



06.7 The Criminal Exploitation of Children

All staff will be trained to recognise signs which may indicate criminal exploitation and to identify children in the school/setting who may be at risk and to report this.

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children under 18 and older where there is a vulnerable adult are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns and using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines".

Cuckooing is a practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. There are different types of cuckooing:

- Using the property to deal, store or take drugs
- Using the property to sex work
- Taking over the property as a place for them to live
- Taking over the property to financially abuse the tenant

The most common form of cuckooing is where drug dealers take over a person's home and use it to store or distribute drugs. Children living in these properties are at risk of neglect and other types of abuse.

Signs which may indicate criminal exploitation:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts /phone calls
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Criminal exploitation of children is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals; including, reference to the reference to the Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures. This will mean a referral into the Police and Starting Point and supporting the child in a sensitive manner.

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