



**#SAY something if  
you SEE something**

**Solihull**

# **SOLIHULL EXPLOITATION AWARENESS**

**For Public Services**



## Say something if you see something

- In Solihull, we believe that those who work in public services can play a positive role in preventing Exploitation and human trafficking, which puts children and vulnerable adults (and your organisation & communities) at risk!
- You can provide a crucial part of the fight against these issues and be the eyes and ears of the community, providing potentially important information to authorities.
- By working together we can play a positive role in protecting children, vulnerable adults and local businesses.

## Introduction

This is an information booklet aimed at those who work in public services in Solihull. The aim of it is to help educate staff about how they can help in safeguarding children and adults and it has been developed in-line with Solihull's All Age Exploitation Strategy.

It is possible that you have been in or observed situations which did not feel right or know people you are not comfortable with. (In one instance, where a person was convicted of offence's against an adult in his work place; his colleagues knew him as 'touchy-feely' Bob. In another, a particular place was well known to local people for sexual exploitation.)

We can only develop safe communities if everyone plays their role in Safeguarding and as a public service employee you can also help.

It is good practice for anybody who comes into contact with people in their day to day work to know what to do if they have concerns about safeguarding. This booklet is a chance to learn what you can do.

Abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, race, ability or culture. Acting on concerns and sharing information is the first step in safeguarding. It is also a duty.

This booklet is about Exploitation, which is a form of abuse.

## What is exploitation?

Exploitation is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person or adult and exploits them:

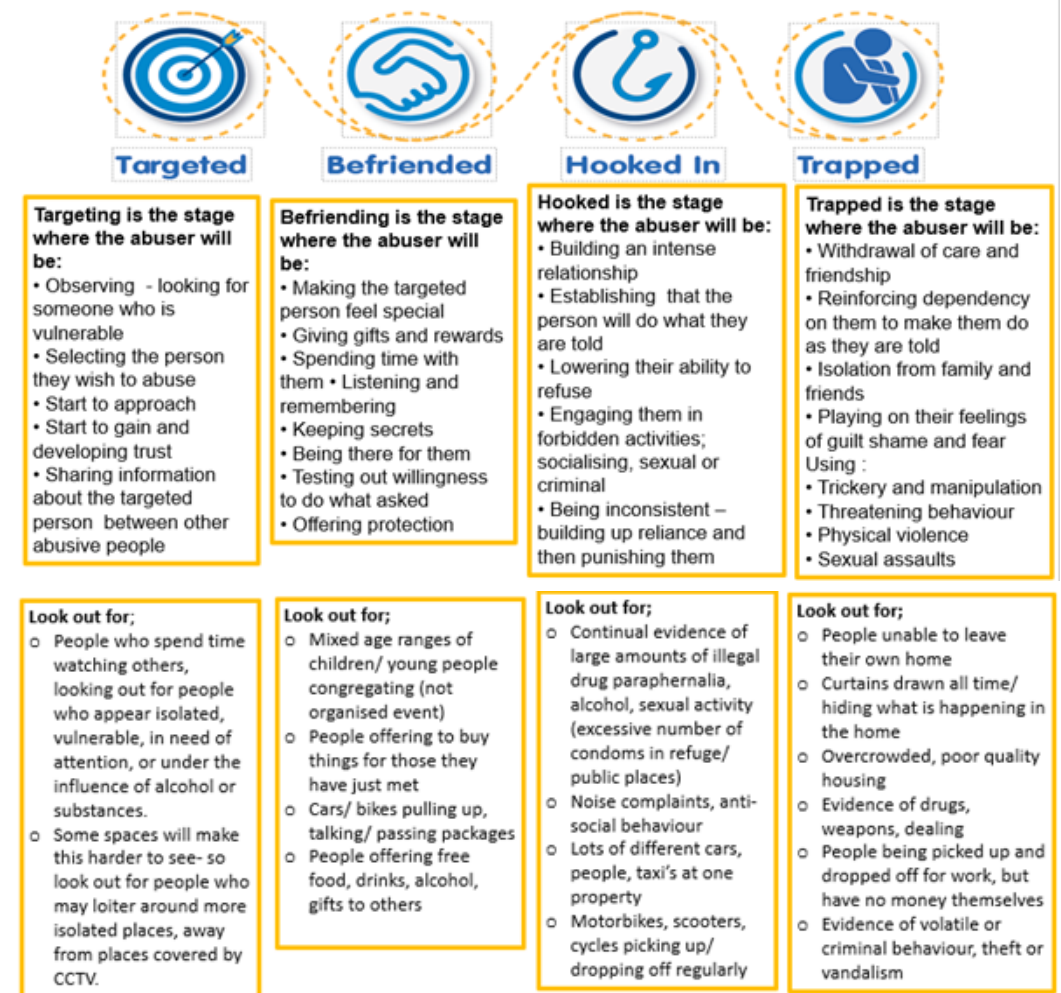
- a) through violence or the threat of violence, and/or
- b) for financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- c) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants.

The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual due to his /her specific situation. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology, e.g. as the result of a grooming process which takes place during conversations in chat rooms, or through the use of social media.

The abuser may manipulate the person to think that the abuser is their friend, or even a boyfriend or girlfriend. But they will put them into dangerous situations, forcing them to do things they don't want to do. The abuser may physically or verbally threaten the person or be violent towards them. They will control and manipulate them, and try to isolate them from friends and family.

## Grooming

In order to prepare people for abuse and not get caught, most abusers groom their victims. Grooming happens both online and in person. Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a person's trust, although this can also happen very quickly. They may also try to gain the trust of their whole family so they can be alone with the person.



# Offenders

Groomers do this by:

- Pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online
- Offering advice or understanding
- Buying gifts
- Giving the person attention
- Using their professional position or reputation
- Taking them on trips, outings or holidays.

Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the person from friends or family and making them feel dependent on them. They will use any means of power or control to make someone believe they have no choice but to do what they want. Groomers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the person. Sometimes they will blackmail them or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

In parallel, offenders also need to groom protective adults and the environment. This can mean credible explanations given to others in the environment.

Some locations (e.g. park/arcade/shopping centre/ any space where people would socialise) become hotspots for grooming. This could be happening in places you visit while at work or in and around the community you work or live in.

Abusers often make use of certain businesses and premises when carrying out exploitation. For example, they:

- Use places where people socialise and relax to befriend and 'groom' victims
- Buy their victims 'treats' such as food, alcohol, cigarettes or gifts
- Help their victims gain access to over-18 establishments and parties
- Frequent venues known to be regularly visited by people, e.g. shopping centres and entertainment complexes
- Take advantage of people drinking alcohol (sometimes under-age), whose judgement is impaired
- Provide victims with free transport
- Use their place of work to 'groom' people –for example by giving them free food, drink or 'VIP' access
- Groom victims left unsupervised in areas such as public toilets, parks etc.
- Use information technology to record and distribute images of people
- Use those venues that provide private areas or overnight accommodation to take advantage of vulnerable victims

## Definition of Human Trafficking

People who are victims of exploitation are also vulnerable to human trafficking within and / or across towns and cities.

Human trafficking involves recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person for the purpose of exploitation or abuse. Trafficking within the UK is an offence irrespective of distance traveled and can be applied to movements within the same street.

Most people are trafficked for financial gain. Trafficking is carried out by organised gangs and individuals.

Human Trafficking is an offence under the Modern Slavery Act 2015

# Vulnerabilities

Certain groups of people are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Whilst anyone can be vulnerable at different times, some factors make them particularly vulnerable.

- Unaccompanied children and young people
- People who have a learning difficulty or disability
- People who have a mental health issues, use substances or are in a domestic violence relationship, and or children whose parents are.

Look out for:

- People who travel with adults who do not appear to be their parents; carers or relatives to hotels, party houses/places
- People who appear distressed or frightened

# Things that can make people vulnerable:

As an employee in a public service , you will be aware of the issues which can make people vulnerable. These can also mean that exploitation or trafficking is more likely:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Age
- Separated from friends
- Communication issues (deaf/blind/language barrier)
- No means of payment
- Disability (physical/learning)
- Stranger to area
- Illness (Mental or physical)

# How you can help

As an employee in a public service , you may see things or become aware of issues which may mean that exploitation or trafficking is likely, we need everyone to work together & have:

- A duty of care
- A moral/social will to help and report a concern about a vulnerable person
- An understanding that raising a concern could save a life
- Recognise that as a service to the public you are the eyes and ears of the community

For example you may have concerns about :

- Continual evidence of large amount of illegal drug paraphernalia/ alcohol/ sexual activity (excessive number of condoms) in refuge/ public spaces,
- The location or vehicle near your place of work/ in the community - be aware of addresses / number plates etc.
- The people paying for things for others
- A conversation you can hear


**Then you should pass on any information you have to the Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111**

**For support 0121 704 8021**

# Information to share

- Names of people involved if you know them
- Locations and addresses of the places you are concerned about
- Description of the people if you can see them clearly
- If there are cars you think are suspicious - share the license plate number and car description
- Share what is concerning you about the activity.
- Identify if there is CCTV footage or any other evidence





Exploitation is a form of abuse where someone is groomed, then forced or made to do things for the benefit of others.