

Parents and Carers

Are you sure?



Child Exploitation

Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse.

Exploitation is when individuals or groups take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into doing what they want in exchange for something the child wants or needs. This is always to the benefit of the exploiter. This can include the child being coerced into having sex, committing crimes and more.

How it happens?

Grooming is the process these people use to build a trust and relationship with a young person in order to get them to do what they want. They may offer children money, drugs, gifts, protection, friendship, love or affection as a means of gaining their trust. They may also use physical violence and threats as a means of control.

What can we do?

There is much we can do to protect children from exploitation.

This leaflet helps to recognise some of the issues and advise you on how to protect.

Missing Children

- Children going missing are at more risk of being exploited
- Being on the street can lead to your child being groomed and exploited
- Exploiters actively look out for vulnerable children who are out late at night with no parental control

Other Risks

- Being asked to steal may lead to more serious crimes
- Children already using cannabis will have easier access to harder drugs
- Drug dealing is often the next step to fund a personal habit
- This can create big debts which **must** be paid

What to look for

- Regularly going missing/coming home late
- Increasingly secretive
- Older partner or friendship group
- Sudden change in friendships
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Unexplained injuries
- STD's or pregnancy/terminations
- Increase in offending behaviour
- Expensive clothes, money and items etc without plausible explanation
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Excessive need for money
- 'Burner' phones/multiple phones
- Sudden interest in gang culture/drill music
- Change in language – use of urban slang/terms related to drug dealing
- Items linked to criminal activity – weapons, balaclavas, tools, stash bags, scales etc

Changes in teen behaviours are normal, given it's a time of transformation and challenge. Significant, sudden change may not be normal when linked to the above.

What you can do

- Listen without judgement. Children need to know they can talk without fear of us getting cross and upset.
- Pay attention to their behaviour. Many children cannot voice their worries but will show them in how they act.
- Get to know what they know.
- Know their friends. Question new friendships and be aware of any secrecy around these.
- If your child is picked up, or has train or bus tickets, record as much detail as possible.
- Take an active interest in their online life. Use security settings and talk about the sites they use with them.

If you have concerns:

- Let them know you are worried about them.
- Reassure them they are not to blame.
- Keep a record of concerns to give to the Police and Children's Services.

Where can you go for help?

If you think your child is being exploited it's important to know that you are not alone.

You can report your concerns to:

Local Children's Services:

t 0300 555 1384

NSPCC Helpline:

t 0808 800 5000

Police:

t 101

If you feel your child or family is in immediate danger, always call 999.

If your child isn't where they are supposed to be, report them missing straight away on 101 - **you do not have to wait 24 hours.**

For more information on exploitation visit:
www.thinkuknow.co.uk