



Exploitation Identification Tool

This tool has been designed to be used by all practitioners who work with children and young people*. If you have a concern regarding possible exploitation of a young person the tool can be used to support your professional judgement and thinking about the young person's current situation and needs.

This tool should be used when you suspect a young person may be at risk of or suffering;

- sexual exploitation;
- criminal exploitation through association or involvement with a peer group and/or organised crime;
- County Lines;
- modern day slavery or human trafficking;
- serious youth violence

Professional judgement

This tool has been developed to support practitioners thinking and to ensure you consider a wide range of areas and issues. It is important to remember that this is **ONLY** a guide to inform your professional judgement around areas of risk, harm and exploitation.

One tick against a high risk box, in one or more areas, may indicate a serious risk of harm or exploitation but it may also be an indication of other concerns that require exploration, assessing and a plan of intervention. It is important to remember that less ticks does not always mean increased safety and reduced concern.

Each section requires you to input the **information gained** and **your assessment**. This should not be a list of events but must include your understanding of why this is relevant to concerns regarding exploitation.

The child or young person must be at the centre of your thinking when using this tool.

This tool should wherever possible be used and completed whilst in discussions with the young person, their parents or carer, or other professionals supporting the young person.

This tool is intended to **assist** your decision making; helping you make an initial judgement regarding the risk of child exploitation; it is **neither a specialist assessment or referral form**. When making a referral to Children's Social Care or sharing your concerns with the child's allocated social worker, this identification tool should form the basis of those discussions and your professional analysis. A copy of the completed tool should be attached to the referral. Refer to the table at the end of this tool to help you decide how to proceed and discuss this with your line manager and/or designated safeguarding lead/manager.

*The term young person is used throughout this tool as the tool can be used in relation to a child up to the age of 18 and a care leaver up to the age of 25.

Exploitation Identification Tool

Young person's name:

Young person's DOB:

Worker completing form:

How and with whom has this tool been completed?

What are the concerns/ reasons which led to completion of this tool?

Education/ training/ employment	Examples of Risk Indicators	
	Low	Mainly engaged in employment / school /training. Mainly positive relationships in education. Some low level concerns e.g. truanting.
	Medium	Irregular or low attendance. Breakdown in education placements/fixed term exclusions. Noticeable change in young person's attendance, performance, presentation or behaviour in school. Part-time timetable/ off-site provision/ child is in an Alternative Education Provision. Education provision does not have a good culture of inclusion and responds in a punitive way to concerns. A pattern of concerns of exclusion/ incidents between peers at the school which are not well responded to.

	High	Significant absence from school or no school placement/ permanent exclusion or NEET. Whereabouts unknown when absent/missing from school. Education provision is unsafe for this young person - they are at risk of retaliation, violence, sexual assault, harassment in the provision.	
Information gained and your assessment			

	Examples of Risk Indicators		
Health (including physical, mental and sexual)	Low	Low self-esteem, low mood, struggles to verbalise feelings. Some signs of anger. Seeking a sense of belonging and acceptance. Repeated presentations within health services. Sexually active in consensual peer relationship.	
	Medium	Significant low self-esteem, expressions of despair, self-harm, overdosing, eating disorder, noticeable change/decline in emotional health. Young person demonstrates threatening behaviour / violent outbursts - emotional and behavioural dysregulation. Unexplained injuries. Pregnancy, STIs known to be via sex with peers (if child is over 13). Untreated STI's. Not accessing sexual health support or practising safe sex. Unable to discuss sexuality with others.	
	High	Recognised or suspected mental health needs. Symptoms of PTSD – highly dysregulated presentation. Regular self-harming, overdosing, previous suicide attempts/suicidal ideation. Child/young person causing serious physical/emotional harm to others. Serious unexplained injuries. Repeated STIs, pregnancy linked to adults. Physical symptoms suggestive of sexual assault. Child is under 13 and sexually active (statutory rape). Young person is in a sexual relationship with an adult/ there is a wide age gap.	
Information gained and your assessment			

Accommodation	Examples of Risk Indicators		
	Low	Some accommodation issues, but overall accommodation meets the young person's needs and the young person feels safe.	
	Medium	Unsuitable, unstable, overcrowded or temporary accommodation. Other peers in the accommodation are at risk of exploitation or pose a risk to other peers. Accommodation is in an area known for criminality. The young person is unhappy with their accommodation.	
	High	The young person often stays elsewhere. The young person is homeless or sofa surfing. The young person is a care leaver or child in care. Accommodation is in an area which is currently being targeted by perpetrators of exploitation. Other peers in the accommodation are known to pose a risk of retaliation, knife crime and/ or exploitation. There is a culture which enables harm to happen in the accommodation, including a lack of response to reports of bullying/harassment or high focus on banning and exclusion.	
Information gained and your assessment			

Going missing	Examples of Risk Indicators		
	Low	Often comes home late. Missing during school day (but whereabouts known). Incidents of absence without permission.	
	Medium	Frequently staying out late or overnight without permission /explanation. Repeated episodes of going missing. Goes missing from home or school sometimes for prolonged periods. Parents/ carers not reporting young person missing.	
	High	Frequently goes missing for short or prolonged periods. Whereabouts often unknown through the day / night. Located using national transport networks (trains/motorways). Pattern of street homelessness. Missing with other young people assessed as at risk of exploitation. Looking either well cared for or particularly unkempt on return from missing episodes.	

		Located in areas they are not familiar with and have no links to and / or located in other towns / cities. Found/ been at an address which appears to be `cuckooed'. Found with or accompanied by older non-related adults believed to be involved in drug dealing. Frequent train or other travel / in possession of lots of train tickets or similar with no obvious explanation or means of paying for travel.	
Information gained and your assessment			

Peer relationships and/or contact with abusive adults	Examples of Risk Indicators		
	Low	Friendship group acts protectively of the individual. Friendship group informs adults if there are concerns. Friendship group is known to parents/carers. Change in friendship group.	
	Medium	Extensive use of phone (late at night, secret use) and/or use of more than one mobile phone. Spending time with older peers and/or other exploited children. Involved in ASB and low-level offending alongside peers. Violence within peer group (not involving knives or firearms). May have peers who self-define as in a “gang” or specific group and this young person is not central to this group.	
	High	Found with/ accompanied by older non-related adults believed to be involved in child exploitation/ drug dealing. Appears in online videos with individuals known to be involved in serious criminality. Evidence of association with adults /older peers believed to be perpetrators/ victims of grooming or exploitation. Identifies as a member of a peer group (gang) which has links to organised crime and exploitation by older adults. Violence within peer group (involving weapons). High risk of retaliation between peer groups. Young person has prominent role/status within their peer group. Significant age gap in interpersonal relationships. Considers themselves to be in a “relationship” with controlling coercive individual.	
Information gained and your assessment			

		Examples of Risk Indicators	
Concerning environments, places and/or spaces	Low	Spending time where antisocial behaviour is known to take place. Visiting establishments that adults frequent (e.g. pubs, clubs, bars).	
	Medium	Living in a neighbourhood where exploitation is known to take place. Reported to be spending time in areas where exploitation / serious youth violence / street sex work is known to take place. Has access to premises not known to parent / carer. Use of mobile phone/ internet that causes concerns (including possession of multiple phones, sexting).	
	High	<p>Seen to be picked up in or spending time in areas where serious youth violence / exploitation / street sex work is known to take place. Spending time in a location where there are not any safe adults who would step in if concerns were identified. Spending time in a location where there is a high rate of violence and exploitation.</p> <p>Multiple mobile phones/changing phones frequently and/or significant increase phone calls/texts/messages from unknown numbers which they are unwilling to explain. Entering/ leaving vehicle/s driven by unknown individuals.</p>	
Information gained and your assessment			

		Examples of Risk Indicators	
Drug and alcohol use Consider the type of substances used/ how the young person is funding their use /who	Low	Low level use of substances (including alcohol). Alcohol and substances used in locations and peer groups where there is safety. Substances acquired from a relatively safe source.	
	Medium	Evidence of regular substance (including alcohol) use. Concerns for use / dependency & change / increase of use. Alcohol/ substance use in environments where there is limited safety.	

is supplying them.	High	Evidence of heavy /dependant /worrying substance use (including alcohol) which impacts on relationships and daily life. Concerns for use/ dependency/ increase of use/funding of usage. Alcohol/drug supply is from unsafe sources. Child has a debt or owes someone for alcohol/drugs (consider possible debt bondage). Child is selling substances. Child is harmed/assaulted when using substances.	
Information gained and your assessment			

Coercion / control	Risk Indicators		
	Low	Reduced contact with family / friends.	
	Medium	Limited contact with family / friends. Appears to be 'controlled' or negatively influenced by others. Concerns regarding mental health. Physical injuries. Disclosure of physical/sexual assault but able to access criminal justice support around this. Financial debts they cannot pay back. Young person withholds information, secretive, becomes angry when asked about person/people.	
	High	No contact with family / friends. Concerns that relationship might involve abuse /violence/ be controlling. Disclosure of physical / sexual assault followed by withdrawal of allegation. Serious or repeated physical injuries. Forced imprisonment / abduction. Disappears from system (no contact with support systems). Forced criminality to pay debts. Shows fear of other people.	
Information gained and your assessment	(N.B.speech, language, social, emotional and communication difficulties may leave a child/young person more susceptible to coercion)		

		Examples of Risk Indicators	
Unexplained items/ rewards	Low	Possible unaccounted for small amounts of monies and/or goods. Ability to fund goods such as food / travel.	
	Medium	Some unexplained items/ “gifts” with no finances to purchase and no account given, or account doesn’t fit. Funding use of drugs /alcohol /tobacco/ food/ transport fares through unknown sources.	
	High	Significant concern regarding unaccounted for monies and / or goods. Has unexplained use of or access to non-tangible goods e.g. travel cards/gym/fast food. Talks about gaining status / protection / belonging from a group or individual in a position of power. Has unexplained use of multiple mobile phone. Frequent train or other travel / in possession of lots of train tickets or similar with no obvious explanation or means of paying for travel. Young person has significant debts and these debts are used to control the young person (debt bondage).	
Information gained and your assessment			

		Risk Indicators	
Offending behaviour and risk to others	Low	Starting to associate with problematic peer group. Some anti-social behaviour. Low level concerns about influence on other young people.	
	Medium	Known to police. Peers known to police. Involved in antisocial/criminal behaviour. Known to Youth Justice/ Youth Offending Service. May carry weapons. Sexually inappropriate behaviour to others. Concerns that the young person might expose others to risky situations. Bullying and threatening behaviour.	
	High	Repeat offences, particularly related to drugs or violent crime. Repeat offences of the same nature (e.g. theft). Arrested/Charged/Convicted of Possession with intent to supply drugs or with large amounts of drugs. Arrested away from own home area. Arrested/ found at an address	

		<p>which appears to be 'cuckooed'. Arrested with or accompanied by older non-related adults believed to be involved in drug dealing. Sexually harmful behaviour. Places others at risk of child exploitation via friendships / associations / places. Displays violence towards others (including family members and carers). Bullying and threatening behaviour. Harmful sexual behaviour motivated by peer pressure. Arrested/ found with a weapon.</p>	
<p>Information gained and your assessment</p>			

	Examples of Risk Indicators		
Family Relationships	Low	<p>Carer(s) show warmth, support the child and have good /positive communication with the child. The child has positive friendships. Reported reduced contact with family.</p>	
	Medium	<p>Carers do not always implement safety plans such as notifying the police if the child is missing. Carers can find it difficult to respond appropriately and with warmth to the child. Some concerns regarding parenting capacity (this may include mental illness or substance misuse). Family relationships are strained. Domestic violence/abuse in the family. Friends /carers report a change in behaviour /reduced contact with the child /concerns for the child. Family member(s) have known links to criminality.</p>	
	High	<p>There is little or no communication between the carer(s). Breakdown in family relationships / no contact, young person does not have a relationship with any key carer as a result of significant instability in their placement and housing. Young person has a sibling who is assessed to be a victim of exploitation. Child lives in an environment where there are significant concerns about abuse and neglect. Child is suspected or known to have experienced, or to be experiencing significant harm in their family/home environment. Family member(s) have known links to exploitation/ trafficking.</p>	
<p>Information gained and your assessment</p>			

Engagement with services / positive activities	Risk Indicators		
	Low	Lack of engagement, some difficulty in contacting the child. Accesses universal positive activities (sports clubs / youth groups etc).	
	Medium	Some engagement but sporadic contact. Often misses appointments or engages suddenly at crisis points.	
	High	Brief engagement, frequently fails to attend appointments. Concerning change in behaviour. No contact/ engagement. No positive activities identified.	
Information gained and your assessment			

Other factors to consider

Other child & family factors to consider	<p>Family: Abuse and/ or neglect in family; parental substance misuse; exposure to adult sex work; a family member or known associate involved in the supply of drugs</p> <p>Child: Learning disabilities; child in care; living within residential setting/ supported accommodation; financially unsupported; migrant /refugee /asylum seeker; death, loss or illness of a significant person in the young person's life</p>
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Information about perpetrators, peers or locations of concern	Other information, such as the name of adults / peers about who there are concerns and places of concern
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Analysis and Professional Judgement

From completing this Exploitation Identification Tool what are your worries for this young person regarding exploitation?

From completing this Exploitation Identification Tool what do you consider to be the positives/ protective/ resilience factors regarding exploitation?

Professional Judgement (consider the specific areas of concern and strength identified in this tool. What do you consider the level of risk to be and what is the rationale for your decision making?)

- On completion of this risk identification tool, please make an initial judgement about the level of risk of exploitation for the young person.

Low	At this point there is little indication that the young person may be at risk of being targeted or groomed. Seek advice/ guidance from your designated safeguarding lead/ team. Child may require early help support. A discussion could be held with the ART team. If the child/young person has an allocated social worker, a discussion should be held with them and the tool shared with them. If the decision is no further action, or to offer advice, support, guidance, intervention within the home agency and not to contact Children’s Services, this must be recorded in the young person’s record /file.	
Medium	Indicators that the child/young person is vulnerable to being exploited. They may be at risk of opportunistic abuse. Seek advice / guidance from your designated safeguarding lead / team. The practitioner must contact Children’s Services if there is not an allocated social worker. If the child/young person has an allocated social worker, a discussion should be held with them and the tool shared with them.	
High	Indicators /Assessment /Evidence /Disclosure denote that the child is at high risk of, or is experiencing exploitation (they may not recognise this). Seek advice / guidance from your designated safeguarding lead / team. The practitioner must contact ART if there is not an allocated social worker. If the child/young person has an allocated social worker, a discussion should be held with them and the tool shared with them. If it is felt that a child is at immediate risk of harm, the Police must be contacted on 999.	

Next steps

(Consider: what is the plan to safeguard and support the young person. What is the plan regarding disruption of locations and/ or suspected perpetrators. Does intelligence/ information need to be shared with the police. Do any actions need to take place to ensure other young people are safeguarded?)