The grooming process

The young person is befriended and trust is built, making them feel special and understood.

As the relationship grows, the victim becomes dependent on this ‘friend’ who then begins to isolate them from their family, their school or work and their friends.

The offender gains control of the young person, through manipulation, coercion, threats and intimidation.

A young person may not even realise they are being exploited. Offenders use many different techniques to gain trust. The grooming may be direct or indirect, face-to-face or via social media.

About R.I.S.E

(Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation)

RISE is a multi-agency team that includes police officers, children’s social care workers and a specialist nurse. RISE works closely with professionals from other agencies. The aim of the RISE team is to reduce incidents of CSE, protect young people at risk and to disrupt and prosecute offenders.

If you have concerns that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation, guidance is available:

www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/cse

If you require further information please

Call us on: 01604 888345

Email us: rise@northants.pnn.police.uk

Or visit www.northants.police.uk

Further information for parents is available at:

www.paceuk.info
Parents Against Child Exploitation

www.ceop.gov.uk
CEOP (Online grooming)

www.nspcc.org.uk
What is Sexual Exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It happens when one or more people take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact - it can also happen through the use of technology.

Who is at risk?

Any young person regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity and sexuality can be at risk of being sexually exploited. Children and young people from loving and secure homes can also be victims of sexual exploitation. The characteristics common to all victims are not always their age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation, but their powerlessness and vulnerability.

Push and pull factors

These are vulnerabilities or issues that ‘push’ the young person towards the perpetrator.

- Previous experience of abuse
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Parental vulnerability (e.g. drug and/or alcohol abuse, mental illness, learning disability, their own history of an abusive childhood)
- Family breakdown / disrupted family life
- Insecure immigration status
- Children who have physical or learning impairments
- Children who are exploring their sexuality or gender without the appropriate support

The grooming techniques used by the perpetrator to gain the young person’s trust. Examples may be:

- Being liked by someone or being made to feel special
- Receiving alcohol, drugs, money or gifts
- Getting a buzz from the excitement in risk taking or forbidden behaviour
- Being offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules or boundaries
- Being given lifts, taken to new places, and having adventures with a casual acquaintance

Possible indicators

CSE is often a hidden crime and it is important to be aware of indicators that a young person is at risk or being exploited.

- Episodes of running away/going missing
- Self-harming behaviours
- Exclusion from school or poor school attendance
- Physical symptoms e.g. sexually transmitted infections or bruising
- Unexplained clothes, money or other gifts
- Substance, drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Difficult relationships with family and peers
- Low self-esteem
- Association with risky peers or gangs
- Being contacted by unknown adults, or associating with older men/women
- Having more than one mobile phone, or using different SIM cards

It is often the case that children and young people do not see themselves as victims, as they may claim that they have acted voluntarily.

The reality is their behaviour is not voluntary or consenting - it is a product of grooming and manipulation.