



This is our **Exploitation Strategy** for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. The strategy is jointly delivered through a **multi-partnership agreement** between Safer Cornwall, Safer Scilly, Our Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Its purpose is to:

- Improve **outcomes for children, young people and adults** who go missing
- Be assured that arrangements to respond to **all types of exploitation** are **robust and effective** - including (but not limited to) human trafficking, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and modern slavery
- Influence and contribute to the **commissioning of services** for children, young people and adults
- Promote and embed **trauma-informed** and shame-sensitive approaches
- Develop and monitor performance management **data, strategic intelligence and insight**; facilitate good information sharing
- Ensure that **recommendations and learning** from new policy, legislation, research, guidance and statutory reviews are acted upon
- Ensure **effective links** with other strategies and plans to maximise impact and prevent duplication
- Contribute to **Peninsula collaboration work** related to missing people and exploitation.

In all of our work, we commit to a **children's rights approach** and to work collaboratively with **other Strategic Partnerships** to deliver shared outcomes.

What do we want to see?

- A greater understanding of the **local intelligence picture** in relation to missing people and exploitation, including the role that **electronic communication** has in enabling exploitation
- **Our staff are confident** in recognising and responding to missing people and exploitation concerns.
- **Everyone has an appropriate awareness** of missing people and exploitation issues and **knows what to do** if they have concerns about themselves or someone else.
- The **multi-agency responses to exploitation work effectively** to prevent exploitation and protect the most vulnerable people.

Progress is monitored and managed through the **Missing and Exploitation Group**, a strategic subgroup sitting across all three partnerships.

This strategy is supported by:

- An **Outcomes Framework**, which uses multi-agency data to measure our progress
- A **Delivery Plan** that details the specific actions by partners to achieve the outcomes. The delivery plan is a **living document** and will be updated to reflect any **new or emerging priorities**.

For more information about our partnership approach to tackling exploitation in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly visit: www.safercornwall.co.uk/exploitation

What is exploitation?

Exploitation is a **complex form of abuse and neglect**. It causes serious and long-lasting harm to victims and impacts communities.

Labour Exploitation

Domestic Servitude

Sexual Exploitation

Criminal Exploitation

The Government describes exploitation under **four main types**; it often does not fit neatly into one type, however, but instead **spans several different types**. Cases reported in Cornwall have mostly included exploitation and trafficking for sexual exploitation or drugs. Labour cases are infrequently identified, and although awareness is improving, it is a largely hidden type of harm.

The term 'exploitation' is an **umbrella term** which covers many different forms of **abuse, neglect and criminal offences** under modern slavery and human trafficking. There is different terminology used in this context, however the term **exploitation** is the one **most widely understood** by practitioners and others.

Exploitation is when a child or adult is **controlled by an abuser** for the abuser's own advantage. The person displaying abusive behaviours may be an adult but **could also be a child or young person**.

They may use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and use of weapons as **methods of control**. They may **offer 'gifts'** such as money or drugs or promise status and affection, as a means of **'grooming'**.

A person experiencing exploitation may also take part in **abusive behaviours towards others** at the same time. Regardless of the circumstances, exploitation is **never the victim's fault**.

The **most prevalent** form of exploitation in the UK, reported by the Home Office over the past four years, primarily involves the exploitation of British nationals¹, **mostly teenagers and vulnerable adults**, forced, coerced or groomed into committing crime for someone else's benefit known as 'criminal exploitation.'

Criminal exploitation is often a feature of, but not limited to, **'county lines' drug dealing**.

A person being exploited **may not see themselves in this way** and think that they have a free choice in their involvement. But when the people exploiting them have more power than they do, this is **not a free choice**.

The methods that the exploiters use include 'grooming,' where someone builds a **relationship, trust, and emotional connection** with a person so that they can exploit them.

¹ Key statistics for Cornwall, in the last year:

Devon and Cornwall Police recorded:

- **48 Modern Slavery** crimes ► no change
- **250 crimes** flagged as **Child Sexual Exploitation** ► -2%

153 referrals (Devon and Cornwall) to the National Referral Mechanism ▲ +55%

- 57 adults / 90 children / 6 unknown

990 children were identified by Children's Social Care as having experienced/at risk of exploitation

- 476 young people (48%) experienced exploitation
- A further 514 (52%) young people were at risk of exploitation

325 children were referred to the Missing and Child Exploitation Panel for safeguarding and disruption interventions ▲ +39%

¹ [Criminal exploitation: Modern slavery by another name](#), Centre for Social Justice (February 2024)

Exploitation in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly

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People who are exploited are often **too afraid to tell anyone** and sometimes do not recognise that they are being exploited. It requires **greater awareness** (in communities and partners) about signs and symptoms and where to refer concerns, and a more **proactive approach**.

Labour exploitation cases are **identified infrequently**. National studies highlight issues around **rurality**, lack of **workforce training**, limited community awareness and **public attitudes** towards minority groups.

Racism within communities can heighten fears of a perceived threat, whilst **exploitation continues to those unseen** within our communities.

Drug use and dealing has become more visible in communities, especially class A drugs. The threat from drug-related **Organised Crime Group activity has increased**. Young people and adults are being **exploited** through County Lines and 'cuckooing' of addresses.

Despite **focused efforts from partners** and investment in local initiatives through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Office, residents tell us that they think **little action** is being taken.

Children who have experienced or are at risk of exploitation are **more likely to be identified** by professionals and the numbers have increased over the last two years. This could include sexual, criminal or drug-related exploitation.

We have **well-established multi-agency responses** in place for **child exploitation**, providing safeguarding, disruption and prevention, but the pathway to support and interventions for **adults is less well-defined**.

A **minority of young people** commit crime and anti-social behaviour. Children involved in crime are also victims, often through **abuse and neglect in early childhood**, but also within their social networks and relationships with peers.

Services working with young people are seeing more knife carrying, but this is **primarily for defence** or out of fear.

Challenging behaviours are becoming more common amongst **younger children**, who are more vulnerable to exploitation. Children are at **greater risk of harm** if they go **missing or are not attending school** regularly.

Whilst it's important to recognise that many families choose to home educate and do so successfully, there are also many children **not attending school for reasons** other than parental choice.

A lack of suitable education, coupled with other vulnerabilities can lead to the **loss of a sense of belonging** from their school or community. **Loss of contact with professionals** who can identify them as being at risk of harm means that **targeted work could come too late** and increase the risk.

Those not in school are also at **more risk of becoming NEET² at post-16**, narrowing employment opportunities and increasing the risk of poor mental health and vulnerability to exploitation.

Further reading and references

Local information about the **prevalence and nature of exploitation in Cornwall** has been drawn from a range of thematic needs assessments and other intelligence sources. These are published in the Safer Cornwall library [Library - Safer Cornwall](#)

- The overarching Community Safety **Strategic Assessment** 2024
- [Strategic Framework](#) – Safer Cornwall’s approach to preventing serious violence and underpinning [Strategic Needs Assessment](#)
- The [Drugs Needs Assessment](#) to direct local delivery of the national 10-year plan to combat illegal drugs. This is accompanied by an [Alcohol Needs Assessment](#) and [Young People’s Substance Use Needs Assessment](#)
- A comprehensive [Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment](#) to support new tri-partnership strategies.

The Government has produced a [Typology of Modern Slavery Offences](#) which outlines the different forms of exploitation that are prevalent in the UK. There is a [modern slavery training resources page](#) which is updated with key information for a range of different agencies on this topic.

The Government has also brought together documents and promotional material related to the government’s work to [end county lines drug supply and exploitation](#).

Relevant national strategies and plans:

- [No Place to Hide](#): Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028, Home Office 2023
- [From harm to hope](#): A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives, HM Government 2022
- [Serious Violence Strategy](#), Home Office 2018

Identifying and responding to exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking is a statutory duty. This strategy has been developed in line with key legislation, including:

- The Modern Slavery Act 2015 - [Modern Slavery Act 2015 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Care Act 2014 - [Care Act factsheets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Children Act 1989 - [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Children Act 2004 - [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017 – [Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Independent Anti-Slavery commissioner - [Home | Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner \(antislaverycommissioner.co.uk\)](#)