

# #LookCloser



## Partnership Campaign

A briefing for professionals working with young people

# What's included in the pack and how can you help?

**#LookCloser** is a partnership campaign aiming to raise awareness of child exploitation and abuse, with a particular focus on public spaces.

This digital pack has been put together as a guide for partners to help us spread the **#LookCloser** messages.

Book onto our **#LookCloser** programme of learning, see our timetable included in the pack.

There are a number of resources included in this pack. Please download and follow the steps below to help spread the **#LookCloser** message:

1. Share our poster and leaflet digitally. Only circulate physically where safe and able to do so.
2. Use our social media assets to share our campaign online.
3. Download our free materials and share these with your colleagues. You may add these to your internal intranet sites or screen savers for colleagues to see.
4. Copy and paste our template email signature to help spread the message to your professional network.
5. Visit our **#LookCloser webpage** and share our key messages.
6. Pledge to **#LookCloser** using our template included in this pack.

# Key Messages

**Children and young people who are being exploited** may not always look or act vulnerable. If something doesn't feel right, it may not be.

**#LookCloser** focuses on public spaces where exploitation may be most visible to the public - parks, supermarkets, transport, banks and online environments like gaming platforms and social media.

We also know that bias can be a huge barrier in identifying young people who are being exploited. **#LookCloser** highlights that there is 'no perfect victim' and any young person can be exploited.

Members of the public and those working in the service, retail or transport industries are in a position to spot signs of exploitation and abuse.

Young people can be exploited and abused anywhere.

Ensure public spaces are safe for all young people.

Look beyond the obvious – trauma can manifest in many different behaviours.

Collectively we can safeguard more young people if we all know what to look out for and how to report concerns to the police.

It's important to challenge stereotypes of what a 'typical victim' of exploitation looks or acts like.

# Objectives of the campaign

- To increase awareness of the signs and indicators of child exploitation and abuse. To encourage members of the public and those working in the service, retail and transport industries to report concerns promptly to the police.
- To increase awareness of the signs and indicators of child exploitation and abuse amongst professionals and increase understanding of there being 'no perfect victim'.
- To increase professionals understanding and confidence in the value of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the importance of submitting a high quality referral.
- To encourage a victim focused response to child exploitation and abuse, recognising that young people may commit crime as part of their exploitation.
- To increase understanding amongst professionals around effective approaches to positively engage young people who may be victims of exploitation and abuse.
- To increase the reporting of intelligence related to child exploitation and abuse from both members of the public and professionals.

# Current exploitation and abuse considerations

**Criminals are always adapting and evolving their tactics to groom and exploit children and young people. Here are some considerations with this in mind:**

- Perpetrators are trafficking children using a wide range of transport methods including taxis and private hire vehicles, trains, trams and buses.
- Some partners have shared increased concerns regarding knife crime and serious youth violence at this time. It is important that responses to this recognise that such violence often relates to child exploitation and in particular conflict arising from county lines activity.
- Exploiters are continuing to expand online grooming beyond child sexual abuse and into child criminal and financial exploitation.
- Child financial exploitation is an emerging area of concern. It is important that where children are linked to fraud or financial crime that exploitation is considered.

**Remember children should never be made responsible for preventing their own exploitation.** Therefore, it is vital that interventions focus on disrupting those exploiting these children.

# Since the last #LookCloser awareness week, we have launched some new resources:

**The Children's Society**

**Responding to Children telling you they have experienced Sexual Abuse, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Children sharing experience of sexual abuse (CSA), sexual violence and sexual harassment need to be responded to sensitively. Often it has taken the victim/survivor a lot of courage to share what has happened to them, and they can be concerned about how others will react.

The experience of sharing can be helped or hindered by the way in which a professional engages with the victim/survivor. It is crucial that the child feels supported without judgement. How a professional responds to a child telling them about experience of sexual abuse can impact how the survivor recovers and whether they feel able to share further details or access further support.

**What to know:**

- Child sexual abuse can happen to any child, of any age, sex, race or socio-economic background. These acts can be incited by a single adult or child, or groups of adults and children.
- Sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment happen on a continuum and can cross over. These events may take place online and offline (both physically and verbally) and both are never acceptable, to be tolerated or dismissed.
- Children who are survivors of sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment may often find the experience to be traumatic, stressful and distressing.
- Children that have experienced sexual abuse are three times more likely to make suicide attempts<sup>1</sup>.
- It is essential that victims/survivors are protected, believed and provided with sufficient support from the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> Childhood maltreatment and adult suicidality: a comprehensive systematic review with meta-analysis. Psychological Medicine, 2019; 1 DOI: 10.1017/S0033291718003823

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**County lines:**

A support resource for professionals working in education settings

**The Children's Society**

**MODERN SLAVERY**  
Organised Immigration Crime

**The Children's Society**

**Children, Young People and Modern Slavery**

A guide for professionals

June 2021

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# Further learning...

During the week, take some time out to view a webinar, read a report or access a resource:

[The Children's Society exploitation resources](#)

[The Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme Exploitation briefing](#)

[Access resources via the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme](#)

[Sign up to the Contextual Safeguarding Network to access free webinars and other resources](#)

We hope you can join us at our learning sessions throughout the week. The [\*\*#LookCloser\*\*](#) Programme of Learning timetable and details to book on are included in this digital pack.

# Thank you for helping us to share the #LookCloser campaign

We welcome feedback and comments.  
Please contact the Prevention Programme at

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[childrenssociety.org.uk/lookcloser](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/lookcloser)



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