



## Sexual Exploitation Factsheet

Jess was the envy of all the girls at school. None of the other 14-year olds in her year had a 30-year old boyfriend who met them at the school gates in a flash car. They didn't get presents of perfume and clothes. And none of them had gone all the way with a boy, let alone a man. Chris told Jess that she drove him crazy, and that he loved her, and if she loved him too, she'd sleep with him. Soon he was picking her up from home and taking her back to his flat, where they'd listen to music, smoke and have sex. Unlike her parents and teachers, he treated Jess like an adult. She felt special. But Jess wasn't an adult. She was just a child. So when Chris started inviting his friends over and letting them touch her and have sex with her, she didn't know what to do. She was passed around a steady stream of strange adults like a toy, and forced to do things no child should ever do. Soon it wasn't just happening in Chris's flat. Soon, he would pick her up in the morning and drive her to flats all over the country, where she'd be forced to have sex with men as old as 65. Men on drugs, who hurt her. She tried to make it stop. But if she told him she didn't want to, or threatened to break contact with him, Chris hit her – sometimes to the point where she ended up in A&E. The abuse carried on for 4 years, until something inside her broke. She ran away to London. After sleeping rough for 3 nights, she was picked up by homeless charity workers and taken into a shelter. There, she opened up and told her story, and they immediately contacted the local social services team. Jess is still too scared to go home. Scared of what Chris will do to her, and her family. So she's changed her name, and stays in touch with her parents by telephone. Her parents are devastated too. They had absolutely no idea that this kind of thing went on in Britain, let alone under their noses.

**Sexual exploitation means taking advantage of a person sexually to make personal gain or profit.**

**Victims may be forced into prostitution, used in videos or photographs or coerced into performing sexual and erotic performances.**

### Sex Trafficking

The majority of female victims of modern slavery identified in the UK are exploited through prostitution. Some are sold to 'guardians', others answer to advertisements offering legitimate work or to advertisements within the sex industry. Many are tricked into paying to come to this country with promises of a better life. Even if they know that they are going to work in the sex industry, none are aware of the extent to which they will be exploited. Victims of trafficking often have their passports taken as soon as they arrive at their destination. Frequently they are intimidated, threatened and forced to work as sex slaves, with their earning kept by their abusers. The major characteristics of sexual slavery are violence, loss of freedom of movement and transfer to other 'owners' for money, goods or services. Victims of sex trafficking are often moved from one place to another and may often be found working on the streets or places that offer sex such as massage parlours, saunas, strip clubs, adult bookshops and bars. Sex workers and young females, whether British or foreign nationals, are the most vulnerable groups.

## Spot the Signs

### Look out for:

- *A person who is frightened, isolated, extremely scared of authority or in physical pain. They may seem underage.*
- *Someone who has very little money of their own, and few possessions.*
- *Buildings which are being used as brothels – houses with a lot of security, bars on windows, curtains drawn day and night.*
- *Someone with very limited English who many only know sexual words.*
- *An individual (e.g. a sex worker) who is seeing a lot of clients each day and night, who has little personal freedom or time off.*
- *A young person who seems to be passed around groups for sexual purposes, perhaps plied with drugs or alcohol*
- *In grooming cases, someone who is thrall to a controlling adult who they believe they are a loving relationship with.*

### If you spot any signs call

Police (emergencies) **999**

Police (non-emergencies) **101**

Modern Slavery Helpline

**08000 121 700**

Salvation Army Helpline

**0300 3038 151**

Crimestoppers **0800 555 111**

## Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a person, often a minor or someone who is vulnerable, to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

Grooming happens both in person and online. Groomers hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining the person's trust. Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating them from their family and their friends. They use any means of control to make the victim believe they have no choice but to do what the groomer wants.

Many victims are groomed over a long period of time and are coerced into performing sexual acts once they believe that they are in a relationship with their abuser. Therefore, they are reluctant to speak out or seek help; they may be unable to due to language barriers; they may be afraid of the police. Most of all they might fear their abusers. Often, victims are unaware that they are being sexually exploited, believing instead that they are in a loving relationship.

### Useful resources

Home Office (2015), Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

NSPCC (2012), Caught in a Trap

Pai, Hsiao-Hung (2013), Invisible.

Britain's Migrant Sex Workers

### Links

National Crime Agency - [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk)

Rights of Women - [rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://rightsofwomen.org.uk)

The Salvation Army - [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)