Department for Education – Together we can tackle child abuse
Campaign briefing note – March 2016

Background
On Thursday 3 March 2016, the Department for Education is launching a national campaign to encourage members of the public to report child abuse.

We are supporting the ‘Together we can tackle child abuse’ campaign in Lancashire, which aims to encourage the public to report their concerns in order to get help to children more quickly.

A third of people who suspect child abuse, do nothing because they’re worried about being wrong. In 2014/15, more than 400,000 children in England were supported because someone noticed they needed help.

The campaign addresses all forms of abuse and neglect and the aims to raise awareness of the signs and address the barriers to reporting.

Target audience
The main target audience for the campaign is parents aged 25-40. Research shows that this group is most likely to feel confident about reporting and can therefore be nudged into action.

The campaign will also be seen by professionals such as teachers and healthcare professionals who work with children and are well placed to spot instances of abuse and remind them of their responsibilities.

Research has shown that if people feel they are part of their community’s response to child abuse and neglect, this reduces their fear of reporting and encourages them to report. The campaign will therefore reassure the public that the information they give is usually part of the bigger picture.

Key messages
The key messages for the campaign are:

- The county council has a duty to protect children and young people from harm caused by neglect or abuse. This includes investigating any allegations that a child might be being neglected or abused, and if necessary take appropriate action to protect the child.
- We’re asking staff who work with children to look out for the signs and report any suspicions of child abuse. Early recognition and intervention can improve the outcomes for children.
- You don’t have to be absolutely certain about whether a child is being abused; if you have a feeling that something’s not right. Information is usually gathered from many sources, and your report would form one part of a bigger picture.
- The campaign will direct the public to our Children’s Assessment & Referral Team (CART), therefore during the campaign, you may notice an increase in people reporting child abuse or neglect.
- If you or someone you know or work with has concerns about a child in Lancashire, it should be reported by calling 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722.
**Spotting the signs of child abuse and neglect**

There are several signs of child abuse or neglect which people can look out for:

- **Appearance** – such as frequent unexplained injuries, consistently poor hygiene, matted hair, unexplained gifts, or a parent regularly collecting children from school when drunk.
- **Behaviour** - such as demanding or aggressive behaviour, frequent lateness or absence from school, avoiding their own family, misusing drugs or alcohol, or being constantly tired.
- **Communication** – such as sexual or aggressive language, self-harming, becoming secretive and reluctant to share information or being overly obedient.

**How Lancashire will be supporting the campaign**

The campaign is being launched on Thursday 3 March, we will support the campaign via the following channels:

- **Media** – a press release will be issued to launch the campaign locally with a quote from Cllr Matthew Tomlinson.
- **Posters** – campaign artwork directing people to the reporting website will be distributed to children's centres, young peoples and community centres across the county.
- **Social media** – campaign key messages and infographics will be shared on the county council's social media channels including Facebook and Twitter.
- **Stakeholder communications** – information about the campaign will be circulated to relevant stakeholders including Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board, Lancashire Children's Trust, Lancashire Police, schools and the young people's service.
- **Internal communications** – the campaign will also be promoted internally to all county council staff via a staff notice, Jo's Update, and Team Talk. Information will be made available for county councillors via the councillor news portal C-First.

**Further information**

You can find out more by visiting [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) and searching for 'child abuse'.