

1

What is Exploitation?

Exploitation is a serious and complex form of abuse that can affect anyone, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, or background. Exploitation can take many forms, such as sexual, criminal, financial, labour, or online, and can involve grooming, coercion, manipulation, violence, and threats. Exploitation can have devastating and long-lasting impacts on the physical, emotional, and mental health of victims and survivors, as well as their families and communities.

Whilst individuals who experience exploitation may also be victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, it is important to recognise the complexities of Exploitation can often sit outside of this remit.

2

Types of Exploitation

- **Sexual Exploitation:** A form of sexual abuse that involves taking advantage of an adult, sexually for their own benefit through threats, bribes or violence. This includes but not limited to forced prostitution, child sexual exploitation.
- **Forced Labour:** Making a person work against their will, usually under threat, without fair pay or proper working conditions.
- **Domestic Servitude:** victims being forced to work in private households usually performing domestic chores or childcare duties. Their freedom may be restricted working for long hours with very limited pay.
- **Forced Marriage** is a marriage in which one or both parties do not, or cannot give consent.
- **Organ Harvesting:** the surgical removal of parts of the body sold for profit.
- **Forced Criminality:** Compelled to commit crimes for the benefits of others.
- **Debt bondage:** can be present in many forms. Debts may arise out of exploitation itself, for example illegal money lending with victims having little or no control over their debt and little or no way to pay it back.
- **Cuckooing:** Criminals or gangs take over a vulnerable person's home and use it for illegal activities. This can include individuals masquerading as friends (mate crime) who go on to take over a person's property.

3

Identification of potential victims

There are no typical victims of exploitation – victims can be men, women or children of all ages, ethnicities and nationalities from across the population. However, there are a number of signs which may indicate an individual is experiencing exploitation.

- Unexplained gifts, clothing, money or phones
- Poor living conditions – dirty, overcrowded, excessive CCTV at the property/bars on the window, multiple visitors coming to and from the property.
- Physical appearance – bruises and untreated injuries, unkempt appearance, malnourished, inappropriate clothing, avoiding eye contact and withdrawn or frightened.
- Isolation – distrusting of professionals or a reluctance to engage with services, limited access to friends or family,
- Restricted freedom – does not have access to a bank account, mobile phone or passport, unable to access work or food.
- Social Vulnerabilities – potential victims may also present with multiple vulnerabilities including homelessness, substance misuse, previous involvement with social care, mental health or learning disabilities.

4

Legislation

The Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2015. The Act gives lawful enforcement tools to fight modern slavery, ensure perpetrators can receive suitably severe punishments for these appalling crimes and enhance support and protection for victims.

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on all organisations to prevent and respond to harm, and abuse involving adults at risk and consider use of Section 42 safeguarding duties if appropriate. The Care Act

recognises that adults at risk are more likely to be victims of exploitation as a result of their care and support needs.

5

What to do

If you suspect there is an immediate safety/risk call 999 or 101 if it is not urgent.

To report an adult safeguarding concern, contact the appropriate safeguarding hub based on where the potential victim may live. For Barnsley residents, contact Barnsley Adults Social Care on **01226 773300** or out of hours **01226 774466** or you can complete a referral here [Adult safeguarding information for professionals and volunteers](#).

Confidentiality is a fundamental principle in professional practice, but there are circumstances where breaching it is necessary to protect individuals from harm. When someone is being exploited due to coercion, the duty to safeguard their welfare overrides the obligation to maintain confidentiality. This is because the safety and well-being of the person at risk take precedence, especially when exploitation could lead to significant harm.

For further advice or guidance, you can also contact The Modern Slavery Helpline on **08000 121 700**.

Anyone who might be a victim of modern slavery should be offered the chance to enter the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is the system used in the UK to identify people who have experienced modern slavery and human trafficking ensure they receive appropriate support and protection. Information on how to enter a victim into the NRM scheme can be found here [Report modern slavery – Report modern slavery – GOV.UK](#)

6

Good Practice

The Community Safety Team in Barnsley can also offer additional support including the use of Civil Injunctions, which can impose restrictions or requirements on individuals to prevent exploitation taking place. Community Protection Notices (CPNs) are also available, requiring individuals or businesses to stop actions linked to exploitation.

Closure Powers enable Community Safety to quickly shut down premises associated with significant nuisance or disorder. In partnership with the police, councils may also apply for Criminal Behaviour Orders and Dispersal Powers to further disrupt and prevent ongoing exploitation. These tools are designed to be flexible and responsive, ensuring local issues are dealt with effectively.

Community Safety Victim and Witness Support Officers can also provide support for identified victims of exploitation acting as a single point of contact with organisations involved and providing emotional support to the victim.

For further information on how Community Safety can support how you manage a case related to exploitation please contact safer@barnsley.gov.uk

7

Recommendations from the review

- Cuckooing Guidance: Embed clear pathways, definitions, and intelligence gathering within the Safer Barnsley Partnership Plan.
- Strengthen LD Reviews: Improve checkpoints, information sharing, and probing for exploitation.
- Was Not Brought (WNB) Guidance: Ensure escalation when adults with LD miss health appointments.
- Audit Safeguarding Processes: Review triage and decision-making to ensure risk is fully understood and acted upon.

8

Further Resources

- [7 Minute Briefing – Adult Exploitation](#)
- [Safeguarding Adult Reviews \(SARs\)](#)