

What is child sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive children or young people 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.

The young person may think that their abuser is their friend, or even a boyfriend or girlfriend. But the abuser may physically or verbally threaten the young person or be violent towards them. They will control and manipulate them and try to isolate them from friends and family.



Who does it affect?

This abuse can affect young people from any background. Boys and young men are abused as well as girls and young women.

The victims of abuse are not at fault. Abusers are very clever in how they take advantage of the young people they abuse.

How does it happen?

Many of the young people Barnardo's works with have been 'groomed' by an abusing adult who befriends the young person and makes them feel special by buying them gifts or giving them lots of attention. Young people may be targeted online or in person. Sexual exploitation can also occur between young people of a similar age; it is still a form of abuse.

In most cases, the abuser has some power over the young person. The abuser may be older or stronger than the young person, or they may be in a position where they are able to control the young person.

There are some situations that can make young people more vulnerable to sexual exploitation by becoming distant from the people who would usually look after them.

Key Signs of sexual exploitation

- Indications of sexual activity involving a young person who you know or suspect to be under 16.
- Indications of sexual activity with one or more adult who is significantly older than the young person.
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education.
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Anti-social behavior
- Isolated from family or friends
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Unexplained gifts
- Sexualised dress or language or behaviour
- Depression or low self-esteem
- Use of alcohol and/or illicit drugs
- STIs and/or Pregnancy
- Associated with adults who are known or suspected of being involved in adult prostitution
- Being in a hotel room which is visited or requested by a number of additional adults.

What the U turn Service can offer

We aim to protect young people through working together on personal safety, relationships, sexual health, risks and sexual exploitation

Our project workers will work closely with young people, male or female, aged 18 and under, offering them 1:1 support to help them develop and sustain safe and healthy relationships.



We are a confidential service seeking to always work in a non-judgemental and open way, respecting individuality and diversity.

If you are concerned that a child is at immediate risk of sexual exploitation please talk to your manager, police and children's services.



Referral Process

Our service is voluntary, so please discuss the referral with the young person and gain their consent before referring them.

The referral form can be accessed via the resources for frontline professional's page on:

www.portsmouthscb.org.uk

All referrals will require a child sexual exploitation risk assessment.

Referrals can be sent securely via a CJSM account to:

pyps.portsmouth@bypmk.cjsm.net

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

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Barnardo's Young People's Service

U-Turn

Offering information and support to children and young people who are at risk of/ involved in child sexual exploitation

