

Company

The
Children's
Society

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION







THEMED PROGRAMME



AIM

Child criminal exploitation impacts thousands of young people across the UK every day, with the most well-known example being county lines. Explore the signs, consequences and support around exploitation. A partnership card with The Children's Society.

ACTIVITIES

-  Criminal Exploitation: Key Words
-  Criminal Exploitation: True or False
-  Stages of Grooming & Exploitation
-  Did You See That Coming?
-  Criminal Exploitation: The Consequences
-  Looking out for Others

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

➤ INTRODUCTION

Child criminal exploitation is prevalent across the UK, the most well-known example being county lines.

Criminal exploitation puts children and young people at risk of gaining criminal records, prison time, violence and more, whilst the exploiters get the rewards. Learn how to spot the signs of exploitation and how we can all help ourselves and others to disrupt this criminal exploitation.

For more info visit www.childrensociety.org.uk


? DID YOU KNOW?

- 50,000 young people are thought to be involved in gangs or organised crime groups.
- The grooming process can take place online or in person and could take months.
- Common types of exploitation are county lines, money laundering, storing stolen goods, violence and hiding weapons/drugs.
- Exploited young people often feel trapped and don't know who to turn to.
- Most exploited young people don't recognise they are being exploited.



GET LEARNING: STAYING SAFE


CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: KEY WORDS


- 1  Print the Criminal Exploitation: Key Words sheets. Cut the sheet into the individual boxes (i.e. so that the key words and their definitions are all separate).
- 2 If working with a medium to large group, consider splitting into two or more groups for this activity. Each group will need their own copy of the sheets.
- 3 Challenge the young people to match the key word to the definition. In total there are 14 key words.
- 4 After everyone has finished, bring the group back together and go through the answers.
- 5 How many did they get correct? Were there any words that the group didn't know the meaning of before? Do any of the definitions surprise the group?




GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: TRUE OR FALSE


- 1  A leader will need to access the Criminal Exploitation: True or False sheet.
- 2 Set up two goals or targets at one end of the room. Label one goal/target as 'True' and the other 'False'.
- 3 Split the group into two or more teams. Position them at the other end of the room behind a cone. Give each team a football (you could also use a uni-hoc stick and tennis ball).
- 4 Read out a statement. The teams must then race to guess if the statement is true or false. They should do this by shooting at the goal/target labelled either true or false. If teams miss, they can run to retrieve the ball, return back to the shooting line and try again. The first team to hit the correct target wins a point.
- 5 Continue playing with all 12 statements. The team with the most points at the end wins.



GET LEARNING



20 MINUTES




PREPARATION NEEDED

GET LEARNING: STAYING SAFE

STAGES OF GROOMING & EXPLOITATION

Grooming is how criminal gangs target, hook and trap young people into criminal activity. Learn about the four stages of grooming, so you can spot the signs should someone attempt it on you or one of your friends.

- 1  Print a copy of the Stages of Grooming sheet. You'll also want a copy of the four scenarios, cut into their individual cards.
- 2 Explain to the group that the process of grooming and exploitation can happen in an instant or can take a long period of time. You may also find some stages overlap with each other. Grooming is an ongoing, deliberate process which traps young people and gives them little or no chance to say no. It's important that we can spot the signs as early as possible.
- 3 As a big group read through the four stages of grooming sheet and consider each one in turn.
- 4 Split into smaller groups and give each group one or two of the scenario cards. Ask the groups to look at their scenario(s) and answer the following questions before feeding back to the group.
 - What stages of exploitation is the character in the story at?
 - In what way is the character in the story vulnerable?
 - What possible ways could the character have reached this point?
 - What are the power dynamics in the story? Who has power?
 - Is it easy for the character in the story to say no? Why?
- 5 Bring groups back together and ask them to feedback as a big group. What did they think to their scenarios and how did they answer each of the above questions?



GET LEARNING



15 MINUTES



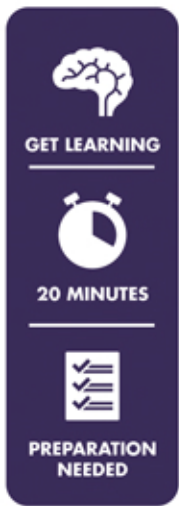
PREPARATION NEEDED

GET LEARNING: STAYING SAFE

DID YOU SEE THAT COMING?

Are you aware of the signs that someone may be being criminally exploited? Would you be able to see if your friends were being targeted?

- 1 Show the YouTube video '**Did you See That Coming?**' by Surrey Police (<https://youtu.be/Rfw-KqIYxQI>). This video is a series of TikTok style clips that have been brought together. Tell the group that after watching the clips, you're going to ask them a few questions.
- 2 Pause the video at 1:52 and tell the group you're going to test out their observation skills. Ask the following questions:
 - In the first video, what item was under the bottle? **Coin**
 - What colour school jumper was the dancing school girl wearing? **Red**
 - What was the dog's name? **Brandy**
 - What colour apron was the cleaner at the hotel wearing? **Blue**
 - How many signs of criminal exploitation did you spot?
- 3 Explain to the group that there were multiple signs of child criminal exploitation happening in the background. Congratulate anyone that spotted any. Watch the rest of the video so the group can see them all being highlighted.
- 4 Afterwards discuss how easy / hard it was to spot the warning signs, even when it was happening in plain sight.

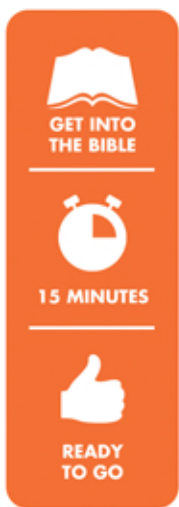


GET LEARNING: STAYING SAFE

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: THE CONSEQUENCES


Explore the consequences of being caught up in criminal exploitation and the long-term impacts that can have.

- 1 Ask the group to think about what the consequences of criminal exploitation on a young person might be? Brainstorm these as small groups/pairs and then discuss as a big group.
- 2 Discuss what impacts these consequences might have on a young person's life.
- 3 After the group have shared their ideas, go through the consequences that we've listed on our sheet. How many of these did you get? Were there any that you hadn't thought of?
- 4 Discuss how these consequences might impact yours, your friends or family members' lives if they were being exploited.



GET INTO THE BIBLE: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN VALUES

LOOKING OUT FOR OTHERS

- 1 The Bible tells us that we should always consider other people and put others before ourselves, particularly when we can serve and help others. It might not always be the easy thing to do, but if it is the right thing to do then God demands it of us.
 **“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”**
Philippians 2:3-4
- 2 As a group discuss these Bible verses. What do you think they are trying to say? What impact should they have on our lives? Is it easy to put others before yourself? When can that be a challenge?
- 3 Now put this Bible verse to the test with a scenario themed around potential exploitation of a friend. Would you spot the signs and would you do anything about it?
- 4 **Scenario:** Your best mate has become distant. He is never online after school to play on the PlayStation, when he always used to. He is often late or missing from school and he has a new set of older friends who he often hangs out with now instead of you. You've also noticed he has a brand-new phone and trainers, but you know his family can't afford them. You suspect he is being exploited, so you have a word with him. He tells you to butt out, stop being jealous and says you're being ridiculous. What do you do?
 - a. Back off. You don't want to lose a friend and you don't want your other mates thinking you're a snitch. It's just not worth the hassle.
 - b. Go and tell a responsible adult about your concerns and try and get some help for your friend. It might mean you become unpopular or lose him as a friend, but it might stop them from getting trapped in exploitation. It's got to be worth it right?
- 5 Encourage the group to have an honest discussion about what they would do. What impact would each decision have on you and your friend? Does your response align with our Bible verse, or have other factors impacted your decision? Talk through your thinking as a big group.
- 6 What is more important? The potential negative impact your decision has on you, or the potential positive impact it could have on your friend? Should you always put others before yourself as our Bible verse ask, or should you sometimes look after 'number one' (yourself)?
- 7 In life we are often faced with difficult situations and decisions. Never forget that we can always turn to God in prayer to share those worries and concerns and to get his encouragement to always do the right thing. Finish this activity in prayer.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: KEY WORDS

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION	Controlling another person by taking advantage of the power you have over them in order to get them to commit crimes on your behalf.
PEER PRESSURE	When your friends or others put pressure on you to do something or be a certain way in a way you might not want to.
CONSENT	The ability and freedom to make a choice. It is yours to give.
GROOMING	The process of seeking to control and exploit another person by seeking to gain their trust and take away their ability to say no.
VULNERABLE	Someone who has an increased chance of being controlled or manipulated.
POWER	The ability to control or influence another person.
BELONGING	A sense of fitting in or being a part of a group or organisation.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: KEY WORDS

COUNTY LINES	Where drugs are transported from one area to another, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced or manipulated by others.
MONEY LAUNDERING	Transferring money gained from crime to your account and getting you to withdraw it as cash from a cash machine. This makes the money legal, but you are guilty of laundering the money to make it legal.
TRAPPED	Feeling that you are in an unpleasant situation in which you lack freedom, and you feel you cannot escape from it.
ISOLATION	The state of feeling alone and without friends or help.
CRIMINAL GANG	A group of people who go around together and often deliberately cause trouble or commit crime.
ORGANISED CRIME	Criminal activities which can involve large numbers of people and are organised and controlled by a small group.
ABUSE	Comes in many forms (i.e. physical, emotional, sexual) and can often have a damaging effect on the health and wellbeing of an individual.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: TRUE OR FALSE

- County lines is when someone exploits a young person to sell drugs – **True**
- Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a young person to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual / criminal abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking – **True**
- People who groom children for criminal activity are always male – **False**
- Children and young people can only be groomed online – **False**
- Children who are victims of exploitation can consent (agree) to being exploited – **False** (Part of the grooming process is manipulating children to be willing, so they feel like they are consenting.)
- 50,000 children are involved in organised crime gangs in England – **True**
- Criminals only target boys and young men for County lines – **False** (Girls are now increasingly being targeted by criminals.)
- Young people are choosing to be involved in county lines for quick access to money and luxury goods – **False** (You can't choose to be exploited. Children are targeted and groomed, with levels of control placed over them.)
- When a young person is told to plug drugs (inside rectum or vagina), it is a form of sexual abuse / exploitation – **True**
- Criminal exploitation is just county lines – **False**
- Some children and young people can be kept up to six weeks or more at a time in a 'trap house' being made to sell drugs – **True** ('Trap house' or cuckooed property is a property that is being used for the purposes of selling drugs. These are usually very unsafe places and children kept there are at extreme risk of harm and with no way of contacting anyone.)
- Some criminal gangs will set up a fake robbery, where they arrange to steal their own drugs off a child to make them think they are now in debt to that gang and must work for free for them – **True**

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: THE CONSEQUENCES

VIOLENCE & HARM

An exploited young person is likely to face consistent threats of violence and harm from their exploiter or other people, e.g. gang violence, in order to trap a young person further. Violence could also include sexual or emotional violence too.

DEBT BONDAGE

This is where a young person 'owes' money or favours to their exploiter if they fail to do what they are told or if they lose the drugs or other items, even if they are arrested, making the exploitation worse. Sometimes the exploiter can falsely create a 'debt' to trap a young person.

CRIMINAL RECORD

An exploited young person is likely to get caught and arrested by the police and then face being taken to court for the crime they have been forced to commit. This record will stay for many years and prevent you from doing things you want in the future.

PRISON TIME

Lots of exploited young people face prison for their crimes. Some crimes, such as money laundering have a maximum 14-year sentence. An exploiter knows this and wants someone else to take the risk for them!

REPLACEABLE

A young person is often lead to believe they belong to a group or gang and they will always have their back and look out for them but the harsh reality is that a young person is often being used and is ultimately replaceable.

ANXIETY

Being exploited has a dramatic affect on many young people's mental health. Many say they feel lonely and isolated and that no one understands what they are going through. They might be scared of being arrested, given a criminal record, prison or the long-term impact on their life.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

An exploited young person is likely to start acting differently. They may stop seeing friends or doing things they like, damaging relationships they have or picking up bad habits or addictions. These consequences and addictions can then last a lifetime.

ISOLATION

An exploiter will work to isolate a young person from their friends and family so they have fewer things that could work against their efforts to control a young person. This isolation from a support network is damaging to all areas of a young person's life.

THREATS TO FAMILY

Those being exploited can find that threats are made against their family or friends if they don't do something. These threats are used to keep young people trapped and feeling forced into completing tasks. Some gangs will go through on a threat to prove they mean business.

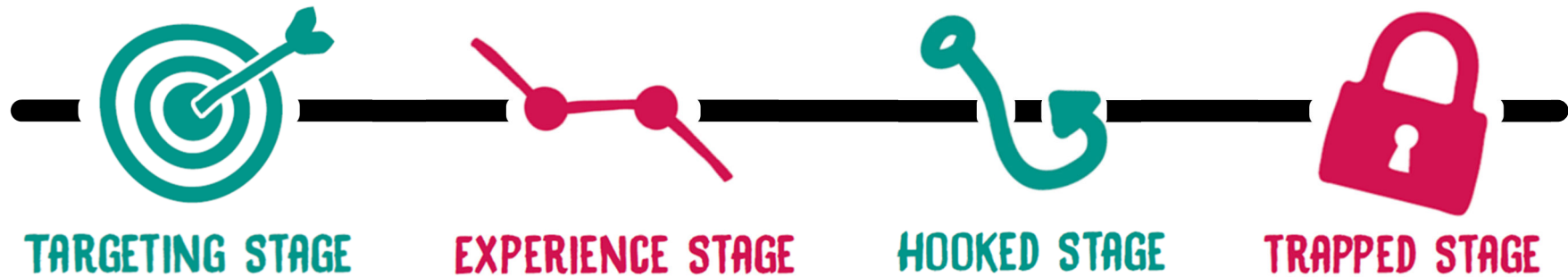
EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Being exploited can then have consequences for your education and future employment prospects. By not being able to fully focus on your studies, or by regularly missing days of school, grades can take a hit. Criminal records can also impact your future employment options.

TRUE

FALSE

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: STAGES OF GROOMING



THE TARGETING STAGE



This is when someone targets a young person who is vulnerable, as this reduces their chances of getting caught. They pick their targets based on things like your age, strength or situation.

Signs of this stage include a person:

- * Observing you
- * Finding out your vulnerabilities, needs and wants
- * Selecting you as a target
- * 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
- * Marking you out as someone to watch.

THE EXPERIENCE STAGE



This stage is where the person might try to get you used to their lifestyle, or train you up in what they're doing.

At this stage a person might:

- * Make you feel wanted
- * Give you gifts and rewards
- * Include you in lots of things
- * Test your loyalty
- * Listen to you and remember what you say
- * Offer you protection
- * Relate to you and offer you advice
- * Give you a sense of belonging
- * Praise you, or ask you to praise them
- * Give you a weapon
- * Introduce you to more established members of their gang
- * Ask to see the skills they've taught you, and test you.

THE HOOKED STAGE



This is the stage where the person will make you feel like you're a member of their gang, even though actually they're just exploiting you for their own gain.

Signs that you're in the hooked stage of being exploited can include you:

- * Having an identity in the group
- * Being given a bigger role in the group
- * Being asked to commit crime
- * Feeling more powerful
- * Feeling you've made a progression in the group
- * Being threatened
- * Engaging in activities such as drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour
- * Being asked for favours
- * Keeping secrets
- * Being asked to recruit others to the gang
- * Being involved with trap houses.

THE TRAPPED STAGE



Now you feel dependant on the group, the relationship with the person exploiting you may start to become unpleasant, as they reveal their true intent or character.

At this stage you may experience:

- * Threatening behaviour
- * Attempts to reinforce your dependence
- * Suggestions you owe your exploiter
- * Blackmail
- * Violence
- * Sexual assaults
- * People playing on your emotions
- * Attempts to isolate you from your family, friends and society
- * People forcing you to abuse others
- * People humiliating you
- * Someone making you feel trapped
- * Involvement in Class A drugs
- * Running a trap house

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: STAGES OF GROOMING

JAMAL, AGED 14

Jamal is 14 and in a gang. The older members of the gang look out for Jamal and make him feel respected and protected. He really feels he belongs. His home life isn't great and he always seems to be at risk of exclusion from school. Some of the older members of the gang are planning to steal a car and want Jamal to join in.



ALI, AGED 11

Ali received a message on Instagram from a friend of his uncle offering him a free Xbox and other things he wants. Ali accepts but is later told he would have to pay for those expensive things by hiding some packages under his mattress for a time. He is told that he would have to do this lots of times whenever he is asked to pay off his "debt".



JADE, AGED 15

Jade is in a relationship with Paul, who is 2 years older. Paul is popular and spends his money on looking good. He often arranges parties that younger and older people go to. He gives free alcohol and drugs to Jade and she regularly gets drunk. Paul tells Jade he loves her and asks if she will drop off a package for him. Paul doesn't tell Jade what is in the package but tells her he will be angry if she looks.



TOM, AGED 12

Tom is 12. He lives with just his Mum, who is on benefits. Some older boys start to give Tom some attention and offer to buy him some stuff and help out his Mum. He likes this attention and is impressed with how much cash they seem to always have on them. He knows they have a bad reputation, but they don't seem that bad to him.

