

1 What is adult criminal exploitation?

Criminal exploitation is a type of Modern Day Slavery (MDS); a sub - category of forced labour, which is covered by Section 1 of [the Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

Criminal exploitation is the deliberate manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person for personal gain.

Perpetrators often groom adults so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Criminal exploitation can be difficult to identify, and an adult is unlikely to recognize it until after the event.



2 Victims of adult criminal exploitation

[Adults at risk](#) are most likely to be exploited, however, anyone can be the target for criminal exploitation.

Perpetrators are known to exploit vulnerable adults by approaching them in homeless shelters, food banks etc., with a view to recruiting them to carry out short term work under the guise of cash in hand payment.

The recruiter may also use drugs and / or alcohol as a means of control over the victim.

Traffickers are also known to recruit potential victims from other countries into to the UK, where they are forced to commit crimes.



3 Categories of adult criminal exploitation

There are six categories of criminal exploitation identified by the Home Office:

- Forced gang related criminality.
- Forced labour in illegal activities.
- Forced acquisitive crime such as shoplifting.
- Forced begging.
- Trafficking for forced and /or sham marriage.
- Financial fraud.

[Cuckooing](#) is the term used to refer to a person or gang taking over a property, normally belonging to a vulnerable adult, which they then operate criminal activity from. Those exploited will often be exposed to physical, mental, and / or sexual abuse.



4 Risks associated with adult criminal exploitation

Some of the risks to the adult when they become involved in criminal exploitation include:

- Being arrested, including for crimes committed by other members of the gang - joint enterprise.
- Subject to threats, blackmail, violence, and emotional abuse, including threats towards family and friends.
- Issues around substance misuse.
- Not being able to leave or cut off ties with the person or gang.
- Risk of physical harm, including rape and sexual abuse, or being killed.
- Long term impact on employment options as some roles are inaccessible to people with a criminal record.



5 Indicators of adult criminal exploitation

- Low self - esteem, the adult is closed off and scared to talk.
- Houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), where people live or are kept in squalid conditions.
- Overcrowding in accommodation.
- Signs of psychological trauma, mental health issues, self - harm.
- Signs of injury / abuse - often requiring medical care.
- Fear and mistrust of people in authoritative positions.
- Unexplained acquisition / loss of money.
- Lack of identification documents.

7 Further information

For more information about safeguarding adults, please visit www.northlincsab.co.uk

For guidance around the National referral mechanism (NRM), please visit [Modern slavery victims: referral - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[NLSAB guide for professionals about cuckooing](#)

[NLSAB Language guidance for professionals working with adults](#)

[County Lines Drugs Gangs - Humberside Police](#)

[Home Office County Lines Guidance](#)



6 Questions to consider

Be curious... What would you do if you suspected that someone was a victim of criminal exploitation? Do you know where to get further help and advice?

Are you clear about your responsibilities? Are you familiar with the local structures for tackling Modern Day Slavery (MDS), so that you know where to raise these concerns?

Remember, if there is an immediate risk of harm to the adult you are worried about, you must contact **the police via 999**.

To report a concern about an adult with care and support needs, who is experiencing, or at risk of criminal exploitation, please contact **the safeguarding adults team on 01724 297000, by email adultprotectionteam@northlincs.gov.uk, or visit [North Lincs SAB | Reporting a Concern](#).**

