

# IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK OF GROOMING?

**Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust or emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit or abuse them.**

Anyone can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time. Groomers sometimes build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.





## Types of Grooming

Children & Young People can be groomed online, in person or both, it could be by a stranger or by someone they know. The relationship a groomer builds can take different forms:

- Romantic relationship
- Mentor
- Authority figure
- Dominant figure

An online groomer will use the same sites, games & apps as young people, spending time learning about a young persons' interests and use this to build a relationship with them. Online grooming can take place on various systems:

- Social Media Networks
- Text messaging and messaging apps
- Email
- Text, voice and video chat in forums, games & apps

## Tactics groomers use online and in person

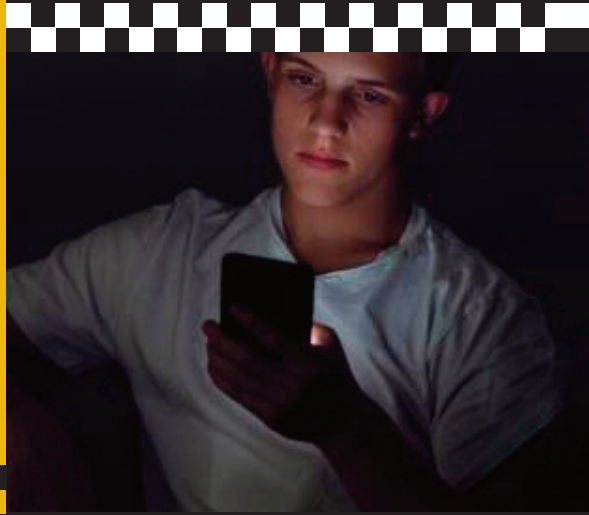
- Pretending to be younger
- Giving advice & showing understanding
- Buying gifts
- Supplying free food & drink
- Giving attention

Groomers might also try and isolate children & young people from their friends and family and make them feel dependent on them. They may even be persuaded to involve other young people. It is important to remember that children & Young People may not understand they've been groomed. They may have complicated feelings, like loyalty, admiration of love, as well as fear, distress and confusion.

It can be difficult to tell if a child is being groomed as the signs might not always be obvious, and as children become teenagers, they are often secretive and mask underlying problems.

## Some signs that you might see include

- Being more secretive about how they are spending their time, including their online activity
- Having an older girlfriend or boyfriend
- Having money or new things that they wouldn't have the money to pay for
- Underage drinking or drug taking
- Having food and drink bought for them
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age
- Spending more time away from home or going missing from periods of time



## If you are worried or have concerns you can speak to someone about it...

Visit the CEOP website where you can speak to an experienced Child Protection Advisor, this can be reported by an adult or a young person. <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Contact your local Police on 101 Or report to the Police online - On the main page click on "Contact Us" and then "Report a crime" <https://www.durham.police.uk/Contact-us/Report-a-crime/Pages/default.aspx>

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnerships - On the main page click on the pink button "What to do if you are concerned about a child" <https://durham-scp.org.uk/>

Darlington Safeguarding Partnerships - On the main page there is a yellow box featuring contact numbers if you concerned about a child. <https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/>