

Are you worried about your child being criminally exploited?

Do you think they may be involved in selling drugs or other types of criminal activity? Have you seen a change in behaviour recently and don't understand why?

What does criminal exploitation mean?

- When children are used by people, sometimes in gangs/groups, for criminal activity such as carrying or selling drugs/weapons, running money through ticket machines, helping with robberies.
- Young people sometimes call it 'going cunch', 'going country', 'going OT'
- Sometimes children get sent out of the area, and they may be away for days at a time
- When children are sent by older people to commit crime which is of benefit to the older person, gang/group, this is **exploitation and trafficking**.

*It important to know that **you are not alone** and not to blame. There are many parents and carers in similar situations and there are things you can do to help protect your child:*

- Report your concerns to Children's Social Care. A social worker can help you take steps to protect your child. They will make an assessment based on concern your child is at risk of harm from outside of the family.
- If you would like more support, go to other professionals who can help: your GP, school, police or a youth worker.

- You can report your concerns to the police and say ‘I suspect my child is being trafficked for criminal exploitation’.
- If your child isn’t where they are supposed to be, report them missing straight away on 101. **You do not have to wait 24 hours.**
- If your child is picked up in a car, or has train or bus tickets, keep a record of this information to give to the police or social worker
- There may be other evidence that your child is being exploited, such as interactions on social media, unexplained money, clothing or gifts, change in behaviour; where possible try to keep a record of this

Don’t be worried about contacting the police – you are trying to protect your child

- Speak to your child about what you’re worried about
- Let them know they aren’t in trouble – and that you’re worried
- There may be threats made against you or your family by the people exploiting your child. Your child may believe that they are protecting you. Let your child know that you know about this risk and that it is not their responsibility to protect you

There are other signs that someone may be being trafficked and criminally exploited and you can get help in many different ways

- If you are concerned about your child’s immediate safety call the police on 999
- If you have concerns about your child which are not immediate, please contact your Local Children’s Services Safeguarding team or the NSPCC’s helpline on 0808 800 5000
- If your child wants to talk to someone they can call ChildLine: 0800 1111 or Get Connected: 0808 808 4994 (text 80849).