

#NOMORE | A MOTHERWELL CHESHIRE CAMPAIGN

Sexual Exploitation

Some people form relationships with young people to use them for sex.

People who do this want young people to think they are a friend, or a boyfriend or girlfriend. They want to gain their trust to get power over them. They might also use bribes, threats, humiliation and even violence to get power over them.

They use that power to force them to have sex, or do sexual things, with them and sometimes with other people.

This is sexual exploitation and it's a crime.

Sexual exploitation is very harmful to young people with the potential to affect every part of their health, happiness and development.

Who does this happen to?

Sexual exploitation or abuse in a relationship can happen to boys and girls.

It can be really hard to spot abusive behaviour and sexual exploitation as people often think that they're in a good relationship, even after things have turned bad.

If you are a victim of abuse in a relationship or sexual exploitation it is NEVER your fault.

5 warning signs to look out for...

It can be really hard to spot when someone is abusing or exploiting a relationship. Some possible signs that they're not all they seem:

1. **To get to know you they give you lots of attention.**
We all like attention and it's nice to feel wanted. But if someone tries to get to know you by giving you lots of attention, ask yourself - what do they really want?
2. **They give you in-game gifts or send you money online. Or they give you gifts like alcohol or jewelry offline.**

This can be exciting and make you feel good about someone but, if they want sex or anything else from you in return, they are trying to exploit you.

3. **They try to isolate you from your friends or family.**

They will say that they are the only person you need and tell you that your friends or family won't understand or you'll be in trouble. They might try to control who you can and can't be friends with, or talk to online. Remember, the people who care about you will want to protect you.

4. **They have mood swings.**

If someone flips between sending you 'very nice' and 'very nasty' messages, you can feel like you need to do things to keep them happy. This can be a sign they are trying to control you.

5. **They make promises or threats.**

Abusers use many tricks to control young people. They may make promises they can't keep, ask them to keep secrets or threaten them. Some become violent. Online 'friends' might threaten to share any photos or videos that you've shared with them.