



South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board



Practice Guidance Exploitation

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Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Grooming	4
Vulnerability	5
Victims and Perpetrators	7
County Lines	8
Modern Slavery	9
Sexual Exploitation	12
Scams	14
Radicalisation	16
Mate Crime	18
Appendix	
1. Useful Resources	20

Introduction

This document provides guidance for practitioners who are concerned about adults with care and support needs who are at risk of exploitation. It describes different types of exploitation and gives examples of things to look out for. It should be read alongside the South Gloucestershire [Multi-agency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#). Concerns that an adult at risk is being exploited should be referred to South Gloucestershire Council on 01454 868007 in line with the multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures.

Not all adults who are being exploited will have care and support needs. Practitioners should also think of other sources of support such as the police, the safeguarding lead in their own organisation or the Strategic Safeguarding Manager in South Gloucestershire Council who is the council lead for exploitation.

Exploitation occurs when a person is groomed, forced or coerced into doing something that they don't want to do for someone else's gain. It is a complex and often hidden issue. People who are exploited can find themselves in situations where they experience abuse and violence, and they may be forced to take part in criminal activities.

Exploitation can happen anywhere. It takes place in urban and rural areas and affects people of all ages, genders and ethnicities.

Exploitation is often a gradual process. People are groomed and introduced to new ideas, behaviours and activities, making these appear normal and acceptable. These ideas and activities may seem exciting or give someone something they are looking for (such as money, or a sense of belonging). Because of this, people will often not recognise that they are being exploited until their situation becomes very serious.

Exploitation may be taking place even if someone seems to be making their own choices or the activity they are taking part in appears consensual – the person's vulnerability and the situation's exploitative nature can take away their freedom and capacity to make their own decisions. They may feel trapped and unable to escape their situation or tell others what is going on.

People involved in exploitative situations must always be considered victims and offered appropriate support.

Grooming

Grooming forms a key part of the exploitation process. It involves building a connection with someone in order to coerce or deceive them into becoming involved in an exploitative situation.

The connection established during the grooming process could be a friendship, a romantic relationship or a relationship of dependence in which the groomer provides something that is valued, such as monetary goods or self-validation and acceptance. Groomers seek to develop these relationships through taking a continued interest in the person and offering advice, understanding and gifts. Once a person's trust has been gained, efforts will be made to isolate them and encourage them to become reliant and dependent on the groomer. Coercion, intimidation, force and blackmail may also be used to establish power and control.

People may not recognise that they have been groomed and may not view their relationship with the person who is grooming them as exploitative. They may value greatly the connection they have with this person and appear hurt by suggestions that their relationship is in any way controlling, coercive or otherwise concerning.

Grooming is often associated with sexual exploitation but is also present in other forms of exploitation such as radicalisation, county lines, modern slavery and financial exploitation.

Grooming can happen to anyone of any age and gender. It can take place face-to-face, via the telephone, the internet or social media – this includes social media sites, instant messaging and photo-sharing apps, and online gaming platforms.

Online grooming has become a significant factor in forms of exploitation such as sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Online grooming allows people from many different geographic and social backgrounds to be exploited, including those who may not otherwise be at risk of exploitation.

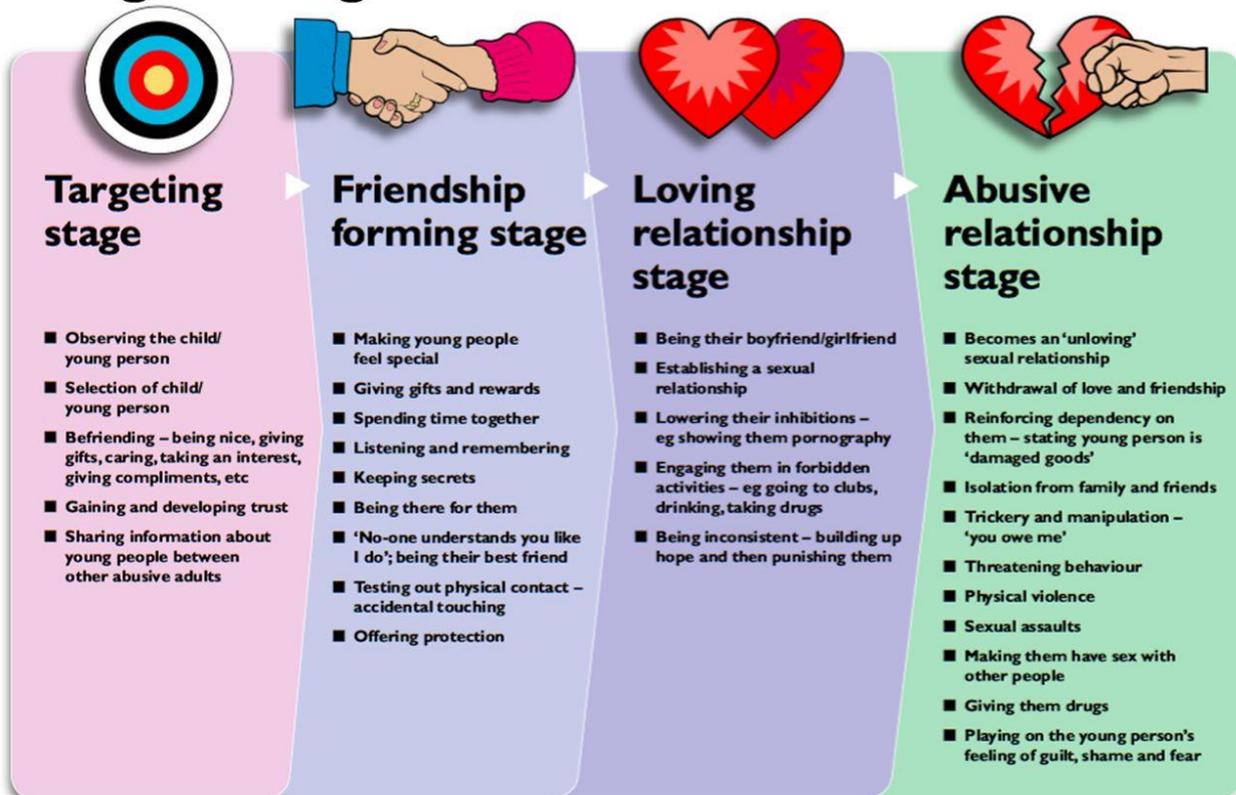
Signs that someone is being groomed may include one or more but are not limited to, the following:

- Becoming secretive
- Isolating themselves from existing friendships and social groups
- Developing new friendships
- Meeting friends in unusual places
- Developing a strong attachment to a particular individual, who may appear dominant and controlling
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Acquiring new items such as clothes or mobile phones, without explanation
- Having access to drugs and alcohol
- Expressing new and strongly-held ideas, values or beliefs

The diagram below (The Grooming Line) was developed for work with children and young people, but could apply to anyone at any age. It shows the four stages of a grooming relationship and how a perpetrator may groom someone. It may be a

useful tool when working with a person that is being groomed to help them think about what is happening to them.

The grooming line



Vulnerability

Although the term 'vulnerable adult' is no longer used in adult safeguarding, the concept of vulnerability remains relevant. Someone is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation. The nature and extent of someone's vulnerability changes over time, in response to their personal circumstances.

Each case of exploitation arises from a unique set of circumstances. However, certain life experiences are known to increase vulnerability to exploitation:

- Being in care, or being a care leaver
- Being involved with a gang
- Experiencing communication difficulties (for example, due to having English as an additional language or having a sensory impairment)
- Experiencing drug or alcohol misuse
- Experiencing financial difficulties
- Experiencing mental health difficulties
- Experiencing past trauma or adversity, including experiences of neglect or abuse

- Experiencing peer pressure
- Experiencing times of transition and change
- Feeling socially isolated
- Going missing
- Having caring responsibilities
- Having an illness, health condition or disability
- Homelessness and living in insecure housing
- Involvement in the criminal justice system
- Living in an unsafe or unstable home environment

Experiences such as those listed above can increase people's vulnerability in a number of ways:

- They increase the level of risk people are exposed to in their daily lives
- The thought processes and behaviours developed to cope with difficult experiences can create or intensify their vulnerability (for example, using drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism)
- Exposure to challenging experiences may lead people to view exploitation as a normal, expected or unavoidable part of life

Victims of exploitation are also growing more diverse, with people viewed as 'low risk' being groomed and exploited. Often these people will have been exposed to risk outside of the home, for example through their friendships and relationships with others. Peer influences and information technology (especially social media) are increasingly being identified as pathways into exploitation.

Trauma

Trauma and adversity experienced during childhood and later life can have huge impacts on people's lives and can greatly increase their vulnerability to exploitation. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are extremely stressful and traumatic events encountered during childhood or adolescence with negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing. They include experiences of:

- Abuse (physical, sexual or emotional)
- Neglect (physical or emotional)
- Household challenges (such as domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health difficulties, parental separation or divorce, imprisonment, parental loss)

These experiences can have significant and life-long impacts on physical, psychological and social development. They can increase the likelihood that people will participate in risk-taking and health-harming behaviours, and that they will become a victim or perpetrator of violence, abuse or exploitation. Traumatic experiences can also occur in adulthood, exerting similar impacts on health, wellbeing and vulnerability to exploitation.

Victims and perpetrators

Exploitation, like other forms of abuse, always involves a 'victim' and a 'perpetrator'. However, these terms can be confusing because of how victims of exploitation are coerced and controlled.

People who have been exploited may have been forced to participate in criminal activities or to become involved in the exploitation of other people. They may have been forced to take a lead role in an exploitative situation or may appear to be a willing participant.

Their actions may not seem like those of a victim. This can lead to confusion and doubt when identifying those who have been harmed by an exploitative situation, and those who hold responsibility for doing so.

It is important to remember that anyone is a victim if they are involved in a situation which limits their freedom and ability to make decisions about their own actions, and that exploitation contains elements of control and coercion which may not be immediately visible.

People may not think of themselves as victims because:

- They have normalised their experiences of exploitation, especially if it has occurred over a long time
- They feel dependent on their abuser or the exploitative situation, or feel affection towards their abuser – this is often a consequence of being groomed
- They feel that they have willingly taken part in a situation or activity – this may be because they have gained something from the situation and do not recognise that they have been exploited in return

People who have been exploited may act in challenging ways – they may be reluctant to engage with you, to recognise that they are a victim of exploitation, or understand the importance of trying to leave the situation. Actions such as these are often a result of the coercive and traumatic nature of the exploitation they have encountered.

The nature of someone's involvement in an exploitative situation, and their behaviour towards those seeking to help them can raise questions over whether they are a victim. This can lead people to overlook someone's welfare, care and support needs and to downplay the risk that they will experience further harm. Sometimes it is used as a reason to avoid acting on information that indicates that someone is being harmed. It is important to explore the rationale behind views such as these and question whether they are based on evidence.

County Lines

County Lines is the term used when illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

In some cases the dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from. This is known as cuckooing.

People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

As we have seen in sexual exploitation, victims often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality.

Some signs to look out for include:

- An increase in visitors and cars to the person's house or flat
- New faces appearing at the person's house or flat
- New and regularly changing residents (e.g different accents compared to local accent)
- Changes in the person's mood and/or demeanour (e.g. secretive/ withdrawn/ aggressive/ emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Changes in the way the person dresses
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g clothes, jewellery, phones, cars etc)
- The person may go missing, possibly for long periods of time
- The person is seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Disengagement from the person's normal social activities
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries

Modern Slavery

Slavery is an umbrella term for activities that occur when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service.

Modern slavery is a major issue in Britain. Victims and perpetrators include UK citizens and foreign nationals from a range of countries. People may be trafficked into the UK from abroad or may be trafficked internally between cities, towns and rural areas. Modern slavery can take place anywhere – including villages and rural areas as well as large towns and cities. It is a crime happening in our communities, takeaways, hotels, car washes, nail bars, farms and other agricultural settings, and private homes.

The 2019 UK annual report on modern slavery states that the most robust estimate to date of the scale of modern slavery in the UK was produced by the Home Office in 2014, which suggested that there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in 2013.

People of all genders and ages can be victims of modern slavery. Over half of modern slavery referrals reported nationally relate to children and young people under the age of twenty-seven.

Someone is in slavery if they are:

- Forced to work through mental or physical threat
- Owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
- Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
- Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom

Perpetrators of modern slavery may be involved in organised crime networks or could be people close to the victim, including family members, friends, partners or employers.

Labour abuse and Labour exploitation

Labour abuse is at the lower end of the spectrum but can be equally traumatising for the individual concerned. Issues such as non-payment of minimum wage, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), few or no breaks, belittling of workers and long hours are all signs of labour abuse.

Forced labour and labour exploitation are at the higher end of the spectrum and defined as modern slavery. They involve the control, force or coercion of an individual to perform work.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of modern slavery.

Human trafficking is a crime. It does not always involve international transportation. Trafficked people have little choice in what happens to them and often suffer abuse due to violence and threats made against them or their families. In effect, they become commodities owned by traffickers, used for profit.

Human trafficking is not the same as people smuggling. People smuggling is an offence against the state, involving moving people illegally with their consent. Modern slavery and human trafficking are crimes against the individual, involving moving people without their consent.

Signs that might indicate modern slavery and human trafficking are that the person

- Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, anxious/agitated or appear withdrawn and neglected. They may have untreated injuries
- Is rarely allowed to travel on their own, seems under the control, influence of others, rarely interacts or appears unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work
- Lives in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and/or lives and works at the same address
- Has no identification documents, few personal possessions and always wears the same clothes day in and day out. Their clothing may not be suitable for their work
- Has little opportunity to move freely and may always be accompanied
- Is dropped off/collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night
- Avoids eye contact, appears frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers and fears law enforcers for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation, fear of violence to them or their family
- May show signs of psychological or physical abuse. They might appear frightened, withdrawn or confused
- May not have access to their own documents, such as ID or their passport, with the employer having confiscated them
- May not have a contract and may not be paid National Minimum Wage or not paid at all
- Is forced to stay in accommodation provided by the employer. This accommodation could be overcrowded or 'on-site'
- Might not accept money or be afraid to accept payment
- May be held in their employer's home and forced to carry out domestic tasks such as providing child care, cooking and cleaning
- May not be able to leave the house on their own, or their movements could be monitored
- May not have access to their own belongings, including their ID, but also items such as their mobile phone
- May be deprived of their own personal living space, food, water, or medical care
- Has relationships which don't seem right - for example a young teenager appearing to be the boyfriend/girlfriend of a much older adult



If you are concerned about a potential victim, or suspicious about a situation that is potentially exploitative, you can call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. The helpline is operated by Unseen, open 24/7 and entirely confidential.

If you believe a person is being trafficked and is in immediate danger, you should call 999 straight away.

The National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support. From 1 November 2015, specified public authorities have a duty to notify the Secretary of State of any individual identified in England and Wales as a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking. The “duty to notify” is set out in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and applies to the following organisations:

- The Home Office (including UK Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, and Immigration Enforcement)
- Local authorities
- Health and Social Care Trusts (HSC Trusts)
- Police
- POPPY Project
- National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA)
- Migrant Help
- Kalayaan
- Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
- Medaille Trust
- Salvation Army
- Barnardo's
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- Unseen UK
- New Pathways
- Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)
- Refugee Council

To make a referral click [here](#)

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where people are manipulated, coerced or forced into participating in sexual acts in order to receive something such as gifts, money or affection.

People can be sexually exploited through physical assault (penetrative sex, sexual touching or masturbation) or acts not involving physical contact, such as the sharing of sexual images through the internet and social media.

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation usually hold power over their victims, for example due to their age, gender, sexual identity, physical strength or status.

Sexual exploitation can affect all genders and ages and can occur within any community or social group. It can be perpetrated by individuals and groups, children and adults, and people of any gender.

Sexual exploitation can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents. It can be opportunistic or part of organised abuse and exploitation. Perpetrators may be outsiders or individuals known to the victim, such as a partner, family member or friend.

Victims of sexual exploitation may be given phones, especially if they are being exploited by an organised crime group. Mobile phones act as a means for perpetrators to maintain contact and control over the victim and coordinate their exploitation, especially if this involves being exploited by more than one individual.

Sexual exploitation can happen as part of a relationship, which the victim may view as loving and consensual. The perpetrator may have groomed them through becoming their friend and offering them favours. Because of this the victim may trust or feel dependent on the perpetrator and may not realise that they are being exploited.

Victims of sexual exploitation may also be forced to participate in the grooming and exploitation of other people.

Sexual exploitation can happen within gangs where it may be used as a form of punishment or control, or as a display of status and power.

Common signs that someone is being sexually exploited include those listed below. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and warning signs will show themselves differently in each person

- Appearance and behaviour
 - evidence or suspicions of sexual assault
 - self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing
 - developing inappropriate or unusual relationships or associations, including relationships with controlling or significantly older people
 - displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, language or dress
 - sending sexually explicit content via the internet, mobile phones or social media
 - frequenting areas known for sex work
 - secretiveness around behaviours
 - 'branded' with a tattoo indicating ownership
- Personal circumstances
 - associating with gang members
 - becoming involved with drugs and alcohol
 - being isolated from peers and social networks
 - becoming pregnant unexpectedly
 - contracting sexually transmitted infections
 - unexplained absences, including persistently being late or going missing
 - unexplained acquisition of money, clothes and mobile phones
- Other observations and circumstances
 - using more than one phone, especially if both are used to communicate with different people (for example, if one phone is used exclusively to communicate with a specific group of 'friends')
 - receiving an excessive amount of texts or phone calls – these may be from multiple callers, some of whom may be unknown

Scams

Anyone can fall victim to a scam, but some people are more susceptible than others because of their circumstances. People living with some form of cognitive impairment, such as dementia, may be unable to distinguish scams from legitimate opportunities.

It is really important to report scams, whether it is to Trading Standards, Action Fraud or Friends Against Scams. The biggest hurdle in combatting this type of exploitation is under-reporting, and yet reporting scams could be the most important tool in helping prevent further victims.

The National Trading Standards Scams Team created the Friends Against Scams initiative to protect and prevent people from falling victim to this type of crime. For further information on how to spot a scam the Friend Against Scams have an online awareness session which can be accessed at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

Victims of scams should not be embarrassed to talk to friends and family to get their help – they have been the victim of a sophisticated crime. The criminals who exploit people by scams are sophisticated. They may spend hours researching their victim or weeks building up a relationship of trust. They will use pressure tactics to make the person give them what they want.

Scam Mail

Scam mail can come in many forms, including lotteries, prize draws, catalogues, and clairvoyant scams. The amount of junk and scam mail a person receives can be reduced by following these tips:

- Send any scam mail the person receives to the National Trading Standards Scams Team to help them investigate and stop the criminals behind scams. You will receive information to help you identify scams. Sign up online at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk or write to 'FREEPOST NTSST MAIL MARSHAL'
- Sign up to Royal Mail's paid-for redirection service to have the person's post delivered to a trusted friend or relative. Apply online at www.royalmail.com or at a Post Office branch
- Sign up to the Mailing Preference Service (MPS). Although the MPS does not stop scam mail, it will reduce the amount of direct marketing mail that the person receives. The MPS is a free service. For more information and to register visit www.mpsonline.org.uk or call 0207 291 3310

Scam Phone Calls

Scam calls are a common method criminals use to try to gain people's personal and financial information. The calls can be very intimidating and the criminals can apply a lot of pressure.

There are several options available to help stop criminals getting in contact by phone:

- Use a call blocking unit. These are units that connect to a landline and block scam and nuisance calls. Different brands will work in different ways and vary in how restrictive they are on incoming calls
- Many landline providers now offer options for preventing nuisance calls which are free to their customers. For more information on these, contact the person's landline provider or visit their website
- Sign up to the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) – Although the TPS does not stop scam calls, it will reduce the amount of unwanted sales and marketing calls received. The TPS is a free service. For more information and to register, visit www.tpsonline.org.uk or call 0345 070 0707

Doorstep Scams

To help the person protect them self from doorstep scams:

- Display a 'No Cold Calling' sticker on the front door. Download a printable version here: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/NCC. Local Trading Standards can also provide 'no doorstep callers' door stickers, which can be requested via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline (0808 223 1133). These requests also provide a further opportunity to send out information on scams and rogue trading in general.
- Support the person to use a good trader scheme to find legitimate traders. The local council will be able to provide information about schemes in the area.
- Install a door chain and/or a spy hole on the front door to check who is there.
- If the person is expecting a trader, remind them to ask to see identification from them, then phone the company they are from to check they are genuine before letting them into their home. Make sure the number the person calls is genuine; not a number given by the caller.

Internet Scams

With the rising threat of online scams, it's important to remember to be careful when using the internet. Criminals can create flashy, official looking websites and emails all in an aim to extract personal or financial information. Encourage the person to be wary of links and attachments in emails and keep their guard up – especially if they receive an email they are not expecting.

Tips include:

- Keep the computer up to date – the person will be better protected if they keep the operating system (such as Windows or Mac) updated. They should receive notifications when they need to update the system.
- Use the latest version of the internet browser (such as Edge, Chrome and Firefox) – this will help to provide better protection from scams, viruses and other possible threats.
- Use security software (for example anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall) to protect the computer from viruses and attempts to steal personal information. Some computers already have security software installed, or you can check www.getsafeonline.org for advice on reputable providers.

- Use a different, strong password for every online account in case one gets hacked. A password manager will help store passwords securely and means the person will only have to remember one strong master password.
- Enable multifactor (or two-factor) authentication on online accounts like email. This is a safer way to log in and requires another source such as a mobile phone to authenticate that it is the person logging on to their own account

Other scam advice

It is good practice to ensure that the person does not hold too much cash in their current accounts. They should keep the bulk of their money in savings or deposit accounts. This means that if a criminal gains access to their current account or convinces them to make a payment, they will only be able to access a limited amount of the person's money.

Consider contacting the person's bank. Explain how and why you feel concerned about scams and ask them for help in providing additional security measures to better protect the person's account. The bank will then be able to offer a range of measures to support them and protect them from scams.

If you notify the bank, the bank has a duty of care to ensure the person is protected.

Radicalisation

The UK Home Office defines radicalisation as "The process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then join terrorist groups." People may become radicalised if their views and beliefs are influenced by extreme ideas and perspectives.

Individuals may have been personally affected by international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest, resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour. For some, watching the suffering in places of conflict and believing that they unable to contribute can create extreme feelings of anger and alienation. These powerful feelings can leave individuals susceptible to people or groups who may offer an 'answer', a way to step in and actively tackle the problem.

People can often become drawn to principles and ideologies held by others and some are particularly susceptible to this type of control. Such individuals may be lacking moral role models in their lives or experiencing a lack of access to proper education or balanced arguments that can enhance their sensitivity to this form of manipulation.

These ideologies may be shared through local 'teachers', national groups and often on the Internet. Individuals are attracted to those with such perceived authority and knowledge through particular methods of indoctrination. Radicalisers use normal social processes of influence when trying to persuade vulnerable people towards their beliefs. There's no magic formula or secret skill. The difference is they use it to potentially extreme effect.

Those intent on recruiting individuals to extremist activities may target people who have experienced a trauma, particularly any trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict. Often the most vulnerable are those who perceive discrimination, experience racial or religious harassment, or distrust government. They may have experienced poverty, disadvantage or social exclusion that has left them with a distorted opinion of the world.

People may choose to follow certain groups to earn credit amongst their peers or with those they perceive to be in an authoritative position/a group leader or head. They may not initially be aware of the group's true intentions or fully understand the extent of the beliefs held.

Leaders and members that hold strong beliefs can use their power and influence to induce guilt, shame and a sense of duty in the wider group. Individuals who show allegiance can be left with feelings of obligation, a need to fit in, a duty to comply or to 'keep the peace' and may have concerns around their own self-perception, worried about what others will think of them if they disagree or fail to conform.

It may be that an individual has encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection or isolation. They may choose to tackle feelings of resulting low self-esteem or loneliness by exploring new groups and cultures. They may be searching for answers to questions about identity and faith and experiencing a need to belong and feel a part of something.

Common forms of mental distress or disorders such as anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and relational or personality problems can leave individuals particularly susceptible to radicalisation.

During the radicalisation process people may sometimes pass through a phase of holding extremist but not violent views, before reaching a position where they are prepared to pursue damaging actions.

Individuals and young people in particular are often influenced by views and opinions provided by online propaganda and can associate opportunities for adventure with potentially dangerous situations. This desire for risk-taking can be exploited by radicalisers who are intent on recruiting susceptible individuals open to new and exciting opportunities.

Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police also play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

Channel

Channel is a Local Authority led multi-agency programme made up of safeguarding professionals and local partners. Channel works by partners jointly assessing the nature and the extent of the risk and where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to the individual's needs.

Examples of support provided could include mentoring, diversionary activities such as sport, health or mental health support particularly for those who are in crisis, signposting to mainstream services such as education, employment or housing. Support is always tailored to specific needs of the individual following assessment by the multi-agency panel.

The panel is designed to work in the same way as other multi-agency structures that are used to safeguard individuals at risk — from drugs, knife and gun crime, gangs etc. The panel is chaired by the local authority and consists of statutory partners and the Prevent coordinator.

Mate Crime

Many people with cognitive impairments have so called 'friends' who go on to abuse them. This has led to people losing their independence, financial, physical and sexual abuse...even murder. Mate Crime does not start with bullying but it can become bullying. It starts with people saying they are the person's friend. Mate Crimes often happen in private and are not seen by others. Mate Crimes are Disability Hate Crimes and should be reported to the Police

Examples of Mate Crime:

- Someone borrowing the person's mobile and using up all the credit
- The 'friend' visiting every time it's benefit day so they can go to the pub and spend the person's money
- The 'friend' comes round every Thursday and takes the person out in his car for the afternoon. The 'friend' charges £20 for petrol each time
- 'Friends' always go to the person's flat for a party on a Friday night – the person pays for the food and drink for everyone

How can you spot Mate Crime?

If you notice any of these things it could mean the person is a victim of Mate Crime:

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance, finances or household (e.g. new people visiting or staying over, lots of new 'friends', lots more noise or rubbish than there normally is)
- Unexplained injuries
- Being involved in sexual acts which they have not agreed to
- Losing weight
- Not taking care of themselves and looking dirty or scruffy
- Bills not being paid
- A 'friend' who does not respect, bullies or undermines the person
- Suddenly short of money, losing possessions or changing their will.

- The person 'doing what they are told to' by a 'friend'
- Showing signs of mental ill health
- Not being with usual networks of friends/family or missing weekly activities.
- Goods or packages arriving at a person's house (and then being collected by someone else soon after)
- The house is a mess after lots of parties

For more information about Mate Crime visit the Safety Net Website at <https://arcuk.org.uk/safetynet>

Appendix 1 Useful resources

For further information about any of the topics listed below, click on the link:

[Action Fraud](#)

[Exploitation and vulnerability](#)

[Friends Against Scams](#)

[Get Safe Online Advice](#)

[Mate Crime](#)

[Mail Redirection Service](#)

[Mailing Preference Service](#)

[National Trading Standards - Scams Team](#)

[South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Policies & Procedures](#)

[Telephone Preference Service](#)

[Training offered by South Gloucestershire Council](#)

[Unseen](#)

All links correct at time of publication