



Exploitation of Adults Guidance Booklet



Adult Exploitation information booklet

This document has been devised to give information to practitioners who have concerns about an adult who is at risk of exploitation. It includes some of the different types of exploitation you might find and some of the warning signs that might be noticed.

It should be read alongside your Local Authority safeguarding policy and procedures. These can be found on your Safeguarding Adults Board website.

What is Exploitation?

Exploitation is a form of abuse where someone is forced or coerced into doing things for the benefit of others, it is often a gradual process and people may not even recognise that they are being exploited until their situation becomes very serious.

People are groomed and introduced to new ideas, behaviours and activities, making these appear normal and acceptable. These behaviours and activities may seem exciting or give someone something they are looking for – including money, gifts or a sense of belonging.

Exploitation can take many forms, can take place in a range of situations, and can involve many groups of people, it can happen anywhere and can affect any age, gender or ethnicity.

All those caught up in exploitation must be seen as victims of the abuse, it is not their fault and they are not to blame.

What is Grooming?

Grooming is an integral part of the exploitation process. It is an extremely powerful way in which a perpetrator builds a connection with someone in order to coerce or deceive them into an exploitative situation.

The connection could be a friendship, romantic relationship or a relationship of dependence in which the groomer provides something that is valued, such as money, gifts and acceptance.

Once trust has been gained, the groomer will try to isolate them and encourage reliance and dependence.

Every groomer has power and control over their victim, to establish this power and control different methods may be used: coercion, intimidation, force and blackmail.

The victim may value the connection they have with their groomer, they may seem hurt if you suggest that their relationship is in any way controlling, coercive or otherwise concerning. Unfortunately, grooming can make it very difficult for the victim to see that exploitation is happening or that their relationship is exploitative.

Anyone can be a victim of grooming, it doesn't matter your age or gender, it can happen face-to-face or online.

How can adults be exploited?

Exploitation can take on many forms:

- Radicalisation
- Modern slavery
- Honour based abuse
- County lines
- Sexual
- Financial
- Scamming
- Fraud
- Criminal

Modern Slavery:

Exploitation is a type of modern slavery. When a person is trafficked, they are a victim of modern slavery. We can convict perpetrators of trafficking and modern slavery under Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Types of modern slavery are:

- Forced labour
- Sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- Organ harvesting
- Domestic servitude

Trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purpose of exploitation. People can be trafficked 'internationally' from one country to another or 'internally' within this country, from one street to another or one town to another. If the movement of that person is against their will and they are being exploited after they have been moved, they are a victim of trafficking.

The National Referral Mechanism:

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the framework through which potential victims of trafficking in the UK are identified, so that they can be supported and protected. In the case of a child, the child's best interests will be a primary consideration in the decision to make, or not to make, a referral into the NRM

Referrals into the NRM can only be made by selected agencies known as 'first responders'. If you are not a first responder then you will need to refer the person to a first responder in order for them to be referred into the NRM.

Radicalisation:

The UK Home Office defines radicalisation as "The process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then join terrorist groups." People may become radicalised if their views and beliefs are influenced by extreme ideas and perspectives.

It can occur both offline and online through the exposure to and engagement with violent ideological propaganda, or through extremist networks. The radicalisation

process makes those at risk more likely to support acts of violence and terrorism, and possibly to even commit such criminal acts themselves.

Belief in an extremist cause and membership of an extremist group can offer people a sense of purpose, identity and community. This may be particularly appealing if someone is experiencing difficulties and challenges in their life.

Signs to look out for:

- Becoming isolated from family and friends
- Becoming more secretive, especially around internet use
- Centering day-to-day behaviour and activities around an extremist ideology, group or cause
- Changing appearance and clothing in link with that associated with a group or cause
- Developing a fixation on a particular subject.
- Thoughts and communication
- Becoming more argumentative and domineering when expressing viewpoints
- Being quick to criticise alternative views and opinions, and being closed to new ideas
- Expressing intolerance or hatred of other people or communities
- Expressing thoughts about harming, or using violence towards, others
- Talking as if from a script
- Using hate terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Associating with different friends or social groups
- Accessing extremist websites and social media sites
- Attending meetings held by extremist groups or hosting extremist speakers
- Possessing materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause
- Possessing firearms or other weapons or showing an interest in obtaining them.

Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation. It is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy and it aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Channel

Channel is a Local Authority led multi-agency programme made up of safeguarding professionals and local partners. Channel works by partners jointly assessing the nature and the extent of the risk and where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to the individual's needs.

Financial Exploitation:

This happens when someone is deceived or coerced into handing over monetary funds or assets. It can happen through fraud, blackmail, accumulating debts, or having money or property stolen. It can happen online, via email, telephone, post, or in person. Face-to-face financial exploitation may be carried out by doorstep callers or by people known to the person such as family, friends and carers.

Signs to look out for:

- Changes in bank account funds, including unexplained withdrawals
- A family member or other responsible adult has taken control of finances, especially if this has been done without explanation or consent

- Additional names on bank accounts have been added
- A will is suddenly changed or created
- Bills or rent go unpaid, despite having the financial means to do so
- A care giver may try to isolate someone from their family and friends
- A person's money, personal belongings or financial documents go missing
- When a person makes financial transactions or withdrawals there is always the presence of another person
- Purchasing or receiving items which seem unsuitable or excessive, especially when considering their financial or personal circumstances
- An unusual amount of mail, emails or telephone calls
- Signatures on cheques or official documents that do not look like the person's signature, or which have been provided by someone else

Fraud:

Fraud is a criminal offence as defined by the Fraud Act 2006. Most commonly it occurs when a person dishonestly makes a false representation in order to gain for themselves or cause loss to another. There are 52 types of fraud – it can be short term (via text message) or long term (multiple payments over time – romance/investment)

Signs to spot:

- Being secretive
- Talking about an online romance/relationship
- Frequent trips to the bank
- Gift cards
- Frequent phone calls
- Struggling to pay the bills
- Lack of food
- Not talking care of themselves

Sexual Exploitation:

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where people in exploitative situations and relationships are manipulated, coerced or forced into participating in sexual acts in order to receive something such as gifts, money or affection. The abuser has power and control over the victim, this power can come from age, stature, size, information held about the person or status.

Anyone of any age can be sexually exploited. This includes people who are aged sixteen and over and can legally consent to sex – if they are being forced, manipulated, deceived or coerced into performing sexual acts they cannot freely give consent.

Signs to look out for:

- STI's or pregnancy
- Bruising
- Talking about a new boyfriend/girlfriend
- Associating with different people
- Having new gifts that they wouldn't normally have
- Using different language around sex and sexual activity

- Changes in behaviour
- Being more secretive
- Going missing or disappearing and not being able to explain where they have been

Criminal Exploitation:

Criminal exploitation happens where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive the person into criminal activity. We know this happens with children but adults can be victims too. If they are vulnerable they can be preyed upon to sell and transport drugs. They are also targeted if they have their own property, sometimes known as cuckooing or forced home invasion.

Signs you might spot:

- Suspicious items in the property, such as weighing scales, multiple phones, sim cards or drug paraphernalia
- Lots of unexplained cash, clothes and other items of value
- Blocked off windows and doors
- Unknown people in the property who act as friends of the inhabitant – think about accents and if they sound local
- Lots of people entering the property, or people arriving and leaving at unusual times
- Cars stopping at the property for short periods of time
- Concerns that the inhabitant of the property has not been seen for a while – they may feel too afraid to leave the house or may have been prevented from doing so by the drug gang.

Advocacy:

Under the Care Act If someone is going through a Section 42 Safeguarding enquiry or a Safeguarding Adult review they could be entitled to a Care Act advocate.

The aim of Independent Advocacy under the Care Act is to enable people who have substantial difficulty being involved in the safeguarding enquiry to be supported in that involvement as fully as possible, and where necessary to be represented by an advocate who speaks on their behalf, in the event the person isn't able to express their views.

The advocate will meet with the person, find out what they would like to happen with the enquiry, talk through any potential options they have. They will also talk to them about how they would like to be involved in any potential safeguarding meetings.

The ultimate aim is for people's wishes, feelings and needs to be at the heart of the process.

Please check your local authority to find out which organisation they use for independent advocacy.

Useful information and links:

Modern slavery helpline 0800 121 700 (operated by Unseen 24/7)

To make a referral online go to –www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start

For emergency – 999

Children's Society (for parents) – www.childrenssociety.org.uk/

National County Lines co-ordination centre:

Section 45 defence awareness video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w3Zc0MdmyU>

NRM awareness video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkpXxS6dzkw&t=2s>

County lines awareness video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdYq2dhQ3qc>

Guidance – Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines – Oct 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Mark's story video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FAGkvLvDeE&t=3s>