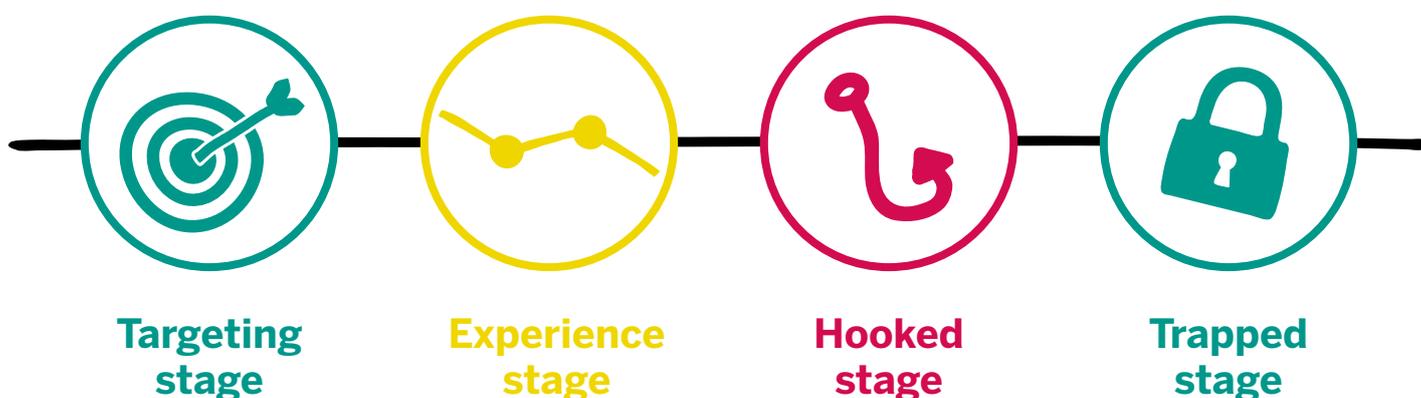


# Criminal Exploitation: Stages of Recruitment

## Children At Risk of Exploitation (CARE)

There are a number of different stages that people use when they're trying to exploit you. Knowing what these stages of recruitment are, and what signs to look out for, can help you keep yourself safe from exploitation.

**There are four main recruitment stages when somebody is trying to exploit you:**



This booklet gives you more information about each stage of recruitment, and you can find out more by visiting **[childrenssocietyeast.org.uk](http://childrenssocietyeast.org.uk)**

If you think you (or someone you know) might be being recruited for exploitation, don't keep quiet. There are plenty of people you can talk to who'll be able to help, including:

**ChildLine: 0800 11 11**

**NSPCC: 0808 800 5000**

**The Mix: 0808 808 4994**

You can call also The Children's Society on **01245 493 311**  
or visit **[childrenssocietyeast.org.uk](http://childrenssocietyeast.org.uk)**

## Targeting stage



This is when a person targets a young person who is vulnerable, as this reduces their chances of getting caught. They pick their targets based on things like your age, strength or situation.

**Signs of this stage include a person:**

- \* Observing you
- \* Finding out your vulnerabilities, needs and wants
- \* Selecting you as a target
- \* Glamourising their lifestyle to you
- \* Gaining and developing your trust
- \* Sharing information about you with other members of their gang
- \* Recruiting you to their gang or friendship group
- \* Marking you out as someone to watch

## Experience stage



This stage is where this person might try to get you used to their lifestyle, or train you up in what they're doing. **At this stage a person might:**

- \* Make you feel wanted
- \* Give you gifts and rewards
- \* Include you in lots of things
- \* Test out your loyalty
- \* Listen to you and remember what you say
- \* Offer you protection
- \* Relate to you and offer you advice
- \* Give you a sense of belonging
- \* Praise you, or ask you to praise them
- \* Give you a weapon
- \* Introduce you to more established members of their gang
- \* Ask to see the skills they've taught you, and test you

## Hooked stage



This is the stage where the person will make you feel like you're a member of their gang, even though actually they're just exploiting you for their own gain. **Signs that you're in the hooked stage of being exploited can include:**

- \* You having an identity in the group
- \* You being given a bigger role in the group (so you may have people running for you)
- \* You getting more responsibilities within the group eg more money
- \* You might be encouraged to engage in thrill seeking behaviour
- \* You might be asked to commit low level crimes
- \* You might feel more powerful (although this may not be the reality)
- \* You might feel you've made a progression in the group (although this may not be the reality)
- \* Others may know your name, helping you feel more powerful (but this can result in rivalry)
- \* Your exploiter might create a dependency
- \* Exposure of possible consequences to your actions
- \* You might be given access to information
- \* Engaging in activities such as drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour
- \* Asking for favours
- \* Keeping secrets
- \* Asking you to recruit others to the gang
- \* Involvement with trap houses



## Trapped stage

Now you feel dependant on the group, the relationship with the person exploiting you may start to become unpleasant, as they reveal their true intents or character. **At this stage you may experience:**

- \* Threatening behaviour
- \* Attempts to reinforce your dependency
- \* Attempts or suggestions you're indebted to your exploiter
- \* Manipulation
- \* Blackmail – this can include 'fake' mugging organised by them to create a debt
- \* Physical violence
- \* Sexual assaults including strip searches, drugs being inserted for running (plugging)
- \* People playing on your guilt, shame and fear
- \* Attempts to isolate you from your family, friends and society
- \* People forcing you to abuse others, assault or even shoot people
- \* People humiliating you, either sexually or by exposing your mistakes to others
- \* Someone making you feel trapped
- \* Involvement in Class A drugs (cooking or running)
- \* Running a trap house
- \* Drug addiction (encouraged by others)
- \* Your exploiter making you dependent on them (resulting in you having less money)