

The Sexual Exploitation of Children, Young People and Adults with a Learning Disability in Newcastle



Easy Read Version

What this report is about



Gangs of men in Newcastle have worked together to sexually abuse;

- Children
- Young People
- Adults with a learning disability

This report is about the main things that have been learnt about keeping people safe.

Sexual exploitation around the country



Around the country there have been many times when groups of adults (mostly men), have groomed children and young people to use them for sex.



Grooming is when adults gain the trust of young people, children and vulnerable adults so that they can use them for sex.



Sometimes the men pretend to be people's friends to get the young people, children and vulnerable adults to have sex. They sometimes give people drugs and alcohol.

Lots of men will use the same young person, child or vulnerable adult for sex.

We call this sexual exploitation. It is illegal, and it is abuse.



Many children, young people and vulnerable adults don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse.



There has been lots of abuse by groups of men in different parts of the country.



It has been so bad that there have been lots of stories about what has happened on the news and in the newspapers

Sexual exploitation in Newcastle



In 2013 a woman aged 21 with a learning disability told her Social Worker that she had been used for a long period of time by groups of men for sex.



She also talked about the abuse of other children and young people.



This made people like the police and Social Workers understand that:

- Groups of men were sexually abusing children and young people and children in Newcastle
- Groups of men were also sexually abusing adults with a learning disability in Newcastle

Operation Sanctuary



The Police started to investigate the gangs of men abusing people.



This investigation was called Operation Sanctuary.

A sanctuary is a place of safety.



Over 30 men were arrested in Operation Sanctuary.



They were sent to prison for many years.

Things that have been learnt from Operation Sanctuary

The people who have been abused



Just like in other parts of the country, there has been a large number of people from Newcastle who have been abused. We call these people victims.



The victims have been very well supported by services to help them cope with what happened to them.



The sexual abuse of adults with a learning disability in Newcastle was something that was not found in other parts of the country.



This does not mean the abuse of adults with a learning disability or other vulnerable adults is not taking place in different parts of the country.



Getting evidence from victims was not always easy. Not all victims made complaints or could explain clearly what had happened to them.

The people who carried out the sexual exploitation



Most of the men who abused people in this case came from ethnic minority backgrounds.



Work needs to be done to understand why men and sometimes women commit these crimes. This can be things like understanding what abusers think about women and girls.



It has not been found that young boys and men with a learning disability have been abused by gangs of men. This does not mean that it is not happening.



Sexual exploitation is still likely to be happening.

The investigation into sexual exploitation of people



Operation Sanctuary was a very good investigation. The police, Social Workers, people in the health service and others all worked well together to:

- Bring a lot of abusers to court
- Make sure the victims got a lot of support



Lots of people who work in Newcastle supported the work of the police and Social Workers to protect people from the groups of abusers.



In some parts of the country people were worried because many of the abusers were from ethnic minorities. People did not want to be seen as being racist.



In Newcastle the needs of children, young people and adults with a learning disability were seen as more important than anything else.



There have been no complaints about the work done in Newcastle to protect people from the groups of abusers.

Things that should be done in the future to keep people safe



Different places around the country should listen to what children, young people and vulnerable adults tell them about abuse.



The police, Social Workers, people who work in health and others should believe that abuse by groups of men, and sometimes women, will be happening.



They should work together in teams to find out who is being abused and stop the abuse.



Education, health services and services in the community should learn how to spot people who have been abused by groups of men and sometimes women.



They should report this to people like the police and Social Workers who can keep people safe.



Good support should be given to people who have been abused to help them:

- to feel better about themselves
- to live in a safer place
- to keep away from the people who abused them



It should be made as difficult as possible for groups of men and sometimes women to abuse people.



Work should be done to understand the reasons why groups of men abuse people together.

What the Government should do to keep people safe from groups of abusers



The government makes the rules that everybody has to follow.



The government should:

- Look at the rules that people like the police and Social Workers have to follow to keep people safe from abuse. They should make sure that the rules are right to protect people from gangs of abusers



The government should:

- Look at how people who have been abused are supported in court.



The government should:

- Look at the laws that keep people safe from abuse by gangs of men to see if any changes need to be made.



The government should:

- Look at how you can keep people safe from abuse, even if they say they do not want any help.