misuse Team
01698 52740
Cambuslang/Rutherglen
Substance Misuse Team
0141 613 5130
East Kilbride Substance Misuse Team
01355 807000
Hamilton Substance Misuse Team
01698 455466
Lanark Substance Misuse Team
01555 673400
Larkhall Substance Misuse Team
01698 884656

Police

Family Protection Unit:
01698 202538

Social Work Area Teams:

Blantyre 01698 527400
Clydesdale 01555 673000
East Kilbride 01355 80700
Strathaven 01698 455400
Larkhall 01698 884656
Rutherglen/Cambuslang
0141 647 9977

Victim Support

01698 301111

North Lanarkshire

Addiction Service

Coatbridge 01236 431161
Motherwell 01698 266717

Child Care Information Service

01266 812281

Department of Education

01236 812222

Drug & Alcohol Projects

Airdrie Addiction Support Project
01236 753341
Mondlands Addiction Counselling
Service 01236 753263
Bellshill - RUSHES, Young Persons
Drug & Alcohol Project
01698 746775
Cumbernauld & Lanarkshire
Counselling Service
01236 731378
Wishaw - Shield Centre
01698 355865

Eva Project

01236 707767

Money Advice Services

Airdrie/Coatbridge
01236 812696
Bellshill/Motherwell/Wishaw
01698 346790
Cumbernauld
01236 618182

Police

Family Protection Unit
01698 483095 / 96

Shared Care Team

01698 332090

Social Work Area Teams

Airdrie 01236 757000
Bellshill 01698 346666
Coatbridge 01236 622100
Cumbernauld 01236 638700
Motherwell 01698 332100
Shotts 01501 824700
Wishaw 01698 384200

Women's Aid

01698 321000

Young Carers

01698 258801

Victim Support

01698 336565

All areas in Lanarkshire

Out of Hours Social Work Stand by Service

0800 811 505

Public Health Nurse Contact local your local Health Centre(formerly known as Health Visitor)

Rape Crisis

01698 527003