

POLICE RESPONSE TO CHILD EXPLOITATION

WHAT IS CHILD EXPLOITATION?

Child exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 in to criminal and or sexual activity.

Grooming is a method used by perpetrators to build a relationship with a child in order to coerce and control them. It happens online and offline. The child may then be, forced into labour, made to, or coerced into sexual activity.

Child Exploitation is a form of Modern Slavery.

Stages of Exploitation

RECRUITMENT- This can take various forms but can be described as a grooming process

CONTROL- This is an essential element in the process as it establishes the dominance of the perpetrator over the victim.

Alcohol, controlled drugs and tobacco may be introduced to the young person making them more dependent on the perpetrator to 'feed' an addiction.

EXPLOITATION- In this phase the young person is exploited and may be available to other people for exploitation.

Controls are exerted with extreme pressure to ensure compliance.

Young people can be targeted at fast food outlets, shopping centres and parks.

It can also happen 'behind closed doors' in hotels, salons and car washes or even online.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

It can happen anywhere and to any child.

HOW POLICE DEAL WITH EXPLOITATION VICTIMS

- **Victim engagement – Multi Agency STRAT discussions, visit, liaising with professional network (Children’s Services, School, Youth Justice Service, MASH and Vulnerable Adults Team).**
- **Referrals to partner agencies for support (Youth Engagement & Diversion Referral, CATCH-22, Sister Systems, Prince’s Trust etc..)**
- **PNC Markers or the National Referral Mechanism (known as the NRM, this helps to identify, access or support potential victims of Modern Slavery).**
- **Secure & Preserve Evidence – EEK (Early Evidence Kit), seizure of clothing / mobile phones**
- **If child is Missing – liaison with Missing Persons Unit / referral to OP OROCHI if County Lines is suspected**

HOW POLICE DEAL WITH EXPLOITATION – OFFENDERS

- Briefing slides to local officers
- Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN's)
- PNC Markers to help identify individuals when they come to police attention.
- Arrest / Prosecute
- National Intensification week (data led policing operation tackling County Lines activity)
- Criminal Behaviour Orders / Injunctions
- Slavery Trafficking Prevention & Risk Orders (STPO / SRO)
- Sc45 Modern Slavery Act.