

Fact Sheet – Grooming

What is grooming?

Grooming is a form of abuse that involves manipulating someone until they're isolated, dependent and more vulnerable to exploitation.

Grooming can take place online or face to face and may be by a stranger or someone known to the adult.

Online grooming might be referred to as "catfishing", where the groomer pretends to be someone they're not in order to gain trust.

The person will not know that they are being groomed – the perpetrator may be giving them lots of attention and compliments or giving gifts to gain their trust. They may also have been told to keep the contact with the groomer secret.

Signs of grooming

- The person becomes withdrawn, or they may seem troubled by something but unwilling to talk about it. Alternatively, their emotions might become more volatile.
- The person may have been given new items/extravagant gifts or had promises made in exchange for (often) sexual or financial gain.
- Groomers often aim to isolate their targets from their family or friends. If they seem reluctant to see you, or they refuse a visit, it might be because someone's manipulating them.
- You notice that sums of money have disappeared from the person's bank account, or the person claims they cannot pay for food or bills.
- The person might be spending more time on the phone, or online, than usual. But they won't say what sites they're visiting, or who they're talking to.
- They start talking about a new "friend", "boyfriend" or "girlfriend", and it's not clear who they are or how they met them.

Adapted from the Ann Craft Trust.

What to do?

If you are concerned that an adult is being groomed, please report this to:

Staffordshire Police - always call 999 if there is an emergency or immediate threat of abuse taking place.

If a criminal offence has occurred, or may occur, contact the Police force where the crime has occurred/may occur via 101 or online reporting mechanisms.

Refer any safeguarding concerns for adults with care and support needs which mean they are unable to protect themselves from abuse to the Local Authority for the area where the abuse took place by phoning the relevant contact centre;

If the abuse occurred in Stoke-on-Trent – Tel: **0800 561 0015**
(available during standard office hours)

To report concerns overnight, over a weekend or on a bank holiday, please contact the Emergency Duty Service on Tel: **01782 238770**

If the abuse occurred in Staffordshire – Tel: **0345 604 2719** **(available during standard office hours)**

To report concerns overnight, over a weekend or on a bank holiday, please contact the Emergency Duty Service on Tel: **0345 604 2886**

[Grooming can also take the form of predatory marriage – see fact sheet on predatory marriage.](#)