

## What can you do?

If you are worried that an adult is trying to abuse you, or worried about a friend, tell someone you can trust.

If you can, talk to your parents, your carer or a close member of your family. Sometimes it is difficult to talk about personal problems like sex.

Perhaps you think your parents or carer will be angry or upset, or you will get into trouble with the police. Even so, it is better to ask for help if you are unhappy about the way you are being treated by an older person.

Is there someone else you could talk to – such as a teacher or someone from your religion or local community? Tell the trusted person about your concerns.

Child sexual exploitation is a crime – the police and social services will act to stop it happening.

If you think you are being abused or are worried about a friend call our Children's Services Access and Referral Hub: **0300 300 8585**. There are specialists in the team who can help stop the abuse.

# In an emergency call 999

## Contact us...

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## Child sexual exploitation

If you are worried about a young person or if you think you have been sexually exploited you should talk to an adult you trust straight away



## Could this be a friend?

- Does your friend stay out overnight?
- Have they missing from home?
- Do they miss school?
- Does a grown-up outside their family give them money, clothes, jewellery, a mobile phone or other presents?
- Do they have an older boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Do they take drugs or drink alcohol?
- Are they losing touch with their family and friends?
- Do they hate themselves sometimes?
- Are they secretive about where they go and who they see?
- Do they chat to people online they have never met?

If this sounds like the life of a friend, they could be at risk of sexual exploitation by older adults. Taking risks is part of growing up, but sometimes young people get out of their depth and need help.

## What is sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation can involve swapping sexual favours for drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and other presents. Or it may be having sex for money with several adults. Young people may feel they must have sex because an adult gives them something, or because they feel threatened or frightened.

Some young people may want to have sex because they think the adult is their boyfriend or girlfriend. In reality they are being used for sex, and the 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' may pass them on to other people too. (Remember – sexual abusers can be women, as well as men.)

## How does it happen?

We know from experience that some grown-ups target young people and draw them into abusive sexual relationships. This is how it works:

- Older adults show the young person a lot of interest and affection at the beginning, and make them feel special,
- Sometimes they ask groups of young people to come back to their house or parties with other adults, which makes the child feel grown up,
- They are offered drugs and alcohol, and a place to chill out,
- The young people may get presents like clothes, a mobile phone, or money to buy alcohol and cigarettes
- After the grown-up has gained the young person's trust and affection, things change,
- They will ask for sexual favours for themselves or other people, in return for alcohol, drugs, presents, money - all the things they started giving for free,
- They stop being nice and can become threatening or violent.