

#LookCloser



Partnership Campaign
Intranet slides

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.

Positive Engagement with Young People



Because of the **complex nature of grooming and exploitation** it can sometimes be hard for professionals to see young people as victims, particularly older teens and young adults. Anger and aggression are **common responses to trauma** and often surface when a young person feels scared or threatened. This includes encountering people in authority such as the police.

1. Provide opportunities for a young person's voice to be heard.
2. Ask open questions with sensitivity.
3. Create an environment where the young person feels comfortable and safe.
4. Provide opportunities for a young person to make choices.
5. Where possible, avoid the young person having to repeat their story multiple times.
6. Avoid judgement and intimate questions.
7. Be sensitive to cultural, gender and historical issues.
8. Move at the young persons pace so that they can process what is being said and have time to form their responses

It is important to **#LookCloser** for less obvious signs of grooming, exploitation and abuse. By recognising that there is no 'perfect victim' and any young person can be exploited, we can begin to understand their behaviours, improve engagement and ultimately safeguard more children.

The Grooming Process

Target

- Observing children
- Finding out their vulnerabilities, needs and wants
- Gaining and developing trust
- Manipulating children to recruit them
- Glamorising their lifestyle
- Sharing information with others in the group

Test

- Test out children's loyalty
- Offer them protection
- Give a sense of belonging
- Might create a dependency
- Introduce them to more established members
- Ask for favours
- Ask to recruit others

Trap

- Experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence
- Trafficking
- Humiliation and control
- Reinforced dependency
- Blackmail
- Debt bondage
- Isolation from family, friends and society

The National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the framework for identifying victims of trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and ensuring they receive the right support.

All police and local authority staff have a legal duty to refer anyone they think **may** potentially be a victim. They are not expected to be sure.

It is best practice to submit an NRM in partnership with other agencies as they may have valuable information to include.

If a child is being used for the benefit of others including to commit any crime, to work inappropriately, or take part in any sexual activity and they are being moved or kept anywhere for that purpose, they are being trafficked and an NRM **must** be completed.

Access the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre video on the NRM here:

[Via YouTube](#)

[Via Police Knowledge Hub](#)

If you cannot access the video, please speak to your National County Lines co-ordinator.

NRM Myth Busting!

<p>It doesn't matter what I write on the NRM as long as it's completed and submitted</p>	<p>FALSE: It is vital to think about the language you include. A child who has been exploited is a victim. Words like 'prostitute', 'gang member' and 'streetwise', for example, suggest compliance rather than victimisation. Keep your submissions factual and focused on <u>exploitation indicators</u> only.</p>
<p>If a young person appears to be acting in knowledge and 'consent' of their actions an NRM can't be completed</p>	<p>FALSE: Groomed and exploited children cannot consent to their exploitation. It is our duty to look beyond the obvious to understand what may really be going on.</p>
<p>NRMs can help the pursuit and conviction of Organised Crime Groups and exploiters</p>	<p>TRUE: Police have a duty to raise a crime report and investigate for every NRM submission. Successful modern slavery charges act as a far stronger deterrent than drugs charges, including longer sentencing.</p>
<p>Young people are using the NRM to escape criminal convictions</p>	<p>FALSE: The NRM is NOT a 'get out of jail free' card and there is no guarantee that a positive NRM decision will see a young person 'let off'. Every case must be treated individually and we cannot allow professional bias to risk failing to protect children.</p>

NRM Myth Busting!

<p>Exploiters are abusing the system and telling young people to say they are a victim of trafficking to avoid criminal charges.</p>	<p>FALSE: A young person simply saying they are a victim doesn't mean they will be recognised as one by the NRM. However any young person under the influence of an exploiter is a victim and should be treated as such.</p>
<p>If a young person appears to be acting in knowledge and 'consent' of their actions an NRM can't be completed</p>	<p>FALSE: If you have grounds to SUSPECT that a young person may have been exploited, it is your legal duty to make a referral. State any signs and indicators you or other key professionals have observed including behaviour. The Home Office then makes the final decision.</p>
<p>If a young person's solicitor uses a Section 45 Modern Slavery defence later in the process, then this must be a false defence and trafficking has not occurred</p>	<p>FALSE: Young people who are being exploited will often give false accounts initially, due to fear and mistrust of professionals. Traffickers often coach young people to give false accounts and solicitors often advise them to plead guilty to get a shorter sentence. If there is a disclosure later in the process, or if professionals share information which identifies the young person is being exploited, then an NRM should be submitted.</p>
<p>The NRM should not be used for CCE and CSE cases</p>	<p>FALSE: ANY young person that has moved location or has been held for the purposes of exploitation, has been trafficked and this is grounds for an NRM</p>

Why use the NRM?

Identifying victims:

The NRM can be valuable as a framework for identifying potential victims and then advocating for appropriate interventions and support to prevent further exploitation and offending.

Builds the intelligence picture:

It is the main data source in understanding the scale of modern slavery in the UK.

Disruption powers:

The Modern Slavery Act offers a number of disruption powers, including Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders (STROs) and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders (STPOs) as further deterrents.

Initiates modern slavery investigations:

Successful Modern Slavery charges act as a far stronger deterrent than drugs charges, including longer sentences.

Access the [Home Office Disruption Toolkit here](#)

Look beyond the obvious.

Young people:

May not understand or recognise they are being exploited.

Need you to look beyond the obvious to protect them from harm.

May find it difficult to find the right words to tell you their story.

Don't always look vulnerable or act like we may expect a victim should.

May have committed offences as part of their exploitation.

Will often distrust the police and other adults in authority.

May behave aggressively as this is a common response to trauma.

Can be scared about what might happen to them next.

Need to feel safe and heard, in order to talk.

Thank you for helping us to share the #LookCloser campaign

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

prevention@childrenssociety.org.uk
childrenssociety.org.uk/lookcloser



The
Children's
Society

