

Safeguarding Week | THURSDAY | Grooming and Exploitation

Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board News



Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board

The focus for Thursday is:

Grooming and Exploitation

People can experience grooming and exploitation at any age and in a wide range of contexts. Today we want to raise awareness about different types of grooming, for instance child sexual exploitation, predatory marriage, financial scams and radicalisation. We want to facilitate conversations about how to recognise the signs of grooming and how to respond to promote safer cultures.



Signs of Grooming

When most people think about grooming, they think about children. But adults are vulnerable to grooming too. Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult so they can manipulate, exploit and

abuse them.

Grooming of adults

[Adult grooming](#) is usually a gradual process where the actual abuse, usually sexual or financial, doesn't come until much later. Signs to look for could be becoming withdrawn or troubled, money disappearing from bank account, being secretive about what they are looking at online, talking about a new friend when it's not clear who they are or how they met. A term used when gangs use violence and abuse to target the homes of vulnerable people and use them as bases for drug dealing is ['cuckooing'](#).

Grooming of children

Children and young people can be [groomed](#) online or in person or both – by a stranger or someone they know. The Children's Society's

campaign [#LookCloser](#) encourages everyone to learn the signs of child exploitation and how to report it. They have specific guidance for people who work in the following industries:

- Banking.
- Taxis, ride shares and private hire vehicles.
- Delivery services.
- Retail.
- Hotels, rented accommodation and caravan parks.

Effects of grooming

One of the key results of grooming is that the survivor is left carrying the shame of the events, often represented in a sense of complicity – that you let it happen. This self-blame once again makes the abuse difficult to talk about. Grooming makes it more difficult to identify when abuse is happening, and more difficult to identify and talk about in retrospect.

Predatory Marriage

Another issue can be so-called [predatory marriages](#) which involves vulnerable adults being led into a marriage which financially benefits the new spouse. Ann Craft Trust speaks to Daphne whose mother married a man aged 68 while she was 91-year-old suffering with severe dementia and terminal cancer.



Scams and Fraud

A scammer may try to approach on the doorstep, by post, over the phone or online. They'll often pretend to be someone they're not or make misleading offers of services or investments. [Age UK](#) can help spot and avoid the latest scams targeting money from older

people.

At [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) you can talk to a Scams Action adviser online, or book a face-to-face appointment.

[Public Protection Partnership](#) is a shared service delivering Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough Councils. They have information about scams and also doorstep callers who make unsolicited visits or telephone calls in an attempt to sell goods or services. They have three key points:

- Say NO to doorstep callers.
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

- Unsolicited phone calls - it's not impolite, it's your right to hang up.

Preventing violent extremism

The Prevent programme is part of the government's anti-terrorism strategy and aims to stop vulnerable people being radicalised into violent extremism of any kind.

In Bracknell Forest, the Prevent Steering Group is chaired by the council and includes representatives from the police, health service, education and the local community. Their [practitioners guide](#) provides information and contact details for support.

[Educate against hate](#) provides government advice and trusted resources for schools to safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and promote shared values.

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