Ready2Comply
TOOLKITS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DIRECT WORK RESOURCE · EXPLOITATION AND SAFEGUARDING

Not Who They Seem

Spotting grooming and exploitation

A colourful, ready-to-use direct work pack to help young people recognise grooming and sexual exploitation – online and in person – and to help you gauge, record and act on risk.

- Ages 11–17
- 1:1 or small groups
- 3–4 sessions
- Editable Word

SAMPLE

Worker's guide

Session plans, the law for staff, SEND and trauma-informed tips, disclosures, escalation and recording

Activity sheets

How grooming works, healthy or not spotter, 12 scenario cards, safety checklist, safety plan, who to tell

Risk measure

Young person's quiz with scoring key, worker observation checklist, record sheet – plus a certificate

For children's homes, supported accommodation and schools · British English · Version 1.0 · November 2026

Definitions and law in this pack were checked against Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, DfE guidance on child sexual exploitation, legislation.gov.uk, CEOP and NSPCC sources in November 2026 (see Sources, page 21).

Ready2Comply is not affiliated with any app, charity or police force named in this pack. App names are trademarks of their owners and are mentioned only because young people use and recognise them.

How grooming works

It often looks like friendship or love at first – here are the steps

Targeting

Picks someone who seems lonely, bored or wanting to belong.

⚠️ Anyone can be targeted.

Gaining trust

Compliments, attention, 'you're so mature'.

⚠️ Lots of attention very fast.

Gifts & favours

Trainers, phones, money, lifts, vapes, food.

⚠️ 'Free' things can create a debt.

Secrets

'Don't tell anyone about us.'

⚠️ Good friends don't need secrets.

Isolating

'Your carers don't get you. Only I do.'

⚠️ Cutting you off from people who care.

Parties & substances

Free alcohol or drugs, older people, flats.

⚠️ Used to lower your guard.

Online pressure

Moving to private chats, asking for pictures.

⚠️ Pictures can be used for control.

Owing & threats

'You owe me' or threats to share pictures.

⚠️ That's exploitation – tell someone.

Control

Being told where to go, who to see, what to do.

⚠️ Love doesn't control you.

Did you know?

Grooming can be done by **anyone – men or women, adults or other young people**, strangers or people you know. Whatever happened, **it's never the young person's fault**.

SAMPLE

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Real-life situations

Cut out the cards or pick one. What's going on? What would you do?

1 Best friend online

Someone who says they're 16 messages you every day. They get you like nobody else. Now they want to video call – just the two of you.

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

2 The gift

A man who hangs around the shops buys you new trainers. "No catch – you just look like you need a break."

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

3 Older boyfriend

Your boyfriend is 22. He says staff would "split you up" if they knew, so you tell them you're at a friend's.

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

4 Party flat

You're invited to a party at a flat. There's free vodka and weed and lots of older men. Your friend says "just chill".

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

5 Lifts

Your mate's older cousin always picks you both up from school, buys you food and lets you smoke in his car.

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

6 Our secret

"What we have is special. Don't tell anyone, they wouldn't understand." You feel happy – but a bit sick too.

🚩 Red flags? 🤔 What would you do? 🗣️ Who could you tell?

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