

What is sexual exploitation?

This is a type of sexual abuse where children and young people are tricked or pressured, by an adult or friends of a similar age, into sexual activity in return for something – like attention, love, food, shelter, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money. It happens to boys and girls and can happen online. It's important that children and parents know how to spot the warning signs so they can protect themselves and their friends.

How does sexual exploitation happen?

Someone who is exploiting a child may:

- Show them a lot of interest and affection and make them feel special
- Take them and their friends back to their house or to parties
- Offer them drugs, alcohol or a place to hang out
- Buy them clothes, a mobile phone or money

Once they've gained trust and affection, things change. They will ask for sexual favours for themselves or other people in return for alcohol, drugs, presents, money – all the things they started giving for free. They stop being nice and can become threatening or violent.

The warning signs of sexual exploitation

If you're worried about a child, some of the signs they are in trouble could include:

- Having an older boyfriend/girlfriend or older friends
- Staying out late or going missing from home and school
- Being bought presents or given food, money, alcohol, cigarettes or drugs
- Being secretive about what they're doing and who they're with
- Spending increasing amounts of time talking secretly with new friends
- Receiving calls or texts from strangers asking to meet up
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- Accepting lifts from people they don't know
- A sudden change in their behaviour – becoming aggressive and disruptive, or quiet and withdrawn

Further signs of sexual exploitation can be found on the Barnardo's website:
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns.htm

Remember:

- There can be a big age gap between victim and perpetrator, but it can also be peer-on-peer
- Boys can be targeted just as easily as girls – this is not gender specific
- Perpetrators can be women and not just men
- Exploitation can be between males and females or between the same genders
- Children with learning difficulties can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation
- Exploitation can take the form of 'cyber exploitation' – for example through mobile phones, Facebook, gaming and other social media sites



Help and Advice

CEOP

Has someone acted inappropriately towards your child online, or to a child or young person you know? It may be sexual chat, being asked to do something that makes them feel uncomfortable or someone being insistent on meeting up. You can report it to us below.

www.ceop.police.uk

PACE (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation)

PACE works alongside parents and carers of children who are being, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited by perpetrators external to the family

paceuk.info

ThinkUknow

The latest information on the sites children and young people like to visit, mobiles and new technology. If you look after young people there's an area for you too – with resources you can use in the classroom or at home. Most importantly, there's also a place which anyone can use to report if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk