

Child sexual exploitation

Reduce the risks

Sexual exploitation can be hard to recognise because you often believe you're in a relationship with the person. It could be a friend, or group of friends. It could be someone you think of as a boyfriend or girlfriend. It could be a person or a new group of people you've only just got to know. It could be someone you've talked to online. But whoever it is, they could use clever ways to take advantage of your relationship - and that means you can be harmed almost before you know what's going on.

What does Sexual Exploitation look and feel like to begin with:

- New friends and exciting.
- A new loving relationship, feeling loved.
- Gifts like phones or money.
- Invites to parties or rides in cars.
- Free drinks, drugs or parties.
- It can happen in person or through social media.

What can happen:

- Being asked or forced to have sex with other people.
- Being blackmailed into sharing sexual images.
- Having to have sexual activity when you don't want to.
- You may feel scared that you are in an unhealthy relationship.

If you are a young person who needs support and advice, please talk to an adult you trust. If you would like to talk to someone in confidence you can contact Childline, who are available 24 hours a day; you can call them free on 0800 1111 and this number will not appear on a telephone bill. Remember, if you are in any danger or feel unsafe ring 999 immediately, or talk to an adult you trust.

Sexual exploitation

Adults who benefit from child sexual exploitation use many different methods to target young people. It can begin with an 'exciting' new friendship with an boyfriend or girlfriend. The young person may receive expensive gifts and be given alcohol or drugs. Before long they create a loyal and dependent relationship with the victim. It is against the Law and a form of sexual abuse, which puts the young person at risk from physical, emotional and psychological damage.

The dangers of being missing

You may feel that getting away is your only option because you're not getting on with the people you live with. In reality, young people can face new problems like not having any money, any food to eat or a safe place to sleep.

Young people who are missing may be in more risky situations, do things they wouldn't normally do and become vulnerable to drug and alcohol use and sexual exploitation.

If you feel you cannot stay at home for any reason talk to someone first. Call the Catch22 Helpline on 0808 168 9698 to speak to a local person for support.

Who can help?

- Catch22
- Friend/Relative
- Parent/carer

Contact

- www.ceop.police.uk 0870 000 3344
- www.thinkuknow.com
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.listentomystory.co.uk