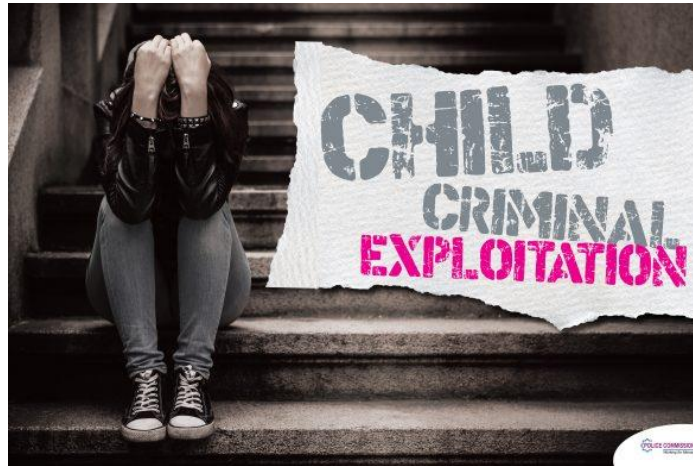




Safeguarding Newsletter



What is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual/ group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to manipulate, coerce, deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into committing crimes.

Child criminal exploitation is not new, but the level or criminality that children are involved in has increased, the violence used has dramatically increased and therefore the danger that they are in has also increased. Levels of aggression on the streets have increased significantly as has the availability and use of weapons.

Current Facts

- There are roughly 50,000 children across the country being exploited.
- Females are just as likely to be exploited criminally as boys are- boys are less likely to disclose.
- It can happen to any child of any background.
- Half of the drug lines in the country are operated by exploited children.
- Birmingham currently has 44 organised gangs and 11-20 street gangs.
- Because Birmingham is in the middle of the country, many of the drug lines run through it making young people in Birmingham further targets particularly if they have easy access to local train stations.



Birmingham facts

- Currently 150 + lines identified as running out of the West Midlands.
- 60% of these are from Birmingham.
- 315 young people identified for County Lines in Birmingham
- More than 254 young people known to be related to gang members and either involved or on the edge of CCE.
- Birmingham is central- key stop off point and trains running to most places.
- Fluid population and is a highly populated city- less likely to be noticed

How does a child end up being criminally exploited?

Often, gang members will observe for a time before approaching a young person. They will entice them into low level criminal activity through rewards such as money, clothes a new bike etc. This can be burglary, low level mugging, dealing weed.

They will pretend they are friends, using street language that makes them feel this way.

Once they have groomed them in this way, they will 'up the stakes' giving children larger amounts of drugs to carry, class A instead of class B and will praise them, telling them what a good 'soldier' they are.

They will send them all over the country delivering drugs with no regard to their wellbeing.

Gang member will:

- Have the young people working in trap houses under the same conditions. May be the only one working the trap house, therefore very vulnerable when users come to buy. May not feed them, may not have access to water, not being allowed to sleep.
- Don't actually pay them
- The money they do get is far below what the young person would expect from the music videos that glorify this way of life- nothing like what the drill music leads them to believe.

Missing Children

When children 'go missing', which we often see in appeals on social media, they are often involved in CCE.

- Gang members will make children go to 'trap houses' and deal drugs for them from there.
- They might keep them there for days at a time
- Often missing children are found in other cities where they have been sent to deliver or deal drugs.



So why don't young people just stop doing this?

- It is very hard for a child to escape CCE once they have become involved in it.
- They may have been involved in hazing and then this is held as a threat over them, if they try to leave the gang will share the video of this hazing with family/on social media.
- They will have 'friends' turned against them- may have people sent to beat them up/stab them etc.
- The gang leaders themselves may beat them up.
- It is not their fault...they are children who have been groomed.

What are the signs that my child may be being groomed in order to become a victim of child criminal exploitation?

- Phones- trap and burner
- Money
- Unexplained injuries
- Missing episodes
- Carrying weapons
- Expensive clothes/trainers
- High mobile usage
- Change of associates
- Use of street language
- Use of tag name
- Drug paraphernalia
- Cars coming and going
- Loud voice coming from the mobile
- Older associates
- Drill music
- Not where they say they are



*“Do not be afraid.
Open wide the doors
for Christ.”*



If you have concerns about your children regarding them being at risk of CCE please make contact with school and ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They can offer support and signpost to the relevant agencies.