

# Adult Grooming & Exploitation

**Grooming is a form of abuse that involves manipulating someone until they're isolated, dependent, and more vulnerable to exploitation.**

Both adults and children can be vulnerable to grooming.

## What is Adult Grooming?

Adult grooming is a process where the abuser will pick a person and gradually gain their trust, friendship or even their employment before beginning the abuse, which is usually sexual, financial or encouraging the person to commit acts of crime which is known as cuckooing. In these cases, the abuser commandeers the home of the person to sell drugs or store stolen goods.

It often starts with friendship, with gifts or promises. Eventually there will be an expectation of something in return leading onto power and control with the intention to exploit the person.

Due to there being an initial friendship, it is sometimes difficult to identify and even the person who is being groomed may not realise what is happening. You may have heard this referred to as "Mate Crime".

People with learning disabilities are at high risk of 'mate crime'. This is a form of disability hate crime in which the victim is abused and manipulated by someone they believed to be their friend.

Grooming can take place in person or online, where the abuser will often pretend to be somebody else, this is sometimes referred to as Catfishing.

Grooming can also lead to Radicalisation whereby you might notice the person starts talking about an issue or a cause that's never really interested them before.

## Information & support

- The Ann Craft Trust has lots more information on Adult Grooming, why it can happen and what to do if you are concerned. Please visit their website
- Respond is an organisation that provides a range of services to people with learning disabilities who have suffered from sexual abuse. You can call their helpline on 0808 808 0700.
- Small Steps can help you if you suspect that someone close to you is in danger of being radicalised. You can email them at [info@smallsteps.ltd](mailto:info@smallsteps.ltd)

Plus Dane will investigate all reports of grooming in line with its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. We provide multiple channels for reporting, including in-person, phone, and email, ensuring that individuals can choose the method they feel most comfortable with. All reports are treated with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

- Email: [whistleblowing@plusdane.co.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@plusdane.co.uk)
- Telephone: 0800 169 2988 Our lines are open 8.30am to 5.30pm
- Call 999 if either you, or you believe someone else, is in immediate danger

## Signs to look out for

- The person becomes **withdrawn** or **troubled** by something but **unwilling to talk about it**. Alternatively, their emotions may become more **volatile**.
- The person **using** or **wearing something new**, that you didn't buy for them.
- The person being **reluctant** to see you, or they **refuse a visit**.
- **Money disappearing** from the person's bank account, or the person claims they **cannot pay for food or bills**.
- Spending **more time on the phone**, or **online**, than usual. But they won't discuss sites they're visiting, or who they're talking to.
- Talking about a new "friend", "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" but it's not clear who they are or how they met them.