RISKS OUTSIDE THE HOME

Supporting Young People and their
Families at Risk of Extra-Familial Harm

Safe Families

POWER
THE
FIGHT

TYPES OF HARM:

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) (note: this could be peer to peer abuse, from a boyfriend/ girlfriend, a family member, or in the wider community)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused (this can include peer on peer, boyfriend etc.)

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a child's trust or control them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time.
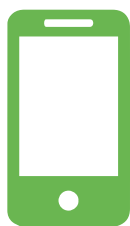
When a child is sexually exploited online they might be persuaded or forced to:
- send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- film or stream sexual activities
- have sexual conversations.

Once an abuser has images, video or copies of conversations, they might use threats and blackmail to force a young person to take part in other sexual activity. They may also share the images and videos with others or circulate them online.

Gangs use sexual exploitation:
- to exert power and control
- for initiation
- to use sexual violence as a weapon.

Children or young people might be invited to parties or gatherings with others their own age or adults and given drugs and alcohol. They may be assaulted and sexually abused by one person or multiple perpetrators. The sexual assaults and abuse can be violent, humiliating and degrading.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION/COUNTY LINES (CCE) [1]
Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines".

Children as young as 12 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs.

THIS CAN INCLUDE:
- Airbnb and short-term private rental properties
- budget hotels
- the home of a drug user, or other vulnerable person, that is taken over by a criminal gang- this may be referred to as cuckooing.

TRAFFICKING & MODERN DAY SLAVERY [2]
Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.
Children are trafficked for:
- sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs.

Trafficked children experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual and emotional abuse as a form of control. Children and young people are also likely to be physically and emotionally neglected and may be sexually exploited.

Please note: Trafficking and modern day slavery can often bring to mind cross-border movement. People can also be trafficked within their own country and between towns and streets and can often be part of grooming and county lines exploitation for young people. Often convictions for CSE and CCE can be as a result of a trafficking conviction.

1. NSPCC Definition: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/
2. NSPCC Definition: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/

GANG AND GROUP AFFILIATION [3]

The word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs. [4]

- Peer group
- A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.
- Street gang
- "Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."

- Organised criminal gangs
- "A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation'."

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

3. NSPCC Definition: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/#gang
4. Adapted in the Children Commisioner's Report (February 2019) 'Keeping Children Safe: Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation' from Hallsworth S and Young T (2004) Getting Real About Gangs. Criminal Justice Matters (55) 12-13

HOW PREVALENT ARE THESE RISKS?

The number of children receiving treatment for knife wounds in England increased by **86%** in the last four years

The recent police recorded crime figures published by the ONS showed a **21% increase** in the number of knife and offensive weapon offences recorded from **37,706** in year ending September 2021 to **45,639** in year ending September 2022.

99 young people aged under 25 were murdered with a knife or sharp object in the 12 months to March 2022. **13 were aged under 16.**

12,720 children in England were identified by social services as being at risk of criminal exploitation by gangs in 2020/21

During 2021/22 in England and Wales there were **17,486** crimes logged by police where children had been sexually exploited – an average of **48 offences a day**

THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER ESTIMATED THAT:

60,000 children may self-identify as a gang member or know a gang member who is a sibling.

300,000 children may know a gang member

34,000 children may know a gang member and have been a victim of violence in the previous 12 months

HOW PREVALENT ARE THESE RISKS?

MODERN SLAVERY

There is no one data source that accurately quantifies the number of child victims of Modern Slavery in the UK. The National Referral Mechanism currently provides the best measure of potential victims, although is known to be an undercount. Data for the year ending December 2021 shows:

5,468 potential child victims of modern slavery were referred an **increase of 9%** from the previous year

91% of those referred were assessed as reasonably likely to be victims

79% of those likely to be victims were boys; this proportion has increased rapidly since the year ending March 2015

Boys were most likely to have been criminally exploited **(62%)** while girls were most likely to have been sexually exploited **(42%)**

82% of children who were likely to be victims were aged 15 to 17 years

FACTORS IDENTIFIED AT THE END OF SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT IN THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2022

Child criminal exploitation
10,140

Child sexual exploitation
16,330

Gangs
11,600

Going/being missing
15,740

Trafficking
2,470

'KNIFE CRIME' [5]

Knife Crime is at the highest level on record. Home Office statistics show that since April 2009, 205 children aged 17 or under have been killed by an attack with a sharp object in England and Wales. Figures peaked in 2021, with 30 children dying in London due to violence affecting young people. This figure represents 40% of homicides in London. The victims of knife crime are getting younger. In 2018 just over a third of homicide victims in London were aged 16 to 24.

GUN VIOLENCE + OTHER VIOLENCE AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE

It's against the law to carry a weapon – like knives, guns or acid – even if it's meant for protection. If someone is found with a weapon they'll be arrested. The safest thing to do if there's a threat is to contact the police, not to carry weapons for self-defence.[6]

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence is abusive and violent behaviour by a partner and can sadly be part of young people's relationships. It is a form of domestic abuse and violence.

PEER-ON-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE/HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (HSB)[7]

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive.
Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is a form of HSB where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development. Child-on-child sexual abuse is a form of HSB that takes place between children of any age or stage of development.

5. Power the Fight: https://www.powerthefight.org.uk/about-us/
6. NSPCC: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/#weapons
7. NSPCC: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour

BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING [8]

BULLYING
Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.
It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:
- physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone
- verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
- non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
- emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone
- undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls.

The following types of bullying are also hate crime:
- racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- bullying someone because they have a disability.

CYBERBULLYING
Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.
Cyberbullying can include:
- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- shaming someone online
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

8. NSPCC Definition: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF HARM TAKING PLACE:
CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)
- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent or sharp changes in mood or character
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)
- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations.
- Bring secretive.
- Sharp changes in mood or character.
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain.
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy.
- A change in friendships or a new romantic relationship along with some of the other signs.

BULLYING
- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others.

THE IMPACT OF BIAS

One of the things which can be helpful as we work with children, young people, and families, is being culturally sensitive, reflective, curious and being prepared to challenge some of the assumptions and biases we all might have. These are opinions, ideas or assumptions that can lead us to make certain judgements and hold beliefs about people or situations. They function like shortcuts in our brains that make us think about things in a certain, and at times unhelpful, way. We might not always be aware of these as our culture, upbringing and wider community can impact how we think and feel.

All biases have consequences, but different bias can hold different powers – e.g. affinity bias can disproportionately impact people from ethnic minorities in their job opportunities as research has shown hirers can look for people 'like them'.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
AFFINITY	The tendency to look towards those who are most like us and so putting people into groupings that we might associate as 'good' or 'bad' as a result
ANCHORING	The tendency to rely too heavily on an 'anchor', on one trait or piece of information when making decisions (usually the first piece of information that we acquire on that subject)
BANDWAGON EFFECT	The tendency to do (or believe) things because many other people do (or believe) the same. This can be related to 'group-thinking' or 'herd' behaviour
BIAS BLIND SPOT	The tendency to see oneself as less biased than other people, or to be able to identify more cognitive biases in others than in oneself
CHEERLEADER EFFECT	The tendency for people to appear more attractive in a group than in isolation
CONFIRMATION	The tendency to believe or hold onto particular ideas or information that confirms our held views
FRAMING EFFECT	Drawing different conclusions from the same information, depending on how that information is presented
INHERITANCE/ INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECT	When your family experiences/upbringing influences your opinion on people or institutions
HINDSIGHT BIAS	Sometimes called the 'I-knew-it-all-along' effect, the tendency to see past events as being predictable at the time those events happened
NEGATIVITY EFFECT	The tendency of people, when evaluating the causes of the behaviours of a person they dislike, to attribute their positive behaviours to the environment and their negative behaviours to the person's inherent nature.
OUTCOME BIAS	The tendency to judge a decision by its eventual outcome instead of basing it on the quality of the decision at the time it was made
STEREOTYPING	Expecting a member of a group to have certain characteristics without having actual information about that individual

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH THESE RISKS:

You can make a difference by helping young people and their families belong. Whether by intervening earlier on in life to connect families into positive community settings, or by wrapping around a family who is experiencing, or has been affected by, these issues. You can help support a young person's family by providing friendship and support to siblings and parents, even if the risks of supporting the young person are too high.

Remember your role – you can be there to support, not to be the lead professional. Your communication is crucial in helping provide safety and belonging to these families, and so if you feel concerned, you should speak about this to Safe Families (if you're volunteering) or in line with your safeguarding policy.

Remember the 4 'R's of Safeguarding:

Recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and harm taking place.

Respond - Do something. Appropriate response is vital. This could be listening sensitively when a child or adult wants to tell you that abuse is going on and then moving quickly to the 3rd R (Record). The bottom line here is don't delay. Whatever your response is you should do it immediately.

Record everything you have seen and heard immediately on the database (if volunteering with Safe Families, or in line with your safeguarding policy).

Refer - At this point we will then deal with the concern and escalate appropriately. At this point, it may be appropriate to escalate the concerns to your local Social Care or to the police. If you are supporting a family through Safe Families, we will help deal with this.

We'd also want to remind you that you can make a real difference. As we say in the training, one of the biggest factors in young people ending up involved in gangs and other risks outside of the home is the isolation they and their families feel.

We recognise there can be a tension between being a trusted adult and then sharing concerns. We'd always encourage you that a vital part of safeguarding is promoting welfare and wellbeing and so communicating concerns isn't about breaking trust or causing problems, but actually trying to change things for the better.

We'd also encourage you to remember your training in helping young people 'phase out'. Your support can be a key factor in helping a young person start to phase out. You can also play a key role in helping families and young people sustain changes through giving them a sense of belonging and helping them realise they aren't alone in what they're facing.
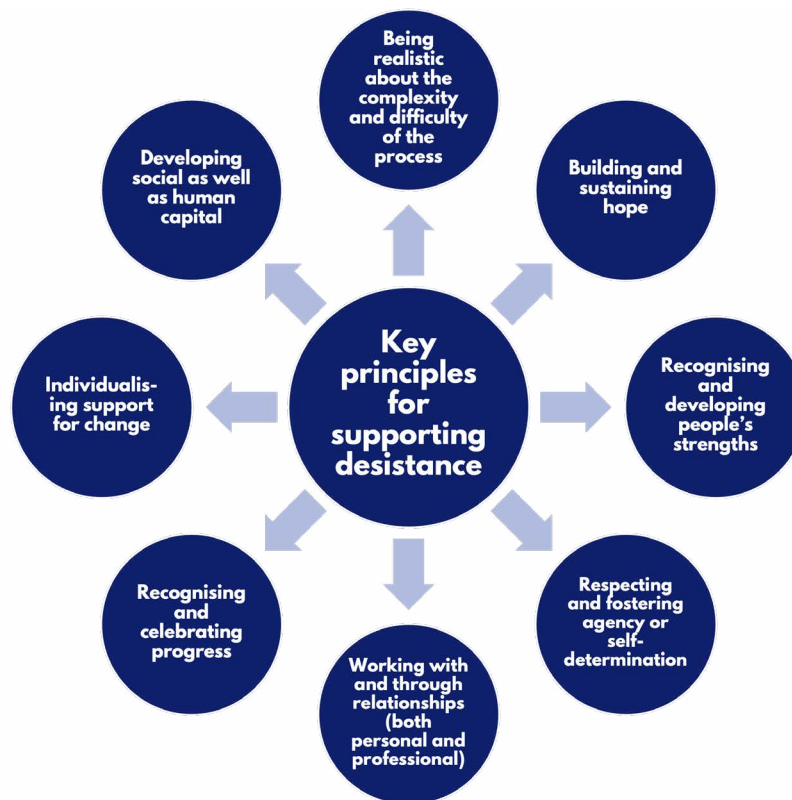
INTRODUCING 'PHASING OUT'

A helpful approach for working with young people impacted by the issues in this training, is Craig Pinkey's research on 'Phasing Out'.

This research is based on the principles of Desistance Theory (the theory of people 'desisting' or stopping from negative behaviour or activities) and is often utilised in support like Youth Offending Work.

We can often think that our role should be helping someone have the 'lighbulb' moment that will stop them from being involved in all the things we're worried about straight away. Instead, Pinkey and Desistance Theory suggest that we should aim to support a young person through a range of positive supports, influences and activities which over a period of time can help them 'phase out' of situations where they may be at risk of being harmed.

The key principles for desistance are in the diagram below.

FACTORS IN DESISTANCE:

Being realistic about the complexity and difficulty of the process

Developing social as well as human capital

Building and sustaining hope

Individualis-ing support for change

Key principles for supporting desistance

Recognising and developing people's strengths

Recognising and celebrating progress

Respecting and fostering agency or self-determination

Working with and through relationships (both personal and professional)

Craig Pinkey then developed these ideas into a range of nurturing areas and positive influences which can all play a part in helping a young person 'phase out'. Pinkey's encouragement is if we can help young people have their sense of self, belonging and identity built through positive groups, activities and relationships, it does make a difference over time.

Why not think about opportunities and activities in your local area which could help a young person?

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE 'PHASE OUT':
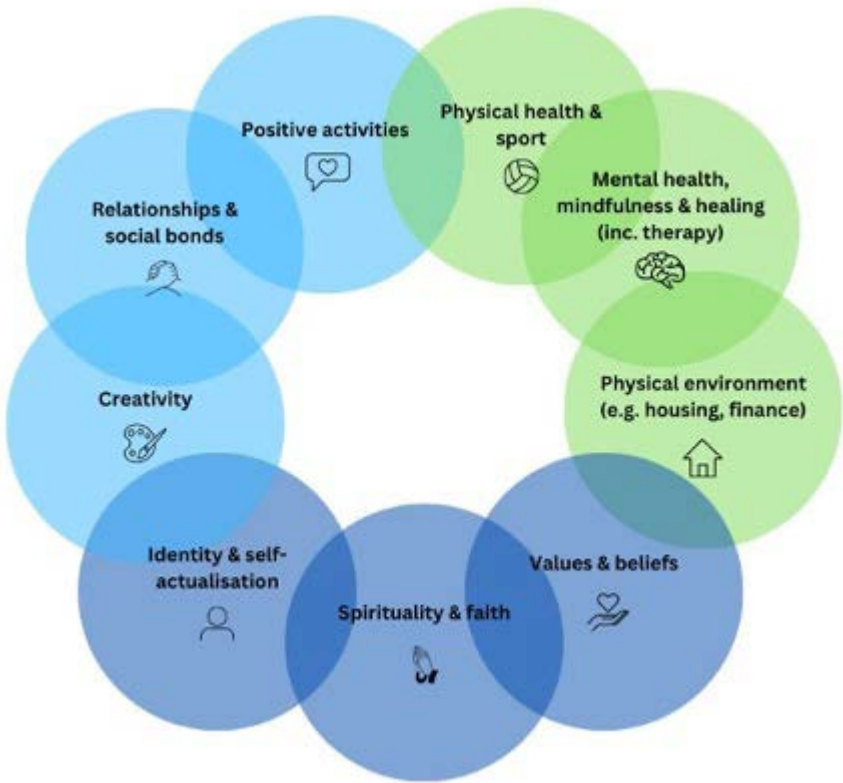
A STORY OF HOPE

Bonnie (not her real name) is a 15-year-old girl from a Gypsy Traveller background. Following a breakdown in her family relationships and the on-going challenges with her behaviour, Bonnie was living in a children's care home. Bonnie was referred to the Power the Fight Therapeutic Intervention for Peace (TIP) programme following concerns about her behaviour, distressing past experiences and multiple life changes that were having a negative impact on her wellbeing.

During her individual assessment, Bonnie was initially cautious about sharing her worries and concerns. However, as the session continued, she shared that she often worries about not being able to see her grandmother and friends and she struggles with intense feelings of anger and will 'lose her temper' in a way that hurts her relationships with people around her. Bonnie also disclosed that when she felt overwhelmed by fear and helplessness, this led to self-harming and being exposed to harmful sexual behaviours in the past.

Through the TIP programme, we were able to provide a culturally sensitive and co-produced workshop at her school covering a range of topics including; Mental Health, Inspirations and Aspirations, Relationships and Conflict Management, Youth Violence, Identity and Social Media. Bonnie attended some of the sessions and initially came presenting as withdrawn, showing controlling behaviour and she refused to accept some of the parameters set in school. However, Bonnie's behaviour started to shift when she started to build trust in the relationship between her and the TIP programme team.

We started to build in regular check ins with Bonnie, especially if she did not attend the workshop. Having this consistently modelled by the team started to result in a marked change in Bonnie's response to her previous way of relating to adults and professionals.

Bonnie started to show signs indicating she felt safe. She'd offer to help set up, ask about the workshop content and once she felt completely safe, started to self-initiate check ins with the TIP team on her own. These check ins were showing her that there are adults who listen, hold her in mind and actively support her in all areas. She started to engage more in the development of her personal safety and helped create her own safety plan. Having a voice in this space also empowered her to change her narrative and how she responds to others too.

This all had a knock on effect that through the ongoing communication, planning for her future and creating a support plan with her school and care home became a collaborative exercise where people really understood Bonnie's life and difficulties. Her engagement with the TIP programme helped to settle her so that she could be referred to CAMHS for longer term, more targeted support at the end of the programme.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If you need more help, talk to a trusted adult or your doctor. Here are some charities and organisations we recommend.

POWER THE FIGHT

Helped create this training. Resources, guidance and avenues for support for families affected by youth violence.

www.powerthefight.org.uk

YOUNGMINDS

youngminds.org.uk
Care for mental health in young people

ALUMINA

selfharm.co.uk
Free online self-harm support for 11-19's

kooth

kooth.com
Digital mental health and wellbeing

SAMARITANS

samaritans.org
24 hour call in support

RenewWellbeing

www.renewwellbeing.org.uk

PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

papyrus-uk.org
Dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health.

NSPCC

nspcc.org.uk
Care for mental health in children

shout 85258

giveusashout.org
Free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone stuggling to cope.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

We offer a selection of additional training and events designed to help you as you look to support children and families, whatever that might look like for you.

If you've found this training helpful, we'd particularly recommend our 'Supporting Teenagers' training to compliment this training.

FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER AT
safefamilies.uk/training

Safe Families

EVERYONE DESERVES TO BELONG

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