

# CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION – Advice for parents and carers

Hartlepool Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Hub

Young people can become vulnerable to exploitation due to a number of reasons, some reasons are:

- Respect and status
- To gain friends
- A sense of belonging
- Excitement
- To find a substitute family
- Power
- Protection
- Peer pressure
- Money



- Changes in emotional well-being, behaviour or physical appearance:
  - ⇒ Wearing more adult type clothing / baggy clothing / layers of clothing
  - ⇒ Outbursts of anger
- ⇒ Talking differently – new slang or language with an aggressive tone
- ⇒ Becoming fearful and or withdrawn
- ⇒ Poor school results or skipping school
- ⇒ Getting involved in fights
- ⇒ Committing crimes such as shoplifting
- ⇒ Carrying weapons
- ⇒ Regularly staying out unusually late and going missing from home
- ⇒ Increased activity online. Secretive over mobile phone use
- New friendships with older persons or persons from out of town
- Unexplained injuries which could indicate violence from others and self-harm
- Refusing to seek medical advice for injuries
- Having sums of money/possessions that cannot be explained

## TOP TIPS:

- LOOK FOR THE SIGNS.
- TALK TO YOUR CHILD AND THEIR FRIENDS.
- ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTIVITIES.
- KNOW WHERE YOUR CHILD IS AND WHO THEY ARE WITH. ASK ABOUT NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND BE WARY OF FRIENDSHIPS WITH OLDER PERSONS.
- COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS OF YOUR CHILD'S FRIEND AND CHECK IN WITH THEM WHEN THEY SAY THEY ARE SLEEPING AT A FRIENDS HOUSE.
- CHECK YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHO THEY ARE COMMUNICATING WITH ONLINE.
- HELP YOUR CHILD COPE WITH PRESSURE AND HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT WITHOUT THE USE OF VIOLENCE.
- SPEAK ABOUT THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENT OR ILLEGAL BEHAVIOUR.
- IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS MISSING, TAKE STEPS TO LOCATE THEM AND THEN CONTACT POLICE TO REPORT THEM MISSING.
- ACCESS PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT WHERE NEEDED.

Committing crime and ending up with a criminal record will affect the rest of your child's life. Having a criminal record can prevent a young person getting a job, going to university or college, or even travelling abroad.

You should call **101** to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response. Call **999** in an emergency.



## USEFUL CONTACTS

**Authority/Council** – Connect to your Local Authority and find out about local specialised work with gangs, parent groups and activities for young people your area. They can also refer you to parenting support programmes.

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

**Family Lives** – gives advice on all aspects of the parenting role and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls are free Tel: 0808 800 2222.

Web: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

**National Council for Voluntary Youth Services** – network of over 280 national organisation and regional and local networks that work with and for young people.

Web: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/>

**The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)** – runs a wide range of services for both children and adults, including national helplines and local projects. In collaboration with the Home Office, they have extended the use of their helpline to provide information and advice to parents and others concerned about young people who may be involved, or affected by gang activity. Their helpline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Freephone: 0808 800 5000. Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Web: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safeaway-from-home/gangs-young-people/>

**Anti-Bullying Alliance** – Advice on bullying.

Web: <https://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/>

**ChildLine** – offers a free, confidential helpline and online service dedicated to children and young people.

Tel: 0800 1111