

# Child Exploitation

**Use this short guide to learn more about child exploitation, how to spot the signs and how to help keep your child safe.**

## At a Glance



### **What is child exploitation?**

It is when a young person is tricked, trapped, forced or persuaded into carrying out acts for someone else's gain. **It is a form of child abuse.** It is not your child's fault.



### **What are the types of exploitation?**

The main types of exploitation affecting young people are **criminal exploitation** and **sexual exploitation**.



### **Who does it affect?**

**Any child**, of any gender, sex, or ethnicity, can become exploited



### **Who will help me and my child?**

**You are not alone.** Agencies in Lambeth have a **duty** to work with you and your child to help keep them safe.

# What the words mean

## Professionals Might Say...

### Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them

### Consent

Consent means to say yes. So, the 'age of consent' is when the law says you're able to make the decision to say 'yes' to sexual activity/acts. In the UK, the age of consent is 16.

### Child Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

When a child is manipulated and coerced into performing sexual activities. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.

### Child Trafficking

The movement of children from one place to another to exploit them. This is a form of modern slavery.

### County Lines

Organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities into smaller towns. They exploit vulnerable people to distribute the drugs, often referred to as 'drug running'.

### National Referral Mechanism

The NRM is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

### Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when drug gangs take over the home of a vulnerable person through coercion, violence or intimidation, using it as their base for selling/manufacturing drugs.

### Extra-familial Harm

This is harm that occurs to children outside of their family system, often during the adolescent years because at this age their social networks widen.

### Contextual Safeguarding

This is an approach to keeping children and young people safe outside of the home.

## Young People Might Say...

### Going Country/ OT/Going Cunch

County lines activity

### Trapping

Selling drugs

### Trap House or Bando

A building used as a base for selling/manufacturing drugs

### Trap Line

A phone line specifically for the purpose of running and selling drugs

### Op/Opps

This refers to opposition - as in a rival group, or even someone from a different area.

### Opp-block

Enemy territory

### Plug/Stuff/Bottle

This is where drugs have been concealed for transporting, usually inserted into the rectum or vagina.

### Shotter

A drug dealer

### P's/Scratch/Lizzies/Gwop

Money

### Wrap

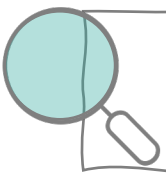
Street quantity of heroin or cocaine sold in small folded paper bag or foil packets.

### Splash/Nank/Kweng/Chef

To stab

### Skate/Skeet/Leggin/ Ten Toes/Dasheen

Runaway or escape



# Spotting the signs

When a child or young person is being exploited, it can be difficult for them to see what is happening or know how to tell someone. It is important that family and friends can spot the warning signs and offer support.



Going missing from home or care. This might involve returning late or not returning overnight.



Avoiding or truanting education, training or employment



Unexplained new possessions, money, or access to drugs, alcohol or even fast food



Multiple phones/  
new bank accounts /  
frozen bank accounts



Attachment to a new area or group of peers including online



Coming to Police attention



Developmentally inappropriate, unhealthy or harmful sexual activity



Uncharacteristic outbursts of anger



Becoming withdrawn or secretive



Sudden change in friendship group, music taste, behaviour, school attendance



Having marks on their bodies which they try to conceal.



Becoming anxious, hyper-vigilant and worried about their safety

# Access Support

If you are worried that your child is being exploited, remember – it is not your fault nor is it your child's. It is important to get support for your child and for agencies to identify who is exploiting your child – and stop them.



Contact Lambeth Children's Social Care to get advice and access early help. **T** 020 7926 5555  
**E** [helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk)



[www.paceuk.info](http://www.paceuk.info) PACE, Parents Against Child Exploitation, supports parents and carers whose children are being exploited by offenders outside of the family



[www.pzlocal.org.uk](http://www.pzlocal.org.uk) Access this support service for families in Lambeth, offering resources, information and advice for everything related to digital family life.



[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/) Go to CEOP for advice on keeping safe online, and to report online grooming or exploitation



[www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org) Access non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality. A safe place to give information about crime - 100% anonymously.



Use this QR code to access a guide with advice on talking to your child about online sexual harassment



[www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/) Access the NSPCC's information for parents & carers

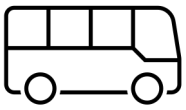


[www.lambethsaferchildren.org.uk](http://www.lambethsaferchildren.org.uk) Visit the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Partnership's website for more information.

# Create a Safety Plan

Working with the professionals supporting your family, help your child to create a **safety plan**. It's a way to help your child think about the people and places around them who can help them when they feel unsafe.

## What to include in the safety plan?



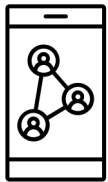
### Travel

Is their route to and from school safe? Do they use an Oyster Card? Record their Oyster Card number.



### Keep ID documents safe

Keep your child's passport/birth certificate safe. Record passport, NHS and National Insurance numbers.



### Social Media

Know which platforms your child uses and their social media names/handles



### Online Banking

Can you access your child's bank details to monitor any activity?



### Find My Phone

Activate location sharing on your child's phone so you can find them



### Safe Word

Agree a safe word they use if they feel unsafe, without others knowing



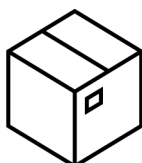
### Protect them online

Use software, like [www.qustodio.com](http://www.qustodio.com) to keep screen time safe



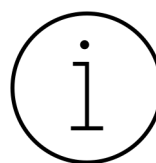
### Contact details

Save your child's friends' contact details.



### Online purchases

Monitor their online purchases and deliveries



### Safe Call

Save details for confidential helplines, like [www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/safecall-service/](http://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/safecall-service/)

# What if my child goes missing?

**You do not need to wait 24 hours to report your child missing**

## If

- ▷ You cannot verify where your child is, and
- ▷ You've checked in with friends and family, and
- ▷ You're concerned for their safety

## Then

Call the Police on 101; if your child is in immediate danger, call 999

## And

Give a detailed physical description of your child, what they were wearing and where you think they might be and who they might be with. Explain if any recent incidents may have prompted this and if they take regular medication or have health concerns.

## What happens next?

- ▷ A Police Officer may visit your home for more information
- ▷ Continue to try and make contact with your child
- ▷ Reassure them that they can return home and they will not be in any trouble; offer to collect them
- ▷ Update the police on all contacts or sightings

## When they return

- ▷ Try to stay calm and give them the opportunity to talk to you. Listen to them and reassure them that you are there to help them.
- ▷ If you suspect that a crime has been committed against your child, or your child has been asked to hold a weapon or drugs, contact the Police for support
- ▷ Check if they need medical assistance, when they last ate, drank and slept – it may have been a couple of hours or days
- ▷ Stay alert to any items that cannot be accounted for, such as money, clothing, gifts, parcels
- ▷ The Lambeth Return Home Interview Team will make contact with you. They are an independent team who will explore the reason for going missing, discuss the triggers, safety planning and support available.

**Emergency** If you are concerned about immediate danger, always call 999

# How else can I help keep my child safe?

Parenting and caring for a teenager can be challenging and many find it hard to adapt to changes in their child's behaviour as they grow up. This can be especially stressful if you are worried about their safety. Use some of the tips on this page to help you talk to your teenager.



**Listen to them.** This can be tough if you don't agree with what they're saying. But give them the space to talk and share their feelings.



**Be curious.** Where do they feel safe? Are there any areas they don't feel safe in? Which friends do they feel safest and most positive with?



Encourage them to **think about the future in a positive way.** What do they want to achieve? How can school/college/training help them get there?



**Set clear boundaries, while still allowing for space and freedom.** Be clear, and calm, about the consequences of breaking these boundaries.



**Spend quality time together** doing something you both enjoy. This could be an activity as simple as looking through old photos together.



**Encourage a growth mindset** - the belief that we can all keep doing better if we work hard. Instead of saying "I can't", say "I can't **yet**"



**Be kind to yourself.** Make sure you find positive ways to relax, de-stress and look after yourself.



**Get help** from others, including your friends, family, social services, GP, teachers, religious leaders and other parents. You are not alone.

# Key points to remember

**Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse.** It is not your child's fault.

**Spotting the early signs** of exploitation is an important first step in stopping it.

**You are not alone.** Agencies in Lambeth have a **duty** to work with you and your child to help keep them safe.

**Access Support.** Use the information in this guide, and the links on page 4 to get help.