

# Child Sexual Exploitation



## What is sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is the abuse of children and young people up to the age of 18, where the young person is being manipulated, coerced or forced into engaging in sexual activity. As a form of manipulation, the young person may receive something – such as affection, a bed for the night, food, alcohol, gifts – from their abuser. The young person may also believe they are in a loving, consensual relationship, when in fact they are being exploited.

## How does child sexual exploitation happen?

Child sexual exploitation can occur in different ways and in different situations. Many young people are 'groomed' by their abuser, which tends to conjure up the image of an adult hiding behind a computer screen talking to young people online. However this is not the only form of grooming and young people can also be targeted in person.

Grooming is a carefully planned process with the aim of controlling a young person, to ensure that they do exactly what the perpetrator wants. Initially, a young person may receive gifts and be showered with attention and affection, but this may later turn to blackmail, threats of violence or actual violence.

It is not a young person's fault if they are sexually exploited. Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation often have power – real or perceived - over the young people they abuse. This power may be due to their age, their status, their intellect, or their physical strength. They use this power to manipulate and control their victim.

Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

Sexual exploitation is a serious issue that affects thousands of young people throughout the UK. It can happen to any young person from any background and affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. Some young people may be more vulnerable to exploitation than others – these include young people with learning disabilities, those who have experienced the death of someone important in their lives and those who are experiencing difficulties at home.

## Who are the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation?

There is no 'type' of person that sexually exploits a young person. Perpetrators can be male or female from any background, any age group and any ethnicity. Often, perpetrators are well-liked, articulate and plausible. Sexual exploitation can also happen between young people and peer groups.

Child sexual exploitation can occur in cars, hotels, houses, clubs and legitimate business premises, with a young person returning home afterwards.

## What are the signs?

Children and young people, who are victims of this form of sexual abuse, often don't recognise they are being exploited. There are a number of signs that could indicate a child is being groomed for sexual exploitation but the following are some common warning signs:-

- Going missing frequently or regularly returning home late.
- Regularly missing school/college.
- Having unexplained gifts or unaffordable new items in their possession.
- Reducing their contact with family or friends.
- Having older boyfriends/girlfriends/friendship groups.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Mood swings/changes in emotional wellbeing/secretcy.
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse.
- Self harming.

## What can I do to protect my child from exploitation?

Young people are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation because they want to experiment, take risks, and push boundaries. However, there are some things that you can do to protect your child:

- Stay alert to changes in the young person's behaviour or any signs of physical abuse e.g. bruising.
- Talk to your child about healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Discuss internet safety with your child and take action to reduce risk when they are online.
- Be aware of the warning signs of child sexual exploitation and access support if you have any concerns.

## What do I do if I have concerns?

If you believe that a child is in immediate danger and needs protection call the Police on 999.

If the child is not in immediate danger and you would like some advice from the Police, call them on 101.

Contact Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190.

## Other sources of support and information:-

**Safe and Sound Derby** - [www.safeandsoundderby.co.uk](http://www.safeandsoundderby.co.uk)

**Tel No:** 01332 362120; or

**Email:** [info@safeandsoundderby.co.uk](mailto:info@safeandsoundderby.co.uk)

**PACE** (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation) – a national charity working with parents and carers whose children are sexually exploited. Advice, support and resources for parents/carers and young people is available on:

[www.paceuk.info](http://www.paceuk.info)

**Tel No:** 0113 240 3040

Parents/carers can access a free e learning course on the PACE web site, on Child Sexual Exploitation aimed at raising awareness, identifying signs and providing advice on what to do if you have concerns. Go to the website at [www.paceuk.info/the-problem/keep-them-safe/](http://www.paceuk.info/the-problem/keep-them-safe/) and follow the simple registration process.

**CEOP's ThinkuKnow** – useful website all age groups including parents and carers looking at internet safety and safe surfing - [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

**Barnardos** – [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

Advice regarding Child Sexual Exploitation including a video to help identify the tell-tale signs of abuse and practical steps you can take to protect children (click on the link below):-

[www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_work/sexual\\_exploitation.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/sexual_exploitation.htm)

**NSPCC** - [www.nspcc.org.uk/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/)

Help, support and guidance for parents, carers, professionals and young people.

**KIDSCAPE** - [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

**GetNetWise** - [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

**Chatdanger** - [www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

**UK Safer Internet Centre** –

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers)

**Family Lives** (provide free help and support in all aspects of family life) - [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

## **Other useful resources for parents/carers:-**

The link below is a video with Shona McGarty from BBC Eastenders show, explaining how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation:-

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBhGgNQY8CY&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBhGgNQY8CY&feature=youtu.be)

NSPCC produced this clip “The story of Jay” to help young people understand ‘grooming’ in relationships and how to keep yourself safe. It tells the story of how sometimes, relationships aren’t what they seem:-

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vYbZSUL5U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vYbZSUL5U)

Watch this short story – a fairy tale with a twist , to raise awareness of children being emotionally and sexually exploited by adults:-

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct7KNyknbbw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct7KNyknbbw)

Watch this short story to help identify the meaning of grooming:-

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHwb1clvExA&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHwb1clvExA&feature=youtu.be)