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CHILD EXPLOITATION

Parents guide to Child Exploitation

Child Exploitation

Children as young as six are being forced to carry and sell drugs far away from their homes. They are made to skip school, sleep in drug dens, keep secrets from their loved ones. They are treated as criminals when they often feel trapped in a hopeless situation.

Enough is enough. County lines and child exploitation must stop. We work hard to end this type of abuse and give those who have been exploited a chance for a better future.

Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse, referring to the exploitation of any child or young person under the age of 18.

It can take many forms, including criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation, with children often being subjected to more than one form of exploitation at a time.

Child Exploitation happens when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. It might appear consensual, and the child might not recognise that they are a victim of abuse

46,000

children in England are thought to be involved in gangs. There is likely many more.

84%

of parents are worried about county lines in their area.

4,000

teenagers are being criminally exploited in London alone.

Finding out:

Finding out that your child has been a victim of exploitation can be traumatic

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TARGETTED BY A RUTHLESS AND MANIPULATIVE CRIMINAL

Organisations such as Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) can provide advice and support including advice on keeping records, dealing with disclosures, and coping guides - <https://paceuk.info/>



Signs might include:

- Changes in behaviour e.g. being secretive, scared, aggressive, distant or angry;
- Hanging around or being in relationships with older individuals or groups and breaking ties with old friends;
- Dropping out of positive activities and hobbies;
- Unexplained physical injuries and/or refusal to seek or accept medical treatment; Unexplained bus or train tickets;
- Going missing from home or school, regularly returning home late or staying out late or overnight;
- Suddenly having lots of money or new possessions that they cannot account for;
- Receiving more calls/texts than usual and being very protective of their mobile phone or having multiple phones or SIM cards;
- Using new language, words or hand signs including unhealthy or inappropriate sexualised behaviours and language;
- Changing their appearance, e.g. particular style, colours; Being afraid or unwilling to visit certain places and people;
- Carrying drugs, large amounts of money or weapons Self-harming and substance misuse issues
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What you can do:

Don't wait for a crisis, start speaking to your children about these issues. It is better to be proactive than reactive.

- Don't scare them with 'the big talk', find everyday opportunities to speak about these issues with your child.
- Don't punish them before listening and understanding, know how to support them.
- Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, keep curious about the technology your child is using and stay up to date with platforms, apps, and trends.
- It is important to adopt good practices and set boundaries during a child's first time on the internet. This could be the moment they are bought a mobile phone, games console or laptop.
- Setting up devices and social network profiles safely allows parental controls to be switched on that will help keep children safe online by blocking inappropriate content, managing apps that can be downloaded and providing an ability to monitor their use. Location sharing should also be turned off.
- Be aware that although you can block unsuitable content, blocks can be disabled or worked around.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, always call the emergency services on 999. To discuss a non-emergency matter with the Police, call 101.

A child may not speak about the abuse because:

- They believe their involvement or relationship was consensual.
- They feared for their safety if they did tell.
- They depended on offenders emotionally, financially or for substance.
- They felt isolated.
- They feared repercussions of crimes they have been involved in.