

# Child Exploitation Guidance

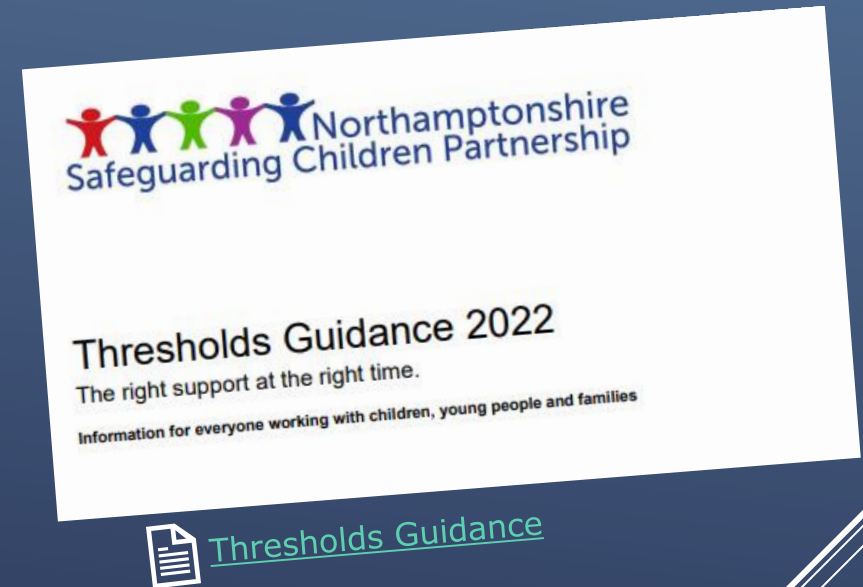
Advice outlining how professionals,  
organisations and individuals can help  
protect children and young people from all  
types of child exploitation



**If you feel that a child is in immediate danger you should contact the police directly by calling 999.**

If there is no immediate danger, the level of need and risk should be established before action is taken. You should do this by using the CERAF (Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework) and Northamptonshire Thresholds document.

If following this you believe that the concern meets the threshold for statutory intervention you should make a MASH referral more on how to do this can be found in this guidance.



***Children that come to notice must be treated as children, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.***

# Introduction

Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse which occurs when someone takes advantage of a child for their own or others profit or gain. It can take different forms.

Safeguarding children from exploitation and violence is 'everyone's business'. Understanding exploitation drivers, themes, risks, and venues of concern, drawing upon intelligence and information from children, peers, communities, and professionals will provide key prevention opportunities to stop children becoming victims of exploitation. Tackling child exploitation is a complex task that requires a proactive, multi-agency, holistic approach.

The risks posed to young people beyond their family and approaches to addressing these are often also referred to as extra-familial harm. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to managing extra-familial harm that '...recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.' (Firmin, 2017). It is often a hidden crime and can happen to any child, at anytime, anywhere. Tackling it remains a high priority for all involved in safeguarding across Northamptonshire.

Child exploitation is a crime with devastating and long-lasting consequences for victims and their families. Childhoods and family life can be ruined, and this is compounded when victims, or those at risk of abuse, do not receive appropriate, immediate and on-going support. Children often find that they are not treated as children, instead being treated as perpetrators or to blame for the abuse they suffer. The overriding principle of this guidance is that children must be viewed as children at all times, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.

We aim to raise awareness of child exploitation by helping people recognise the signs, encourage reporting and providing support to victims.

***Children that come to notice must be treated as children, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.***

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# Strategy, Vision and Aims

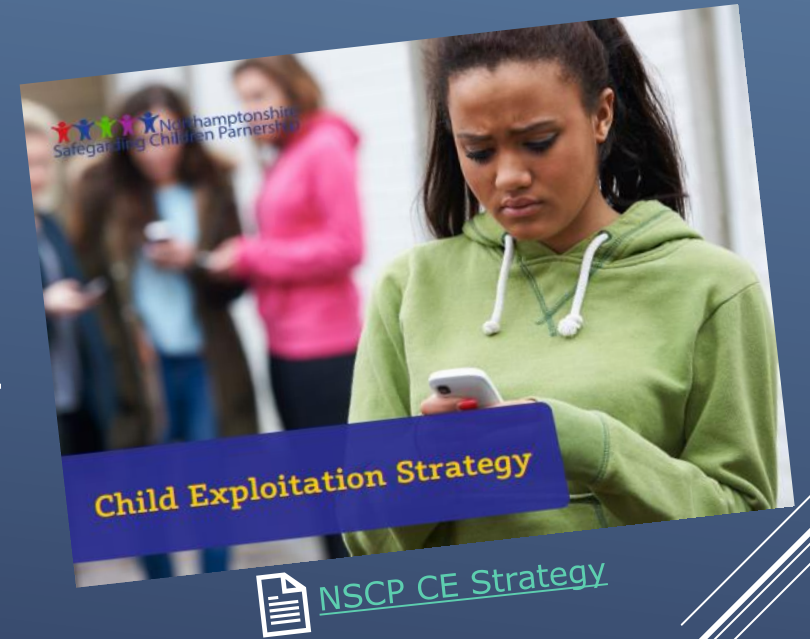
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## CE Strategy

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership have developed and adopted a CE Strategy.

This strategy sets out our vision, aims and principals for tackling Child Exploitation in Northamptonshire which can be found below.

The strategy is designed to be a dynamic document that will be updated on a regular basis as we establish our response to Child Exploitation. It is built upon an understanding around how we can all work together to prepare, prevent, protect and pursue. The document is owned by the Child Exploitation Sub Group of the Partnership.



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# Strategy, Vision and Aims

## Vision

Our vision is simple: to ensure that all agencies that serve children, adults and/or communities understand their roles and responsibilities; to secure a coordinated, effective response to safeguard against harm as a result of all forms of exploitation; and to have a clear focus on the prevention of harm through identification, disruption, and prosecution of offenders

## Aims of our Strategy

- To ensure that children are treated as children at all times.
- To ensure victims are recognised as victims regardless of their situation or circumstance
- To ensure swift identification and action against perpetrators
- To ensure a swift, collaborative and consistent safeguarding response using a contextual or systems wide approach
- To raise awareness of, identify and implement intervention to reduce and prevent child exploitation

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## Principles

The principles underpinning a multi-agency response to the exploitation of children include the following:

- Child exploitation is a form of child abuse.
- Child exploitation can lead to children being exposed to or subjected to serious youth violence.
- Exploited children should be treated primarily as victims of abuse, even where offences have been committed which may need investigating.
- Children may be victims as well as perpetrators.
- It is vital that language is used which adequately describes the children's experience and does not place any blame on them

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

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A group of professionals and young people worked together to develop a simple definition of Child Exploitation that can be easily understood by everyone and is used across our material around CE in Northamptonshire. Below is the definition it is then expanded to look at the individual areas of CE it covers.

## **Northamptonshire CE Definition**

Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse which occurs when someone takes advantage of a child for their own or others profit or gain. It can take different forms. This includes:

- Child criminal exploitation – when a child is coerced, manipulated, or pressured to take part in criminal activity
- Child sexual exploitation – a type of sexual abuse where a child is coerced, manipulated, or pressured into sexual activity

Exploitation can be hard for a child to recognise, and they may not understand that they are being coerced/groomed.

**Often a child may demonstrate warning indicators for multiple types of exploitation and there may be several crossovers.**

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# Definition and Types of 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 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. (Department for Education, 2017)



[Child Sexual Exploitation - Emma's Story - YouTube](#)



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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**Criminal exploitation:** Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 to undertake criminal acts. (Gov.uk 2020) 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. Criminal exploitation of children is much broader than just county lines and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft. Child criminal exploitation also includes forms of economic exploitation. For example, where a child is paid to transfer money in and out of their own bank account to assist with money laundering. Where a child is exploited to commit any criminal offence this can constitute child criminal exploitation.



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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**County lines** is a specific model of child exploitation. The national definition of county lines: 'A term used to describe gangs or organised criminal groups involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas using dedicated mobile phone lines. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and will often use coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons. The groups often use local residential premises, often owned by a vulnerable person, as a base for their activities. This is often taken over by force or coercion, and in some instances, victims have left their homes in fear of violence. Empty or commercial premises can also be used. Perpetrators employ various tactics to evade detection, including rotating group members between locations so they are not identified by law enforcement or competitors.'

Perpetrators will also use vulnerable adults, both male and female and children to transport drugs in the belief that they are less likely to be stopped and searched. Children may be subject to coercive internal concealment of drugs (maybe known as 'plugging' 'stuffing' or 'banking') This involves drugs being moved from one place to another (or stored for a longer duration) hidden in body cavities, commonly the rectum or vagina, to avoid detection. Criminal groups use threats, physical violence, and humiliation to coerce children or vulnerable adults into inserting drugs in their bodies. These processes are sometimes filmed, as a means of coercive control. This poses serious health risks to the victim.

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

Evidence of exploitation through the county lines model will often become apparent to professionals when children are located after missing episodes.

The risks presented to the children involved in this type of exploitative behaviour are just as severe as those involved in county lines. Particular attention must be paid to drug debts as seizing drugs or money will often perpetuate the cycle of criminality as children are further forced to 'work off' the debt (known as debt bondage). Groups may also seek to entrap children by staging false robberies (known as 'taxing') to then entrap the child.



▶ [Help put 'county lines' out of business - YouTube](#)

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**Gender Differences:** Young boys are most likely to be perpetrators of sexual violence and sexual exploitation, and young girls are most likely to be at risk of or experience sexual exploitation. (Children's Commissioner's study, Berelowitz et al, 2012). However, the situation is more complex, as boys and young men can experience sexual exploitation, including as part of violence and coercion to pressure them into performing acts as part of a group or gang which includes sexually exploiting others. Additionally, young girls can become involved in recruiting other young girls to be sexually exploited or be involved in acts of sexually exploiting others as part of their own experiences of being sexually exploited or as part of a pattern of violent offending.

Currently there is likely to be a significant under-reporting of young boys who have experienced sexual exploitation (Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men – A UK scoping study, Barnardo's, August 2014). In addition, most youth and gang prevention programmes are aimed at boys, leaving many girls invisible to services and help. See report Keeping girls and young women safe – Protecting and supporting the girls and young women at risk of exploitation, violence gangs and harm here.

[Breck's Last Game - YouTube](#)

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**Gangs and Organised Crime Groups:** The term 'gang' is often open to interpretation depending on what areas of business you work in. Gangs can be highly organised and sophisticated in exploitation as seen within trafficking, modern slavery and county lines. It is therefore usually more appropriate to use the term Organised Crime Group (OCG) in these contexts rather than 'gang'. The government paper Safeguarding children and young people (year) who may be affected by gang activity distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.

- Peer group – A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.
- Street gang – Groups of young people and adults who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.
- Organised Criminal Gangs – A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most, crime is their 'occupation'. It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous.

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

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**Child trafficking** is defined as recruiting, moving, receiving, and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation, distance travelled is immaterial and it can include all types of exploitation outlined in this document.

Child trafficking is a form of modern slavery. Children can be trafficked both within the UK and into the UK from overseas. International child trafficking can be incorrectly labelled as child smuggling. Professionals are encouraged to be professionally curious to identify the trafficking risk indicators and implement a collaborative safeguarding response to the child. Responding to the vulnerability is a key factor. Exploiters of victims from outside the UK may act as or influence interpreters therefore, it's important the child is spoken to independently. Utilising accredited independent translators from the outset is key to capturing the best evidence and providing the most effective immediate support to the child.

[What You Need to Know About Child Trafficking | NSPCC](#)

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

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**Radicalisation:** is defined as the process by which people, including children, come to support terrorism and extremism and in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups (Gov.uk 2022). Radicalisation also includes grooming into far-right groups as well as Islamism and other forms. Radicalisation is not about a specific faith or demographic and there is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame and often involves an element of exploitation.



▶ [Understanding Radicalisation and Raising Awareness - YouTube](#)

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**Online child exploitation:** This generation has grown up in a digital world which has improved people's lives in many ways, such as giving us multiple methods to communicate and share information. According to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), a significant number of child exploitation offences take place online. These offences include deceiving children into producing indecent images of themselves and engaging in sexual chat online or sexual activity over a webcam. Children often do not see the dangers of sharing intimate images of themselves to strangers. The internet creates a false feeling of security and diminishes inhibitions that would exist offline. The anonymous nature of the internet allows perpetrators to adopt false personas and build trust via online conversations. Children may be naïve to the loss of control of uploaded images, falsely believing the properties of social media applications will protect them. Children may take nude and sexual images of themselves and share them with other children and, whilst the taking and receiving of such images is a criminal offence and a criminal justice response may be necessary in some cases, the focus should be on providing a collaborative response which educates, supports and safeguards all children involved.

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

The following offences could be committed by sharing sexual pictures, videos or messages (often known as 'sexting' or 'sending nudes'):

- Take or permit to take an indecent photo or video of themselves or another person under 18.
- Share an indecent image or video of another person under 18, even if it's shared between young people of a similar age.
- Possess, download or store an indecent image or video of a child/young person under 18, even if that young person gave their permission for it to be created.

Being online can offer great benefits and opportunities for all children, but this is a particular risk for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who may struggle to form and maintain social interactions in person.

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

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Evidence suggests that children with SEND can be more vulnerable to online abuse:

- Children with vulnerabilities including SEND are seven times more likely to experience online harm in their lifetime.
- Children with a disability are at least three times as likely to experience child sexual abuse.
- Children with speech and/or learning difficulties are up to three times more likely to have 'shared nudes' with others compared to those without additional needs.



 [The digital experiences of children with SEND | Internet Matters](#)

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**Child on Child exploitation.** Children can be exploited by other children as well as by adults. Research is increasingly demonstrating that a significant number of exploited children have been abused by their peers.

In some cases, children who have been exploited themselves by adults or peers, will recruit other children to be abused. In other instances, sexual bullying in schools and other social settings can result in the exploitation of children by their peers. Exploitation also occurs within and between street gangs. Where sex can be used in a number of ways including control, retribution, safety and protection.

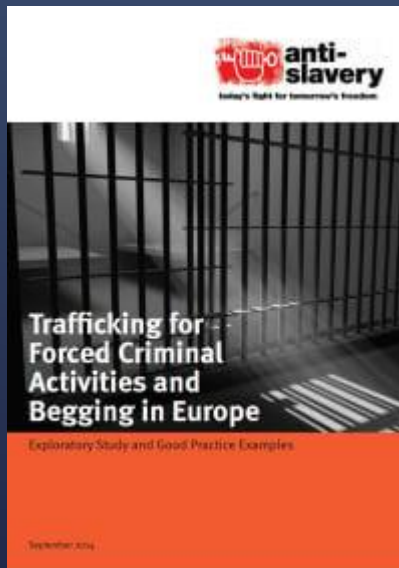
For 16-and-17-year-olds who are in abusive relationships, what may appear to be a case of domestic abuse may also involve criminal or sexual exploitation. In all cases of child-on-child exploitation a power imbalance will still drive the relationship, but this inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the abuser and the abused.

[What is peer on peer abuse - YouTube](#)

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# Definition and Types of Exploitation

**Organised begging** is likely to be a form of modern slavery/trafficking and if children are concerned it is a form of forced or compulsory labour. It occurs when Organised Crime Groups, or less organised groups, traffic and coerce people to beg in busy retail or tourist areas. There is no specific offence of organised begging however, those who participate in organised begging may have been trafficked into/within the UK and may be held in conditions that may amount to slavery or servitude. Debt bondage is sometimes used to force individuals to beg. Children or those with visible disabilities may also be used as props to generate feelings of sympathy.



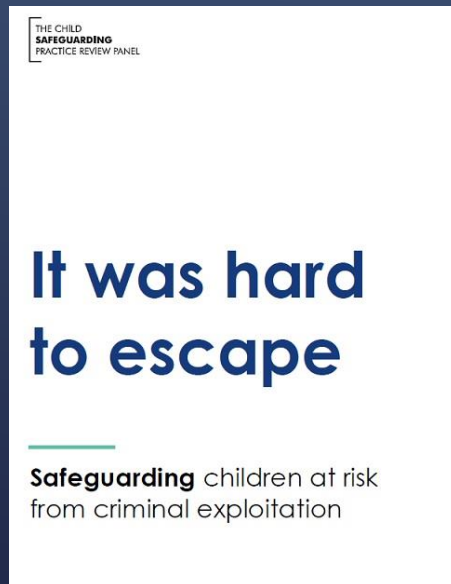
[Trafficking for Forced Criminal Activities and Begging in Europe | ECPAT UK](#)



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## National Reviews

In March 2020 the National Safeguarding Review Panel produced its report [“It was hard to escape”](#) this was a national review into adolescent deaths or serious harm where criminal exploitation was a factor. The review report sets out recommendations and findings for government and local safeguarding partners to protect children at risk of criminal exploitation.



[The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - It was hard to escape - report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



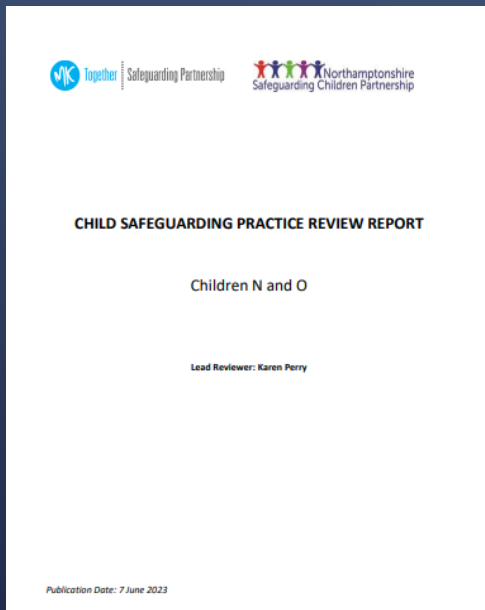
▶ [The 47 children killed and seriously harmed in incidents linked to criminal exploitation - YouTube](#)

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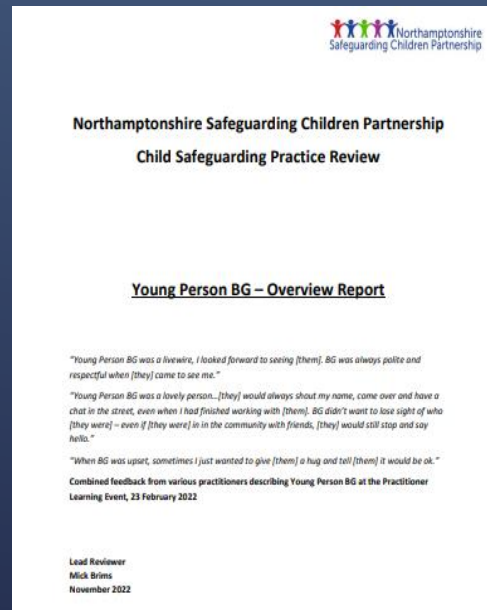


## Local Reviews

In June 2023 the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership published two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPRs) which had a central theme of Child Exploitation. The overview reports and learning summaries for these CSPRs can be found on the links below:



[Child N & O - Child Safeguarding Practice Review - NSCP \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](#)



[Young Person Bg - Child Safeguarding Practice Review - NSCP \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](#)

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# Risk Indicators of Exploitation

The following details the things you might want to consider when thinking about a child that you feel may be being exploited. It is also important to take into account that in normal growing up teenagers can be secretive, moody and display new and challenging behaviours.

Regularly going as missing from school or home

Being found out of their normal area

Often out at all hours of the night and will not say where they have been

Parents are unable to stop them going out

Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, phones etc. / saying these are gifts

Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls (that may affect their behaviour)

Recent change in their relationship with their parents

Attendance issues at school

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# Risk Indicators of Exploitation

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Behaviour issues  
and exclusions at  
school

Significant decline in  
school performance  
/ achievement

Associating with older  
people or groups who  
are controlling and  
who are known to the  
police or social  
services

Started stealing  
from home

Child's  
personality/views  
have changed

Caught carrying  
weapons or known  
to have weapons

Becoming isolated  
from peers and  
normal social  
networks

Significant changes  
in emotional  
wellbeing

Involved in criminal  
activity

Gang symbols  
appearing on the  
child's clothing,  
room, personal  
items

People / peers /  
school are saying  
that the child is in a  
gang

Child gets picked up  
or dropped home by  
lots of different cars

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# Risk Indicators of Exploitation

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Child is using illegal drugs

Child is drinking a lot of alcohol

Child will not talk about their new friends

Child comes home often with bruises or injuries

Change in child's eating / sleeping patterns

Child has started to look unhealthy (tired, weight loss or gain, pale etc)

Child has become very secretive

Child has started self-harming

Child has become more aggressive when questioned

Their friends are concerned about them and worried about who they associate with

They frequently attend A&E with injuries / are accompanied by older adults

They often need emergency contraception

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# Risk Indicators of Exploitation

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When thinking about the list of behaviours it is important to remember that a child does not need to be displaying all of the behaviours to be being exploited. There might just be one thing that changes that you are concerned about and feel that you need further support or information about exploitation.

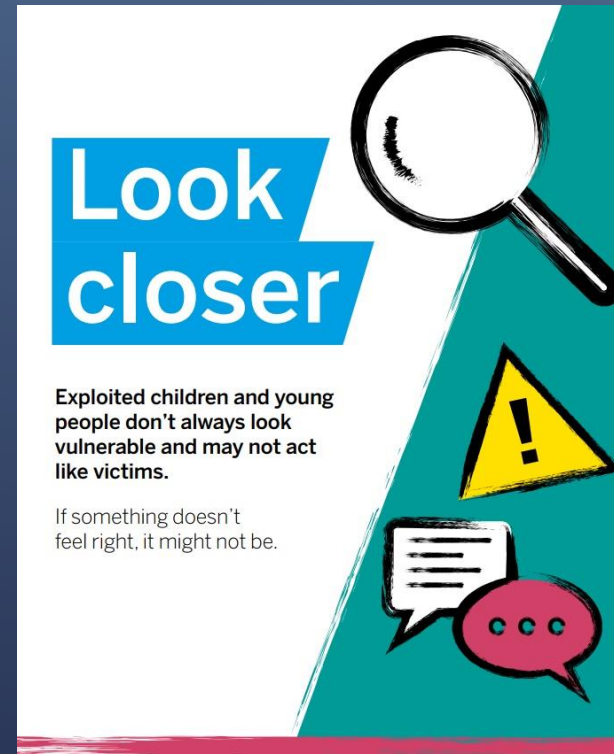


Follow this QR code to learn how to **spot child exploitation**




**#LookCloser**

The Children's Society  
Charity Reg No. 221124





**Look closer**



Exploited children and young people don't always look vulnerable and may not act like victims.

If something doesn't feel right, it might not be.



 [#LookCloser To Spot Exploitation](#)  
[| The Children's Society](#)  
[\(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

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# Push and Pull Factors

All children are vulnerable to child exploitation, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, age or social background, however, some vulnerabilities may increase a young person's risk of exploitation – these are known as push factors.

Children who have been the victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse

Children from households where domestic violence and abuse has been a feature

Children of parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (e.g. drug and/or alcohol abuse mental illness, learning disability, their own history of an abusive childhood)

Family breakdown / disrupted family life / problematic parenting

Economic difficulties and challenges

Homelessness or uncertainty about their accommodation status

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# Push and Pull Factors

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Recent bereavement or loss

Social isolation or social difficulties

Insecure immigration status

Children who have physical or learning impairments

Questioning of their sexual / gender identity, trying to make sense and understand their sexual/gender identity and/or not having somewhere to explore their sexual identity safely

Children in Care, especially if there have been significant placement moves and breakdowns

Connections with other young people who are being exploited or a family history of older family members being involved in illegal activity, such as drug dealing, gang activity or sex work

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# Push and Pull Factors

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Perpetrators may use certain behaviours to groom, coerce or manipulate a young person into exploitation. These behaviours are known as pull factors.

Being liked by someone older

Treated like someone older

Being liked/fancied enough that a stranger asks for their mobile number

Meeting someone who tells them they are special

Receiving alcohol, drugs, money or gifts

Getting a buzz and the excitement of forbidden behaviour

Being offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules or boundaries

Being taken along to adult entertainment venues, red light or gay cruising areas (public sex environments)

Being given lifts, taken to new places, and having adventures with a casual acquaintance

Threats of violence or abuse against a young person and/or family members, including threats to post explicit images online

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# Perpetrators

Perpetrators may be of any age, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, economic background and religious background and from any location. They can be the same age as the child, live in the same street and go to the same school. They can be a member of the child's family, a friend of a friend or someone the child has never met before.

Perpetrators can use a great deal of ways to contact and meet young people such as:

By Phone

Online – by messaging, gaming or through friends of friends

At school

In their neighbourhood

In their place of worship

At their sport club

Through friends

At bus stops

At shopping centres

Any place that young people gather – this is often places with free Wi-Fi such as fast food restaurants.

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# Perpetrators

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Perpetrators use a process of grooming to gain the child's trust. They befriend, pay attention to the child and involve the child in exciting activities, have shared interests to the child, put doubt into the child's mind about their 'real life' and look to brainwash the child to believe their parents are 'in the wrong and don't understand', isolate the child from 'real life', make promises to the child (I can get you a job, I can help you etc.) often whilst making the child believe they are in control and an 'equal' member of the relationship.

This grooming process can go in one of two ways, either the groomer then needs to use force, fear and control to manage the young person or the groomer makes the child feel that they are the ones in control, who hold the power and are making conscious choices.

This difference can be seen when we look at the different types of CE, often a gang member will feel in control and that they have made a choice, whereas a victim of slavery may know the perpetrator has control over them and they have no power at all.

A young person, especially in a gang situation can be both a victim and a perpetrator, may have been coerced or groomed into committing offences. This is often because their view of 'normalised' behaviour has been so changed by their involvement with a gang that they neither see themselves as a perpetrator or victim.

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# Grooming

## What is Grooming?

Grooming is a process that "involves the offender building a relationship with a child, and sometimes with their wider family, gaining their trust and a position of power over the child, in preparation for abuse." (CEOP, 2022)

Grooming can happen anywhere, including:

- online
- in organisations
- in public spaces (also known as street grooming)

Children and young people can be groomed by a stranger or by someone they know – such as a family member, friend or professional. The age gap between a child and their groomer can be relatively small (NSPCC and O2, 2016).

Grooming techniques can be used to prepare children for [sexual abuse](#) and [exploitation](#), [radicalisation](#) (Department for Education (DfE), 2017) or criminal exploitation (Children's Commissioner, 2019).

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### Targeting stage

This is when a person or gang target a young person who is vulnerable, as this reduces their chances of getting caught.

**Signs of this stage include a person or group:**

- \* Observing you, finding out your vulnerabilities, needs and wants
- \* Glamourising their lifestyle to you
- \* Gaining and developing your trust
- \* Sharing information about you with other members of their gang
- \* Recruiting you to their gang or friendship group

### Experience stage

This stage is where this person might try to get you used to their lifestyle, or train you up in what they're doing. **At this stage a person or gang might:**

- \* Make you feel wanted
- \* Give you gifts and rewards
- \* Test out your loyalty
- \* Offer you protection
- \* Relate to you and offer you advice
- \* Give you a sense of belonging
- \* Give you a weapon
- \* Introduce you to more established members of their gang

### Hooked stage

This is the stage where people make you feel like you're a member of their gang, even though actually they're just exploiting you for their own gain. **Signs of this stage include:**

- \* You getting more responsibilities within the group eg more money
- \* You might be asked to commit low level crimes
- \* You getting involved with trap houses
- \* Asking you to recruit others to the gang
- \* Engaging in activities such as drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour

### Trapped stage

Now you feel dependant on the group, the relationship with the person or group exploiting you may start to become unpleasant, as they reveal their true intents or character. **At this stage you may experience:**

- \* Threatening behaviour and physical violence
- \* People playing on your guilt, shame and fear
- \* Attempts to isolate you from your family, friends and society
- \* People forcing you to abuse others, assault or even shoot people
- \* Involvement in Class A drugs (cooking or running)

# The Impact of Child Exploitation

The impact of child exploitation on the young people affected is huge.

For example, exploited young people are at increased risk of rape, sexual assault, physical violence, sexually transmitted infections, trafficking, and pressure to use drugs and alcohol.

## Physical Impact of child exploitation

- Anxiety, depression, addiction, low self-esteem, self-harm, eating disorders, PTSD, self-image, depression, nightmares, flashbacks, attachment problems, emotional numbing/detachment, rapid behaviour changes.

## Physical Impact of child exploitation

- Physical injuries, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, weight loss, sickness, self-harm, general ill health, problems with fertility, hair loss, poor diet, addictions, change in physical appearance, impact on parental mental health, disturbed sleep patterns.

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# Multi Agency Principals for Responding to Child Exploitation and Extra Familial Harm

The Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to develop a set of Practice Principles to inform local and national responses to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.

**The eight Multi Agency Principles for responding to child exploitation & extra familial harm** are evidence-informed, which means they draw on the expertise of children, young people, parents, carers and professionals and what we know from research. Taken together, they promote a holistic response to child exploitation and extra-familial harm that recognises the potential presence of different and multiple forms of harm in children and young people's lives.

[Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](https://researchinpractice.org.uk)

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# Multi Agency Principals for Responding to Child Exploitation and Extra Familial Harm

Those affected by child exploitation and / or extra-familial harm are due the same rights and protections as other children and young people, so the Principles will be relevant to work with all children and young people. We know, however, that for children and young people experiencing these forms of harm, the complexities and presentation of child exploitation and / or extra-familial harm can mean that responses sometimes undermine the realisation of these rights.

To support partnerships, agencies and professionals to shape how they respond to this context, the Practice Principles:

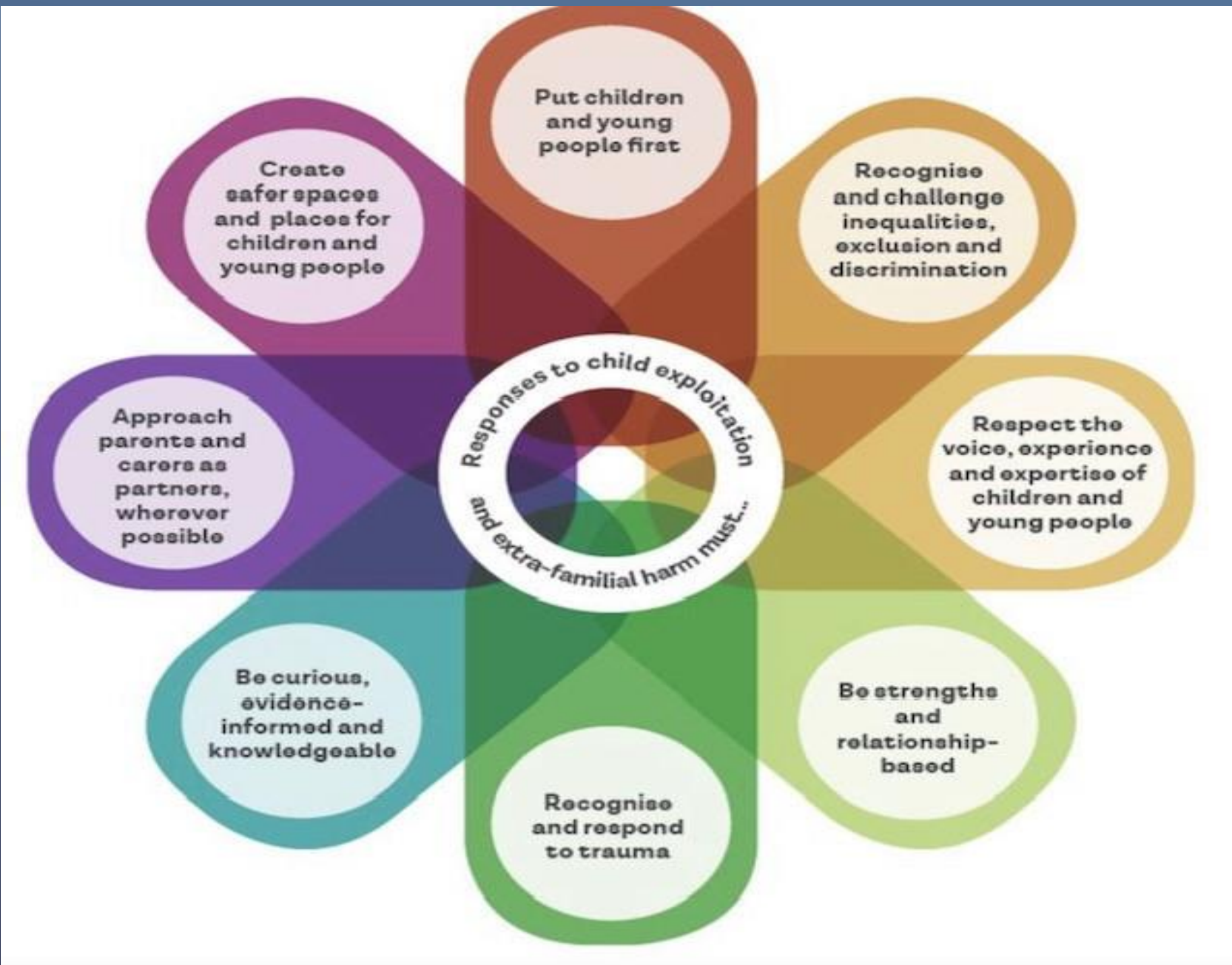
- **Offer a compass** to help navigate a complex landscape, rather than a detailed map for every individual situation, as no one set of circumstances or local context is the same as another, and there is no single answer for how to respond to these types of harms.
- **Are high-level** to support a coherent approach across local partnerships and to support multi-agency working.
- **Focus on behaviours and culture** to help direct work with children, young people, and families, operational management and strategic leadership to align.
- **Complement existing and forthcoming guidance** and are broad enough to sustain utility over time and to fit within diverse local working arrangements.

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[Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#)



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# The National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

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The NRM is a national framework for identifying victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive appropriate care. Trained decision makers decide whether individuals referred to them should be considered to be victims of trafficking according to the definition in the Council of Europe Convention. Potential victims of trafficking are likely to be extremely vulnerable. They may fear revealing their status or experiences to state authorities and will often mistrust individuals in authority. Their ability to participate in any future proceedings, for example as a witness, will depend largely on their psychological, emotional, and physical health. Referrals to the NRM can be made by any members of first responder organisations, this includes police, local authorities and a number of other organisations. Modern slavery referrals can still be made by organisations who are not first responders via the modern slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700 or via online reporting [File a report \(modernslaveryhelpline.org\)](https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org) If you suspect that someone is a potential victim of modern slavery or just feel that *'something is not quite right'* you should report the matter. Act quickly as victims can be moved out of the area. A range of agencies may be involved in a trafficking case such as the police, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), local authorities and non-governmental organisations such as charities. The NRM makes it easier for these agencies to co-operate, share information and facilitate access to advice, accommodation, and support. [Report modern slavery as a first responder - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-modern-slavery-as-a-first-responder)

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# The National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

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Advice and guidance for professionals,( including support with referral to the NRM,) and support for victims with the emotional and practical traumas of being trafficked can be provided by the Barnardo's Independent Child Trafficking Guardian service. [ICTG - East Midlands | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)



▶ [NCLCC - National Referral Mechanism - Awareness Video - YouTube](#)

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# Trauma Informed Practice

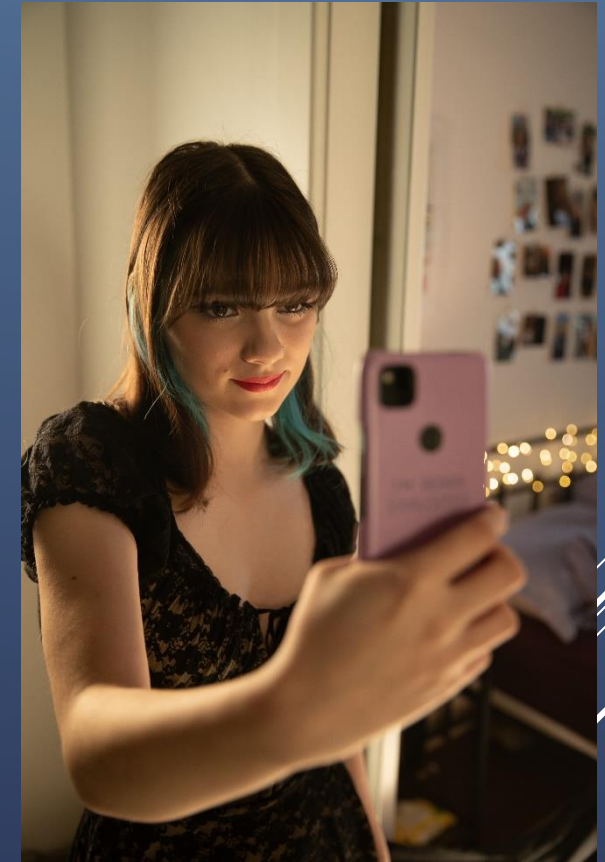
Trauma Informed approaches have become increasingly cited in policy and adopted in practice as a means for reducing the negative impact of trauma experiences and supporting mental and physical health outcomes.

Trauma informed practice is an approach which is based on the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, physiological and social development (Gov.uk 2022).

It is important to recognise every interaction matters and relationships are essential to the way we work. There is a known link between traumatic experiences and increased risk factors of child exploitation.

Connecting with empathy with young people increases the likelihood of preventing further harm and trauma being experienced.

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# Trauma Informed Practice

Being trauma informed is essential to safeguarding and connection requires time and presence, not only for individuals that have experienced trauma but for practitioners.

- Prevention requires looking past presenting behaviours and our own judgement and possible unconscious bias to be trauma responsive in practice.
- Enabling young people to exercise voice, choice and control which can be undermined by trauma.
- Understanding that non engagement or “negative” coping strategies may be a direct or indirect result of trauma.
- Vicarious trauma can impact on professionals’ ability to be trauma responsive in practice; taking care of your own wellbeing as a practitioner is essential to being trauma responsive when supporting young people that have been exposed to trauma experiences in their life.

[Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[\(875\) UK Trauma Council \(UKTC\) - YouTube](#)

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# Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma signs and symptoms in children can take many forms and the signs and symptoms listed below must always be considered as responses to trauma within the context of a young child's history, caregiving system, supports, etc.

Common symptoms where trauma has occurred are:

## Infants (birth to 3 years)

- Eating disturbance
- Sleep disturbances
- Somatic complaints
- Clingy / separation anxiety
- Feeling helpless / passive
- Irritable / difficult to soothe
- Constricted play, exploration, mood
- Repetitive / post-traumatic play
- Developmental regression
- General fearfulness/new fears
- Easily startled
- Language delay
- Aggressive behaviour
- Sexualized behaviour
- Talking about the traumatic event and reacting to reminders / trauma triggers

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# Trauma Informed Practice

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## Young children (3 to 6)

- Avoidant, anxious, clingy
- General fearfulness / new fears
- Helplessness, passive, low frustration
- Restless, impulsive, hyperactive
- Physical symptoms (headache, etc.)
- Difficulty identifying what is bothering them
- Inattention, difficulty problem solving
- Daydreaming or dissociation
- Irritability
- Aggressive behaviour
- Sexualized behaviour
- Loss of recent developmental achievements
- Repetitive / post-traumatic play
- Talking about the traumatic event and reacting to reminders / trauma triggers
- Sadness / depression
- Poor peer relationships and social problems (controlling / over permissive)

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# Trauma Informed Practice

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## Teenagers

- Strong emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety and guilt
- Overreacting to minor irritations
- Repetitively thinking about the traumatic event and talking about it often
- Disturbed sleeping patterns
- Withdrawing from family and friends, disengagement
- Wanting to spend more time alone
- Being very protective of family and friends
- Returning to younger ways of behaving including giving up responsibilities or a sudden return to rebellious behaviour
- Increased need for independence
- Self-absorption and caring only about what is immediately important
- Loss of interest in school, friends, hobbies, and life in general
- Pessimistic outlook on life, being cynical and distrusting of others
- Depression and feelings of hopelessness
- Difficulties with short-term memory, concentration and problem solving.

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- The language professionals use should reflect the presence of coercion and the lack of control young people have in abusive or exploitative situations and must recognise the severity of the impact exploitation has on the young person.
- Child Exploitation is **never** the victim's fault
- Victim blaming judgemental language may reinforce messages from perpetrators around shame and guilt which may prevent a young person from disclosing their abuse through fear of being blamed by professionals.
- Victim blaming language in record keeping could prevent cases going to court or be used against the victims by the defence.
- 'Attention-seeking' is a term often used to describe behaviour people don't understand or don't know how to respond to. It places the focus on the behaviour, rather than the reasons behind it. This can lead professionals to miss important signs that a child needs support, protection, or both.
- The term also implies that children are purposefully 'acting up' to get a reaction. It encourages the belief that ignoring the behaviour will make it stop.
- Behaviour is a natural form of communication. Always think about the reasons behind behaviour. Consider whether the child has underlying support or safeguarding needs, or both. (NSPCC 2023)

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## Consider Inappropriate terms and suggested alternatives:

Inappropriate Term	Suggested Alternative
“Putting themselves at risk”	They may not understand the risks or be being groomed. There are concerns regarding other influences over the child
“sexual Activity”	They have been sexually abused/raped
In a relationship with...	Think about the facts of the persons situation considering coercion and control being a factor
Age 12 consented to sex	Raped
Promiscuous	The YP is vulnerable to being sexually exploited The YP is being sexually exploited
Boyfriend/girlfriend	The YP states they are in a relationship however there are concerns about the persons age, the imbalance of power/exploitation.
Gang member (this implies choice it does not recognise abusive or exploitive context or powerful grooming process)	YP is being criminally exploited The YP is being exploited within gangs
Dealing drugs	Being made to carry, sell or transport drugs by an adult

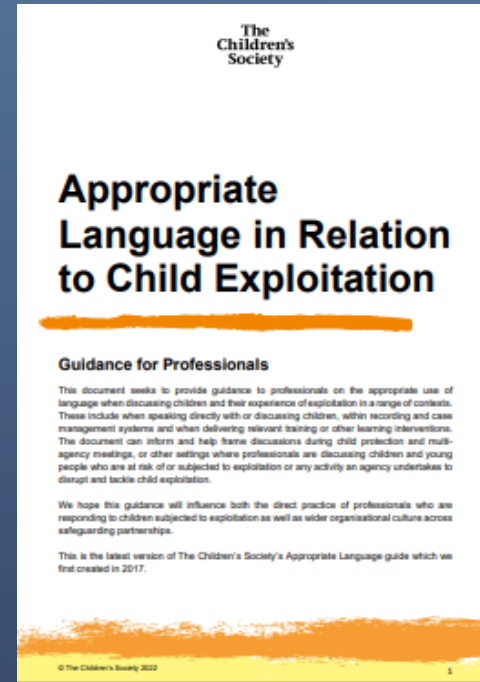
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# Language Matters

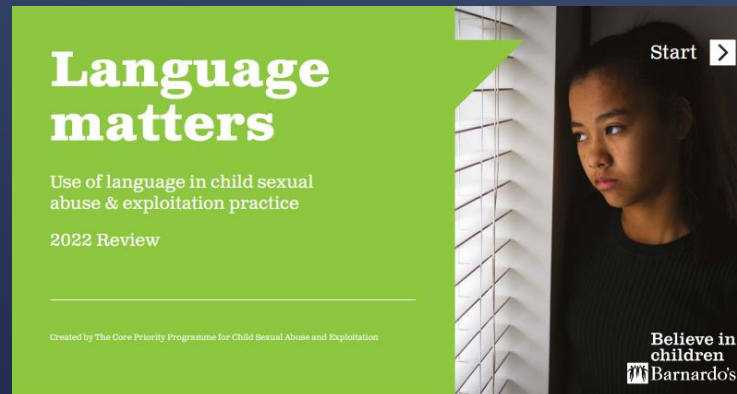
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▶ [Victim blaming language - YouTube](#)



[Child Exploitation  
Appropriate Lan  
guage Guide  
2022.pdf  
\(childrenssociety.  
org.uk\)](#)



[Language Matters  
2022 review.pdf  
\(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

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# Transitional Safeguarding

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## What is Transitional Safeguarding and why does it matter?

Transitional Safeguarding is described as: 'An approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice, and which prepares young people for their adult lives. (HM Inspectorate of Probation Academic Insights 2022/03)

Where young people are experiencing coercion and other forms of control and exploitation under 18, these experiences and the impact they have rarely stop when a person turns 18. Young people's brain development continues to mature cognitively and emotionally well into their twenties. This has important implications regarding, for instance, potential ongoing coercive influence of exploiters. The transitional nature of maturation after 18 requires us to take a nuanced approach to the 'age of maturity' and to take account of young adults' individual experiences and circumstances in how we protect their rights and understand their capacity to take particular decisions.

The contribution of adult social work is essential to developing and embedding a more transitional approach to safeguarding young people into adulthood.

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# Transitional Safeguarding

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▶ [What is Transitional Safeguarding and why does it matter? on Vimeo](#)



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**



[Adult social care -  
Adult social  
services - West  
Northamptonshire](#)



[Bridging the Gaps: Transitional  
safeguarding](#)



**North  
Northamptonshire  
Council**



[Adult social care | North  
Northamptonshire Council  
\(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

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# Working Together

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The following sections examines the roles and responsibilities of individual agencies to ensure children and young people are protected from Child Exploitation. Click on the blocks below to learn more about each agency.

All  
Professionals

Schools

Health

Looked After  
Children  
Service

Youth  
Offending  
Service

Community  
Safety  
Partnerships

Parents

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# Working Together – All Professionals

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A multi-agency response is essential to effectively tackle child exploitation. Organisations with specific child safeguarding responsibilities need to ensure that they enable their staff to work collaboratively and effectively share information within their organisation and with their partners. It is key that all practitioners are aware of everyone's aims that are politically important to them, mutually agree benefits and work together to safeguard children. All practitioners must be aware of:

- Their local child exploitation safeguarding protocols
- Their areas of responsibility and remits
- Safeguarding responsibilities and local reporting routes and escalation pathways
- Child exploitation indicators, associated risks, and importance of disrupting perpetrators
- The importance of professional curiosity
- The impact of trauma and associated risks
- The demographics of their borough, community complexities and ongoing challenges such as gangs and serious youth violence

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# Working Together – Schools

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Maintaining children in education is a critical protective factor against exploitation. Schools can help to raise awareness, offer support, and raise aspirations regarding the prevention of exploitation. Schools should ensure that they provide an environment where staff can recognise and appropriately respond to behaviour which is a signifier of abuse and exploitation. Schools should re-consider the use of exclusions for vulnerable children as this increases the likelihood of further exploitation, and this could be further explored in exclusion hearings. Schools, colleges, and other educational institutes have a key role to play in raising awareness and there is a clear need for early and continuous education. Child exploitation can impact very young children and the risks are heightened due to the online world. If children are not educated about the dangers and what a healthy relationship is, then they will be left exposed to the risks of child exploitation.

Personal, social, health and economic lessons are an obvious route for educating children about the risks of child exploitation and other forms of harm and risks. School nurses, dedicated Schools Officers and Safeguarding Leads are also well equipped to deliver these sessions.

Consideration must be given to special educational needs (SEN) children and children who sit outside of the mainstream education settings. SEN children or children who sit outside of main education are at higher risk of exploitation and therefore need particular attention and a bespoke response.

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# Working Together – Health

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Health can provide key early intervention opportunities for child exploitation victims. Health services such as A&E, school nurses, health visitors, GPs and sexual health services will encounter children demonstrating the child exploitation warning signs so it's pivotal they are aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. Children may attend A&E as victims of serious youth- violence and this could be a pivotal stage and a reachable moment in the child's journey to accepting/disclosing they are a victim of exploitation.

Here are some examples of key health specific warning signs of potential child exploitation:

- Expressions of despair -self-harm, overdose, eating disorder, challenging behaviour, neglect of medical conditions, substance misuse
- Mental health difficulties – anxiety, depression, PTSD, psychosis
- Sexually transmitted infections, repeated requests for emergency hormonal contraception
- Pregnancy/Miscarriage and/or seeking termination of pregnancy
- Late presentation or unexplained injuries or illnesses/suspicion of assault
- Change in Physical appearance/dress/image
- Vague somatic complaints – headaches, stomach aches etc
- Persistent painful urination (dysuria) with no obvious medical cause
- Parents/professionals seeking ADHD or mental health diagnosis for their child due to rapid behaviour changes
- Impact upon parental mental health

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# Working Together – Health

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Health professionals are key contributors in providing the multi-agency, holistic approach to child exploitation. Health partners offer a range of services that can prevent child exploitation, provide intervention opportunities, and support victim safeguarding plans.

These include:

- 0-19 services
- Primary Care
- Acute services
- Community Health Services
- Mental/Emotional health services
- Alcohol and drug misuse services
- Sexual Health and reproductive services
- Healthy relationships and sex education to schools and colleges.
- Health youth Justice team
- Specialist Health services



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# Working Together – LAC Service

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The definition of a Looked after Child (LAC) is a child or young person who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours. They include children from birth to age 18 years. They are also often referred to as Children in Care (CIC). Children in care have the same health risks as their peers, but the extent is often increased due to their previous experiences. They often enter the care system with a worse level of health than their peers due to the impact of poverty, poor parenting, chaotic lifestyles and abuse or neglect which are also known push factors to child exploitation.

We know that young people living in residential childcare are particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they are isolated from a stable family, and they may have a strong desire to fit in with a group to achieve a sense of identity and belonging.



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# Working Together – LAC Service

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Children and young people who have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including sexual, emotional, physical abuse, emotional or physical neglect, having a parent or caregiver addicted to alcohol or drugs. Witnessing abuse in the household, having a family member in prison, a family member with a mental illness and losing a parent or caregiver through divorce, death, or abandonment and who lack a stable home environment may be more vulnerable. The presence, or lack, of protective factors in their lives influences the likelihood of being exploited. As children in care they are also more likely to interact with other young people in care or care leavers and potentially be groomed into exploitative relationships.

The Looked after Children's healthcare professionals are key contributors in providing the multi-agency, holistic approach to child exploitation and offer a range of services that can prevent exploitation, provide intervention opportunities, and support safeguarding plans.

The Looked After Children team can provide support or signpost to early intervention opportunities for exploitation victims and may offer support around mental health difficulties, sexual health, substance misuse, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, changes in behaviour, psychosomatic complaints, unexplained injuries etc.

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# Working Together – LAC Service

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They endeavour to enhance the resilience of our children in care and strengthen the protective factors around them to enable them to overcome adversities and avoid negative consequences whilst also offering advice and training to carers and other professionals to support them in doing so.



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# Working Together – YOS

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The Youth offending service is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary service committed to responding effectively to exploitation of the young people we work with. Responding to exploitation is a priority in the business plan.

Northamptonshire Youth Offending service is aware that young people who have speech and language or learning difficulties, neurodiversity issues, have suffered adverse childhood experiences, or who struggle to access mainstream education are more likely to be the victim of exploitation. Therefore, any young person considered to have high vulnerability concerns are discussed in multi-agency risk safety and wellbeing meetings that occur at least once every 12 weeks. All relevant professionals are invited to these meetings that are chaired by a manager in the service.

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# Working Together – Community Safety Partnerships

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The Community Safety Partnership is focused on identifying and understanding community safety issues and delivering outcomes that make a difference to people's safety, lives and wellbeing utilising the resources available through its partnership. A key priority is reducing criminal exploitation of children, protecting those at risk of gang violence, knife crime and from entering the criminal justice system. Other safeguarding priorities are around Prevent and reducing radicalisation through the Channel processes. Professionals play a key role in educating the wider community in order for them to identify the warning signs, risks and know how to raise the alarm. Child exploitation awareness training is available, in relation to the warning signs for child exploitation and what actions should be taken if they are concerned about a child's safety or suspicious behaviour or activity.

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# Working Together – Parents

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Parents play a crucial role in safeguarding and protecting their children from child exploitation. Research shows that confident, authoritative parenting which supports children to make informed decisions is a key protective factor in relation to child exploitation (NSPCC 2023). They can educate their children on healthy relationships, sex and the risks associated with child exploitation. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their child's voice is heard and create a safe support environment where the children have the confidence to speak. Parents must not be afraid to speak out and request help from professionals when needed. All professionals must take every opportunity to support parents by ensuring:

- Child exploitation is on the agenda of parents.
- Parents are aware of the associated risks linked to child exploitation; and have the information to spot the warning signs.
- Parents know how to raise the alarm and where to go for help.
- They are provided a tailored support to assist families in safeguarding their children, including through online exploitation.
- Tools to assist parents to identify signs of exploitation are available through the [NSPCC](#) and the [Children's Society](#) websites.
- [Parents Against Child Exploitation](#)

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# Specialist Services

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This section of the guide examines three specialist services, the support they offer and how you can access them.



RISE



CIRV



VAP

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## **THE RISE (Reducing the Incidents of Child Sexual Exploitation) Team**

The RISE team is a multi-agency team who provide intervention to young people assessed as being at high risk of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) within the county. RISE stands for Reducing the Incidents of Child Sexual Exploitation and is represented by Police, Health and Northamptonshire Children's Trust who allocate a specific Senior Practitioner for exploitation, and a team of Young People & Family Support Workers. The Young People & Family Support Workers build a trusted relationship and can support young people to attend sexual health appointments and to build engagement with other services. As the CSE risk level reduces, young people can be stepped down from the RISE cohort and continue to work with the same worker providing consistency and continued engagement with step-down plans.

RISE has a team of Detectives Constables, Police Constables and civilian support staff overseen and managed by a Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeant. Primarily investigating sexual offences disclosed by those young people incorporating disruption and distraction techniques and training packages for YP and professionals.

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# Specialist Services - RISE

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The Child Exploitation Specialist Nurse acts as a source of child exploitation expertise for health agencies across the county. This includes providing a liaison line for advice and support to practitioners, dissemination of relevant research and resources to health agencies and provision of safeguarding supervision and training to health practitioners across the health economy. The Child Exploitation specialist Nurse also represents health at the Vulnerable Adolescent Panel as an advisory member to give health advice and recommendations as appropriate. The impact on health due to child exploitation can be significant; all young people accepted to the RISE cohort are offered an in-depth health assessment and any health needs are met across the health economy.

The RISE partnership is co located at the Criminal Justice Centre and meet 3 times per week to discuss and manage any concerns or notifications. New referrals are reviewed weekly at the multi-agency panel and the individual Risk Management Plans are reviewed every 8 weeks or sooner.

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# Specialist Services - RISE

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The RISE engagement workers will also complete reports and attend relevant meetings for young people to regularly update professionals on anything significant regarding that child/young person.

Professionals can also contact RISE on [rise@northants.pnn.police.uk](mailto:rise@northants.pnn.police.uk) to request any specific updates.

Referrals are made by completing the [CERAF Assessment Tool](#)

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# Specialist Services - RISE

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▶ [2021 08 10 RISE professionals edit - YouTube](#)

Here you can watch the Professionals edit of Sarah's story – a young person telling her story in her own words: who was groomed and exploited and how she was supported by the RISE team.

Young Persons edit of Sarah's story shown in schools across the county



▶ [2021 08 12 RISE schools edit - YouTube](#)

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# Specialist Services - CIRV

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The CIRV (Community Initiative to Reduce Violence) Team sits in Central Intelligence Services and was launched in February 2019. CIRV has a focus on both knife crime and gang intervention. We seek to intervene as early as possible away from these cultures through joint working and the building of genuine trust and rapport. CIRV look to engage with young people who are involved in, or at risk of, becoming involved in knife crime and/or gang related activity. CIRV is Northamptonshire Police's programme delivering interventions to tackle gang violence in the county. CIRV is made up of Early Intervention Team, Police, YOS, Probation, Turnaround and ACE Support workers in the OFPCC to deliver a single joined up service.

CIRV are currently undergoing some changes which will see the launch at the end of August in addition to what CIRV currently offer the expansion of the model to include Targeted Intervention alongside the Voluntary Engagement, with a non-engagement cohort which will be refocused to provide opportunities for compulsory engagement. Individuals referred are discussed at a weekly multi-agency triage to establish their risks and needs. Engagement on the programme is voluntary, and for those over 18 they must agree to GPS tracking.

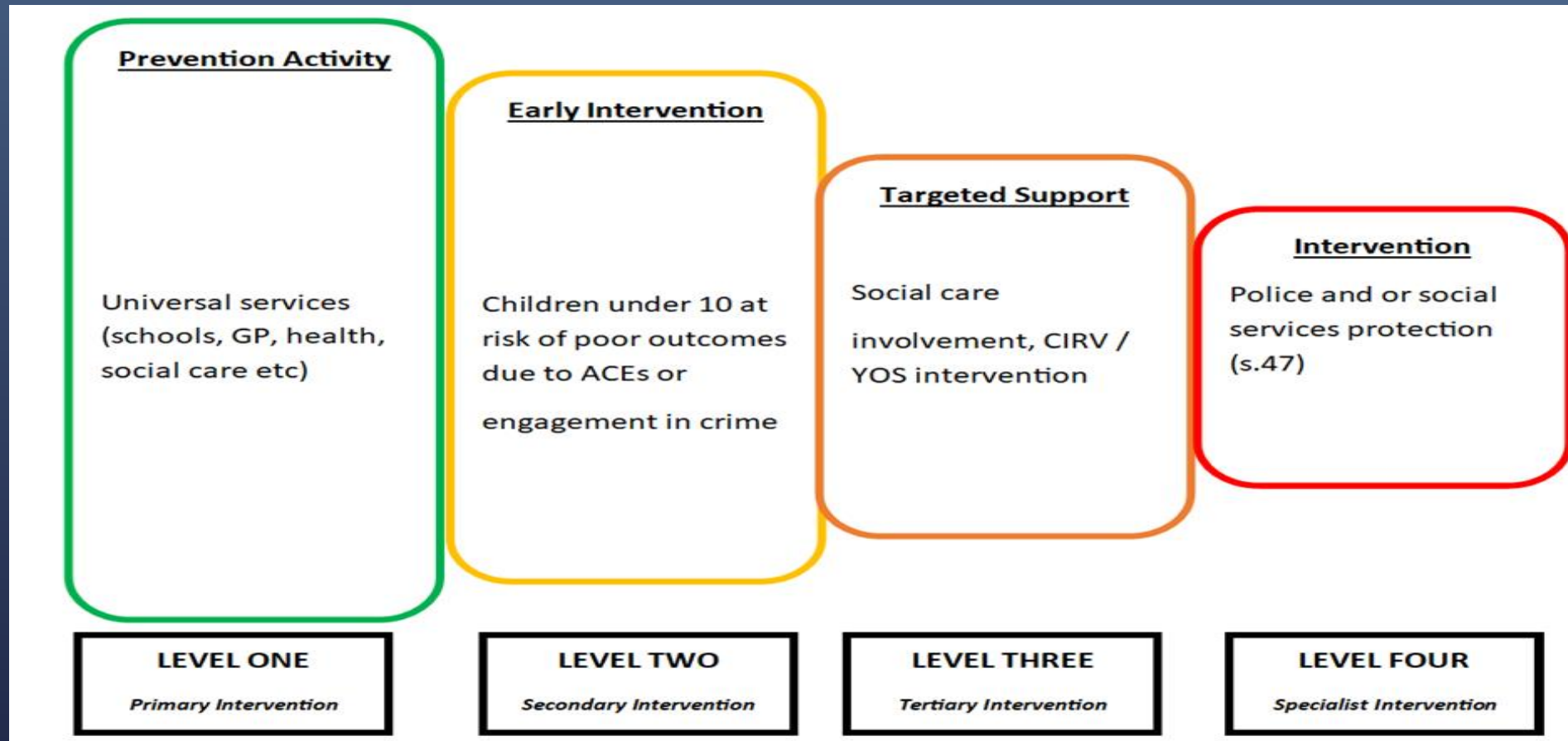
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# Specialist Services - CIRV

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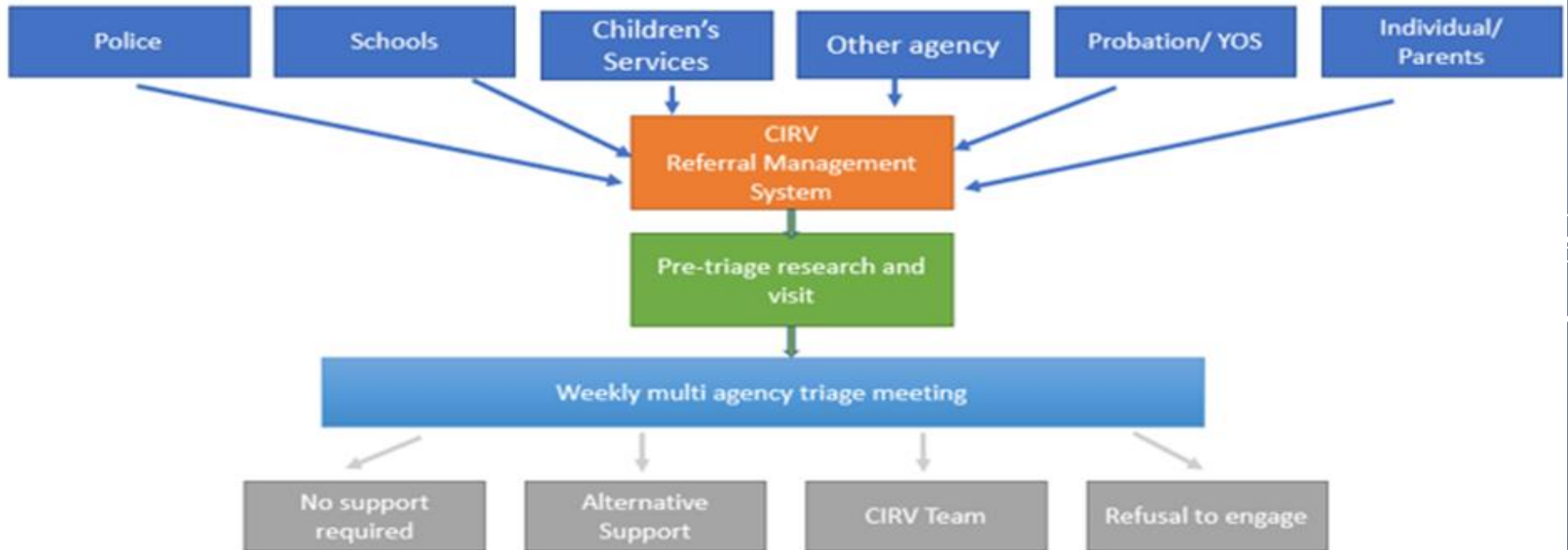
The intervention stages can be visualised below with each stage reducing the likelihood of children being victims or perpetrators of crime preventing the need for costly and traumatic intervention at Level 4.



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## Triage Process



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# Specialist Services - CIRV

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This approach delivers against the Strategic Priority of 'Prevention and Intervention' whilst including Effective Partnership working, as we engage with young persons at the lowest level, which delivers a disproportionate benefit for every person diverted from crime in terms of outcomes, cost to society and health outcome.

You can call in office hours on 07539 183975, or email at [CIRV@northants.police.uk](mailto:CIRV@northants.police.uk)

You can also read more on the CIRV website, <https://www.cirv-nsd.org.uk>

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# Specialist Services - VAP

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The vision for the Vulnerable Adolescent Panel is to address the growing problem of child exploitation and extra familial harms that present a risk to the children and young people in our communities.

The panel aims to ensure that as a multi-agency partnership we effectively share information to support young people who are at risk of being exploited and address extra familial harm with a view to utilising a contextual safeguarding approach to make our communities safer.

VAP is a multi-agency information sharing and consultative process. The panel does not hold accountability for the cases heard, this remains with the lead professional and/or team working directly with the young person.

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## The Aims of the Panel

To reduce risk and vulnerabilities in children and young people who may be subject to various forms of exploitation by:

- Providing expert advice and guidance to professionals.
- Providing a forum for multiagency information sharing within Working Together 2018 guidance.
- Ensuring that all agencies have oversight of young people who are at risk of, or being, exploited and that risks are fully understood.
- Utilising panel knowledge and experience to identify actions to reduce risk of exploitation over and above existing plans.
- Feeding current data regarding the risks to our young people into the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and NSCP in order to establish an accurate oversight of the extra familial harm threat in our county.
- To drive a contextual safeguarding response to extra familial harm.

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## Panel Processes

- The panel is held fortnightly and is co-chaired by Police, NCT, YOS and Health
- Referral may be completed by the child/young person's case lead professional from any agency where there is a concern about risk of exploitation
- Where the child has a social worker, referral should be made in consultation with the social worker.
- The referrer will present the case for discussion at panel within a 20-minute time slot.
- At the panel a risk rating and direction will be given by the panel.
- The referral should be discussed with young person and family prior to referral to ensure their voice is included.
- To request a referral form and refer a young person to the panel you should email the dedicated email to request referral form [vappanel@nctrust.co.uk](mailto:vappanel@nctrust.co.uk)

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## **Adultification bias:**

Adultification bias is a form of racial prejudice where children/young people from diverse or minoritized communities are treated as more mature than they are by a reasonable social standard of development. An example of how this plays out is that a Black child has reported to be treated unfairly such as their true ages disbelieved when they told authority figures and facing consequences for misbehaviour while white young people would have their young ages considered.

['Where are the Black girls in our CSA services, studies and statistics?' | Community Care](#)

[Safeguarding Black girls from child sexual abuse: messages from research - Childrens \(ccinform.co.uk\)](#)

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# Intersectionality

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The concept of intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects. For example, someone may experience racism, sexism and ageism collectively or individually at different times and in different environments.

[Listen Up Research](#) have produced an [Intersectionality infographic](#) to consider an example of intersectionality in more detail.

You can read more information here: [Intersectionality: race, gender and other aspects of identity in social work with young people - Community Care](#)



[Original size] [WORKING TO INCREASE SAFETY IN EXPLOITATION \(windows.net\)](#)

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# Contextual Safeguarding

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Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of [significant harm](#) beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people have in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and [abuse](#). Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial [abuse](#) can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore, children's social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

Contextual safeguarding therefore expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to [abuse](#) beyond their front doors.

[What is Contextual Safeguarding? \(csnetwork.org.uk\)](https://csnetwork.org.uk)

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# Contextual Safeguarding

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▶ [What is contextual safeguarding? - YouTube](#)

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# Contextual Safeguarding

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A new toolkit aimed at improving child protection has been launched following the work of researchers from the University of Bedfordshire and Durham University. Featuring over 180 resources, the new Contextual Safeguarding Toolkit gives guidance on how to implement a contextual safeguarding approach to the risks young people face beyond their families, such as identifying where children are at risk, which could range from within peer groups, schools or other locations outside of the family home. Informed by research, the toolkit has been developed by academics from the University of Bedfordshire's [Safer Young Lives Research Centre](#) and child safeguarding expert, Professor Carlene Firmin MBE, alongside a team of researchers from Durham University.

[Click here to access the Contextual Safeguarding Toolkit](#)



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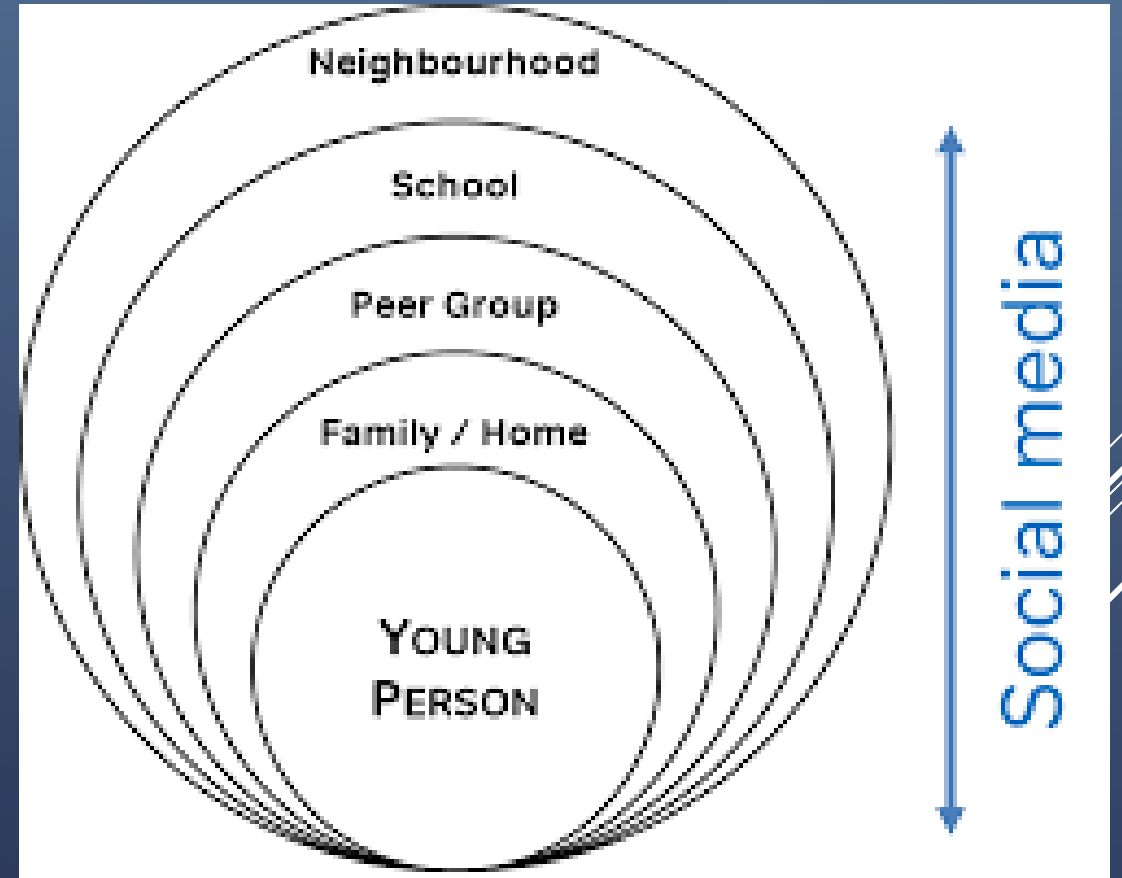


# Contextual Safeguarding

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In order to begin adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach in Northamptonshire a [Tactical Response to Incidences of Serious Violence, Gang Activity and Exploitation Procedure](#) has been created which provides all agencies a framework to respond to incidents and ensure that local communities can feel safe following an incident.

The procedure will be led by local community safety partnerships and should be followed following any significant incident of serious youth violence.



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# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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I'm Being Exploited is a film about two young people who are being exploited.

Although the characters are fictional, they represent real experiences.

It's important to realise young people who are caught up in this type of activity often do not see themselves as victims as those who are exploiting them make them feel important, respected and looked after.

Often parents recognise changes to the 'normal' behaviour of their children. Sometimes they may just get a 'feeling' that something isn't quite right, but sometimes there are really obvious signs.



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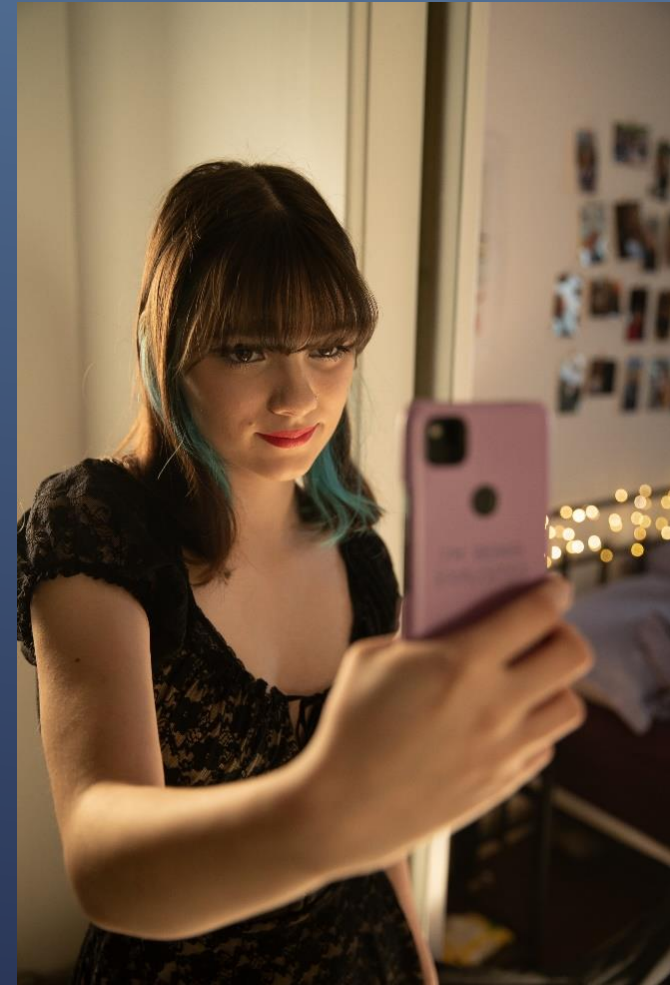
# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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In the film, parents are encouraged to consider whether behaviour changes could be a sign their child is being criminally or sexually exploited.

As parents, trusted adults, police, partners and professionals, let's work together to put an end to this type of abuse.

I'm Being Exploited has been commissioned by Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Northamptonshire Police led on its creation and local partners are supporting its roll out.



*Children that come to notice must be treated as children, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.*

A young woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a black school uniform with a white collar, is holding a purple phone case. The case has the text "I'M BEING EXPLOITED" printed on it. She is looking down at the phone with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus, with some bokeh light effects.

I'M BEING  
EXPLOITED



# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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There are two audiences for this film:

- Parents and trusted adults
- Police, partners and professionals

Trusted adults – evidence suggests a child is more likely to share information or concerns with an adult they already have an existing and trusting relationship with. Who this adult (or adults) are can vary from child to child but are typically people such as parents, older sibling or extended family, through to teachers, coaches, mentors or community leaders.

Police, partners and professionals – this resource can also be used to get to know the signs of CE



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## Key Messages

Parents/Trusted adults	Police, partners and professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #I'mBeingExploited. Know the signs - think about behaviours and what a child may or may not be telling you</li><li>• Any child or young person can fall victim to CE</li><li>• An exploited child may not act like a victim or see themselves as a victim – but they are</li><li>• Children are more likely to open up to someone they trust</li><li>• If you are concerned contact police</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know the signs of CE</li><li>• Any child or young person can fall victim to CE</li><li>• Children and young people involved in criminality because they have been exploited should be seen as victims</li><li>• Know the correct process for referring concerns within your own organisation and report if you have any information or worries</li></ul>

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## Social Media Posts

- Young people are being exploited in Northants. Child exploitation can happen to any age, gender or ethnicity - online or anywhere that children and young people go or hang out. Worried about your child? Find out more here: [www.northants.police.uk/ce](http://www.northants.police.uk/ce)
- 'I'm Being Exploited' is a film aimed at parents. We want every parent to be aware of Child Exploitation. Exploiters pick their targets based on things like age, strength or situation. Often the young people caught up in this type of activity do not see themselves as victims. View film here: <https://youtu.be/IpgqEyRGggA>
- Children and young people are being sexually exploited online & offline by predatory individuals, who manipulate & groom them by making them feel special. Worried this is happening to a child you know? Contact Police on 101 or dial 999 in an emergency.
- Predators persuade, or force children into sexual activity. Often in exchange for presents, money, alcohol or emotional attention. It can happen face-to-face, online or anywhere that youngsters spend time. Worried about a child? Contact Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

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## Social Media Posts

- Young people are being exploited by criminal gangs to move quantities of drugs and money all over the county. Let's work together to raise awareness, take action and prevent this activity. Find out more about how to spot the signs of Child Exploitation here: [www.northants.police.uk/ce](http://www.northants.police.uk/ce)
- I'm Being Exploited is a film about Child Exploitation. Young people who are caught up in this type of activity often do not see themselves as victims as those exploiting them make them feel important, respected and looked after. View the film here: <https://youtu.be/IpgqEyRGggA>
- Criminals use desirable items to lure young people in to work for them. These include trainers, clothing, cash & tech. Has a young person you know recently got some of these? They could be being exploited. Help is available, more here: [www.northants.police.uk/ce](http://www.northants.police.uk/ce)
- Parents, has your child's behaviour changed recently? Do they have new mates, new clothes, new phone, new attitude? Are they lying to you? Are you worried about them? Could they be being criminally exploited? Help is available: [www.northants.police.uk/ce](http://www.northants.police.uk/ce)

***Children that come to notice must be treated as children, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.***

# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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## Assets

HAS YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGED RECENTLY?

DO THEY HAVE NEW MATES, NEW CLOTHES, NEW PHONE?

I'M BEING EXPLOITED

LEARN HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS OF CHILD EXPLOITATION

#ImBeingExploited Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

PREDATORS ENCOURAGE, PERSUADE OR FORCE CHILDREN INTO CRIME OR SEXUAL ACTIVITY

IT MIGHT BE IN EXCHANGE FOR PRESENTS, MONEY, ALCOHOL OR EMOTIONAL ATTENTION

I'M BEING EXPLOITED

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northants.police.uk/ce

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# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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In order to assess the success and impact of I'm Being Exploited on our communities, we would ask that you abide by our terms of use when sharing the films. By using our campaign on your platforms you agree to these terms.

## Links to I'm Being Exploited

YouTube -

- Full Video - <https://youtu.be/IpgqEyRGggA>
- Girl Short Video - <https://youtu.be/9NroDC5hNP0>
- Boy Short Video - <https://youtu.be/HnZrWbIC8O8>

Wherever possible, we would ask you to please use YouTube on social media or to share our posts onto your channels so that we can continue to monitor and assess the success of the campaign.

If you need to post the native version of the film we have made this available via contacting the Business Office at [NSCP@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:NSCP@northnorthants.gov.uk)

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# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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## Full Version



▶ [I'm Being Exploited - Full Video - YouTube](#)

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# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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## Girl Short Version



▶ [I'm Being Exploited - Girl - YouTube](#)

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# #ImBeingExploited Campaign / Film

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## Boy Short Version



▶ [I'm Being Exploited - Boy - YouTube](#)

*Children that come to notice must be treated as children, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in.*

# Assessment Tool - CERAF

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The Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) is a child exploitation risk assessment tool. The CERFA has been developed in Northamptonshire and is our agreed tool for professionals to use to help identify Child Exploitation and assess risk.

The CERAF sees professional judgement as equally important to the score you come up with as a result of the CERAF.

Professionals should be mindful that often child exploitation does not exist as a standalone issue and that children who are displaying indicators of one form of exploitation are also likely to have experience of other forms of exploitation.

A number of helpful guides and training aids have been produced by the Partnership to help professionals complete a CERAF, these can be found on the link below and over the following pages.

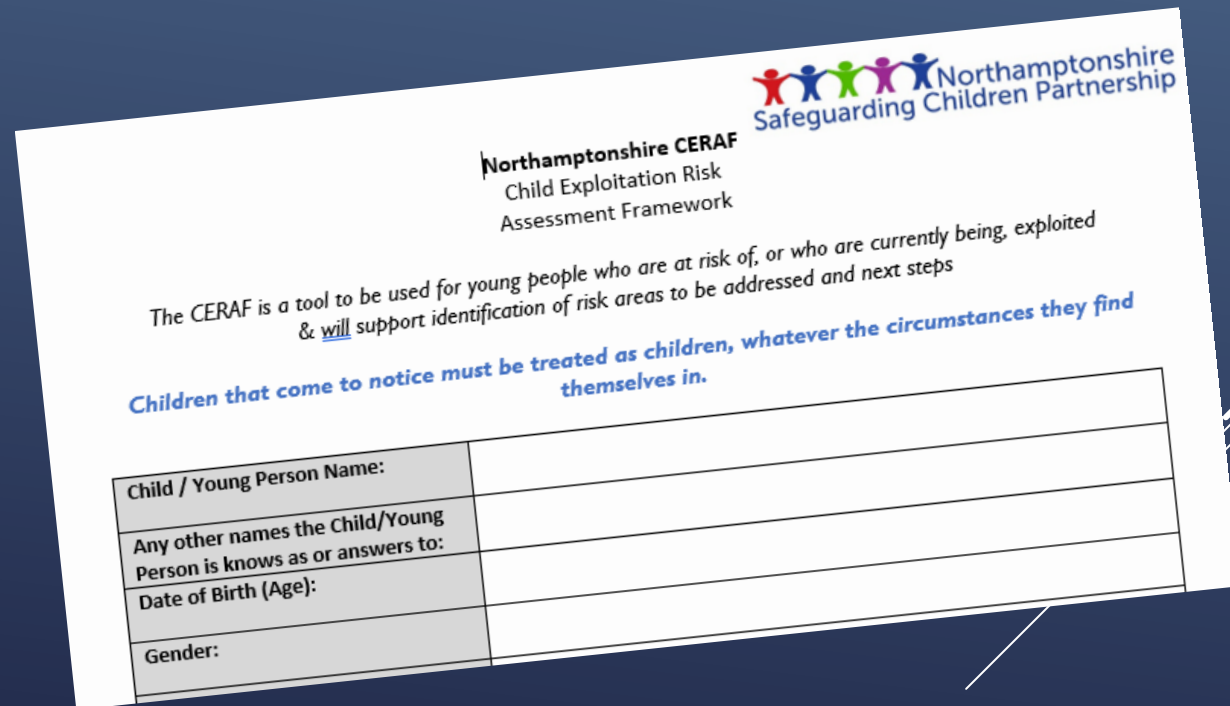
[Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework \(CERAF\) - Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](http://northamptonshirescb.org.uk)

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# Assessment Tool - CERAF

A CERAF should be completed as soon as potential concerns regarding any form of child exploitation are identified. This may include child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), child financial exploitation (CFE), county lines (CL), modern day slavery (MDS) or child trafficking concerns. The evidence may follow a missing episode, or increasing occasions of a child truanting from school, staying out late, associating with new peers/associates where there may be some concerns or known intelligence risk.

Best practice indicates that **information from multiple sources** (including family members, the child concerned, school, other professionals) is needed to ensure that you have as much information as possible on the risk indicators and any explanations for these.



The CERAF is a tool to be used for young people who are at risk of, or who are currently being, exploited & will support identification of risk areas to be addressed and next steps

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Child / Young Person Name:	
Any other names the Child/Young Person is known as or answers to:	
Date of Birth (Age):	
Gender:	

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The below documents have all been produced to help in the completion of the CERAF. Links to all can be found below along with a short description of each one.

- [CERAF Risk Assessment Tool](#) – Main tool that should be used for young people who are at risk of, or who are currently being, exploited & will support identification of risk areas to be addressed and next steps.
- [CERAF Guidance](#) – Guidance document that should be used alongside the CERAF tool giving professionals areas to consider and help in completing each section.
- [CERAF Flowchart](#) – Flowchart detailing the steps to take following the completion of the CERAF
- [Local Services Guide](#) – A guide to a range of local services that can support children and young people at risk of exploitation, including contact details and referral information where appropriate.

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## Training Video

The below video has been produced as a training aid to explain to professionals what the CERAF is and how it should be completed including details of what to do following completion and the level of risk identified.



▶ [Northamptonshire CERAF Guidance Video](#)

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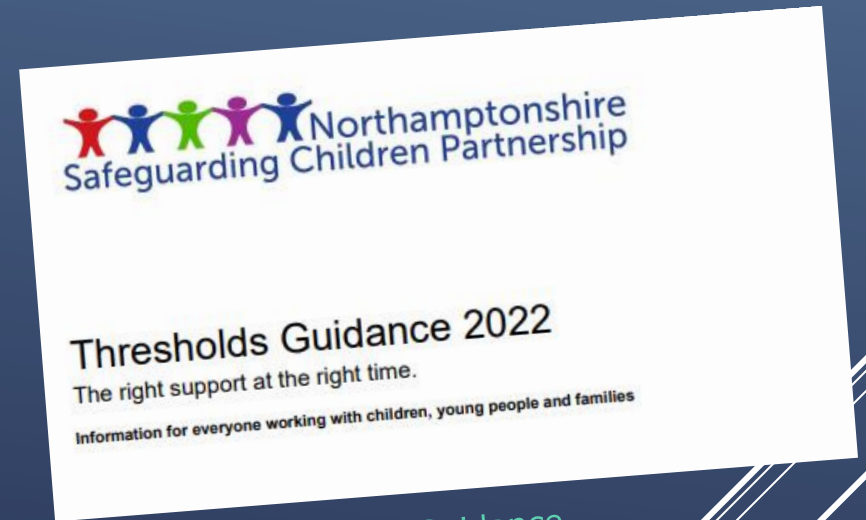
# What to do with a concern

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**If you feel that a child is in immediate danger you should contact the police directly by calling 999.**

If there is no immediate danger, the level of need and risk should be established before action is taken. You should do this by using the CERAF (Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework) and Northamptonshire Thresholds document.

If following this you believe that the concern meets the threshold for statutory intervention you should make a MASH referral more on how to do this can be found in this guidance.



 [Thresholds Guidance](#)

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## Contacting MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

If you have an urgent concern please do not hesitate to call the MASH immediately on 0300 126 7000 where you will be able to speak to a professional who will listen to and record your concern. You will be required to submit a written copy of the referral following this conversation if it meets the thresholds for a referral.

If there is no immediate danger, you should establish the level of need and risk before you take action. You should do this by using the [CERAF](#) and [Thresholds](#) document which will help you.

If following this you then believe your concern meets the threshold for statutory intervention please either call the MASH on 0300 126 7000 or complete the [online referral form](#).

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## Useful Links

- [Thresholds](#) – Northamptonshire Thresholds document
- [CERAF Assessment Tool](#) – Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework Tool
- [Local Services Guide](#) – Guide to Local Services that can support children and young people.
- RISE – Reducing Incidences of Sexual Exploitation Team
- [CIRV](#) – Community Initiative to Reducing Violence Team
- [VAP](#) – Vulnerable Adolescents Panel

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The Partnership offers training on Child Exploitation which can be accessed by registering and signing up to the NSCP training platform on the link below.

Here you will find a basic e-learning course on Child Exploitation as well as a 1 day face to face course on Child Exploitation.

[NSCP Training Platform – Enable](#)



How to Register and Sign Up to NSCP Training:

- [How to Register for the on the NSCP Training Platform Guide](#)
- [How to sign up for face to face training course Guide](#)

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## Basic E-Learning Course

A course for those working with vulnerable children, this covers the effects and impacts of sexual exploitation of children. It covers grooming, trafficking, up to date information on CSE, and includes challenges and scenarios for an interactive learning experience.



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## One Day Face to Face Course

This course is aimed at all practitioners from across the partnership who would like to understand more about all aspects of Child Exploitation and our approach to preventing exploitation in Northamptonshire.

### **Who is this course aimed at:**

All practitioners working with young people at risk of child exploitation.

### **By the end of the course you will:**

- Have increased awareness of the experiences of young people affected by CE.
- Be able to identify vulnerabilities , behaviours and risk indicators for young people experiencing or at risk of CE
- Be able to identify the guidance and tools available in relation to this area of safeguarding.
- Consider your professional responses to CE and support available for children and families
- Be aware of our approach to tackling CE in Northamptonshire.

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