

**catch
22**

PARENTS PACK

Information and guidance
surrounding Child Criminal
Exploitation and Gang
Affiliation

Catch22 is a social business, a not for profit business with a social mission.

For over 200 years we have designed and delivered services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities.

CONTENTS

What is Child Criminal Exploitation?..... 4

Does it happen in Coventry? 5

What is a gang? 5

Spotting the signs..... 7

How do children become involved in gangs? 8

Females in gangs..... 9

What to do and who can help? 10

Useful Contacts..... 11

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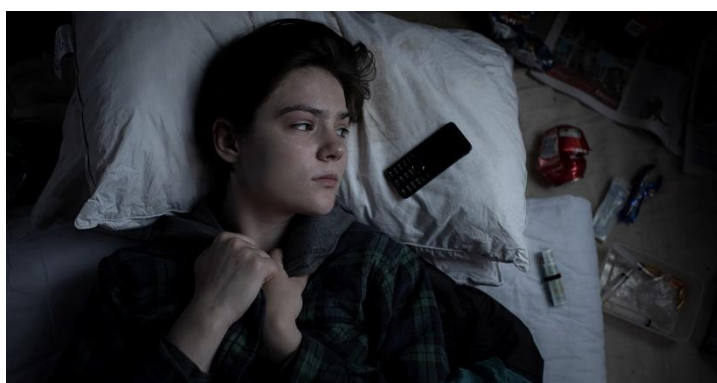
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What is Child Criminal Exploitation?

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.



Below is a video to show the impact of County Lines and Child Exploitation:

Alfie's story

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV_EbjNklec



Does it happen in Coventry?

Yes - it can happen **anywhere** to **any** young person.

Coventry is not exempt, and we are currently working with young people in the city who have found themselves in this situation.

What is a gang?

Gangs have been a major contributor to the growth of violent crime in the past decade. Heavily armed with sophisticated weapons, gangs are involved in drug trafficking (county lines), murder/serious assaults and acts of extreme violence, witness intimidation, kidnap/torture, robbery, extortion, CSE and turf battles. Gangs now operate in cities of all sizes, as well as suburban communities throughout the UK; gang violence is no longer limited to major cities.

OCG – Organised Crime Groups

- Commit serious crimes
- Planned and co-ordinated
- Conducted by people working together on a continuing basis
- Often motivated by financial gain
- Graded by the police- some are assessed to be more severe than others

USG – Urban Street Gangs

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

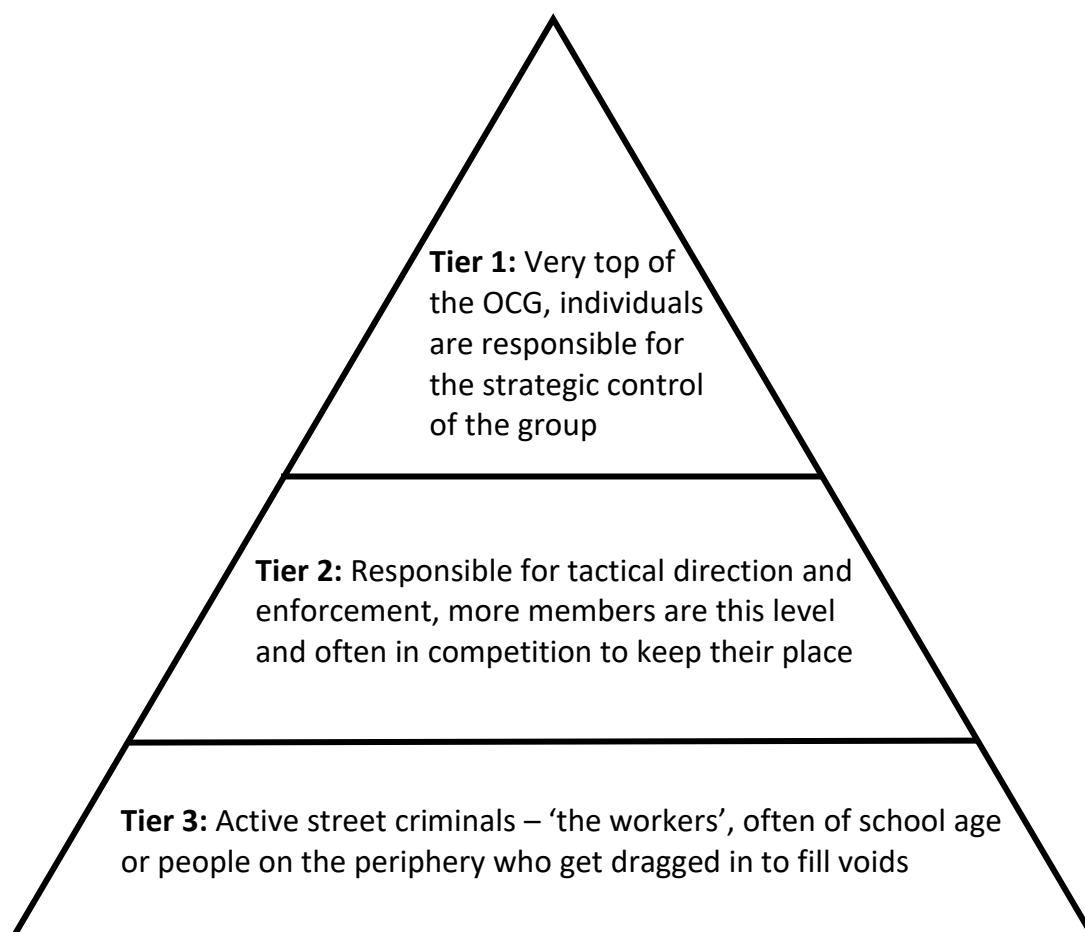
- See themselves (and others see them) as a discernible group
- Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence

They may also have any or all of the following features:

- Identify with or lay claim over territory
- Have some form of identifying structural feature
- Are in conflict with other similar 'gangs'

USG's can also be far more chaotic than OCG's

Almost all OCG's have a pyramid structure:



Spotting the signs...

Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime.

Know the signs to spot

Signs of exploitation

- Are they always going missing from school or their home?
- Are they traveling alone to places far away from home?
- Do they suddenly have lots of money/lots of new clothes/new mobile phones?
- Are they receiving a lot more calls or texts than usual?
- Are they carrying or selling drugs?
- Are they carrying weapons or know people that have access to weapons?
- Are they in a relationship with or hanging out with someone/people that are older and controlling?
- Do they have unexplained injuries?
- Do they seem very reserved or seem like they have something to hide?
- Do they seem scared?
- Are they self-harming?

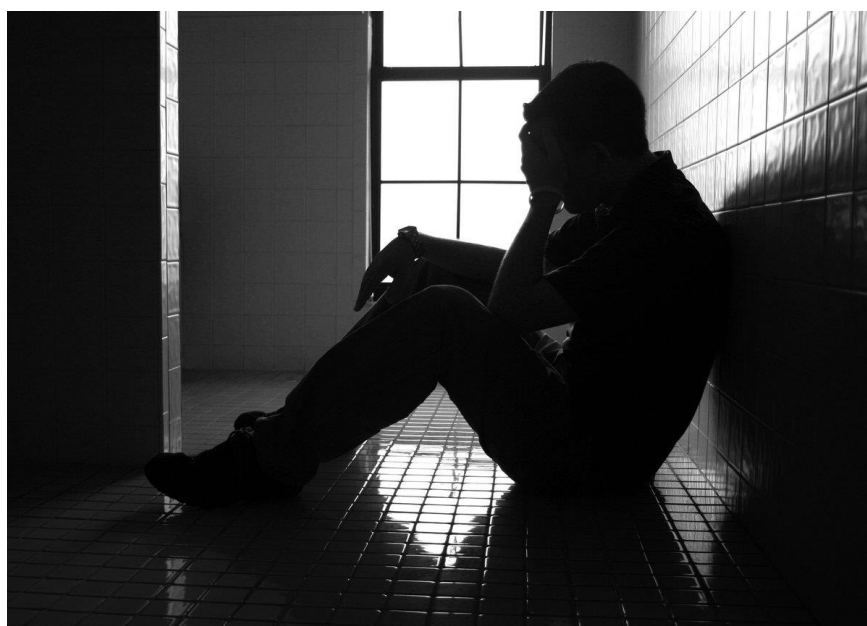


How do children become involved in gangs?

They are often 'groomed' as part of a powerful process where the abuser:

- Befriends the child
- Gains their trust
- Makes them feel they are in a loving relationship or friendship
- Distances them from family & friends
- Takes total control over them
- Provides them with gifts such as money, mobile phones, drugs, alcohol, a 'sense of belonging'

The young person probably won't recognise that they are being abused...

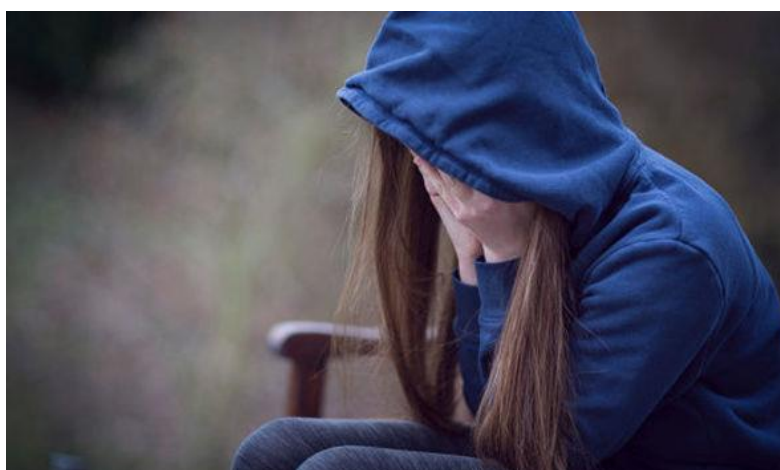


Females in gangs...

Females can be involved in gangs too, **however**, their involvement is more 'behind closed doors'. Females involved in gangs are at great risk of emotional, sexual and physical abuse.

Females make up approx. 10% of gangs and have varying roles:

- Girls may be groomed into gangs by males who pose to be romantically interested in them and relationships are formed which may not always be genuine.
- They can be used as 'honey traps' – this is where females may be used to obtain information from rivals or to 'set them up'.
- Girls may be involved in criminal behaviour such as holding weapons (society isn't as suspicious regarding females), they may be asked to give alibi's and may get involved in other criminal activity such as drug running, theft and assaults.
- They may be used to give other gang members alibis.
- They can also be used to lure other females
- It is likely that they may have regular missing episodes if they are involved in gangs.



What to do and who can help?

If your child is already involved in a gang, they may not want to talk about it or be too scared to say anything.

They may just need support or someone to talk to.

- **STAY CALM**
- **Listen and keep lines of communication open**
- **Encourage them to take part in positive activities e.g. sports**
- **Be aware of what they can and maybe accessing on the internet**
- **Speak to them about the consequences of their behaviour**
- **Try to understand the situation from their point of view**
- **Ask what you can do to help**
- **Contact local support networks (family hubs, faith groups, Police, school)**



Useful Contacts...

Speak to your local Family Hub

Aspire Family Hub, Humber Avenue, CV1 2SF - 024 76 978100

Families for all Hub, Foleshill Rd, CV6 5LB – 024 76 785575

Harmony Hub, Clifton St, CV1 5GR - 024 7678 7474

Moat Family Hub, Deedmore Road, CV2 1EQ - 024 76 978036

Mosaic Family Hub, Jardine Crescent, CV4 9PL - 024 7678 7801

Park Edge Family Hub, Roseberry Ave, CV2 1NE - 024 7678 6868

Pathways Family Hub, Lawrence Saunders Rd, CV6 1HD - 024 7678 8444

Woodside Family Hub, Upper Ride, Coventry, CV3 3GL - 024 7678 8430

Speak to us at Catch-22

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk>

Email any enquiries to our CoventryCCETeam@catch-22.org.uk

Speak to the Police

999 for emergencies

101 for non-emergencies (web chat is also available if you'd rather type than talk)

Intelligence submission – fib@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Speak to Coventry Children's Services if you have any **immediate** safeguarding concerns

Report any concerns to 02476788555

Out of hours (emergencies) – 02476832222

Speak to Independent Charities

Childline – 0800 1111

Gangline – 0800 032 9538

Anonymously through Crimestoppers – 0800 555 111 or online at

<https://crimestoppers-org.uk>

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk

<https://www.fearless.org/>