

Working with the Police

*The role of parents
in investigating child
sexual exploitation*

Pace

Parents against
child sexual exploitation

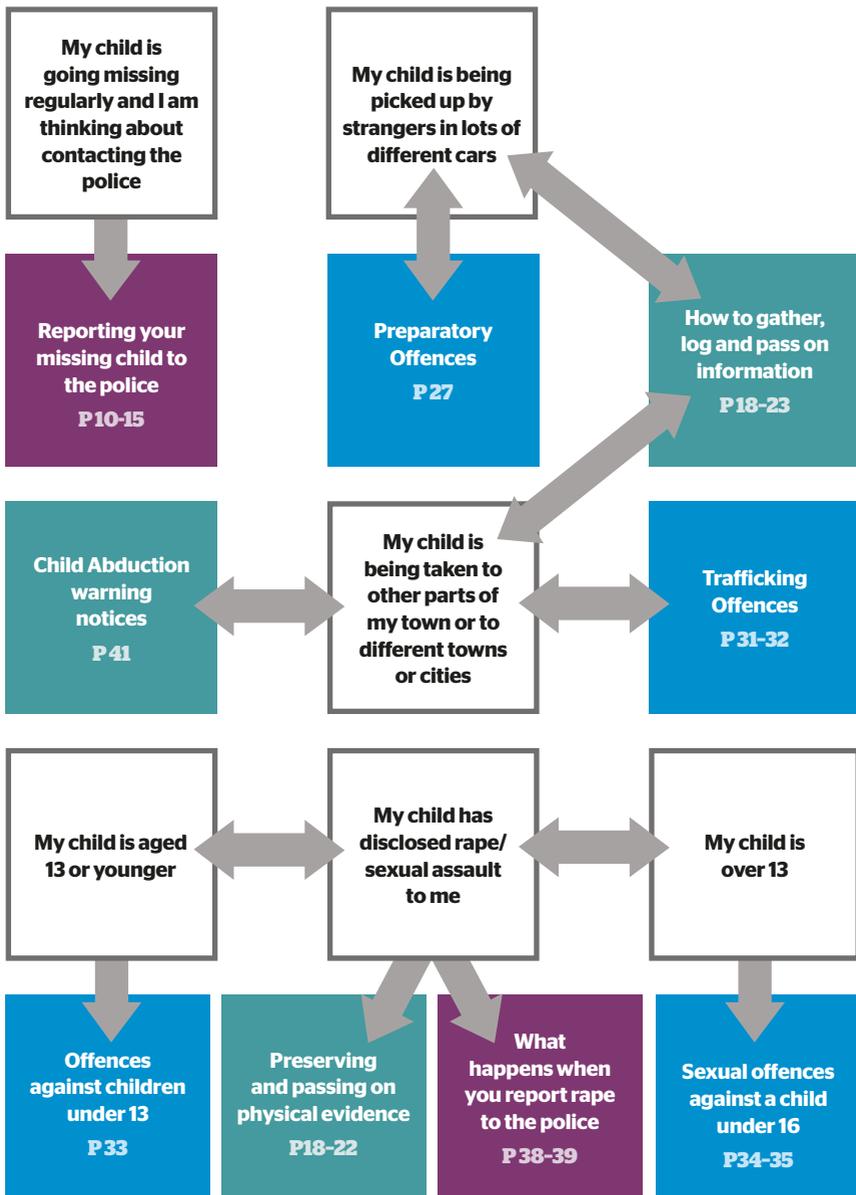
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This booklet contains general legal information. The legal information is not advice and should not be treated as such. The legal information in this booklet is provided without any representations or warranties, express or implied. You must not rely on the legal information in this booklet as an alternative to legal advice from a lawyer or other professional adviser.

Quick guide



How can parents work with the police if their child is being sexually exploited?

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves the sustained grooming, sexual abuse and sexual violence against children under the age of 18. It encompasses serious crimes and should be reported to the police.

This booklet explains how the police can help and the tools they have at their disposal to disrupt child sexual exploitation. It explains how the law can be used to bring criminal charges against those responsible. It also explains how and why police investigations into child sexual exploitation can be problematic and complex, and how you as parents can be instrumental in providing evidence and safeguarding your child.

Who are Pace?

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) works alongside parents and carers of children who are sexually exploited, or are at risk of being sexually exploited, by perpetrators external to the family. At our heart is a network of affected parents, whose expertise is central to our mission. Individual parents' experiences are referred to throughout the booklet in distinctive handwritten type. You can read more about Pace and how we can help on pages 48-49.

Reporting a missing child

Child Sexual Exploitation at a glance

What is child sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children. It involves relationships based on a deliberate imbalance of power between perpetrator and child. Perpetrators come from all age groups and social and ethnic backgrounds.

Whom does child sexual exploitation happen to?

Girls and boys under 18 are sexually exploited when they are coerced into sexual activities by one or more person(s). This booklet is concerned with cases that involve perpetrators external to the family. The perpetrators of sexual exploitation deliberately target children's youth and inexperience in order to exercise power over them. Sometimes the perpetrators will be around same age as their victims, but there is still an imbalance of power. Children who are sexually exploited can come from all social backgrounds and not just 'chaotic' or 'dysfunctional' households. The majority of children who are sexually exploited are living at home when the exploitation occurs.

What does child sexual exploitation look like?

Child sexual exploitation often involves a stage of 'grooming', in which the child might receive gifts prior to, or as a result of, performing sexual activities, or having sexual activities performed on them. These gifts may be of material value, such as gadgets, designer clothes or trainers, but it may be that attention and affection alone is sufficient to win the child's trust. Conversely, exploitation can also occur by the child being denied something, ie being taken to a party in an isolated location, but then told they cannot be taken home unless they perform a certain sex act. Child sexual exploitation is often conducted with actual violence or the threat of violence. These may be threats towards the child or towards her or his family, and may prevent the child from disclosing or exiting the cycle of the abuse. These threats may be based on films or photographs of your child in sexual situations that were generated by the child themselves, posted on line and then used to control and

manipulate them. In the case of online sexual exploitation, the grooming process is often much shorter than in real life and quickly escalates to threats and intimidation. [*Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, CEOP: June 2013*]

Where does child sexual exploitation occur?

A child may be groomed for sexual exploitation through their peer group (ie school friends or associates of school friends) or through socialising at particular locations, such as shopping centres, parks, budget hotels or house parties. However, it can also occur in the virtual world, for example over the internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Kik, Skype and Snapchat.

How the police define child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice Guidance on CSE is an important document for parents because it makes it clear that even if the child has reached the legal age of consent (16), the police have a duty to protect them from child sexual exploitation.

“ The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 years old and has reached the legal age of consent should not be taken as a sign that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. These young people are still defined as children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 respectively. They can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation and their right to support and protection from harm should not be ignored or de-prioritised by services because they are over the age of 16, or are no longer in mainstream education.”

Working with the Police

The guidance is also important because it recognises that the effects of child sexual exploitation extend beyond the affected child and impact on the entire family. The document says:

“ Sexual exploitation can have a significant impact on families and can affect health, work life, family relationships, economic stability and social life. Parents are often distraught, traumatised and feel guilty for not being able to protect their children from being sexually exploited. The sexual exploitation of one child in the family can place other siblings at significant risk of being groomed and exploited too.”

The guidance also makes clear that even if the child has reached the legal age of consent (16), then the police have a duty to protect them from child sexual exploitation.

www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation

How the police can help

The role of the police is to assess and manage risk to children and young people; to prevent harm where possible, and to reduce the likelihood of any harm. The sexual exploitation of a child or young person will almost certainly involve the commission of a crime or create the potential for a crime to be committed. It is therefore important you involve the police in the safeguarding of your child from sexual exploitation as **early as possible**.

The role of parents in investigating child sexual exploitation

This booklet aims to guide you through various police procedures and terminology in order to help decide the best route forward. However it is important to note that police procedures, titles and working patterns vary force by force. The guide aims to point out where these discrepancies exist, but it is ultimately a general guide, rather than specific to your local service.

It is also important to note that while the police have a responsibility to investigate crime, they are not responsible for whether or not a prosecution takes place. The body that makes that decision is the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Once the CPS has reviewed cases submitted by the police, they also determine the charge and prepare the case for court. You can find out more about the CPS at:

www.cps.gov.uk

The role of Pace

Pace offers support for parents whose children are being sexually exploited and information on how to safeguard their child in partnership with the police and other agencies. Whilst we cannot give advice on particular courses of action, our specially trained workers are available to provide a non-judgemental safe space in which to explore all available options.

If you live in an area where the police form part of a multi-agency specialist CSE division, you may be allocated a designated Parent Support Worker (PSW). Your PSW will meet regularly with you and act as a conduit between you and the police. They may come from Pace, or from another organisation in the voluntary sector. Unfortunately this service is currently only available in a handful of police forces. Parents are welcome to contact Pace in office hours for individual specialist support, or can access 24 hour peer support on our secure on-line forum at:

www.paceinfo.uk

Reporting your missing child to the police

One of the most frequent indicators of child sexual exploitation is your child going missing. It is therefore important that you report your child missing to the police every time they go missing, even if it is occurring on a daily basis.

You can report your child missing by visiting your local police station, or over the phone by dialling 101, which automatically transfers you to your local police. You can also find your local police station on-line at:

www.police.uk/?view=force_si

101 or 999?

If you know that your child is in immediate danger and threatened with violence, injury or loss of life, then call 999.

Making the call - what you need to know

It is commonly thought that you must wait 24 hours before reporting somebody missing, but this is not true. You can make a report to the police as soon as you have done as much as possible to locate your child and that you consider them to be missing. There is no minimum waiting time. It may sound like common sense, but before contacting the police, check to see if they have left you or another household member a message on your phone voicemail, text message or social media.

When you call the police, you are usually put through to a call-handler rather than an actual police officer. You should tell them right away that you are calling to report a child missing. If this is not the first time you have reported your child missing, you need to state that your call relates to an on-going concern about child sexual exploitation. The call handler will then ask for your location and the length of time your child has been missing.

The role of parents in investigating child sexual exploitation

Once you have given this information, the call handler will either put you through to a police officer, or request a police officer to call you back or visit you at home. **It is important that you ask for a police incident number for future reference.**

When you are contacted by a police officer, you should also ask them for:

- Their name, collar number, telephone extension and email address.
- Contact details for the child sexual exploitation specialist team within the force (if they have one).
- Contact details for the Missing Person Coordinator.
- An alternative police contact, should the named person not be available to take your calls (ie when they have gone off-duty).

Making the call - what the police need to know

It may be useful to have written notes about your child to hand when you are reporting your child missing. The sort of information the call handler or police officer is likely to ask will include:

Your child's name

Date of birth

Height

Weight

Identification marks

The clothing they were wearing last time you saw them

Unique physical attributes (eg birthmarks)

Details of any medical conditions they may have (eg asthma, diabetes)

Names of known associates (particularly new friends they have recently acquired)

Financial details (bank account, credit and debit card details)

Mobile number, social media user names

Working with the Police

It may be useful to give examples of other aspects of your child's recent history including:

Change of behaviour

Recently frequented locations

New relationship/social groups/networks

Recent drug and alcohol use

The police will also ask you for an up-to-date photograph (preferably in electronic form).

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After several months of contact with our local force, we were allocated a youth intervention officer. He helped a lot, as he got to know us and defended us in police meetings when senior officers suggested that there were 'issues' within our family. We have since found out that there is a specialist CSE team within the force, but we have not been involved with it as my daughter had already built up a good relationship with the youth officer. So my advice is to try to find out if there is a designated CSE team as early as possible in your interactions with the police.

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Be aware that you have to go through a whole layer of reporting to get to the police, as it isn't usually an actual police officer who takes your call, but a call handler. So parents have to go through the reporting process all over again when the police officer calls back later. It's incredibly frustrating.

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I rang the police every time she was out and they soon got sick of it. So I started to ring the missing persons' coordinator as well.

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Possible responses to a missing child report

Once you have reported your child missing to the police, they will make an assessment of the level of risk to them. Your child's age and circumstances of their disappearance (eg whether or not they have been reported missing before) will dictate the level of investigation they undertake. This may include:

- Searching the areas where your child was last seen, or is known to frequent. This will include your own home and garden, shed and/or garage.
- Attempts to contact them by phone or computer.
- Checking local hospital admissions.
- Reviewing CCTV footage.

Many parents continue to search for their child once they have reported them missing to the police. However, it may be advisable for somebody to stay in the family home in case your child returns of their own accord. You should be able to reach an agreement with the police as to what you will do whilst they are conducting a search, to avoid duplication. For example, you may choose to:

- Continue to contact your child's friends and/or friends' parents.
- Pass on the police contacts you have to other parents who may have information about your child's whereabouts. Parents of other children exposed to exploitation may not want you to know that they have information, for fear of implicating their own child.

Working with the Police

It may be helpful to use a landline or somebody else's mobile phone to make phone calls, so that your own mobile line is free to take any calls/texts from your child.

You could also make an agreement with the police as to how often you expect to hear from them and if you don't, how frequently you will contact them for an update.

What happens when my child returns home?

Your child may return of their own accord, but if the police locate them then they will most likely undertake a 'safe and well check.' This should be within 72 hours of the child's return, but can vary from force to force.

In some areas a Return Home Interview (RHI) is carried out. It is worth asking your force or social services department if they offer such a service. It may be carried out by a third party or independent person, to whom the child may find it easier to disclose exploitation.

The RHI aims to explore the reasons why the child has gone missing and looks for opportunities to prevent further episodes. However this is rarely straightforward in the case of child sexual exploitation. The child may refuse to disclose their whereabouts out of loyalty to the perpetrators, or because they have been groomed to believe they are in a consensual relationship. Nonetheless, it is worth persisting and asking for repeated RHIs if necessary. It is vital that your child knows there are people who will listen to them, whenever or wherever they feel ready to talk.

Finding out if a suspected perpetrator is already known to the police

If you know the identities of the people you believe your child is with when they are missing and you strongly suspect they are exploiting your child, then you have the right to enquire if they have a previous history of sexual offences. The Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (also known as Sarah's Law) enables parents to enquire whether a person who has access to a child is a registered sex offender, or poses a risk to that child.

In order to make a formal request, parents need to visit a police station in person. You will need to be seen by a specialist officer, so be prepared to wait or call back. The officer will listen to your concerns and invite you to submit a formal request for information. You should receive a reply within 7 days. In exceptional cases information might be disclosed at the time. You can read more about the scheme here:

www.direct.gov.uk/keepingchildrensafe

www.west-midlands.police.uk/victims-witnesses/child-sex-offender-disclosure-scheme

If you find out that your child is in contact with a known sex offender, you could ask to be referred to CID Headquarters (CIDHQ) by calling 101. Staff there will be able to direct you to the relevant specialist team who may be located in the Public Protection Unit (PPU) or Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU).

What to do if you're not happy with the police response

Since 2012 there have been several high profile child sexual exploitation court cases, which have led to an improved understanding of this type of sexual abuse from the statutory sector. This means that the police are much better informed about the nature of child sexual exploitation and are more likely to deliver a good response. However if you are not satisfied with your service from the police you could consider highlighting the College of Policing Professional Guidance on CSE to the officer and discussing why you feel your child is at risk and not simply 'choosing the wrong friends' or displaying 'normal teenage rebellion'. You can download the entire guidance at:

www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation

You can read more about making a complaint on pages 44-45.

How to gather, log and pass on information

How to gather, log and pass on information on suspected perpetrators to the police

Although it may not feel like it, as a parent you have more information about the people who are exploiting your child than you may think. If the police conduct an investigation into your child's sexual exploitation, then they need as much information as possible about who they are associating with, where they are going and when they are missing from home.

How you gather and log information on what is happening to your child is crucial to police investigation and potential court cases. Due to the traumatic nature of child sexual exploitation and the child witness(es)' age and vulnerability, judges will increasingly look to what is known as **corroborative evidence** to support their statements in court. This includes all the information supplied by you, the parent. As it is possible that this information will be used by both the prosecution and the defence team, it is important that you systematically record all dates and times. If there is one thing you can start doing right now it is keeping a detailed, chronological, securely stored log.

How to record information correctly

Any information you note should be dated, signed by you and kept in a safe place. It may be useful to email all your observations to yourself so you have an automatic record of the time and date. An ideal scenario would be to keep notes in a bound book and backed up with a computer log, but don't worry if you have existing notes that are not in this format. They may still be valuable and of use to the authorities.

The type of information that you need to record includes:

Perpetrators: names, nicknames, addresses, ages, physical descriptions, typical clothing, regional accents.

Vehicles used by perpetrators: registration numbers, partial registration numbers, vehicle make and model, colour and distinguishing features (ie bumper stickers, spoilers etc).

Technology: phone numbers, text messages, phone calls, social networking pages, games console messages.

Locations: details of places where your child may have met with perpetrators or been taken to by perpetrators.

Dates and times: details of when your child may have been with perpetrators.

Gifts: recent acquisitions that your child wouldn't normally be able to afford (eg clothing, make-up, iPods, iPhones etc).

Witnesses: people who may have witnessed your child in the company of the suspected perpetrators (ie neighbours, school peers).

It may even be useful to jot down other observations such as the weather, or the dominant news story of the day. Even apparently minor details may provide crucial corroborative evidence in court.

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We handed over photos posted on Facebook, addresses of where the so-called parties were held. We logged car registration numbers and the times of their arrivals and departures.

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Working with the Police

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When our problems started we were given some advice from a friendly police sergeant. We were told to write down everything that happened, times, dates, who we had spoken to, what had been said, car reg numbers, sightings ... you name it we recorded it. Sadly in our case we didn't get a conviction but one day there will be a court case and I know that our diaries will be a crucial part of the evidence.

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We would regularly take our daughter's phone after she had been missing and write down all the numbers on it and it was this that gave us and the police evidence to start tracking down the dangerous individuals.

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The importance of first disclosure

If your child does disclose sexual offences against them to you, it is very important that you write down what they say as accurately as possible and record the time and date. This is because the person whom the child first disclosed abuse to is regarded as a crucial witness in any resulting trial. Police officers and the Crown Prosecution Service will request a statement on 'first disclosure', so include as much information as possible in your written notes.

Physical corroborative evidence

Whilst the responsibility for collecting forensic evidence lies primarily with the police, as a parent you are uniquely placed to gather important physical evidence. Examples include:

- Forensic material from your child's person (eg blood) or from the perpetrator's person transferred onto your child's person (fingerprints, hair, semen). It may be particularly beneficial to keep underwear, bedding and any gifts received by your child for this type of evidence.
- Forensic material from computers, mobile phones.
- Medical/photographic evidence of injuries, such as marks of assault, bite marks or bruises.

Handling physical evidence

It is important to note that physical evidence degrades over time, so should be handed to the police as soon as possible. Parents should avoid keeping items that may be of value to avoid degradation and cross contamination with other items in the household. If for whatever reason you do need to store evidence, keep it in a brown paper bag rather than plastic and be sure to mark it with the date and time.

If you hand over electronic devices to the police for forensic examination, be aware that the specialist IT team may have a backlog of several months before they can examine your child's equipment. It is therefore helpful for both you and your child to have realistic expectations that **you may not be reimbursed with your equipment for several months**. This can be especially frustrating in the case of mobile phones if you are locked into a contract. You should also be prepared for the possibility that the specialist IT team is unable to access the relevant information for technical reasons.

A note on pregnancy and terminated pregnancy

If your daughter becomes pregnant through sexual exploitation, it is important to seek support from specialist youth sexual health services, such as Brook (www.brook.org.uk) and that medical practitioners are informed about the circumstances of conception. This is because a DNA test of the baby, or written evidence of miscarriage or termination may be used as evidence against a suspect in court. Pace can signpost you on to local agencies that can help, as well as offering emotional support to you as a parent in such circumstances.

Supporting evidence

Third party evidence may come from members of the public who have witnessed a child's contact with suspects, eg being driven or dropped off in cars. Many parents who come to Pace have formed vital alliances with parents of other children involved in the same exploitation ring and have been able to pool intelligence on their children's whereabouts when they are missing, for example.

However, if there is an active police investigation into your child's case, then bear in mind that you will be advised by the police not to discuss your evidence with other people.

If your child's school is supportive, it may be useful to share information with their Family Liaison team. Statements from teaching staff and absence logs may also be used as evidence, so it is worth building a relationship and informing staff about your concerns.

Passing on information/evidence

In theory, you should be allocated a designated officer when reporting suspected child sexual exploitation. They should be your first point of contact to update with new evidence and will advise you on how to hand in physical objects. However, some parents have reported they had no such contact, which caused frustration when they were required to constantly repeat information when handing over items. It may be helpful to record the name and collar number of every different police officer you speak to. Try to remain calm and polite and above all, persistent.

If the perpetrator(s) is/are a known sex offender(s), the police may advise you to pass on the information to the local Offender Management Team, who will then manage your evidence.

Responding to harassment by suspected perpetrators

Many parents tell Pace that they experienced harassment and stalking from the perpetrators responsible for their child's abuse, which prevented them from seeking help from the police earlier.

However, there are legal powers in place to protect you if you are targeted in this way. Any of the following behaviour should be logged with times and dates and reported to the police:

- Being physically followed, either on foot or in vehicles.
- Being spied on, or having people loitering near your property.
- Being repeatedly contacted by somebody, including through friends, family, the workplace or over social media.

If you have already given a statement to the police regarding the sexual exploitation of a child, then acts of harassment or stalking are automatically considered to be intimidation. This puts you under special protection and carries severe penalties.

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The gang knew we had spoken to the police and made it known to our family that they were not happy. There were more cars parked outside our house for days on end; I was followed and 'bumped into' by strange men.

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Parents also need to be mindful that the law on harassment applies to everybody and that they themselves may be accused of harassment by the perpetrator(s). This has happened on numerous occasions when parents have chosen to follow a suspected perpetrator's car in order to track the whereabouts of their child.

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We began following the perpetrator's car whenever our daughter was inside. Unbelievably, we then received a warning from the police, after they received a complaint from his solicitor. It seemed to us that the law was more in his favour than ours.

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In our case we received death threats on a regular basis for two years and nothing happened to the perpetrator. Yet one day when I announced in a fit of temper that I would kill him, I was promptly arrested. Luckily I had logged all the previous threats and harassment we had suffered from him in my diary and no further action was taken against me.

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Using the law to protect your child

Using the law as a key resource to protect your child

As there is currently no specific offence pertaining to child sexual exploitation overall, parents may benefit from having an overview of the existing legislation on sexual offences. The main piece of legislation that applies is the Sexual Offences Act 2003. You can read the Act in its entirety at:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents

The most important points to be aware of are:

- If a child under the age of 16 has gone 'willingly' with an abuser, then the offender may still be prosecuted, as long as it can be proved that the suspect knew or ought to have known the child's age.
- Once a child reaches the age of 17, offences relating to sexual activities with a child under 16 do not apply but an offence of rape may be brought if sex has taken place without consent or the victim is incapable of consenting through consumption of alcohol or drugs.
- The definition of 'sexual activity' is not limited to penetration, but can include kissing, groping, inappropriate touching and even virtual activity, such as encouraging a child to send intimate photographs of themselves via SMS or social media.

The offences may be categorised as:

- Preparatory offences
- Grooming offences
- Offences relating to pornography and prostitution
- Trafficking offences
- Sexual offences against a child under 13
- Sexual offences against a child under 16

- Offences committed by those in a position of trust
- Offences of rape and sexual assault

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force at midnight on 1 May 2004. This means that any rape or assault that took place before midnight on 1 May 2004 may be dealt with under other legislation. If it cannot be proved that it occurred either before or after midnight on 1 May 2004, then the defendant may still be convicted of an offence (under section 55 Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006).

Preparatory offences

Administering a substance with intent

Sexual Offences Act, section 61 (also Intoxicating Substance Supply Act 1985; Offences relating to supply of controlled drugs, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Drugs Act 2005)

This applies where a substance is given to a child without their consent in order to deliberately intoxicate them to enable another person to engage in sexual acts with them. Examples include when an alcoholic drink has been spiked with a drug or a soft drink spiked with alcohol.

Committing an offence with the intent to commit a sexual offence

Sexual Offences Act, section 62 (also Child Abduction Act 1984, section 2)

‘Sexual offence’ has a wide definition and includes aiding, abetting, (ie assisting or planning) counselling (ie encouraging) or procuring (taking steps to ensure it happens) a sexual offence.

This means that if your child is forcibly held against their will or taken somewhere against their will but manages to escape before a sexual offence is committed, an offence has still been committed.

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If the offence committed includes an act of kidnapping or false imprisonment, then the defendant must be tried at a Crown Court and may be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Grooming offences

Meeting a child following sexual grooming

Sexual Offences Act, section 15

If an adult (aged 18 or over) has communicated with a child under 16 (including over the internet) on at least two occasions and communicates plans to meet up with them, then an offence is committed. It is not necessary for the adult to set off on the journey. The adult must intend to commit a sexual offence and must not reasonably believe the child to be over 16.



What you can do

Be vigilant about your child's internet and mobile phone usage. Cut and paste any suspicious messages you access through their social media pages (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat) or mobile phone and store them into an electronic file, making sure you record the date and time of receipt. Alert the police as soon as you discover messages with sexual content and suggestions of meeting. Be prepared that if you hand over a computer or phone to the police, it may be several months before you are given them back, as they may be kept for evidence.

Remember: you don't have to wait for an offence to have been committed if the content of the message shows intent of sexual activity.

Offences relating to pornography and prostitution*

Sexual Offences Act, sections 45–53

**Pace has publicly called upon the UK Government to remove all references to ‘child prostitution’ in legislation as soon as possible. It is a deeply offensive term, which unnecessarily conveys an aspect of choice onto the victim. We use the term here because it is used in the legislation but we hope this will be amended.*

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 amended the Protection of Children Act 1978 so that the law relating to indecent photographs now applies to children under the age of 18. In terms of paying for the sexual services of a child if the child concerned is aged between 13–18, then the offender must not reasonably believe that the child is over 18.

The offences are listed under sections 45–53 and include indecent photographs of children aged 16 to 17; causing or inciting ‘child prostitution’, controlling a ‘child prostitute’ or a child involved in pornography and arranging or facilitating ‘child prostitution’ or pornography.



What you can do

Indecent Images

If you discover indecent photographs of your child or sexual images on their personal electronic devices (phone, ipad, laptop), or on the internet, you should contact the police immediately. They will then advise you as to whether they prefer you to bring the equipment to them, or if they prefer to send round a specialist team for collection at a later time.

Continued on page 30 ...



Indecent images

Given that the evidence may provide a direct link to the perpetrator, it is important that you act quickly, as your child may alert them that you have seen the images, giving the perpetrator time to destroy any hardware in their possession.

It is possible that your child may be being blackmailed by a perpetrator(s) in relation to the images, who may threaten to circulate them publicly. This will obviously be hugely distressing to a child (as well as to you as a parent), so it is important to reassure them that you understand that being exposed in this way feels terrible. Child victims of online abuse can quickly feel cornered and trapped, and a calm perspective from you can help de-escalate their anxieties.

As your child will likely be extremely possessive of their hand-held devices, it is very possible that removing them for safekeeping will cause an escalation in tension between you both. It may be helpful to talk through this with a Pace parent support worker.

You can also report online abuse of your child to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) by making an online report at:

www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report

Suspicious amounts of cash

If you find a suspiciously large bundle of cash in your child's possession, the safest immediate thing to do is to photograph the money, noting date and time. You should then ask the police if they want you to hand the cash to them for forensic evidence. Again, bear in mind that seizing the cash may subject your child to an increased risk of harm, especially if the perpetrator has tasked your child with safekeeping the money. Try to ascertain the source of the money and agree that you will keep it for safekeeping.

Trafficking offences

Trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation, section 58

Trafficking is defined as the intentional arrangement or facilitation of a person's arrival in the UK, exit from the UK or travel within the UK with the intention that the person concerned will be involved in sexual exploitation. Even if your child is regularly taken to the other side of your hometown, then this charge could be brought against a perpetrator, providing it could be proved that it was in order to facilitate child sexual exploitation. You can find out more about the relevant legislation by reading the Palermo Protocol and the European Convention Against Trafficking (especially Articles 10 and 12):

www.palermoprotocol.com and www.ecpat.org.uk/content/council-europe-convention-action-against-human-trafficking



What you can do

If you know the locations where your child is being taken to, then you must report them missing to both your own neighbourhood force and the force local to your child's suspected location. If you think your child is regularly being taken there, try to establish relations with either a specific CSE worker or youth team. Be prepared to encounter vastly different ways of operating between forces.

It is worth noting that each individual police force has its own IT system. Theoretically, forces should be able to share information as and when required, but there can be delays and breakdowns in communication on occasion.



What you can do

The National Referral Mechanism

If your child is repeatedly going missing in different localities over a period of time, you could ask your police contact to refer your child to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is an important tool in the statutory response to child sexual exploitation and is a good way of ensuring your child's case is escalated. This is because it requires different agencies to share all available information on your child and formally identifies them as a victim of trafficking. If the police do not agree to refer your child, you can also ask other agencies for a referral, including Local Authority Children Services, Barnardo's and the NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre.



What you can do

The British Transport Police

If you believe that your child may be being taken to other districts by train, then you could ask your local police force to notify the British Transport Police. The BTP are responsible for policing the rail network and have access to CCTV footage from stations and trains. You may choose to follow this up independently by calling the BTP on 0800 405040. If you know that your child is being trafficked by rail for sexual exploitation and live near a large mainline station, you can usually find the BTP office within or close to the station premises and make a report in person.

Sexual offences against a child under 13

Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault of a child under 13, sections 5-7

Under the Sexual Offences Act, a person can legally consent to sexual activity only if they are aged 16 years or over. But if a child is under 13 years old then in law s/he is automatically regarded as **not able to consent** to sexual activity. This is the case even if s/he expressed consent or believes that s/he is able to decide whether or not to consent to sexual activity. **Sexual intercourse with a child under 13 is therefore automatically seen as rape.**

There is a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for rape, assault by penetration, and causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity.

Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity, section 8

This offence covers inciting a child to participate in penetrative and non-penetrative sexual acts either with the offender him/herself, or with a third party. 'Inciting' could include texting a child with promises of a reward for sexual activities, or suggesting a potential sexual act. It also covers an adult making a child perform a sexual act such as stripping or masturbation.

Sexual offences against a child under 16

Section 9: Sexual activity with a child

Section 10: Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity

Section 11: Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child

Section 12: Causing a child to watch a sexual act

NOTE: These offences pertain to children under 16. However, because exploitative relationships often involve threats to the victims and/or their families, and/or the victim is often intoxicated with alcohol and drugs at the time of contact, then offences may have been committed even when the children are aged 16 or 17.

Sexual activity with a child

Sexual activity with a child encompasses sexual offences against children under 16 that involve both penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Therefore it includes penetration of a child's vagina or anus with a penis, or with any other part of the body or object. It also includes penetration of the child's mouth with a penis or penetration of the offender's mouth with a child's penis.

There is a common misconception that this offence is limited to the above only, but actually the law's interpretation of sexual activity can include kissing, groping, inappropriate touching and even virtual activity, such as encouraging a child to send intimate photographs of themselves via SMS or social media.

Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity

If your child will not disclose sexual assault, but you find suggestive texts messages from a perpetrator about potential sexual activity, (and they are under 16), then an offence has been committed, even if you cannot prove the activity actually occurred. See page 19 for what to do if you discover sexual content on your child's mobile or social media pages.

Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child

This offence is committed in circumstances where an offender, for the purposes of sexual gratification, intentionally engages in a sexual activity in the knowledge that a child under 16 is present or in a place where the activity can be observed. Additionally the offender must be aware that the child is aware of the activity. So if your child witnesses sexual activity but does not disclose being coerced into the activity themselves, an offence has still been committed.

Understanding consent

Section 74 of the Act tackles the issue of consent. It defines consent as having the freedom and capacity to choose. Having the freedom to choose means being able to exercise real choice about whether to engage in sexual activity or not. In cases of child sexual exploitation, the child is often unable to refuse sexual activity because violence or threats are used against them or s/he is held against their will. So even if the child is over 16, non-consensual offences (sections 1-4) such as sexual assault and sexual assault by penetration may have been committed if the child's freedom to choose was restricted.

Having the capacity to choose refers to the person's ability to consent to make a particular choice on sexual activity. Therefore people with additional needs or impaired mental faculties may not have the capacity to consent. A person of any age who is intoxicated with drugs or alcohol also does not have the capacity to consent to sexual activity.



What you can do

Many parents report to Pace that their children are intoxicated with drugs or alcohol following contact with the perpetrators. Therefore, the child's capacity to consent to sexual activity is affected even if they have voluntarily (as opposed to non-voluntarily) consumed alcohol or another substance. If anybody over 13 years of age has temporarily lost the capacity to choose whether or not to have sexual intercourse and sexual intercourse has taken place, then the defendant will have committed an offence of rape. If your child is obviously intoxicated after suspected contact with a perpetrator, then this is a situation whereby it would be beneficial to keep used underwear. Store the underwear in a brown paper bag with the **date and time clearly written on it**. You should also log the date and time and symptoms that your intoxicated child presented with (eg dilated eye pupils, clammy to the touch, slurred words, unable to stand, fast-paced breathing).

Offences committed by those in a position of trust

Sexual Offences Act, sections 16-22

Under the Act, it is prohibited for any person in a position of trust to have sexual contact with any child under 18 even if the defendant claims the child gave their consent. This covers situations such as looking after a child in a hospital, care home or an educational institution and children looked after under care orders. The obvious people it applies to are teachers, clinicians and care-workers, but it also applies to **anybody who provides specific services to children** (ie careers advice, after school clubs, youth clubs, performance/sports societies) and anybody who is regularly involved in caring for, training, or supervising children.

The offences are:

- Sexual activity with a child.
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.
- Sexual activity in the presence of a child.
- Causing a child to watch a sexual act.

Offences of rape and sexual assault

Rape, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent, sections 1-4

Under the Act, rape is defined as penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth by a penis where the victim does not consent and the offender does not reasonably believe that the victim consents. Sexual assault includes assault by penetration and causing or inciting a person to engage in sexual activity without consent.



What you can do

If your child discloses rape or sexual assault to you, it is important to show that you believe them by listening calmly and actively and responding sensitively. Do not beat yourself up if you cry yourself – it is a natural response to witnessing your child's distress. Once your child has indicated they have told you as much as they feel able, tell them again that you believe them. If the rape or sexual assault is recent, it is strongly advisable that you call the police, even if the child does not want you to. Remember you can also report information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

It is also very important to make a written note of the date, time and place where your child disclosed and as much of your child's statement as possible (see The importance of first disclosure, page 20).

What happens when you report rape/sexual assault to the police?

Upon receiving a report of sexual assault or rape, the police usually send out a first responder called a specially trained officer (STO) to your address. The officer will take a urine sample and swabs from your child's skin and/or mouth. No intimate swabs will be taken at this stage. If your child agrees, the police will then transport you and your child to a local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Taking police transport is for the best, as they will ensure no forensic evidence is lost during the journey by placing protective sheets on the seats.

If your child cannot face going to the police, then you could suggest you visit your nearest SARC together. You can find a list of national centres at:

www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/LocationSearch/364

If your child discloses rape to you immediately afterwards, but does not wish to attend a Sexual Assault Referral Centre or report it to the police, you could keep their unwashed clothing in a brown bag, clearly labelled with the date and time. It is worth taking the evidence to the nearest SARC, as they usually store evidence for a number of years for use in historic cases.

Even if your child discloses rape or sexual assault some time after the attack, it is still worth ascertaining which clothing they were wearing at the time, as it is possible to extract forensic evidence even after clothes have been washed.

Regardless of whether or not your child feels able to disclose the rape, you do need to consider their immediate health needs, such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Important things to consider about disclosure

Best practice for achieving best evidence from young people would take place in a special off-site headquarters, with non-uniformed staff and through discreetly placed video cameras. Specially trained staff would agree on language the child wishes to use to identify body parts and activities, with the option to draw if verbal description becomes too difficult. This level of provision is not yet rolled out nationally, however, so you should be prepared for the following challenges:

- Your child may be repeatedly asked to revisit specific points, even if the child themselves do not view it as significant.
- The police may prefer a chronological account, which seems fixated on events leading up to the assault, rather than the assault. The witness may feel frustrated by this, as if they are constantly being drawn 'off topic'.

Post-disclosure support

Bear in mind that if your child is brave enough to disclose to the police, there are vast differences in the level of post-disclosure support available. This can be problematic, as there can be considerable time lapse between the initial disclosure and a trial. However, your child will be given an opportunity to refresh their memory by watching their DVD interview or reading their statement before the trial. Remember that Pace staff are on hand to give support to you whilst you in turn support your child during this stressful time. Recent changes instigated by the 2013 review of the Crown Prosecution Service have led to more timely responses.

Disruption tools available to the police

The following section explores the number of civil prevention orders that may be applied for by a chief officer of police if your child is being sexually exploited.

Sexual Risk Orders

A Sexual Risk Order can impose restrictions on a perpetrator, such as limiting their internet use, preventing them from approaching or being alone with a named child, or restricting their travel abroad. It can be issued by a court after police application if it is satisfied that the individual has done **an act of a sexual nature**.

Sexual Risk Orders replaced Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RSHOs) in March 2014, after they were found to be not fit for purpose. It is hoped that the Sexual Risk Orders will be simpler, easier to implement and more effective. However, the current language does not clarify whether or not online contact falls within the definition of 'an act of a sexual nature'. Pace is therefore backing Barnardo's recommendation that the guidance issued by the Secretary of State is clarified to include virtual contact through social media platforms. At the time of writing, there was no official date for national implementation of the new SROs. A Pace PSW will be able to provide you with more up-to-date guidance.

Closure notices and hotel information requests

The 2014 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act brings in new measures for police to disrupt child sexual exploitation, such as the power to close down premises used to commit sex offences. To issue a closure, the police officer must have reasonable grounds to believe that the premises were, or are likely to be, used for child sex offences and that closure is needed to prevent the place from being used for activities related to child sex offences. The officer must also be satisfied that reasonable efforts have been made to consult the local authority and to establish the identity of any residents or anyone with an interest in the premises.

Police can also request information about hotel guests, such as their name and address, from hotels or similar locations if they reasonably believe that child sexual exploitation is taking place there.

Child Abduction Warning Notices

Child Abduction Warning Notices (or just 'notices' in police parlance) were formerly known as Harbourers' Warnings. They can be issued against individuals who are suspected of grooming children by stating that they have no permission to associate with the named child and that if they do so they can be arrested under the Child Abduction Act 1984 and Children Act 1989.

They can be a useful tool for parents because they require a statement from the person(s) with parental responsibility for the child. This is important if you identify a risk as a parent, but your child insists that the person is a legitimate 'friend' or 'boy/girlfriend'. However, parents from Pace have experienced major frustrations with Child Abduction Warning Notices as breaching the conditions of the notice does not automatically mean an offence has been committed. This is because the legislation stipulates that it must be proven that the adult has 'taken' or 'detained' the child, which is of course difficult to prove if the child insists they remained with the offender willingly.

The other problem with Child Abduction Warning Notices is that the police are able to issue them for children up to the 18 only if they are in the care of the local authority. At the moment they can only be issued to children up to the age of 16 if they are living at home.

At the time of writing (June 2014), Pace and several other national charities publicly recommended that the Government amend the legislation to ensure that breaching the conditions is an offence and that notices can be served for all children up to the age of 18.

Working with the Police

Parents notes:

How to make a complaint if things go wrong

How to make a complaint if things go wrong

Police forces are organised differently, with each one operating along individual lines and in agreement with the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board. This means that some parents will experience compounded stress if the service in their area is not as effective as in other parts of the country or if circumstances involve more than one police authority.

If you are dissatisfied by your treatment by the police, there is a process for making a formal complaint. However, many parents advise that this should be avoided for as long as possible.

“

Complaints can sometimes make a good working relationship difficult - not that they should - but it does happen. It may be worth waiting until the case is closed before you go down that route.

”

Parents may get a better response by seeking out a senior officer and trying to establish a working relationship with an officer in authority.

“

Don't expend time and energy on junior officers; seek out someone of at least the rank of inspector.

”

Once you have identified a more senior officer, try to remain calm and express your concerns clearly - it may help to write points down beforehand.

The role of parents in investigating child sexual exploitation

If you do not receive a satisfactory response to your concern, then you could make a formal complaint. As a very last resort, you could turn to the outside body that monitors the police called the Independent Police Complaints Committee (IPCC). You can find out how via the IPCC website:

www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/how_complaint.aspx



Be prepared for tremendous delays when making formal complaints. The IPCC took 16 months to investigate and get back to us with an outcome. We feel we only got regular updates because Pace supported us and kept the agencies on their toes. When the Ombudsman responded, we were then told to wait a further three months for a response from our local Children's Services. So now we're playing the waiting game yet again..



Contacting your Police and Crime Commissioner

If you are dissatisfied with the service from your local police force, or wish to promote better understanding of child sexual exploitation, then another option is to contact your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). PCCs were elected across England and Wales in November 2012. Their role is to hold the police to account and they aim to make the police answerable to the communities they serve.

You can find out who your PCC is and how to contact them via the Association of PCCs website:

<http://apccs.police.uk/find-your-pcc>

(Note that there is no PCC for London, where a similar role is performed by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.)

Useful contacts

Pace

Switchboard 0113 240 3040
Parent Referral No 0113 240 5226
Website www.paceuk.info

Crimestoppers 0800 555111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Victim Support 0845 30 30 900 www.victimsupport.org.uk

Rape Crisis 0808 802 9999 www.rapecrisis.org.uk

CEOP 0870 000 3344 www.ceop.police.uk

Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Missing People 116 000 www.missingpeople.org.uk

British Transport Police 0800 40 50 40 www.btp.police.uk

Poppy Project 0207 735 2062
(for trafficking)

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Summary of offences

Process of Exploitation	Relevant Legislation
Meeting a child following sexual grooming	Sexual Offences Act, S. 15
Administering a substance with intent	Sexual Offences Act, S. 61
Sexual activity with a child	Sexual Offences Act, S. 9
Rape, or rape of a child under 13	Sexual Offences Act, S. 1 and S. 5
Assault by penetration	Sexual Offences Act, S. 7
Sexual assault	Sexual Offences Act, S. 3 and S. 7
Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent	Sexual Offences Act, S. 4 and S. 8
Trafficking within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation	Sexual Offences Act, S. 58
Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity	Sexual Offences Act, S. 10
Arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence	Sexual Offences Act, S. 14
Indecent photographing of children	Sexual Offences Act, S. 48, 49 and 50 and Protection of Children Act 1978
Causing or inciting child prostitution or child pornography	Sexual Offences Act, S. 49 and Protection of Children Act 1978, S. 1
Trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence	Sexual Offences Act, S. 63
Committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence, eg false imprisonment	Sexual Offences Act, S. 62
Supply of intoxicating substance	Intoxicating Substance Supply Act 1985
Offences relating to supply of controlled drugs	Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Drugs Act 2005
Child abduction	Child Abduction Act 1984, S. 2
Criminal intimidation	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, S. 51
Damage or threat to destroy property	Criminal Damage Act 1971, S. 1 and 2
Common assault	Criminal Justice Act 1988, S. 39 or Offences Against the Person Act 1861, S. 47
Threats to life	Offences Against the Person Act 1861, S. 16
Harassment	Protection from Harassment Act 1997, S. 1
Burglary	Theft Act 1968, S. 9 and 10

Where can I find out more about Pace?

You can download all of our booklets and leaflets from the website or order them by contacting us at info@paceuk.info

Pace (2013) **Supporting Families Through The Court Process**. Leeds: Pace.

Pace (2014) **The Relational Safeguarding Model: Best Practice in Working With Families Affected by Child Sexual Exploitation**. Leeds: Pace.

Pace (2014) **Living with Child Sexual Exploitation: Keeping Your Family Together**

Emma Palmer and Peter Jenkins (2014) **Parents As Partners in Safeguarding Children: An Evaluation of Pace's Work in Four Lancashire Child Sexual Exploitation Teams**
October 2010–October 2012. Leeds: Pace.

You can also download our **2012/13 Annual Review** at www.paceuk.info

We're here to help

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) is the leading charity for parents and carers whose children are sexually exploited.

We work with parents to assist them in helping their children exit damaging and exploitative relationships. We do this by forming partnerships with police chiefs and social care practitioners, providing training for safeguarding professionals and campaigning for greater recognition of parents' needs and rights to safeguard their children.

Everything we do is underpinned by the experience of affected parents and evidence-driven research.

We offer a free national support service for parents whose children are experiencing CSE as well as a secure on-line forum where parents can

contact each other anonymously for advice and information. We hold a number of Parent Network Days throughout the UK during the year for affected parents to meet and share coping strategies.

Please let us know if you'd like to sign up to our newsletter, which keeps you up to date with current research and news, highlighting new research and projects.

Tell us what you think of our booklet

Please send your views and feedback to info@paceuk.info or write to us at **Pace, Unit 10, Waverley House, Killingbeck Drive, Leeds, LS14 6UF**

This booklet was written by Louise Vaughan, Pace Communications Manager and was assessed and approved by Tom Duffin, a former Police Superintendent and Pace National Partnerships Director. The author wishes to thank Detective Sergeant Mark Whelan, Inspector Paul Burnside and Detective Superintendent Ian Critchley from Lancashire Police for all their help and advice. The author is also deeply grateful to all the parents affected by child sexual exploitation who spared their time to share their testimonies and advice.

Get involved

You can help other parents bring an end to the misery of child sexual exploitation by:

- Volunteering as a befriender
- Supporting our campaigns
- Taking part in a fundraising event
- Making a donation
- Recommending our training to an organisation
- Attending National Parent Network days

To get more actively involved, please call us on **0113 240 30 40** or email us at info@paceuk.info or go to www.paceuk.info

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