

## Hidden Harms

**Hidden harm** is **harm** or abuse that is usually **hidden** from public view occurring behind closed doors, often not recognised or reported. The emphasis is about spotting signs early and helping to prevent the risk escalation.

These are typically but not exclusively:

- Mental health abuse
- Exploitation (which includes online activity and other forms of abuse and harm which can include from peers)
- Domestic abuse
- Substance misuse
- Honour based abuse
- Forced marriage
- Modern Slavery and human trafficking
- Gang Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation

NHS North East Essex CCG

### What can I do?

It can be difficult to identify if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is suffering from hidden harm.

#### **Indicators could include:**

- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in character/personality
- Poor school attendance
- Missing Mass/Services attendance (different from the usual pattern)
- Seeing vulnerable people where they should not be
- Change in appearance – unkempt, dirty, inadequate clothing
- Appears to have items e.g. jewellery, new phone, clothing- which they would not usually be able to afford
- Appears overly tired
- Self-harming signs
- Fabricated or induced illness

#### **Changes in behaviour might include:**

- Becoming unusually withdrawn
- Aggression and increasingly argumentative
- Sudden disrespectful attitude to others
- Over demanding
- Changes in friendships
- Excessively vigilant
- Seeking constant approval or affirmation
- Secretive
- Poor social relationships, difficulty mixing, compounded by isolation
- Taking unhealthy risks, including with drugs/alcohol/solvents
- Concerning social media and internet usage
- Associating with groups or new groups/older groups
- Changes to appearance influenced by gang association
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour

**Be alert!**

**Not sure? Concerned about yourself  
or someone you know, TELL**

**Parish Safeguarding Representative  
Bernadette Horton**

**07752 448425**

Further reading: <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/parents-carers/what-is-hidden-harm/>

Organisations that my help:

### Essex Compass

COMPASS

A partnership of domestic abuse services providing a response in Essex.

**Essex Domestic Abuse Helpline:**

**0330 333 7444**

Helpline available from  
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

<https://www.essexcompass.org.uk/>



You can contact fearless.org for access to non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality.

Fearless.org provides you with a safe place to give information about crime – 100% anonymously.

<https://www.fearless.org/>

### Modern Slavery helpline:

08000 121 700

You can report a crim or seek advice.

<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/>



### CrimeStoppers.

Speak up. Stay safe.

**0800 555 111**

You can talk in safety anonymously

Your telephone number is scrambled

Your number can't be seen

Your call is not recorded

You can speak up. 100% anonymously.  
Always.

**If you have a concern, contact the Parish Safeguarding Representative on 07752 448425.**

**If you think someone is in danger of immediate harm then call**

- **the Police on 999 or**
- **Essex Social Services on 0345 603 7627 (out of hours: 0345 606 1212)**