

What to do if you are concerned about a child

- Familiarise yourself with the warning signs
- Raise awareness of the warning signs with the local community
- Identify children who you think could be at risk and observe them for any signs of grooming or exploitation
- Report any relevant information to the police
- Educate children about the risks
- Seek guidance and advice

If at any time you believe a child is, or could be in danger, e.g. they are missing and you believe they are with the person/people exploiting them, **dial 999**.

To report any concerns, call West Midlands Police on 101, or confidentially speak to Barnardo's on 0121 359 5333.

To find out more about the dangers of sexual exploitation visit www.seeme-hearme.org.uk



Memories last a lifetime...

Everyone has memories of their first love, but for some they won't be happy ones.

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What is sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that involves some kind of payment, which can include money, mobile phones, drugs, protection and affection.

Vulnerable young girls and boys are often targeted by groups of older men who groom their victim(s), forcing or manipulating them into taking part in sexual activities.

In all cases, the offender(s) has complete control, using their age, physical strength and intellect to help exploit the victim.

The use of violence and other forms of intimidation by the offender is common, particularly as the abuse continues.

The victim is often powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of the relationship because of the grooming process used by the offender and the victim's vulnerability.

The victim will not see themselves as being the victim, especially at the beginning of the relationship.

Children and young people do not volunteer to be sexually exploited. They cannot consent to their own abuse; they are forced.

What are the warning signs?

- **Sexual health and behaviour** – including inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- **Absent from school or repeatedly running away**
- **Familial abuse and/or problems at home**
- **Emotional and physical condition** - thoughts of self-harming or low self esteem
- **Gangs, older age group and involvement in crime**
- **Use of technology and sexual bullying**
- **Alcohol and drugs misuse**
- **Receipt of unexplained gifts or money**
- **Distrust of authority figures**
- **Entering or leaving vehicles**
- **Relationship of concern** - having friends who are older

