

Appeer Safeguarding Information

Exploitation - Spot the Risk

RED FLAGS - What to look out for

Child sexual exploitation, grooming and criminal exploitation involve a person building control or influence over a child in order to abuse or use them for their own benefit. The signs are often similar because perpetrators commonly use the same tactics, such as gifts, attention, secrecy, threats, isolation, debt or emotional manipulation.



Behavioural signs

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship with or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age
- Being isolated or withdrawn from their usual friends.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Being fearful of certain people and/or situations
- Being increasingly secretive.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Using new slang words.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Being involved with gangs and/or gang fights.
- Spending a lot of time at hotels or places of concern, such as known brothels
- Not knowing where they are, because they have been trafficked around the country.



Physical signs

- Unexplained physical injuries
- Scars from self-harm
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Dressing in a sexualised manner inappropriate for age
- Changed physical appearance - for example, weight loss
- Changing their usual clothing/hair/makeup to appear older than they are
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations

Many of these signs may simply be “typical” teenage behaviour, or might be attributed to their neurodivergent traits. However, it is important that they are reported and noted on the young person’s file so that patterns might be identified in the future, creating a clearer picture of the situation that young person is in.

Your next steps:

- Notify the on-site manager or DSL immediately
- Complete a Cause for Concern form



Designated Safeguarding Lead
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