



# **Child Exploitation in Shropshire**

**How to recognise if you are being targeted**



**Shropshire  
Council**

# What is exploitation?

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Grooming is when a person or group forms a relationship with you to use you for their own gain. They want you to believe that you are important to them and to gain your trust so that they can then manipulate you into doing things for them – such as moving or selling drugs or sending sexual images of yourself. This is when it becomes exploitation – there are several different types of this, including **Criminal Exploitation**, **Sexual Exploitation** and **Financial Exploitation**.

## Who does it happen to?

It can happen to anyone from any background, in any part of the country - including **YOU**. You may not be aware that it's happening to you as exploiters are very clever in the way they manipulate people into trusting them - they may use threats or bribes to try and control you. But the important thing to remember is that if it does happen to you, it's not your fault - you are a victim and there are people that can help.



**To find out more, visit our webpage:**

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/childrens-social-care-and-health/child-exploitation>

# Red flags to be aware of

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- Them telling you that they've got your back and that they'll treat you like an adult.
- Encouraging you to be secretive and to keep things hidden from your parents.
- Offering you a mobile phone to use.
- Giving you drugs, vapes or alcohol.
- Promising to give you money or expensive stuff.
- Encouraging you to not attend school or college.
- Sending you sexual messages, images or videos - it is an illegal offence to take, distribute or store an image or video of someone under the age of 18, even if it's of yourself.
- Encouraging you to participate in criminal activity such as stealing, anti-social behaviour or violence.
- Encouraging you to participate in sexual activity - remember if you are below the age of 16 you are not old enough to consent.



# We're here to help you

Shropshire's **TREES (Together Reducing & Ending Exploitation in Shropshire)** Team are based within Children's Services. We are committed to identifying young people who are at risk of exploitation, and supporting professionals and families to reduce these risks. It is recognised that these risks are out in the community, rather than within the family home. This is what is known as **Contextual Safeguarding**.

We can offer social care support to families where appropriate, or we can signpost to another support service such as a substance use service, early help or diversionary activities - with the aim of disrupting exploitation and reducing the risks going forward.

**Call 0345 678 9021 or 0345 678 9040 if out of office hours**

## Report concerns about potential exploitation in your community

Information about perpetrators and locations of concern is crucial to help us build up a picture of Child Exploitation in Shropshire, and allows West Mercia Police and Children's Services to work together to safeguard children and make our communities a safer place to live.

**If anyone is at risk of immediate harm:** Call 999

**To share non-urgent information:** Call 101 or visit the "Tell Us About" section on [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk)

**To report information anonymously:** Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)



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