

Child financial exploitation

What is child financial exploitation?

Any time that a person or group takes advantage of a child to encourage or force them into financial activity that benefits the one making it happen, it is child financial exploitation.

This can take many forms, using different types of currency, and often involves fraud and money laundering. You might know it as 'money muling'; however, this language is problematic as it is dehumanising and essentially describes children and young people as animals.

Financial exploitation is abuse.

Any child, anywhere can be a victim of this crime. In busy cities and leafy villages, from families in financial hardship to wealthier children at boarding schools, criminals are promising 'quick cash' and fake job opportunities to gain access to young people, only to then use threats, violence, and deception to maintain control. They rake in huge profits, while the children and young people they have used are left to pay the price.

How and where does financial exploitation take place?

Information on financial exploitation is still growing, but we know young people are affected by this both **online** and **offline**. **It happens:**

- **at cashpoints**, where young people are approached by exploiters, who know the young person has a bank account that can be accessed
- **on social media and gaming platforms**, where young people are sent fake job adverts or asked to share their bank details

- **through 'relationships'**, including parents, carers, and wider family members and when young people are made to believe they're in a consensual romantic relationship and manipulated into holding money on behalf of their partners.
- **in retail settings**, where young people are made to return high value goods with stolen receipts, or to shoplift.

What forms of currency are used in financial exploitation?

This exploitation involves all forms of currency, including:

- cryptocurrency
- bank accounts
- travel cards
- gaming currencies like skins and credits
- holding accounts
- material goods.

Can young people who have been financially exploited be at risk in other ways?

Yes. Unfortunately, financial exploitation can be connected to other forms of abuse and sadly what may start with sharing bank details can then turn into the threat of sexual abuse or being made to hold or move drugs.

But if we look closer, we can stop exploitation in its tracks.

What can I do?

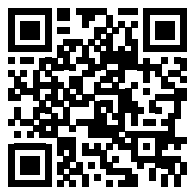
It might not be obvious.

You might think it’s none of your business, or that what you know or have witnessed isn’t enough to act on.

But by taking action – however big or small – even when you’re uncertain, you could help to protect a young person from horrific abuse.

Learn to spot the signs of exploitation to keep children and young people safe.

Follow the QR code to learn the signs of child exploitation.



Join our campaign and pledge to #LookCloser and protect children from exploitation.

Access our free resources to learn more about child exploitation and how to speak to young people about staying safe online and offline.

Learn more about financial exploitation by reading our blog which can be found [here](#).

What if I’m worried about a child or young person?

Call the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

You can also **report to the police online**.

Only report your concerns when it is safe for you to do so, even if this is after the event where your concerns initially arose. Do not attempt to intervene yourself.

Text the British Transport Police on 61016.

If you are on a train, you can text the British Transport Police. Information on routes of travel, addresses, appearance, and behaviour of a child can all help to protect young people.

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

If you have information on child exploitation and abuse or suspect it may be happening but want to remain completely anonymous you can **contact the independent charity Crimestoppers online** or on the phone.

Call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000

The **NSPCC helpline** is staffed by trained professionals who can provide expert advice and support if you’re concerned about a child.

If you think a child you know or work with is at risk of exploitation or is being exploited, contact the social care team at their **local council**.

Will you play your part?

