For other formats or languages:
Telephone 023 8081 6642

It takes a whole village to raise a child.

If you would like to feedback your ideas to Southampton’s Parenting Forum please email Liz.Taylor@spct.nhs.uk

If you are not sure where to go or who to contact, why not give Children’s Information Service a call? They can help signpost to a wide variety of organisations.
Call free on 0800 169 8833 or visit www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

This booklet was given to you by

who can be contacted on
For young people and their parents and carers, teenage years are exciting, challenging and intense. A period of change and adjustment for all concerned with new issues such as changing relationships, or future employment needing discussion as well as topics such as sexual health and staying safe.

This handbook has been developed to provide you with information and advice on some of the issues that you may encounter. It also provides both local and national contacts so you can access more details.

Southampton has developed a vision for the next 20 years which includes being a city that is good to grow up in. I hope this booklet will provide a useful resource in helping to achieve this.

As a teenager, I know all too well the difficulties that surround Southampton and the affects they can have on young people in the city. I can understand that parents and carers might find it hard to cope with this challenging stage of life, which is why I think this booklet is an excellent way to improve relationships within families.

Alice Weavers, UK Youth MP for Southampton.

Throughout this handbook the term parents and carers has been used as shorthand to include mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child or young person, for example those with responsibility for looked after children and young offenders.
Bullying
The real story

Coming out
Is your son or daughter gay?

Depression
Dealing with the uncertainties of life

Domestic violence
It could be happening at home

Eating disorders
The tell-tale signs

Education
Encourage them to keep learning

Employment
Bright future, bright prospects

Equality, ethnicity & diversity
Different and equal

Friendships & peer pressure
Coping with demands

The Internet
New technology, old problem

Involvement in criminal & anti-social behaviour
Making positive changes

Loss & bereavement
Coping with grief

Missing from home
And running away

School attendance
Are they at school?

Self-harming
Understanding and support

Separation & divorce
It's not their fault

Sexual exploitation
Drawn into prostitution

Sexual health
Know the facts

Substance misuse
Spotting the signs

Teenage pregnancy
Preventative parenting

Young carers
Who cares?

Helpful organisations
Changes such as: becoming more withdrawn or violent, regular headaches or 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 child 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 child to always tell someone if they are being bullied. Back up concerns to the school in writing.

Look up a word
*Bullying - when someone hurts or frightens another person on purpose
*School Attendance and Safeguarding Team - professionals who are trained to deal with young people who stay away from school on purpose

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
Bullying* happens when someone hurts or frightens another person on purpose.

Bullying can include: teasing or name calling, 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 to 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 child 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 child is being bullied, listen to what they are saying. Don't ignore them. Help them to make a clear written record of what has happened, with factual details including the date, time and place, who was involved, what happened, the duration and how often these events have occurred.

Agree with your child how this information is going to be communicated. Ask your child if they would like to speak to a Teacher alone, with you or with another person. By law, every school must have an anti-bullying policy, which you can ask to see.

If you feel more could be done then contact the headteacher.

Make your child feel better about themselves by encouraging friends they can rely upon 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 child is a bully
Bullies often feel unwanted or uncared for. Bullying makes them feel powerful or popular. It can be upsetting to know your child is a bully but you need to understand why they feel the need 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.

Help your child 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.

*Parentline Plus
0800 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

*ChildLine 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

*Kidscape
08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk

*www.parent
centre.gov.uk

*www.childrenslegal
centre.com
01206 827466

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47
in particular:
- School Attendance and Safeguarding Team*
- School Nurse
- No Limits
- Connexions
Younger teenagers may not yet be aware of their sexuality. Older teenagers may feel confused about their feelings for their own sex and try to ignore them. Their actions may change as they try to come to terms with their sexuality. Others may try to give you signs that they are lesbian or gay without having to tell you outright.

If you believe your child may be LGBT* and they are having difficulty either coming to terms with this or telling you, make sure that they know you are non-judgemental, love them and want to hear what they have to say.

It may be hard to accept your child 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.

Look up a word
*LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered
*Bisexual - to have sexual feelings for both men and women
*Coming Out - telling people that you are gay or bisexual
*Transgendered - refers to people who dress, present or identify with a gender other than their birth gender

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
However much you love and think you know your child, you may find yourself feeling a range of emotions when finding out that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual* or transgendered*.

Even if you had an idea they may be LGBT, it can still be difficult to accept the truth.

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. However, some people are aware of their sexual orientation long before puberty, whilst others may come out much later in life. It will have taken a lot of courage for your child to tell you and now is the time they need your understanding and support.

Your concerns
Many parents on discovering they have a LGBT child immediately try to engage in unsuitable topics of conversation (particularly about sex) ask questions that a newly out teenager may find difficult to answer, or try to dissuade the teenager from their sexual orientation. A good idea is for parents/carers to confide in a trusted and sympathetic person to discuss their issues, rather than discussing them with their teenager in the first instance.

Common misunderstandings
One common misunderstanding is that "It's just a phase". While many young people experiment with their own sex, if a child tells you they are LGBT they would not have said this lightly. Another is that LGBT is an illness that can be cured, it's not an illness. Some parents also believe their child has been 'turned' by mixing with LGBT friends.

Parents and Carers who have concerns should try to talk to someone who is informed and get some more details and facts as a negative reaction could have devastating effects.

Giving Support
It may take some time for you to get used to the fact that your child is LGBT, especially if it goes against your culture or religion, but your child still needs your support. Let them know you are there for them, as they may want to discuss issues or problems they are facing. You may find it easier to understand and support your child if you contact one of the help groups aimed at parents of LGBT young people.

It is also important to inform your child of how to protect themselves against sexual diseases regardless of sexual orientation or age. All sexually active teenagers should be advised to always use a condom.

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*Note: *The asterisks indicate that the terms "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," and "transgendered" are used in a broader sense here, including gender identity and sexual orientation.

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**Contact Information**
- Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FLAG) Helpline 0845 652 0311 www.flag.org.uk
- Acceptance (for parents of gays and lesbians) 01795 661463 www.ukselfhelp.info/acceptance
- PACE (Family Therapy Service) 020 7700 1223 www.pacehealth.org.uk
- www.outproud.org/brochure_for_parents.html
- The ASK Project 020 7816 4752 Ttx 07711 858057

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- Breakout
- Gay Community Health Service
- Mayflower Group
- No Limits
- Connexions
Four in 100 young people suffer from depression
Many things can set off mental ill health
Your teenager 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

Depression
DEALING WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES OF LIFE

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 child 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 child’s school to see if they have noticed any differences in your son or daughter.

Listen to and talk to your teenager. 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.
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 100 - 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 teenager 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.
People experiencing domestic violence can often feel that they have caused the problem and that it is their fault.

Safety Plan
- Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
- Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone.
- Always carry information with you so you have helpline numbers to hand.
- Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency.
- Get an extra set of keys for the house/car.
- Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
- Talk to your children. Let them know it’s not their fault. Children do not have to see violence to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
- Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.

Look up a word
*Domestic - something that happens in the home
*Violence - when one person inflicts harm on another person
Domestic* violence* can affect anyone, at anytime. It can be any or all of these things:

**Physical Abuse**
Punching, Slapping, Pulling Hair, Biting, Burning, Hitting, Choking, Kicking.

**Financial Abuse**
Being kept without money. Having wages, benefits or pension taken from you. Having to account for all your spending.

**Emotional Abuse**

**Sexual Violence**
Rape, Sexual Assault. Being forced to watch or act out pornography. Being talked to in sexually degrading ways. Indecent phone calls.

**Threatening Behaviour**

There is no excuse for domestic violence.

More than half a million cases of domestic violence are reported in England and Wales each year and most victims are women, the Police receive a call about domestic violence every minute in the UK.

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

Should you decide to leave home consider taking:
Birth and marriage certificates, school and medical records, driving licence, car documents, money, credit cards, cheque books, benefit books, rent books, passports, work permits, visa, medications, several days clothing, personal possessions which have sentimental value, children's favourite toys.

You can get help
If you, your family or someone you know is experiencing (or has experienced) physical, emotional or sexual violence or abuse from a partner or ex partner. The numbers given in the contacts information are for organisations or groups that may be able to offer you advice, practical help or just be there when you need to talk. IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999.
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 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.

For any further information visit: www.psouthamptonchildcare.org.uk

Look up a word
*Anorexia - an emotional disorder characterised by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat
*Obsessing - thinking all the time about one particular thing
*Bulimia - an emotional disorder in which large quantities of food is eaten in a short period of time, often followed by feelings of guilt or shame
*Binge-Eating - eating a lot of food at once, usually in secret
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, 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 tend to maintain their body weight by binge-eating in secret. The main warning signs for both disorders are listed on the left.

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 teenager 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 child too hard at school - people with Anorexia are often high achievers.
- Not being able to express feelings.
- 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 teenager 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. They should also talk to their Doctor and discuss any treatment. Counselling, self-help groups and therapy are all helpful. In very serious cases, they may need to go into a hospital or clinic.

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 child knows she can talk to you about any worries, she is less likely to use food as a way of dealing with her problems.

- Beating Eating Disorders
  0845 634 1414
  www.b-eat.co.uk
- Young Minds
  0800 018 2138
  www.youngminds.org.uk
- NHS Direct 0845 46 47
  www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- Brookvale
- Saucepans
- No Limits
- Connexions
- School Nurse
Help your teenager choose the right subjects
Try to get them to keep learning at school, in higher education or on the job training
Show an interest in their learning
Help with homework where you can

Look up a word
*Connexions Service - a service giving help and advice to young people
*Exclusion - when a young person is kept out of school because of something they have done
*LA - Local Authority

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

Education
ENCOURAGE THEM TO KEEP LEARNING

If your teenager 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 teenager 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 child’s education whenever you can. Talk to the school about their education and career choices and how you can best help your teenager.
Modern 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 now 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.

Connexions Service* will advise your child on how to carry on with their education past the age of 16, at school, 6th form college or other colleges of further education. With training on the job (such as an apprenticeship) they can improve their future career choices and often earn some money too!

While the choice of subjects and skills taken is up to your teenager, there are things you can do to back up their interest in education. Spending time helping in your teenager’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 education plan is and how you can help your child. 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 child is excluded

There are two types of exclusion*, which means that your child is being stopped from entering the school or grounds. The first is a fixed term which may only be for a day, but cannot be for more than 45 days. The second is a permanent exclusion which means that a child cannot return to school pending a meeting with the Governors. If the child cannot return to the school the Local Authority (LA) must find them another place to learn.

The Department of Education has a list of reasons why a child may be excluded from school, including assaulting another pupil or teacher, threatening behaviour and bullying. If you do not agree with the decision, you have a right to a meeting with the school’s Governing Body.

Many young people who are excluded from school go on to achieve well and have successful careers; the key is to work with your school or the local authority who can give you advice and support to help your child overcome the reasons for their exclusion.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

The Governments’ 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 with an income of less than £30,000 per year 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 child tells you they want to leave school at 16, make sure they know this could cut down their choice of jobs for the future. Employers prefer young people with skills.

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

Try to get your child to stay on in further or higher education and ask their school for advice. Discuss different job ideas, such as apprenticeships or work-related education and training.

Look up a word

*Qualification - a recognised formal achievement in education eg. NVQ or GCSE
*Apprenticeship - training while on the job, often having a day or so each week at college or in higher education

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
The longer your child spends in full-time education, the better their job chances are for the future. The less time spent at school, the less choices there are, although this doesn’t always mean your teenager won’t find a job they find interesting and rewarding.

Your teenager may want to leave school at 16 and get out into the adult world to earn money. They may leave school on the last Friday in June in the school year they are sixteen. 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. Apprenticeships* offer work-based training for young people so that they can learn while on the job, building up skills and qualifications* as well as earning money.

Help prepare your child
There are many ways you can help your teenager to apply for a job that’s right for them. Sit down and talk about their interests and hobbies and whether they would like to take these further through work. You, their school or local Job Centre can help them to prepare a CV. A CV gives the company some basic information about your child, their education and interests.

Before any job interview they should find out as much as they can about the company so they can ask sensible questions, plan what they would like to say about themselves, explain why they are interested in the job and find out what is expected of them. 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. Try to make sure they are not late.

Work experience
Most schools encourage children in Year 10 or 11 to do up to two weeks work experience, usually in a job that is linked to their interests. Although usually 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. This may be before or after school, such as a newspaper round, at the weekend, or during the school holidays.
If you hear your teenager talking in a bad way about other cultures or religions or about other people, tell them that this is wrong and explain why. Check the warning signs listed under Bullying on page 4 if you think that your young person may be having problems with this.

Lead by example. Show your children that just because somebody looks or behaves differently it doesn’t mean that they are any worse or better than they are.

Your children spend years listening to your views and ideas so try to make sure that what you are teaching them is fair. Try to have an open mind and remember that not all people are the same.

Look up a word
*Judged - people forming an opinion about you
*A racial incident is defined as - any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim, or any other person. (The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry 1999).

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
We live in a country made up of many different faiths, languages, races and cultures, which make it an exciting place to live. Everyone is different and unique and valuing difference should be encouraged.

Whatever your background, you may not know much about other cultures or religions and you may think it is better to ignore what you don’t understand. It’s important that you try to help your children understand others. They will be learning at school about other cultures so try to get them to take an interest in those people that don’t always look or act the same way as them.

Equal but different
We are all judged by what we are - sometimes in a good way and other times in a bad way. We are judged for our similarities or differences in so many areas of life, for instance, whether we are male or female, our age, our religion, where we come from, our ability or disability, our political beliefs or how much we earn. For young people, being part of a group is very important and they often want to be the same as everyone else and not ‘stick out’ in a crowd.

It’s important for your teenager to understand that’s it’s ok to be different. You can try to get them to understand why people are how they are before judging them. You can explain how it is the differences between people that make them special and that these should be appreciated. Children often take on their parents’ beliefs, so make sure that you lead by example with a family life that respects difference.

Being abused for being different
This can happen for many different reasons, including having a disability, people’s appearance or which part of the city they live in, but nationally there is a lot of publicity about racial incidents.

Everyone deserves to be treated equally and with respect, whatever their colour, background, race, religion or nationality. If you or your teenager have experienced problems that you feel are because of your race then you should tell someone. Racism is a crime and can be reported to the Police or the City Council. If your child is experiencing racism at school speak to a Teacher or Headteacher to try to sort out the problem. Ask your teenager to keep a journal of what has happened, for future reference. The school should have a procedure for noting racial incidents and responding to them, if this proves difficult, incidents can be reported to Southampton City Council’s Hate Crime Reporting Line on 023 8083 4114.

Equality and Human Rights Commission
0845 604 6610
www.equalityhumanrights.com

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- Social Services
- Police Helpdesk
- Connexions
- No Limits
- Youth Service
Friendships help your teenager 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 teenagers to act in a certain way can be powerful. Family support is important - but be prepared, your teenager could turn to their friends first.

Look up a word
*Peer Groups - groups of people of the same age

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

If your child 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 teenager may be getting into trouble. It's unlikely that they're doing it alone.

Find out if your teenager 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.
Friendships are very important to teenagers. 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 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 teenagers 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 teenagers 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 place’. 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 teenager. They may also be worried about what they are doing and do not know how to talk to you about it. Support your child by letting them know they can talk to you and that you will help.

Sometimes young people would like help to get out of situations that they feel are getting out of control. It’s good to talk to them about strategies that they could use in those situations, for example: texting a code word to someone they trust who will then ring them, giving them a reason to leave.

You can help your teenager trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.
The Internet can be fun and useful
Have family Internet rules to encourage safer use
Paedophiles* can use the Internet to contact children
It is important that parents understand the Internet

Keep 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.

Set up and stick to your Internet-use ground rules. Learn all you can about the Internet and how to use it yourself so you can understand what they are viewing and whether it is suitable.

Discuss with your teenager 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.

Look up a word
*Paedophiles - A paedophile is a person who poses a risk of harm to children through sexual abuse

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
The Internet is a wonderful and quick way for young people to find information, help them study and keep in contact with friends or meet new ones.

Unfortunately, the Internet is also an easy tool for child abuse. People who sexually abuse children, often referred to as paedophiles, use chat rooms to become friendly with children or young people, often by pretending to be another child. Other risks include people who want to get personal information like names, addresses or telephone numbers for fraud. Using the Internet too much can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle and can be addictive.

Keep it safe
Keep an eye on what's going on by keeping the computer in a family room, rather than in a bedroom. Learn how to use a computer, access Internet sites and try out a chat room for yourself so you understand what can happen. Check out which sites your children are visiting to see if they are acceptable.

Ask other parents to tell you about good chat rooms or websites. Look for sites that check messages in chat rooms and those which include clear guidelines for use, teen-friendly advice, warnings and how to report concerns.

You can buy software filters which block access to websites with a sexual content. These don't make Internet use totally safe so it is still much better for you to take an active interest in the sites your child is browsing.

Set ground rules:
• Limit the amount of time your teenager spends on the Internet - and stick to it.
• Discuss the kind of websites they can visit which are right for their age.
• Make it clear that they must never give out their real name, address, home or mobile phone numbers or any other personal details, or post photos of themselves on the Internet.
• They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they don’t feel happy about giving.

It’s important that your child understands why there need to be rules. Explain that because they can’t see or hear the people they chat to on the Internet, they may not be who they seem. Paedophiles* gain the trust of young people on the Internet. Remind your teenager that strangers on the Internet can be just as dangerous as strangers on the street.

If your teenager is secretive when using the computer, if you notice changes in how they act, problems sleeping or changes in routine or they are suddenly asking about sexual matters, you should look into whether their Internet use has anything to do with it.

Useful websites on Internet use and safety:
• www.kidsmart.org.uk
• www.chatdanger.com
• www.parentsonline.gov.uk
• www.nspcc.org.uk
• www.bbc.co.uk/chatguide
• www.iwf.org.uk

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- No Limits
- Connexions

*Paedophiles: people who are attracted to children.
Changes in behaviour, such as stealing, using drugs, having unexplained amounts of money and mixing with friends who take part in crime. Keeping secrets, not going to or being in trouble at school and being rude to you or others.

Talk to your teenager about what they are doing, what made them do it and how you can help them to put an end to taking part in crime and anti-social behaviour. You are not alone in coping - Youth Offending Teams and the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Team are there to help you both and can offer you support too.

Try not to judge your teenager. Explain that you want to help them to stop future criminal or anti-social behaviour and that your teenager will need to work with agencies such as the Youth Offending Team or the Council’s Acceptable Behaviour Support Worker. Explain what will happen if they do not stop.

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
Finding out that your teenager has been involved in crime or anti-social behaviour can be a terrible shock and you may feel upset or ashamed.

Before a parent or carer has a chance to catch up with their own feelings there are certain things that may need to happen. If the Police have arrested your teenager it is important that you go to the Police Station to be with them during their interview. Make sure that they have a Solicitor. The Police will be able to contact the Duty Solicitor service if you do not have one. Remember that your child may be frightened or ashamed and could find the arrest and the police cells a very scary place. Sometimes a way of coping with this is to appear to be ‘acting tough’, this is just their way of coping rather than showing you how they really feel.

At the age of ten years old a child can be held responsible for what they do and can be charged and brought before the Youth Court. If your child is arrested for a small crime and never been in trouble before it is likely that a reprimand* or warning will be given. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) will look into the reasons why they acted this way and will work with them to help them put an end to taking part in crime. They can also help you to help your teenager.

If the young person is charged they will have to go to court. If they say they are guilty or are found guilty by the court they will have to meet with the YOT to talk about their actions. They will have to think about how what they did hurt the victims of the crime and they may have to say sorry for the harm caused. Young people who are given Court Orders have strict rules about the number of times they must meet with the YOT, which depends on the type of Order given by the Court.

Children involved in Anti-Social Behaviour can be asked to enter into an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC). Where these prove not to work and in other extreme cases your teenager can be made subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).

The YOT helps parents and families deal with what is happening, as does the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Your teenager needs your help and support to stop any future bad behaviour.

Victims of Crime

Even though we often see and hear reports on the TV or radio that it is teenagers who carry out crime, it is far more likely that teenagers will be the victims of crime.

Make your child 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 of crime and that stopping it altogether is about addressing the offender’s behaviour not the victim’s.
Everyone reacts to death differently and it takes some people longer than others to come to terms with a loss. Give your child 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 child. 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 child 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 memory alive. Remember to let them know it's alright to still laugh or have fun - it doesn't mean you're grieving any less.

Look up a word
*Grief - word used to describe the feeling of loss when someone dies
*Bereavement Counsellor - trained professional who can help people to come to terms with feelings when someone close has died

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
Loss 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 feelings.

The death of a loved one can seem too much to take. 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 really tough on young people.

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

There is no right or wrong way to react and everyone handles things in different ways. There will be a range of feelings your teenager is likely to go through:

- Feeling numb as they try to understand that someone is really not coming back.
- Anger at the person who died, at you, at others or themselves.
- 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 life. They may take their anger out on you, get into trouble at school, find it hard to do schoolwork or want to go out with friends more, pushing the limits and maybe experimenting with alcohol or drugs, as a way of forgetting. Not sleeping well is common at this time too.

How you can help
It is easy for young people to think they are the only ones who have lost someone and that no one else understands them, but talking to other people will help. Talk to your child about what has happened as much as they want to. They may find this hard, so encourage friends to be there for them too. It may help if they talk to a Bereavement Counsellor*.  

Make sure the school knows of their loss and that they will need time and understanding as they work through their feelings. The organisation Cruse, which has a website aimed at young people (see left) helps explain how to deal with feelings.

If you too are suffering, then it is going to be especially hard for you to not only deal with your own feelings, 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. Working through this together will help.

• Cruse Bereavement
  Care Helpline
  0870 167 1677
  www.crusebereavement
  care.org.uk
  • www.rd4u.org.uk

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- Brookvale
- No Limits
- School Nurse
- Connexions
- Saucepans
• Know where your teenager is
• Give family support - your child is at risk
• Physical and sexual abuse can make young people run away
• Get help for your family

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

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 teenager could be getting into trouble.

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

If your teenager 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.
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 child 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 child in a calm supportive way.

Home sweet home?
If your teenager 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 teenager’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 child 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 child goes missing.

Running away
Running away can be 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. Other reasons for running away from home might include peer pressure or feeling that life is out of control. 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 child has run away and you want to find them, contact the Police or local help organisation.
School attendance

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 their chances of a good job
- It is your job to make sure your child gets an education

Look up a word
*Truancy or playing truant - staying away from school
*LA - Local Authority

Notice what times your child 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 child is missing school and talk about any problems such as bullying or fear of failure. Discuss what your child wants for their future and how to reach short-term goals.

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

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
Truancy* is a national problem. Every day 50,000 children miss school. If your child regularly misses school it can have a big effect not only on your child but on you, the school and even the community.

The results of missing school are serious for your child. 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 teenage years.

Truancy also reaches into the community, as there is possibly a knock-on effect of higher levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. If your teenager misses school they are more likely to come across situations of risk.

Allowing children to miss school is also a problem. If you need your child's support at home, perhaps because of illness or to help look after other children, you should contact the school or an officer from the School Attendance and Safeguarding Team. Any time away from school, even for a short family holiday can affect their education.

How to stop truancy
If truancy is a problem, you need to find out why your child wants to miss school. They may find school frightening, lack self-confidence, feel they are failing or maybe they are being bullied. The school will help you get your child back into school with the help of Local Authority* (LA) professionals, such as the School Attendance and Safeguarding Team.

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

Make sure they understand 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.

What you should be doing
It is the law for parents to make sure that their child receives an education and you are breaking the law if you fail to do so. Parents could get a fine of up to £2,500 or even a prison sentence of up to three months or a community sentence if their children do not go to school. Courts can also give a Parenting Order of up to twelve months. If ignored this order could result in a criminal record or fine. You may be offered a Parenting Contract (an agreement between you and the school or LA) in which you meet certain rules and the school or LA helps you with any support.
Look out for injuries such as cuts, burns, scalds or bruises. Your child may try to hide them from you.

Try to find out if your child 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 teenager if they would like you to go with them or maybe try talking about things as a family.

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
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 teenager may be thinking about more serious harm or even suicide.

How you can help

If you know that your child hurts themselves on purpose it is normal to feel very upset, angry and powerless. Your teenager 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 teenager finds it difficult to tell you about their feelings try to get them to them to talk to another family member friend, Teacher, Youth Worker or Social Worker.

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

Try to get your child 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.

SelfLine 0800 1111
(24-hour helpline)
www.childline.org.uk
• The Samaritans
08457 90 90 90
(24-hour helpline)
www.samaritans.org
• Self Harm Alliance
01242 578 820
(Tues 6-7pm, Thurs
11am-1pm, Sun 6-7pm)
www.selfharmalliance.org
• NCH - the Children’s
Charity
www.nch.org.uk
• National Self-Harm
Network
www.nshn.co.uk
• National Children’s
Bureau
www.selfharm.org.uk

For details of helpful
local organisations for
this topic, please see
pages 46-47
in particular:
- Brookvale
- No Limits
- Saucepans
- Connexions
Separation can be as upsetting for your children as it is for you. 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 child 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 child may have said or done. Always give them a chance to talk about their feelings and worries.

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.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 teenager understands what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope.

It's best if both parents work together on explaining what's going to happen and why, even if one of them might not be able to be present when you talk to your child. 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.

Children 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 children 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 child 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 children 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 them 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 children about who they will live with, where and what other changes may happen. Even though you are going through a difficult time yourself, your child 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.*

*For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- No Limits
- Connexions

- www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents
  Government website with tips for handling separation
- www.itsnotyourfault.org
  Advice and support for both parents and teenagers
The prostitution of children is a form of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Children can be drawn into prostitution by manipulative adults who wish to make money.

Adults who abuse children will be held responsible, not the children.

Children 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
- Manipulative - controlling a situation to benefit yourself
- Prostitution - sexual activity that people are paid for
- Psychological - in your head/mind
- Dependent - relying on someone or something
- Addicted - unable to cope without something
- Vulnerable - at risk of harm

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

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

Make sure that your child 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.
It may be hard to imagine how any child could be drawn into prostitution.

The sad fact is that those adults who benefit from child 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 may receive expensive gifts and be given alcohol or drugs. Before long the pimp traps the victim in a dependent* relationship 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 the child at risk from severe physical, emotional and psychological damage.

The damage
Children 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 child is at risk from or is involved in prostitution. If all or even some of them apply to your child, you should seriously think that they might be at risk. All children are at risk from harm.

How to stop it
Keeping or getting children out of child prostitution could need specialist help. A close and positive relationship with your child 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 children 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 (some detailed left) who work with families to help stop child prostitution. If you feel your child is at risk they can provide information and support for you and your child to help stop dangerous relationships. If your child is involved in prostitution they will work with you and your child 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.

*NSPCC
0808 800 5000
Save the Children (National)
020 7703 5400
Barnardo’s (National)
020 8550 8822

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- Barnardo’s
  Southampton Young Women’s Service
- Gay Community Health Service
- No Limits
- Southampton Rape Crisis Service
- Connexions
Young people are starting to have sex younger and younger. Don’t think that this won’t happen to your teenager. 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 teenager. 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. Use magazines and TV programmes to help bring up subjects and to use as examples.

Look up a word
*STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections (such as AIDS or Herpes)
*Contraception - form of protection from pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infections
*GUM Genito-Urinary Medicine

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

Know the facts
• Young people with all the facts often wait longer before trying sex
• You won’t always know if you have a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI*)
• Some STIs can stop you from being able to have children if not treated
• Condoms help protect against STIs and pregnancy

Sexual health

The more you read, the more comfortable you will be talking to them about it.

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Look up a word
*STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections (such as AIDS or Herpes)
*Contraception - form of protection from pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infections
*GUM Genito-Urinary Medicine

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
Children and young people want their parents to talk to them about sex. They may get information from TV, magazines, friends or PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) classes at school, but it is still their parents they trust.

It's important that your son or daughter learns about sex and relationships and using contraception* before they have sex. This means they will understand the male and female body and what happens during sex. They also need to understand the dangers of getting STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and how to stop unwanted pregnancy. It is important to explain that relationships are about love and friendship as well as sex.

How to tell them
It may be hard to talk to your teenager about sex, let alone imagine them having sex! Even though it can be difficult it is important to talk. Young people who understand sex and relationships are less likely to have sex too early. They are also more likely to use contraception when they start having sex which reduces the risk of pregnancy and STIs.

The risk of not having the right information is very real. One-in-nine people in this country has an STI and sometimes there are no clear signs so they might not even know. The most common STIs are Chlamydia, Herpes and Gonorrhoea. Most AIDS sufferers in their 20s will have got HIV as teenagers. Chlamydia affects teenage girls more than any other age group and if not treated can lead to not being able to have children in the future.

The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe. The younger your child is when you start to talk about sex, sexual health and relationships and the more facts they have, the more natural and less difficult it will be for both of you.

Answer questions teenagers have about sex or their bodies with simple, clear answers and make sure you get all the facts right! Talk about relationships as well as sex and how using protection is up to both people. You don’t have to know the answer to all the questions they might ask and if you’re not sure, say so and maybe find out together.

There are plenty of useful books and leaflets, as well as websites for both parents and teenagers that can help.

The law says that both boys and girls can have sex at 16 even though one third of young people under this age are already having sex. The law says under 16s can get advice, contraception and abortion without telling their parents, if they are seen as sensible enough by their Doctor or clinic.

Make sure that your child knows where they can get information about local services so that they can make the right choices about their health.

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One third of under-16s are already having sex. The more your teenager 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.

- Marie Stopes
  0845 300 8090
  www.mariestopes.org.uk
- Brook Advisory
  Centres 0800 018 5023
  www.brook.org.uk
- FPA 0845 310 1334
  www.fpa.org.uk
- Parentline Plus
  0808 800 2222
- NHS Direct 0845 4647
  www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- Sense CDs
  www.sensecds.com
- British Pregnancy
  Advisory Service
  08457 30 40 30
  www.bpas.org

For details of helpful local organisations for this topic, please see pages 46-47 in particular:
- GUM clinic*
- Contraception and Sexual Health Clinics
- Doctor
- School Nurse
- No Limits
- Connexions
- Youth Service
It’s normal for young people to want to try out new things. Having the right knowledge leads to safer choices. Be supportive and do not judge your teenager.

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 teenager.

Look up a word:
* Substance - a chemical or drug
* Misuse - to use in the wrong way

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 teenager is taking drugs or drinking.

Finding drug related materials such as cigarette papers, tin foil and cut off plastic bottles.

Try to get your teenager 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 child will need your help and understanding.

A good relationship between you could help your teenager to 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.

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
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 possible that your teenager 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. It is important to give good information about the risks that young people take when they drink heavily or take 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 teenager 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 teenager’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 teenagers by making sure they have good information about the risks associated with drugs or alcohol. Choose a quiet time to talk, try not to over react, accuse or threaten and don't panic. If they are reluctant to discuss the issues with you, try to find another adult like a family friend or a favourite teacher who they will talk to. If you feel your child needs more help, there are a number of City Drop-In and Outreach Services for young people which they can contact for information and advice.

In Southampton you can access organisations who will assess for substance misuse - No Limits for 11-25 year olds and SAUCEPANS for under 13 years. These organisations can then work with your teenager or if necessary put you in contact with other organisations.
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 teenagers. Talk to your teenager.

Look up a word
*STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections
*IUD - Intra Uterine Device

Warning signs that your teenager 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.

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk
The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe.

More than 90,000 teenagers get pregnant every year. 7,700 are under 16 and 2,200 are under 14 years old. Each year 15,000 under-18s have an abortion. Rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)* have also gone up in the UK. Teenagers often do not understand the types of contraception available and how to get them. They may not know how to use it (such as how to put on a condom) and that they can get the Pill if they are under 16.

Many teenagers have never been told by an adult that it’s OK to say ‘no’ and not to have sex just because all their mates say they are. It is important to let them know that relationships are about love and friendship and not just about having sex. Most parents feel that there would be less teenage pregnancies if more parents talked to their children about sex.

What your child should know

Even though most young people are getting sex and relationship education from school (some schools are better at this than others) teenagers want their parents to talk to them about sex and relationships. The earlier you start talking about sex, relationships and contraception, the less likely they are to have sex too early. They will also be more likely to have safe sex, and cut down the risk of teenage pregnancy and STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections).

Answer questions they have about sex or their bodies with simple, clear answers and find out the answer if you are unsure. Use TV programmes or magazine articles to introduce topics and look at them together. Talk about relationships, as well as sex, and how both boys and girls need to think about protection. Explain that it is not ideal to have an unplanned pregnancy and that being a teenage mum or dad can be tough.

Although the sexual age of consent is 16, one third of young people under this age are already having sex. Under-16s can get advice, contraception or an abortion, without having to tell their parents, if their Doctor thinks that they are mature enough to make this choice.

Unprotected sex

Emergency contraception is available to young people and can stop pregnancy in most cases if it is taken in time (usually up to three days after unprotected sex). If it is three days or more, they may still be able to have an emergency IUD* (Intra Uterine Device) fitted. Emergency contraception is free from family planning clinics and some chemists.

If your teenage has taken emergency contraception and has not had a period within three weeks they should take a pregnancy test and see their Doctor.
Late homework, absence from school, over-tiredness and behavioural problems may be signs that your child is struggling with their caring role. It is vital that you talk to, and listen to your child and take the action needed to help them cope.

Don't think that you and your child 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 Education or Health and Social Care Services/your GP know about your situation - keep them up to date if things change.

• 1-in-5 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

For any further information visit: www.southamptonchildcare.org.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 person, it is especially important to make sure that their needs are properly cared for too.

If your child 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.

In England, 2-3% of children and young people live with a parent or carer who uses drugs. Even more live with someone who uses alcohol. In a school which has 1,000 pupils, about 20-30 pupils will have a parent who uses drugs and even more whose parents use alcohol. (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2003)

**Education**

Naturally you will want your child 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 child’s school or college are informed of their caring role. That way they can allow for the needs and pressures that your child 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**

Southampton Voluntary Services operates a city wide Young Carers project. The project offers help, support, respite and fun activities for any child or young person aged 8 to 18 with caring responsibilities. Secondary schools within Southampton have a Schools outreach worker attached to them, enabling young carers to receive the support and understanding they need to help them fulfil their educational potential. For further information or to refer your child to the project please contact Leonie Warnick at Young Carers.
### Helpful national organisations

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<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Addaction</td>
<td>020 7017 2720</td>
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<td>Barnardo's</td>
<td>020 8550 8822</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk">www.barnardos.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beating Eating Disorders</td>
<td>0845 634 1414</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.b-eat.co.uk">www.b-eat.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brook Advisory Centre</td>
<td>0800 018 3023</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.brook.org.uk">www.brook.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Careline</td>
<td>020 8514 1177</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Accident Prevention Trust</td>
<td>020 7606 3828</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.capt.org.uk">www.capt.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ChildLine</td>
<td>0800 1111</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.childline.co.uk">www.childline.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CRY-SIS Helpline</td>
<td>08451 228 669</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cry-sis.org.uk">www.cry-sis.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day Care Trust</td>
<td>020 7840 3350</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(parents helpline)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk">www.daycaretrust.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and Friends of Lesbian &amp; Gays (FFLAG)</td>
<td>0845 652 0311</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.fflag.org.uk">www.fflag.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Planning Association (FPA)</td>
<td>0845 310 1334</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.fpa.org.uk">www.fpa.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Rights Group</td>
<td>0800 731 1696</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.frg.org.uk">www.frg.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety Information Line</td>
<td>(Information and Leaflets)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information for Teenagers about Sex &amp; Relationships</td>
<td>0800 28 29 30</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ruthinking.co.uk">www.ruthinking.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet Watch Hotline</td>
<td>0845 600 8844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidscape</td>
<td>Parents bullying helpline</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.kidscape.org.uk">www.kidscape.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MALE Advice line</td>
<td>020 8644 9914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Message Home</td>
<td>(for young people</td>
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<td>to get a message to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their parents)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0800 700 740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing Persons Helpline</td>
<td>0500 700 700 (24 hour)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.missingpersons.org">www.missingpersons.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Day Nurseries Association</td>
<td>0870 774 4244</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ndna.org.uk">www.ndna.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>National Domestic Violence Helpline</td>
<td>(Women's Aid)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.womensaid.org.uk">www.womensaid.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Drugs Helpline (FRANK)</td>
<td>(24 hour free advice)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS Direct</td>
<td>0845 4647</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk">www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS Smoking Helpline</td>
<td>0800 169 0169</td>
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<td>NSPCC National Helpline (24 hours)</td>
<td>0808 800 5000</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>OFSTED Complaints Line</td>
<td>0845 601 4772</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>One Parent Families</td>
<td>Lone Parent Helpline</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk">www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.gingerbread.org.uk">www.gingerbread.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parentline Plus</td>
<td>National charity offering help and information for parents/carers and families</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk">www.parentlineplus.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)</td>
<td>0121 248 2000</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.rospa.com">www.rospa.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Samaritans</td>
<td>08457 90 90 90</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Victim Support</td>
<td>0845 30 30 900</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Minds</td>
<td>020 7336 8445</td>
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<td>Parents Information Service</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a></td>
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Contraception

NSPCC
www.advice@nolimits-southampton.org.uk

Breakout - Information/advice for 14-25 yr olds who are LGBT
023 8022 3344 or Mobile: 07860 444673

Barnards - Southampton Young Women's Service 023 8078 9576
Brookvale - Specialist mental health service for adolescents 14-18 years
023 8058 6154

Children's Information Service (CIS)
Information for parents about health, education and opportunities for young people to get involved in leisure activities and volunteering.
0800 169 8833 cis@southampton.gov.uk
www.southamptonchildcare.org.uk

Children's Specialist Mental Health Clinic
023 8029 6230

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)
023 8022 1406 www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Connexions - Confidential support/supportful advice for 13-19 yr olds 023 8022 8557
www.connexions.southampton.org

Contraception and Sexual Health Service
023 8038 8916

Drug Action Team (DAT)
023 8083 4257

E's Up - Young people's treatment service
023 8022 3891

Gay Community Health Service
023 8023 5111 info@chgs.org.uk

Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinic
023 8082 5438

Hampton Trust
023 8021 3520 info@hamptontrust.org.uk

Health and Social Care - Formally Social Services
023 8083 3336

Job Centre Plus
023 8053 8600

Mayflower Group - Provides information and support for transsexual and transgendered people 023 8077 1798

No Limits - Offers free confidential information advice and counselling for young people aged 11-25
- City Centre 023 8022 4224
- Shirley 023 8051 1051
- Sholing 023 8043 5000
advice@nolimits-southampton.org.uk
www.nolimits-southampton.org.uk

NSPCC 023 8024 8180 www.nspcc.org.uk

Parent Partnership Service - Offering information/advice/support for parents of children/young people with special educational needs 023 8055 7607
CO-ORD@parentpartnership.fsn.et.co.uk

Parent Support Link - Support for people affected by someone else's drug use
023 8039 9764

Police
0845 045 4545

Samaritans: Southampton and District
0845 790 90 90 job@samaritans.org

Saucepans - the Community Children and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) project
West 023 8073 4592 - East 023 8040 7028

School Attendance and Safeguarding Team
023 8083 3279

School Nurse - contact through your school

Southampton Community Family Trust, including OK Parents
023 8021 6003 info@scft.org.uk

Southampton PCT: GPs, Health Visitors, School Nurses 023 8090 2597

Southampton Police Community Support Team 023 8067 4198
Southampton.cs@hamshire.pnn.police.uk

Southampton Rape Crisis Service - Support, information and advice for parents/carers of young people who have experienced sexual assault 023 8063 6133

Southampton Voluntary Services
023 8022 8291
information@southamptonvs.org.uk
www.southamptonvs.org.uk

Southampton Women's Aid 023 8033 8881
s.womensaid@btopenworld.com

The Wessex Youth Offending Team (YOT)
Working with 10-17 yr olds who are involved with Criminal Justice System
023 8046 3336

Victim Support 023 8023 4883
support@victimsupport-southampton.org
www.victimsupport.org.uk

Wheatsheaf Trust - Supports disadvantaged people into productive, economic, social and civic activity 023 8023 7662
info@wheatheaftrust.org

Young Carers
023 8021 6032 or 07771 538794
J.warnick@southamptonvs.org.uk

Youth Service - Offers support, activities and informal learning opportunities to young people 023 8022 5858
www.southampton.gov.uk/education/youth-service (information site)
www.youthnetsouthampton.org.uk (young peoples site)