Look closer

Exploited young people don't always look and act vulnerable

If something doesn't feel right, it might not be.

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

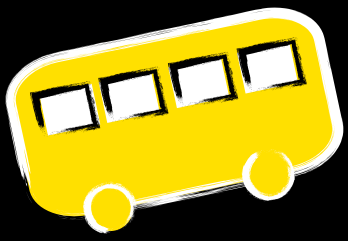
The Children's Society

National County Lines Coordination Centre

NCA National Crime Agency

NPCC National Police Chiefs' Council

ROCU Regional Organised Crime Unit National ROCU Network



Public spaces like bus and train stations, fast food outlets, hotels and roadside services can be where young victims of child exploitation are most visible.

If we all learn to spot the possible signs of a young person being exploited, we can all help to keep them safe and stop this abuse from happening.

Please take a few minutes to learn a little about child exploitation and what to do if you are concerned about a young person or group of young people you see.

#LookCloser Don't wait. Report it.

Young people who have been exploited or abused:

- Don't always look vulnerable
- Don't always act like victims
- May not understand they are being exploited
- May have a distrust of police/adults in authority
- May appear angry or aggressive; these are common signs of trauma
- Can feel scared about what might happen to them next
- Need to feel safe and heard, so that they feel comfortable talking about what might be happening to them

Young people can be exploited anywhere. These are some of the common sites where you may be able to spot the signs:

Public transport: Trains, trams, coaches and buses are all used by organised crime groups to transport children for exploitation.

Petrol/service stations: Young people who are being exploited may stop at service and petrol stations to use the bathroom or get food.

Car washes: Young people trafficked into the country are sometimes made to work in this setting.

Fast food outlets, cafés and shopping centres: These popular youth spaces provide affordable food and access to wi-fi. Some outlets are open 24 hours a day. Perpetrators sometimes take advantage of this.

Hotels/private lets: Perpetrators often use hotel rooms or private lets to sexually abuse and criminally exploit young people. They can also be used as a base by organised crime groups to store, prepare and distribute drugs.

Taxis and ride shares: Taxis and private ride share apps can be used to transport exploited young people.

Hair and beauty salons: Young people trafficked into the country are sometimes made to work and stay in these settings.

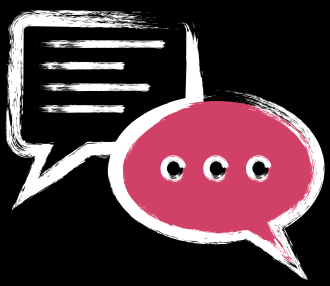
If something is worrying you about a young person's behaviour or appearance and it is safe to do so, ask them if they are ok – it could make a difference.

Some ways to start a conversation:

'You look lost. Do you need some help?'

'Hi. Are you alright? Where are you off to today? Where have you travelled from today?'

'I hope you don't mind me saying, but you seem a little upset? Can I help?'



#LookCloser for signs of exploitation or abuse

Is a child or young person:

- Travelling alone, particularly in school hours, late at night or frequently?
- Looking lost or in unfamiliar surroundings?
- Anxious, frightened, angry or displaying other behaviours that make you worried about them?
- In possession of more than one phone?
- Carrying lots of cash?
- Potentially under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- Being instructed or controlled by another individual?
- Accompanied by individuals who are older than them?
- Seen begging in a public space?

Help us protect children and young people from all forms of exploitation. **Don't wait. Report it:**

If you are concerned about a child and think it's an emergency, dial **999** or if it's not an emergency call **101**.

If you are on a train text British Transport Police on **61016**.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers online or call **0800 555 111**.

childrenssociety.org.uk/lookcloser

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