

Notes

**For confidential  
support and advice  
on sexual  
exploitation  
call the  
Kingfisher Team  
Tel: 01865 335276  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/  
saferchildren](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/saferchildren)**

This document can be supplied in  
alternative formats, please contact:

Oxfordshire Safeguarding  
Children Board

Tel: 01865 815843

[www.oscb.org.uk](http://www.oscb.org.uk)



# Child sexual exploitation



**How to get help if  
you think your son  
or daughter is  
being sexually  
exploited**



## Are you worried about your child or teenager?

- Do they stay out overnight?
- Have they been missing from home?
- Do they skip school?
- Have they come home with money, clothes, jewellery or a mobile phone they can't account for?
- Do they have an older boyfriend or girlfriend you are concerned about?
- Are you worried they are using drugs or alcohol?
- Have they lost contact with family and friends of their own age?
- Do they lack self-esteem?
- Are they secretive about where they go and who they see?
- Do they chat to people online they have never met?
- Are you worried about unsafe sexual behaviour?

If this sounds familiar, your child could be at risk of sexual exploitation by older adults. Taking risks is part of growing up, but sometimes children get out of their depth.

## What is sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation can involve swapping sexual favours for drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and other presents. Or it may be having sex for money with several adults. Youngsters may feel they must have sex because an adult gives them something, or because they feel threatened or frightened.

Some young people may want to have sex because they think the adult is their boyfriend. In reality they are being used for sex, and the 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' may pass them on to other people too. (Remember - sexual abusers can be women, as well as men.)

## What can you do?

If you are worried about a child or young person, you must do something - but it may not be easy to find out what is going on from them.

Your child may have been told not to talk about what they are doing, or threatened with violence. Or they may think they have an exciting grown-up life with a boyfriend or girlfriend, which they don't want to end.

Try to find a time to talk to them calmly about how they feel. Your child may open up, and admit they are unhappy about a part of their life. They may even admit they need help.

But if they won't talk to you, please do not let the matter drop. Is there someone else that you both trust that could talk to them - a grandparent, uncle or family friend, or someone from your religion or local community? Tell the trusted person about your concerns and ask them to have a word.

**If you think a child is at immediate risk call 999.**

Child sexual exploitation is a crime – the police and social services will act to stop it happening. If you are still worried call our confidential helpline number on 01865 335276.

There are specialists in the team who can advise you on what to do next. They can also talk to any child or young person themselves.

## How does it happen?

We know from experience that some grown-ups target young people and draw them into abusive sexual relationships. This is how it works:

- Older adults show them a lot of interest and affection at the beginning, and make them feel special
- Sometimes they ask groups of young people to come back to their house or go to parties
- They are offered drugs and alcohol, and a place to chill out
- They may get presents like clothes, a mobile phone, or money to buy alcohol and cigarettes
- After they have gained the youngster's trust and affection, things change
- They will ask for sexual favours for themselves or other people, in return for alcohol, drugs, presents, money - all the things they started giving for free
- They stop being nice and can become threatening or violent