
Child Exploitation



By Danielle Doherty

What is child exploitation?

Child exploitation is a severe form of child abuse where individuals or groups take advantage of a power imbalance to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child under the age of 18. The exploitation can involve various activities, including sexual activity and criminal acts.

Online exploitation

Online exploitation encompasses various forms of abuse that occur through the internet and digital technologies, impacting individuals, particularly children and young people.

Forms of online exploitation

- **Online Grooming:** Building a relationship with a child, often under false pretenses (e.g., faking age or identity), with the intention of exploiting them sexually or criminally.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Manipulating or coercing someone, especially a child, into sexual activity, which can include creating sexually explicit content or engaging in sexual conversations online.
- **Sexual Coerced Extortion (Sextortion):** Blackmail using threats of sharing intimate images or videos of someone to force them into unwanted actions or to extract money.
- **Child Sexual Abuse Imagery (CSAI):** Creating, possessing, or sharing images of child sexual abuse, [regardless of how it is produced, according to the NSPCC](#).
- **Criminal Exploitation:** Forcing or pressuring individuals into illegal activities through online means, sometimes involving online radicalization or recruiting for criminal gangs.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment, threats, or intimidation through online platforms, [notes the NSPCC](#).
- **Sexting:** Sharing sexual images or videos via text or messaging apps, which can become exploitative if coercion or an age/authority imbalance is involved.

Signs of online exploitation

- Changes in behavior can be indicators of online exploitation:
- Sudden increase or decrease in time spent online or using devices.
- Secretive behavior about online activity or communications.
- New or numerous online contacts or phone numbers.
- Changes in mood, such as anger, anxiety, or withdrawal after being online.
- Receiving gifts or money online.

Impact of online exploitation

Online exploitation can have severe and long-lasting negative effects on victims, including:

- Mental health issues, like anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem including Self-harm and suicidal thoughts.
- Social isolation and difficulty trusting others.
- Feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blame.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Spot the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation

Children are often groomed into believing they are in a relationship with the exploiter. They can be manipulated into sexual acts through blackmail, threats and coercion. Children may be given items such as money, drugs and phones. The offenders can make the child feel protected, loved or dependent on them. Children can be exploited online without ever meeting the offender.

Some facts



- Children can be targeted from any location or background
- Offenders can be male, female, groups or individuals
- Victims of CSE rarely disclose their abuse

Signs

- Frequently going missing from home or school
- Being secretive
- Physical signs of abuse
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Unexplained absences from home or school
- Anxiety/distress over mobile phone
- Unexplained money, mobile phones, clothes or electronics
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- New friends or associates who they are secretive about
- Unexplained injuries or marks

Worried about your child?

Contact the Police

If you think a young person is in immediate danger, call the Emergency Services on 999.

Contact Pace

Parents can access support and advice from Pace about how to intervene early, liaise with local services and put measures in place to keep children safe from exploitation.

www.paceuk.info

Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Spot the signs of criminal exploitation

Children are being groomed and forced into criminal activity. It can include moving drugs, theft and deceptive crimes. Knowing the signs can help to intervene early and keep children safe.

Some facts



- Boys and girls are both at risk
- Children tend to be living at home
- Children are being targeted in every area of the UK

Signs

- Frequently going missing from home or school
- Coming home after missing episodes looking unwell
- Being found with drugs
- Being found in a different area
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive at school and home
- Anxiety/distress over mobile phone
- Unexplained money, mobile phones, clothes or electronics
- Increased interest in money
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Having friends or associates who they are secretive about

Worried about your child?

Contact the Police

If you think a young person is in immediate danger, call the Emergency Services on 999.

Contact Pace

Parents can access support and advice from Pace about how to intervene early, liaise with local services and put measures in place to keep children safe from exploitation.

www.paceuk.info

County Lines Exploitation

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.



Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime. Know the signs to spot.

County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:

 Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area	 Unexplained acquisitions of money, clothes, or mobile phones	 Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls	 Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association	 Leaving home or care without explanation
 Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries	 Parental concerns	 Significant decline in school performance	 Significant changes in emotional well-being	

[edit this text] If you have concerns, follow your safeguarding procedures and share your concerns with local authority social care services.

 Home Office

Working in partnership with
CrimeStoppers.

Child trafficking.

- Child trafficking is a severe form of human trafficking and child abuse, where individuals under 18 are recruited, transported, transferred, harboured, or received for the purpose of exploitation.
- Here's a breakdown of what that means:
- Age: A child is anyone under the age of 18.
- Actions: This includes activities like recruiting children, moving them (domestically or internationally), hiding them, or receiving them.
- Purpose of exploitation: The ultimate goal of trafficking is to exploit the child. This exploitation can take many forms:
- Sexual Exploitation: Using children in prostitution, child pornography, or the sex trade.
- Forced Labour: Compelling children to work in industries like agriculture, factories, domestic service, restaurants, and other sectors for little or no pay, often in unsafe or hazardous conditions.
- Criminal Exploitation: Forcing children into criminal activities such as drug dealing, begging, theft, or cultivating cannabis.
- Domestic Servitude: Forcing children to perform excessive housework, cleaning, cooking, or childcare in oppressive conditions.
- Forced Marriage: Children being compelled into marriages against their will.
- Illegal Adoption: Children being trafficked for adoption, often involving kidnapping or tricking parents into giving up their children.
- Organ Harvesting: The illegal removal of a child's organs for profit



Things to remember

Trust your instincts: If you suspect something isn't right, it's essential to act.

Don't try to deal with it alone: Exploitation is complex, and professionals can offer the necessary support.

Support for parents: Organizations like Barnardo's and the Ivison Trust (for parents and carers of sexually exploited children) offer specialized support to families impacted by child exploitation.

Support for children: Childline and other charities provide confidential help and advice directly to young people affected by exploitation.

Educating your child: Talk to your child about the risks of exploitation, how to stay safe online, and ensure they know they can speak to you or another trusted adult about anything that worries them. Resources like CEOP's website have materials that can help explain exploitation to children of different ages

EXPLOITATION SPOT THE SIGNS

MISSING DAY OR NIGHT
Missing from home or education. Not knowing where they are or who they are with.

NEW PLACES
Discovering they have been going to new places where they have no obvious connections.

ONLINE USE
Spending more time online. Secretive activity, refusal to come offline. Have they distanced themselves from family, friends and usual activities?

CHANGE IN APPEARANCE
Clothing, personal hygiene, talking differently, tired.

INJURIES
Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, marks. Reluctance to seek medical attention.

CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR
Have they become unusually secretive, fearful or withdrawn, aggressive, distanced themselves from family and friends, involved in anti-social behaviour.

CHANGE IN FRIENDS
Sudden changes in who they are 'hanging out' with including meeting new people from social media.

COPING MECHANISMS
Alcohol/drug use/self-harm – what they may be doing or using in order to cope.

POSSESSIONS
Unexplained items e.g. New clothing, money, phone, drugs.

EXPLOITATION AWARENESS DAY 18 MARCH

HELP US STOP EXPLOITATION

SAY SOMETHING, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS.
CONTACT:
Crimestoppers **OR** Police **OR**
0800 555 111 **OR** 101
WWW.STOP-CE.ORG

Contact: []

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS

STOPCE

Who to contact if you have concerns

- **Emergency services**

- Police: If your child is in immediate danger, call 999. You can also call the non-emergency number 101 if you think a crime has been committed but there's no immediate danger.
- British Transport Police: If concerns relate to exploitation linked to the railway, you can text 61016 or use their Railway Guardian app.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead at your child's school: They are responsible for safeguarding children and can provide support and guidance. Call on 01952 468220 or the DSL email- danielle.doherty@lamledgeschool.co.uk

Child protection and support organizations

- NSPCC: Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. They can provide advice, assess the situation, and refer to relevant agencies like social services or the police if necessary. The NSPCC also runs Childline, a 24-hour helpline for children and young people: 0800 1111.
- Local Council Social Care: Contact the children's social care team at your local council. You can choose to remain anonymous.
- Crimestoppers: If you wish to report anonymously, you can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or use their anonymous online form.
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP): If the exploitation is online, you can report it to CEOP, who are dedicated to protecting children from online sexual abuse. However, if you've already reported to the police or children's social care, you don't need to report to CEOP.
- Your GP, a youth worker, or another trusted adult: These individuals can offer support and help guide you towards appropriate services.