



# Trust Your Instinct

What to see, say and do when a situation doesn't feel right.



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**Many agencies are working to promote the welfare of children and adults, but protecting vulnerable people from harm is everyone's responsibility. We all have a role to play as the eyes and ears of our city.**

Most people cope well most of the time with whatever life throws at them. However, things don't always go well, and it's important to notice the signs and find out if the person is getting help or needs help.

The earlier the help, the less likely things will get worse, and the better things will be for the person, their family and community. Seeing a sign that something is seriously wrong and knowing what to do could prevent a tragedy.

Serious issues such as poverty, homelessness, domestic violence and abuse, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and hate crimes occur in all communities. Recent high-profile cases have brought to light new knowledge about what happens, where it takes place and who is involved.

Sharing this information and asking for your help in spotting the signs are part of our determination to stop these things happening. They can't be dealt with solely by officials or the police. Working together, we can help to make a difference.

You work with people every day, so this guide aims to help you know what to say and do when you see things are not going well for someone, or if your instinct tells you something is wrong.

**Part A** lists some things you might see, suggests what to do if you feel uneasy about a child, young person or adult you come into contact with, and explains why it's important to take notice and Trust Your Instinct.

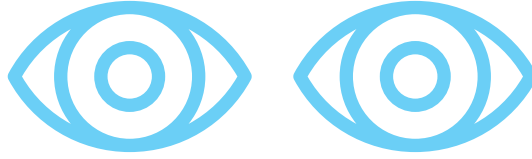
**Part B** shares the insight we've developed about where and how children and vulnerable people have been exploited, abused and radicalised. It explains how your workplace or business could be affected and how your day-to-day contact with people, and the instinct you may develop to spot something wrong, can help.

**Part C** explains some of the issues.

**Please read this, keep it safe, and be ready to do your bit.**

Julia Stephens-Row,  
Independent Chair of MSAB and MSCB

## Part A



# What you might see and what you should do

## Out and about

Trust Your Instinct if you see or suspect that a child, young person or family is involved in or experiencing:

- crime or antisocial behaviour
- hostility or threats
- people trafficking
- domestic abuse or violence
- radicalisation
- forced marriage.

For definitions of some of these, see page 13.

Education gives children and young people opportunities for life. Trust Your Instinct if you see:

- a child off school in term-time
- a child caring for an adult and missing school
- a young person who is not in work (or looking for work), education or training.

Trust Your Instinct if you suspect a child or young person is being sexually exploited; for instance if they:

- have expensive clothes, phones, cash or alcohol without explanation
- are often missing or out late or overnight
- travel in vehicles driven by unknown adults
- have unexplained relationships with unknown adults.

## Health and wellbeing

Everyone deserves to be safe and well, so Trust Your Instinct if you see:

- a person showing signs of neglect
- a person showing signs of dementia
- a person showing signs of hardship
- children exposed to harmful substances, including excessive smoke
- a child or young person self-harming
- a child or young person drinking, smoking or misusing drugs
- parents misusing alcohol or drugs
- someone controlling a person's freedom to leave the home
- a child home alone
- a child or young person who is often without money for food, transport, etc
- a child with unexplained injuries.

## Pubs, bars and clubs

If someone looks vulnerable, don't let alcohol endanger them. Trust Your Instinct if you see:

- someone buying them excessive alcohol, or buying it themselves
- someone receiving 'unwanted attention'
- someone separating them from friends
- someone who needs transport home
- someone leaving with an unknown or 'unwanted' person.





## What to say and do

It's difficult to raise these issues – there may be a reasonable explanation. Is a child off school just because they're poorly, or is someone just having a bad day?

Trust Your Instinct if things don't look okay and ask anyway. Use friendly questions to help people talk about what they're facing and see if there are underlying problems and if help is needed.

**“How are you doing today?”**

**“You look like you've got a lot on today.”**

**“Have you got a day off from school?”**

**“Which school do you go to?”**

If a child could be being sexually exploited, you could say,

**“Who is your new friend?”**

If you think someone is struggling with money, you could say,

**“It's hard to make ends meet these days, isn't it?”**

If they're not coping, maybe say,

**“Life is tough these days, isn't it?”**

Show empathy:

**“I'm from a large family too.”**

In licensed premises, don't let alcohol leave them vulnerable:

- ask if they're okay
- don't serve them another drink or let someone else buy them one
- if possible, reunite them with friends
- check they're not receiving 'unwanted attention'
- make sure any 'unwanted person' knows you've seen their face
- ask CCTV to monitor them if you're still concerned
- offer to call a licensed taxi
- check they know who they're leaving with, and that they're happy with that.

If someone says everything is fine, but you're still concerned, Trust Your Instinct, say something or contact the appropriate organisation.



## Contacts

**If an actual crime or violence is being committed, call 999 without delay.**

Report child sexual exploitation to the police by calling **999** if there is immediate danger – otherwise dial **101**. Visit [itsnotokay.co.uk](https://www.itsnotokay.co.uk)

If a child or young person is at risk or suffering harm, phone the Council's 24-hour contact centre on **0161 234 5001** and say you have a 'safeguarding concern'.

For child protection issues, call the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** or report online at [nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse)

If a crime has already happened, and to contact the police when there's no immediate danger, call **101** or the Crimestoppers Helpline: **0800 555 111**.

For information about safeguarding, visit [manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk](https://www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk)

## Part B



# Where and how vulnerable people can be in danger

**Recent high-profile cases have brought to light new knowledge about what happens, where it takes place and who is involved. If you have a business, making yourself and colleagues aware will help combat these dangers and protect your business.**

Some businesses have proved an ideal environment for the grooming and sexual exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As part of the grooming process, some adults have met young people at small businesses and have developed a relationship of trust with them there, making them feel special with 'treats' such as meals or alcohol, or by involving them in adult parties.

Businesses have been misused for this kind of activity by people working there, volunteering or shopping there as customers, and socialising or enjoying themselves there. For example:

- adult venues (such as nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues) and small shops have attracted groomers when the premises are frequented by children or young people
- underage drinking has put children and young people at risk by impairing their judgement
- groomers have worked and volunteered at premises that provide goods and services where they have regular or private contact with children, and offer them gifts in exchange for sexual favours (for example, free food, drinks or cigarettes; free transport; and free access to a venue)



- children and young people have been vulnerable in areas of premises that are not supervised or security-checked (for example, toilets, beer gardens and play zones)
- vulnerable people are at risk in premises with information technology equipment (such as internet access and mobile phones) as social media can be used to groom vulnerable young people; cameras can be used to record or distribute indecent images of children
- premises providing facilities for private parties, private dancing, entertainment booths, or overnight accommodation have been used for child sexual exploitation.

### **How might this impact on your business?**

**In addition to having a serious impact on the welfare and safety of children, young people or vulnerable adults, sexual exploitation is a crime, and if it happens at (or is associated with) your business, it may cause serious financial and reputational damage.**

### **Where this can happen**

Anywhere young people have access to, or their place of employment could be used, in particular:

- hot food takeaways, off-licences and local shops
- nightclubs
- adult venues, such as saunas and lap-dancing clubs
- children's parties with adult entertainers
- public events
- beer gardens
- restaurants
- hotels
- shopping precincts
- young people's facilities for training, sport and leisure
- toilets, car parks and isolated areas.

## **Protect children, young people or vulnerable adults and your business.**

We all have a moral responsibility to protect children. There may also be legal implications if child sexual exploitation happens at your business and you fail to act or don't have safeguards. Licensing law and health and safety rules may require you to protect children and keep unaccompanied young guests safe. You may also suffer media attention and reputational harm.

It may help if you can show you've taken all reasonable steps to manage risk:

- verify ages and check ID
- keep incident logs and handover notes
- monitor – including CCTV or regular patrols
- have a staff code of conduct
- report suspicious activity.

**Staff should know how to report concerns about the safety or welfare of a vulnerable person or the behaviour of a suspicious person. They should be encouraged to report this to the police if it is an emergency (dial 999), to another appropriate service and to their manager. The nature of the concern and what has been done should be recorded in an incident log.**

## **Hotels**

Warning signs on this checklist don't mean child sexual exploitation is happening, but they could alert you to the danger:

- teenagers loitering in public areas and outside
- people who seem to be monitoring public areas
- guests asking for a room that's isolated
- guests with a local address renting rooms
- guests appearing secretive about their visit or trying to conceal their activities in the room or who they are with
- guests with no luggage or ID
- guests who don't want their room cleaned or visited
- guests moving in and out regularly at unusual hours
- a lot of visitors to a guest room
- frequent visitors who do not appear to have a reason for being there
- several adults heading for a room that may be being used for a party
- different visitors at regular intervals can suggest arrangements for sexual exploitation
- last-minute and walk-in bookings or asking for a specific room number but not knowing the name of the person who booked the room

- bookings made in a different name to those checking in or guests speaking a different language to the person booking
- rooms with lots of condoms, condom wrappers, drugs or drug paraphernalia, such as syringes, wraps, pipes, bong, broken light bulbs, spoons and plastic bags
- signs of alcohol, drug or substance misuse
- guests who appear to be under the age of 25 (for ID) in a licensed area and when alcohol is delivered to rooms
- prepaid bar tab in a room where children stay
- young people with significantly older boyfriends or girlfriends
- young people who look overly made up
- young girl or boy who appears withdrawn or tries to hide their face, or appears afraid, disorientated, restricted from moving or communicating, or to be acting under instruction
- hospitality suite with business people and young girls or boys (adults may be there for an event, conference or meeting)
- guests accessing pornography
- items missing from rooms, such as bedding and bin contents
- noise complaints.

## Taxis

Sexual exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a big issue internationally, nationally and locally, and it has involved the taxi trade. Drivers and companies need to protect vulnerable passengers and themselves from this risk.

Signs that a passenger may be vulnerable include:

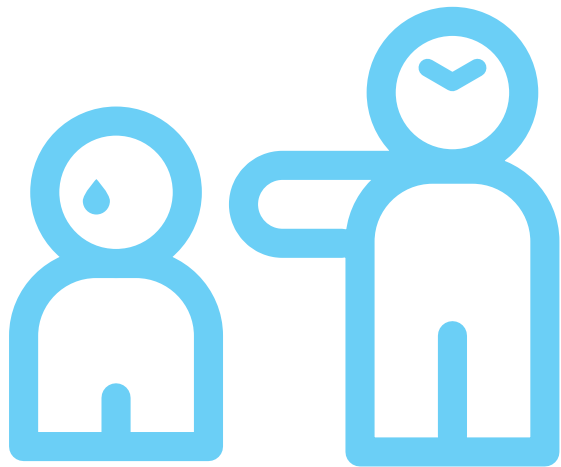
- alcohol and drugs
- age (very young or old)
- disability (physical and learning)
- illness (mental and physical)
- unfamiliarity with an area
- becoming separated from friends
- communication issues arising, for example, being deaf, blind, a stroke victim, or speaking a different language.

Be aware that some people make unwise choices – and have ‘capacity’ to do this. In these cases you might not be able to assist, but it is important that you still report your concerns to professionals who can help; it is not safe for you or your passenger if you attempt to make an assessment yourself – always report your concerns to the authorities.

## Responsibilities to a vulnerable passenger

Reporting your concern could save a life. You are a public service, an ambassador for the city, and the eyes and ears of a local community. Plus:

- you have a duty of care to vulnerable people in your vehicle
- you have a moral and social responsibility to report a concern about a vulnerable person.





## Glossary

### Child sexual exploitation

This is a form of sexual abuse and is against the law. It affects boys and girls under the age of 18. The victim is given something such as food, money or drugs in return for sexual activity. Violence, physical coercion and intimidation can exist but are not always present. Often, the child or young person has been manipulated and does not recognise the danger of the relationship, so they do not realise they are a victim.

You may overhear or see something you are not happy with – always listen to your gut instinct and report any concerns to the police.

For more information or to report online, visit [itsnotokay.co.uk](https://www.itsnotokay.co.uk)

Criminal offences connected to child sexual exploitation:

- serious sexual offences
- rape
- assault
- child abduction
- trafficking.

### Human trafficking

Human trafficking is a serious crime. A person is trafficked if they are brought (or moved around) a country by anyone who threatens, frightens or hurt them, or forces them to do work or other things they don't want to do; including human trafficking also include sexual exploitation.

You can contact the Salvation Army on **0300 308 8151** (24 hours, seven days a week). For further information go to [humantraffickingfoundation.org/whats-issue](https://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/whats-issue)

### Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic abuse can be any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between family members, or people who are or have been intimate partners, regardless of gender. This includes forced marriage and abuse within same-sex relationships. Domestic abuse is very common and affects one in four women in their lifetime. Although most victims are women and most abusers are men, domestic abuse can affect anyone.

For further information about domestic abuse, go to [endthefear.co.uk](https://www.endthefear.co.uk)

## Hate crime

A hate crime is any crime targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's:

- disability
- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity
- alternative subculture.

This can be committed against a person or property. A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime. More information on the different forms of hate crime can be found on the True Vision website at [report-it.org.uk/what\\_is\\_hate\\_crime](https://report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime)

Hate incidents can feel like crimes to those who suffer them and often escalate to crimes or tension in a community. For this reason the police are concerned about these incidents. The police can only prosecute when the law is broken, but can work with partners to try and prevent any escalation in seriousness. Local agencies such as Citizens Advice and community voluntary services can also report the incident on your behalf and provide you with advice and support. Find more details at [manchester.gov.uk/hatecrime](https://manchester.gov.uk/hatecrime)

## Terrorism

Policing cannot be the only answer to this threat. We also we need to act early to prevent people being drawn into extremism. This does not mean spying on neighbours or people at work, or stigmatising or labelling particular communities or groups.

Preventing terrorism is challenging because it needs to be done in the time before any criminal activity has taken place. It is about supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation, ensuring that they are diverted before any crime is committed.

Your job puts you in prolonged contact with people, and you may develop an instinct that tells you when someone is acting suspiciously or if something is out of the norm.

- be alert
- be vigilant
- report suspicious behaviour.

Anti-terrorist hotline: **0800 789 321**.





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