Child Criminal Exploitation

SIGNS

The Children's Society have released "Stages of Recruitment" (2018), which details some of the potential signs that a child is being criminally exploited. Professionals should consider these whilst working with a child who they believe may be at risk.

STAGE 1: TARGETING	STAGE 2: EXPERIENCE	STAGE 3: HOOKED	STAGE 4: TRAPPED
This is when an exploiter targets a child who is vulnerable. Signs at this stage include an exploiter:	This is when an exploiter might try to get a child used to their lifestyle, or to train them up. An exploiter might:	This is when an exploiter will make a child feel like they're a member of the gang, even though they are just exploiting them. Signs can include the child:	Now a child feels dependent on the group. The exploiter may start to become unpleasant, as their true intentions or character are revealed. A child may experience:
• Observing a child and selecting them as a target	• Make a child feel wanted, relate to a child and offer them advice	• Being given a bigger role and/or getting more responsibilities in the group	• Threatening behaviour
• Finding out a child's vulnerabilities, needs and wants	• Give them gifts and rewards	• Engaging in thrill seeking behaviour / committing low level crimes	• Attempts to reinforce their dependency / make them indebted to their exploiter
• Glamourising their lifestyle	• Praise a child	• Feeling more powerful (although this may not be the reality)	• Blackmail – include 'fake' mugging organised to create a debt
• Gaining and developing a child's trust	• Test the child's loyalty	• Others may know their name, helping them feel more powerful (but this can result in rivalry)	• Physical violence and sexual assaults including strip searches, drugs being inserted for running (plugging)
• Recruiting a child to their gang or friendship group	• Listen to a child and remember what they say	• Having a dependence created by the exploiter	• People playing on their guilt, shame and fear
	• Offer a child protection	• Being exposed to possible consequences to their actions	• Being made to feel trapped, and attempts made to isolate them from friends, family and society
	• Include the child in their activities and give them a sense of belonging	• Being asked for favours / to recruit others to the gang	• People forcing them to abuse or assault others
	• Give them a weapon	• Engaging in activities such as: drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour	• People humiliating them, either sexually or by exposing their mistakes to others
	• Introduce a child to more established members of the gang	• Becoming involved with trap houses	• Drug addiction (encouraged by others) or dependency on their exploiter (they will have less money)
	• Ask to see and test a child's skills	• Being given access to information / being asked to keep secrets	• Involvement in Class A drugs (cooking or running), or running a trap house

WHAT SERVICES CAN DO:

At this stage, there may be no signs that seem outside of normal behaviour for a child. However, professionals can still:	There may now be some early signs that cause concern. Professionals should:	Professionals who are aware of any exploitation concerns for a child should seek to:
• Identify those children potentially at risk of exploitation	• Report any concerns to the police	• All incidents should be reported to the police via 101. Any new intelligence should be shared using the Intelligence Sharing form.
• Review any potential vulnerability factors for the child, focusing on: the individual, the home/family, peers, school, and the community	• Record any names, locations or events a child has mentioned – remember to listen for "Who, Where, When, Why and How".	• Make a referral to Children's Social Care by completing the SAFER referral form
• Identify a person who will offer low level preventative work around exploitation	• Ask questions about any unexplained money or gifts a child has	• Make a referral into the VEMT Practitioner's Group (VPG) by completing the VEMT risk assessment form
• Record any new names or locations the child mentions	• Ensure any incidents where a child goes missing are reported to the police	• Make a referral to the NRM, if it is suspected a child has been trafficked for the purpose of exploitation
• Seek to build the child's resilience	• If a child is located out of area, consider whether they may have been trafficked and if an NRM is required	• Provide mental health and therapeutic support to address any trauma suffered by the child
• Report any suspicious behaviour to the police or Crimestoppers	• Review the Social Care Threshold documentation and consider referring to Social Care and/or VEMT	• Co-ordinate with any other involved agencies and share relevant information to aid in safeguarding the child

LEGISLATION:

The Home Office have released the "Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit" (2019), which lists the legislative opportunities that can be employed by front line staff to disrupt exploitation. The use of legislative powers is essential to safeguarding. Professionals should liaise and share information with the police to determine which orders might best protect a child.

Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) – can be issued to disrupt contact between a child and a potential perpetrator, where grooming or exploitation is suspected.	**Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN)** – To be used as an immediate measure to protect victims from domestic abuse/violence or the threat of it.	**Civil Injunction** – stops or prevents an individual from engaging in anti-social behaviour / behaviour that may cause distress. Can be used to prevent a person of concern from attending locations (e.g. school or children's homes), entering high-risk areas, or restrict them from hiring vehicles.	**Injunction to prevent gang-related violence and drug-dealing activity** – used to prevent an individual from engaging or associating in gang or drug activity, including: contact with other gang members, travel to certain areas, to restrict from owning multiple mobile phones, or to stop the promotion of gang-related activity on social media.
National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – for cases where a child is suspected to have been trafficked, or a victim of modern slavery	**Restraining Order –** issued against an individual to protect a potential victim from harassment.	**PNC Act marker / ANPR** – can be used to flag vehicles that are believed to be used as part of the exploitation of children. These vehicles will be stopped and checked by police.	**Community Protection Notice (CPN)** – to prevent the persistent anti-social conduct of individuals or businesses which is having a detrimental effect on the community
Slavery and trafficking risk orders (STRO) – where there is a risk an individual will commit slavery or human trafficking, they can be issued with an order to prohibit the offending behaviour.	**Non-molestation order** – issued against an individual to restrict contact and prevent the harassment of a child.	**Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Order (DDTRO)** – may require a communications provider to close down a phone line(s) for the purpose of disrupting communication devices linked to drug dealing.	**Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO)** – to prevent continuing unreasonable behaviour from occurring in a particular area. Should be considered for areas believed to be linked with CSE or CCE.

Section 17 – assessment undertaken by Social Services to determine if a child is 'in need' following receipt of a referral.	**Section 47 Enquiry** – undertaken by Social Services to safeguard a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm. If access is denied to the child, Social Services can apply for an Emergency Protection Order.	**Child In Our Care (CIOC)** – where the local authority assumes the role of providing the best possible care and safeguarding for a child who has become 'looked after' by Social Care.