

What is Exploitation?

A guide for parents and carers

Exploitation explained

Child Exploitation is something you may have heard about in the media. It can be worrying for you as parents and carers to think about your child, or a child you know, at risk of being exploited. You might find yourself in shock or denial or feel a range of emotions such as feelings of anger, guilt, upset, fear, confusion, helplessness, embarrassment, and/or depression. These feelings and reactions are normal and understandable for parents and carers. It is crucial to remember you are not to blame for your child's exploitation, your child is not to blame, they have been targeted and often manipulated or coerced by criminals.

Understanding what child exploitation means, can help to protect your child if you ever think they're in danger.



Understanding types of exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation is a type of abuse where a child or young person is taken advantage of by being manipulated and given things like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, usually in exchange for carrying out criminal activity.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a type of sexual abuse. It involves coercing, manipulating, or pressuring a child into sexual activity.

Children can be taken to places in and outside of Wolverhampton to be exploited and this is known as **Trafficking**. They can be moved around different places in the country and abused by being forced to take part in criminal or sexual activities.

Exploitation can also happen online even if no physical contact has taken place.

Online Exploitation is where young people are coerced to send indecent images or share sensitive information which can be used to force them into sexual or criminal activity.

It is often recognised that these risks are out in the community, rather than within the family home. This is known as **Contextual Safeguarding**.

What happens if your child is at risk of being exploited?

The earlier we can all work together and spot the signs, the more we can put in place to safeguard, prevent, and protect children and young people. If a child/young person is identified as a potential victim of exploitation, then a referral to children's services is required so that parents/carers, the child, and professionals can create a plan to disrupt the exploitation and identify locations and perpetrators causing harm to your child/young person.

A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a co-located team which brings together agencies and their information, in order to identify risks to and needs of children at the earliest possible point and respond with the most effective and joined up actions.



The **MASH** allows professionals to share information and carry out joint, confidential screening so that vulnerable children are identified and are properly cared for and protected. Children and young people come to our attention in a variety of ways.

This may be because:

- a parent or carer may want to request support directly
- a professional may feel a family need help or have concerns in relation to a child
- a child or their family come into contact with the police
- a child tells someone about abuse either emotional, physical or sexual.

If you are worried about your child or another child that could be at risk, please contact our **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **01902 555392**. For any out of hours emergencies, contact the **Emergency Duty Services** on **01902 552999**.

In an emergency, where a child is at immediate risk, dial 999.

Do you suspect potential exploitation in your community?

Information you provide about possible exploitation in your community helps us understand child exploitation in Wolverhampton and allows **West Midlands Police and Children's Services** to work together to safeguard children and make our communities a safer place to live.

If anyone is at risk of immediate harm: Call 999

To share non-urgent information: Call 101 or visit the section on **[west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us](https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us)**

To report information anonymously: Call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** or visit **[crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)**

Over the page, you will find further support services and contact details of organisations that can help you if you are worried about your child as a parent or carer.

Support for parents and carers of young people at risk of exploitation

Ivison Trust

Web: ivisontrust.org.uk

Tel: 0113 240 3040

Parent support enquiry form:

ivisontrust.org.uk/parent-support-enquiry-form

Catch On

Web: catch-22.org.uk

Tel: 020 7336 4800

Email: info@catch-22.org.uk

Internet Watch Foundation

Web: iwf.org.uk

Children's Commissioner

Web: childrenscomissioner.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Children's Society

Web: childrenssociety.org.uk

Tel: 0300 303 7000

Email: supportercare@childrenssociety.org.uk

Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Web: w360.org.uk/parents

Tel: 0300 123 33 60

Email: bsmhft.recoverynearyou@nhs.net

Missing People

Web: missingpeople.org.uk

Tel: 116 000

