

# Child sexual exploitation and young people with learning disabilities

Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse



Easy read version of 'Unprotected, Overprotected: meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation.'

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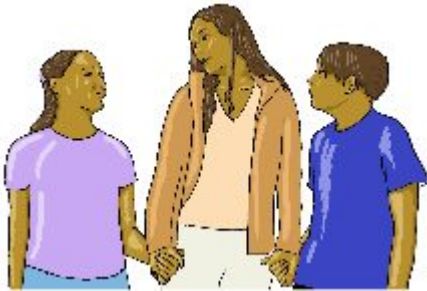
We have said young person or young people in this report. We mean anyone under 18 years old.



## What is child sexual exploitation?



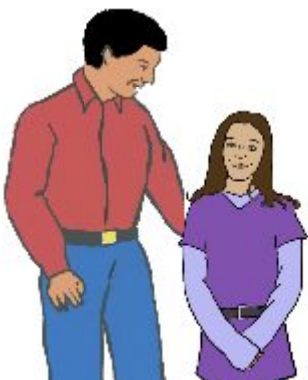
Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse.



Child sexual exploitation can happen to both boys and girls who are under 18 years old.



Sexual exploitation is when young people are used by adults or other young people for sex.

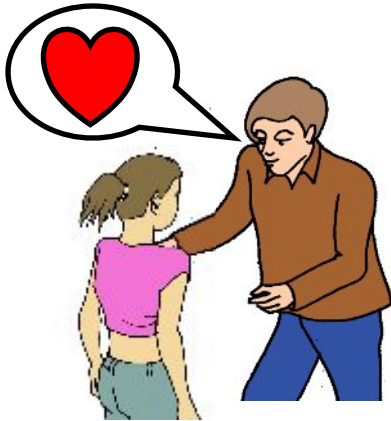


People who sexually exploit young people may:

- take time to get to know the young person, listen to them. They are often really nice to them



- give the young person somewhere to stay



- tell the young person that they love them



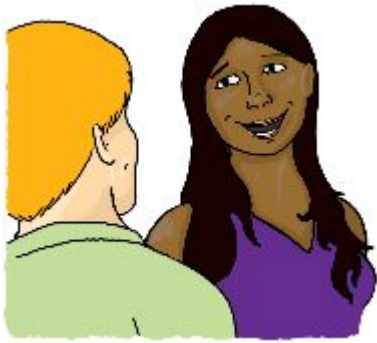
- give things like alcohol, money or mobile phones



- get the young person to send pictures of themselves naked over the internet.



The young person may feel they have to do what the other person says. The young person may not like the sex things they do. But they feel they have no choice.



## How we found things out



The researchers are called Anita Franklin, Phil Raws and Emilie Smeaton. Our job is to find things out.



We talked to 27 young people with learning disabilities about sexual exploitation.

15 of the young people have been abused in this way. 12 young people were at risk of sexual exploitation.



We talked to boys and girls.

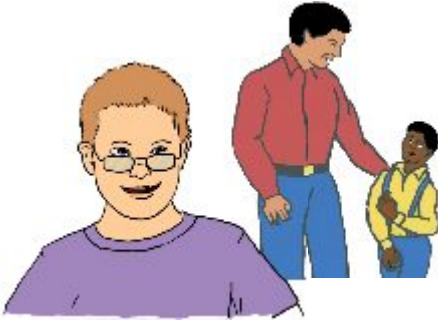
We also talked to staff, managers and bosses of services.



We asked young people with learning disabilities to help us write what needs doing now.



## What we found out



### 1. Young people with learning disabilities may be easy to use for sexual exploitation



This is because young people with learning disabilities:

- are often treated like little children
- are often not seen as people who have sex. So others do not think they will be sexually exploited
- do not get sex and relationship education in school





- do not get training on how to stay safe on the internet.



Child sexual exploitation staff work very hard to help young people with learning disabilities.



They do not always get training to help them with this work.

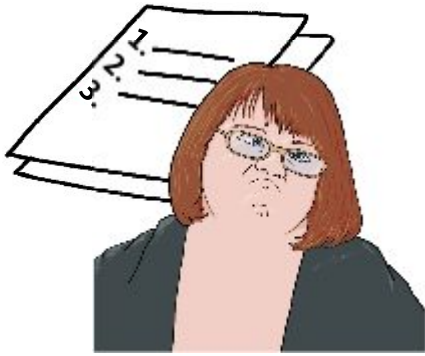


Staff who know a lot about young people with learning disabilities do not always get training about child sexual exploitation.



They do not always know when a young person is being sexually exploited.





## 2. Young people find it hard to say what is happening

Young people said 3 things make it hard to tell someone what is going on:



1. They do not understand that they are being used for sexual exploitation.



2. Sometimes they know something is not right with what is happening.



But they worry about what may happen if they tell someone.



3. There is no one they can trust to listen to them and believe them.



### 3. Seeing that young people with learning disabilities are at risk

Staff find it hard to see when young people with learning disabilities have been abused.



Staff do not think that young people with learning disabilities are at risk of sexual exploitation.



Young people say that social workers:

- do not listen to them



- do not do what they say they will

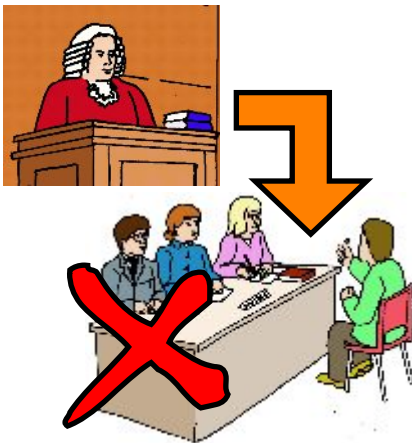


- do not see them often enough.



Police and court people do not:

- think that young people with learning disabilities will be believed in court



- make the changes in court that young people may need.

#### 4. Laws, plans and rules miss out young people with learning disabilities



The law says young people do not have to have sex education. This means many young people with learning disabilities do not have any sex education at all.



Not many places support young people with learning disabilities who have been abused. Plans about support do not include them.

## 5. Local services do not work well together



It is really important for local services to work well together for young people with learning disabilities. But they do not for child sexual exploitation.



Young people with learning disabilities are not included in the plans that are made to stop child sexual exploitation.



They are not included in the plans about supporting young people who have been abused. This means people do not expect them to have been abused in this way.



Staff from lots of different organisations do not always share information about young people with learning disabilities who have been abused in this way.



This makes it hard to help young people.



## What young people say works well



There are some services working with young people with learning disabilities who have been abused in this way.



The young people said this was good because:

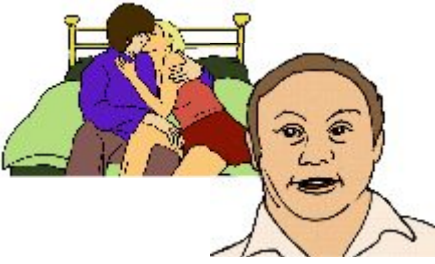
- they have someone who understands what happened and who listens to them



- they learn about child sexual exploitation



- they learn how to keep safe



- they learn to think about risk in relationships



- they learn about good, healthy relationships



- they get on better with their family



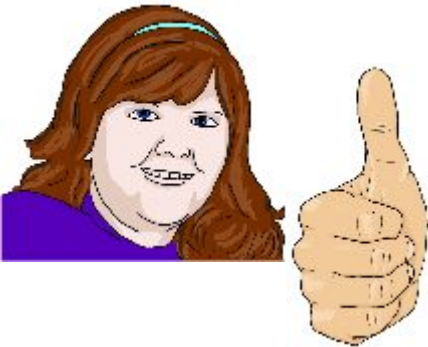
- they understand more about having friends



- they are healthier in every way



- they go back to school or start work



- they feel they have a future.



## What young people with learning disabilities think will help them to be safer



Young people with learning disabilities say to help them be safer from sexual exploitation they need:



1. Good education and information on sex, relationships and sexual exploitation.



2. Good support for them as a child or young person.



This support will be all about what they need and start when they are little. There will be a person who will listen.





3. Support for their learning in school or college.



Their learning disability needs to be thought about. Then plans made for how they can best learn.



4. More places that work with child sexual exploitation for young people with learning disabilities.



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