**Bitesize recording - Grooming-20240327\_144957-Meeting Recording**

0:06  
Hi everyone, and welcome to our bite size training on child sexual exploitation, sextortion and grooming. I'm Hayley Cameron, the Education Safeguarding Manager at Cognos. And I'm here with my colleague Steve. Yeah, hi everybody. Steve Ridden part of the Education Safeguarding team and the E Safety Advisor.

0:27  
So what is sextortion? Sextortion is a type of blackmail

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in which an individual manipulates, threatens to to distribute explicit or intimate materials. Uh such as uh sexual images or videos of the victim, unless certain demands are met. Criminals often target individuals through online platforms, social media, or dating apps that may establish trust and report leading victims to share intimate content willingly or unknowingly through webcam sessions or private messages. So extortion can cause significant emotional distress, a feeling of shame,

1:03  
fear and anxiety. UH. And it's crucial to remember that victims are never at fault, and support is available to help cope with the aftermath.

1:15  
OK, so the Internet Watch Foundation report from 2023 and hotline reports shocking rise in the sextortion of boys. In the first six months of 2023, the Internet Watch Foundation received more reports involving sextortion than in the whole of 2020. Two older teens, 14 to 17 years old, are the most at risk, with boys apparently being targeted most often.

1:42  
So the Child Exploitation Online Protection Team. That's a group of detectives who work for the National Crime Agency, whose job it is to identify these adults who communicate with children sexually on there, hopefully get them prosecuted and put them to prison. They're saying that according to them, that most Child Exploitation offences take place online. These offences include deceiving children, introducing indecent images of themselves, engaging sexual chat online or sexual activity over a webcam. The analysis reveals

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that 13 of 14 year olds represent the largest single victim group. Yes, lots of younger children are getting exploited and older children, but why are 13 or 14 year olds, Uh, are more at risk? Well,

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offenders make a few assumptions. They make the assumption that 13 to 40 year olds have access to smart devices. They also making the assumption that they've got that access in their bedrooms. Offenders know that 13 or 14 rods can go out of the home after school or an evening. And offenders know that 13 or 14 year olds can make an excuse to mum and dad to go and stay a friend's house overnight. So they know all that information already. And as we probably all know, 13 to 14 year olds, they're boundary pushers and they're risk takers. I don't know if you know

2:58  
the the academics tell us that our brains don't fully develop until we get to the edge of about 25 or 26 year old, 26 years old. And the last part of our brain to develop is how we assess risk. So for instance, somebody like myself, I make some very low risk decisions, you get some very good outcomes, but children of that age makes some very high risk decisions and get some very poor outcomes. We all seen on TikTok and YouTube young people doing some real crazy things on skateboards and mountain bikes and we think to ourselves, well, I wouldn't do that

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because I break my neck. But of course the children, they don't see that risk because their brain hasn't developed that. And when they're online in tricky situations, they don't see that risk and that's not their fault. And of course, offenders take advantage of that vulnerability.

3:49  
Hey, so recognising sextortion and the warning signs, be vigilant for potential red flags indicating sex extortion attempts such as receiving unsolicited explicit content, sudden or relentless request for intimate images or persistent demands for personal information, threatening language around the loss of viewers or followers on social media if demands are not met or images and videos are not sent.

4:14  
Sextortion could be committed by individuals, but organised crime gangs are usually behind it.

4:22  
So recognising your child or a child you know may be a victim of sex tortion. It's important to note that every child may react differently when being sexually extorted and the signs may vary depending on their personality, age and other factors. However, here are some potential changes in behaviour that could indicate a child is being sexually extorted. Emotional distress. The child may display size of increased anxiety, fear or mood swings. They may appear more withdrawn, depressed or easily agitated.

4:54  
Social withdrawal. The child might start avoiding social interactions or spending less time with friends and family. They may become isolated and reluctant to participate in activities they used to enjoy a change in online behaviour. If a child is being sexually extorted, they may exhibit specific alterations in their online activities, such as spending

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time online and secretive about the online interactions, or suddenly avoiding or deleting social media accounts.

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You should behaviour with money, gift vouchers, online currency, etcetera. The child is spending more money than usual or has less money than you would expect. They may steal money from you and other members.

5:40  
Unusual secrecy. The child may become unusually secretive about their personal life, activities or online interactions. They might express reluctance or defensiveness when questioned about their online behaviour or communication.

5:55  
Sudden Drop in academic performance. Sextortion can have a significant impact on a child's emotional well-being, which may lead to a decline in their academic performance.

6:05  
They may struggle with concentration, lose interest in schoolwork or show signs of distress during school hours,

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a change in attitude to school. They may see school as their safe place and enjoy the break from devices if the perpetrator extortionist is outside the school community

6:23  
sleep disturbances sextortion can cause significant stress and anxiety leading to changes in sleep patterns. The child may experience difficulties falling asleep, frequent nightmares or increased night time awakenings.

6:38  
Avoidance of electronic devices. If a child is being sexually extorted, they might display an unusual aversion to use an electronic devices or express discomfort when receiving messages or calls.

6:49  
They may try to limit their online presence or avoid using specific apps or platforms altogether. Self harm or suicidal ideation.

6:58  
The child might exhibit signs of self harm, suicidal thoughts or express feelings of hopelessness. These signs should be taken extremely seriously and immediate. Professional help should be sought.

7:11  
So what to do if you are a victim of sextortion,

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this is not your fault and there's nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. It may make you feel upset and helpless, but support is available from trusted, nonjudgmental, judgmental and understanding people and organisations.

7:28  
Stay calm and reach out for help. Ask for assistance from a trusted adult or support helpline. Immediately. Preserve evidence if possible, save those messages and record any communications related to the incident. This evidence can be valuable for legal purposes and reporting the crime.

7:44  
Stop all communication, discontinue any interaction with the perpetrator and block them on all platforms to prevent further manipulation or harassment. Report the incident. Contact your local police and provide them with the evidence and details of this extortion incident. They can guide you to for the next necessary steps to take.

8:06  
Inform parents or a trusted adult. Share the situation with a responsible adult who can provide support, help in reporting the crime and assist in navigating the emotional challenges that may arise. Seek professional help. Reach out to councillors, therapists or support organisations specialising in cyber crime or Victim Support. They can offer guidance and help you cope with the emotional impact of being sexually extorted. Alert relevant platforms. Report the offender and the incident to the platform or website where the initial

8:36  
contact or harassment occurred. They can take necessary action to prevent others from becoming victims. Be cautious of revictimisation. Offenders can be persistent. Despite all attempts to avoid, block and secure your personal information and online presence, they may still manage to contact you. They can be very determined. Again, this is not your fault. Try to ignore and continue to report

9:04  
why young person might share nudes. Not all children who share nudes do so because they feel coerced. In some cases they might want to ohh. However this is often because they believe they might get something in return. This could include getting a modelling job, money, gift cards and new mobile phone or other gifts. Additionally, sextortion can actually come from someone your child is in a relationship with. They might share an image with the recipient who then pressures them for more. Research shows that this can happen to anyone

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from any background and any age. The FBI, for instance, have interviewed victims as young as 8

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at the time of writing. There's a significant spike in sextortion cases globally. Then. This includes the UK with many of the scams targeting teenage boys,

9:54  
how to help children and Young people.

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Parents and carers need to recognise just how embarrassing and shaming sextortion can feel for the young person. As such, they will often struggle to admit they have shared nude images with someone who took advantage of them. Again, those behind the scams know this. As such, if your child has told you that this has happened, then it's a massive first step. If a child or young person tells you about an incident

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of coercion, remember they are a victim of crime. Often victims don't report extortion crimes. Additionally, extreme cases have led to children and young people taking their own lives, so reassure them that you are there to help.

10:36  
So reporting to the police report what's happened. You can do this by contacting your local police on 101 or making report to the National Crime Agency via the Safety Centre where a child protection advisor will make sure you get the help you need. Find out more about how she up can help you by going on to their website. Always call 999 if you are in immediate danger. If you're not ready to make a report to the police or feel worried about what might happen, you can speak to an understanding and not judgmental people at ChildLine.

11:07  
You don't need to give them your name or details. If you have copies of the images or videos, or links to the website where images or videos may be shown, you can use an online tool called Report Remove. Report Remove is here to help young people under 18 in the UK to confidential report sexual images and videos of themselves and the Internet Watch Foundation will then try to have them removed from the Internet. Once you've used Report Removed, you will also be able to talk to a trained ChildLine counsellor who will have provided

11:38  
support. Other children and young people in the same situation Check out the report. Remove.

11:47  
We advise stopping.

11:48  
We advise stopping all contact with anyone who is trying to blackmail or threaten. Do not share anymore images or videos or pay any money of any sort. If you have been communicating on an app, there should be an inbuilt tool to block and report the user. You can find helpful information on how to block and report people on apps and social media.

12:09  
Finally, remember, this is not your fault. The person trying to blackmail or sexually assault you is the one who's in the wrong. Lots of other young people have been in a similar situation. If you're feeling upset and need to talk to someone, you can get in touch with ChildLine.

12:27  
So here's the screen here with the with the front page of the report, Remove and ChildLine and all device. Uh uh, that you need to have to report an image of yourself.

12:40  
So how do I remove a new image of myself? While ChildLine will work with the Internet Watch Foundation on there and there's a few specific steps that you have to take. But what I'm going to do is show you a short video on how you can report a new image of yourself that's ended up on the Internet or social media.

12:58  
I couldn't believe it. When my nude was shared online, I didn't know what to do, I just knew I wanted it down fast. Then I found report removed. They supported me to report the image confidentially and then it actually got removed. I felt so heaved. If it ever happens to you and you're under 18, go to report. Remove you, confirm your age and give some simple details to set up your confidential ChildLine account specialists

13:29  
the Internet Watch Foundation Review your report to see if your nude can be removed. Most of the time, no one else will know you've made a report. If it can be removed, the IWF will find where it's been posted online and get it taken down. There are places they can't get images removed from like Snapchat or WhatsApp, but they will make sure it can't be posted publicly or easily found online. ChildLine will update you on your report and the councillors are always there to support you too. Just remember

14:00  
no one has the right to share a need of you. Visit childline.org.uk/remove For more information

14:10  
SO tactics used by offenders.

14:14  
This one guy here who's Edwards admitted more than 100 sexual offences against children. Uh, we handed a life sentence, got a minimum 12 years. So what did he do? He used fake Snapchat accounts posing as a 14 year old boy to groom more than 200 girls aged between 10 and 16.

14:30  
So he our schools of of children really for indecent images in school uniform and blackmailed many young girls threatening to publish their photos or hurt their families to get them to cooperate. He pleaded guilty to over 22 counts of blackmail, 138 child sex offences and a further offence of refusing to disclose his password to a mobile phone in USB stick.

14:51  
But this typical offender use of psychological manipulation. So police examination of the devices revealed the defendants very significant offending against a large number of young girls. He had been in online contact with over 210 girls, ranging from the age of 10 to 16 years old. There was a pattern of behaviour he made online contact with girls, sometimes pretending to be someone they knew, sometimes making contact through friends of friends. You pretended to be a boy of similar age and groomed his victims by psychologically

15:22  
manipulating them until they had gained control. He was friendly, complimentary, had to have a real interest in the victims and their lives. He gained trust by building relationships with them while continuing that he was a teenage boy. Often he gained A victim sympathy by claiming that contact with her helped his well-being. As you can see. Really manipulative behaviour.

15:45  
This chap here, Elliot Nicklin, 22 years old, used online chat groups to blackmail over 70 teenage girls into sending explicit photos of themselves. He used online personas in chat group to lure his victims in. Again, 27 offences on their job for 10 years. But of course, when this guy here, yeah, starts contacting teenage girls, clearly he's not going to use that photograph because he knows that teenage girls are not going to be speaking to him. So what does he do?

16:14  
He has other personas. OK, so he has lots and lots of fake photographs on there. You'll have lots of photographs of all these particular individuals on there. These are just stock photographs from the Internet that I found on there. But let's just say he decides to use this young chap in the bottom left hand corner. He'll contact the girls via social media platforms on there. Be really cool, really nice to be a voice changing up. You'll sound like the person who looks like on there. Yeah, this could take weeks, could take months on there. The young person, the young girl might even feel she's in a relationship.

16:45  
This young guy, the conversations will get flirty, they'll get sexual. And then one day he will send the girl a naked photograph of himself. Of course it would be naked photograph of him on there. The girl's going to think, wow. And he's gonna say, well, send me one back. Girl's gonna think, well, why not? I've got one of you. What's the problem? You're really nice guy. So she does. She sends him one back. But of course it's not going back to him, is it? It's going back to him.

17:11  
And of course he only needs that one photograph, doesn't he? Send me another one. No. Well, the one you've just sent me is going to your family, OK? It's going to all your mates at school. And of course that is clear. Sex exploitation and sextortion

17:25  
again. This chap here again. Prolific sex offender again posing as a girl. Exactly the same techniques 36 year old man eastern England convicted of 96 sex offences against 51 boys aged 1/4 to 15. The National Crime Agency said is one of the most prolific child sex abuse offenders They've investigated again created dozens of fake social media profiles pretending to be a 13 year old girl. So we do exactly the same thing. He would send the young boys a picture of their you know you'd naked girl. The boys going to think,

17:56  
wow, send me one back, yeah, what's the harm in that? Of course, that's where the extortion happens. The national currency said they had evidence up to 500 victims had sent images to him and more than 5000 children worldwide on there. I mean, thankfully he got 25 years imprisonment.

18:13  
And here's another way, another tactic that people use this chap here could harms. So he falsely poses a River Island model Scout on TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram to lure children to carrying out sexual acts. He targeted 45 youngsters, Adrian 6 and 15. After messaging them on on those social media sites, he then persuaded them to download apps so they could video call each other before using screen capture software to record the footage again. Examination of his laptop showed at least 30 different identities to contact

18:44  
children, including posing as a person called Jash, a supposed model scout for River Island. Victims would be told that the scout was looking for girls aged 10 to 14 to help launch a new spring collection and that they if they passed an online trial they would earn 1200 LB Way. You can see with the cost of living crisis just how children can be sucked in and tricked into posing for that chat there.

19:08  
So lots of information on there. This is one thing so you got naked online for. That's from the southwest grid for learning. Lots of good information on there for parents and for students about this type of offence. And from the Lucy faithful trust that we've got Parents Protect on their A guide for parents and children and young people who have got into trouble online, designed to answer some of the immediate questions you may have to learning about something's happened or what is about to happen in a child's life.

19:34  
Ohh. So this from Internet Matters, a very good website. On there they've got a new resource called What is Extortion? And a Guide to Online Sexual Coercion and Extortion for Children. So a really good website to go to.

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Haley

19:49  
hey so um guidance for schools March 2023. Sharing news and send me nudes. So again recently updated UH. This advice outlines how to respond to an incident of nudes and semi nudes being shared including risk assessing situations, safeguarding and supporting children and young people handling devices and images recording incidents including the role of other agencies, informing parents and carers. So it's really important. A lot of you may be aware of the guidance, but just know the the update.

20:21  
Also, we have this done with the search and screening and confiscation. The most up-to-date version of this is the July 2022. I just thought I'd tell you about searching for devices. It says that search and screening confiscation advice for schools highlights how the Education Act 2011 gives schools the power to search pupils for devices. Search data on devices. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. If during a search a teacher finds material which concerns them

20:53  
and they reasonably suspect the material UH has been or could be used, or has or commit an offence, they can decide whether or not they should be deleted the material or retain it as evidence of a criminal offence or a breach of the school discipline. They can also decide whether material is of a serious nature, that the police need to be involved.

21:15  
Again, some useful websites out there, This is the Sea Up, the Child Exploitation on a Protection Team website. So like the police website, lots of useful information on there from them. And the National Cyber Security Centre have got this brand new resource saying of course Cyber First how to stay secure online for 11 to 14 year olds. Really useful website there and Crime Stoppers, OK, which encourages young people to speak about crime. And they've got a new campaign called Fearless on there and on the Fearless website. Yeah, lots of children think they know about crimes, but this kind of dispels some of the myths about all these different crimes

21:47  
out there that potentially children could get themselves involved in.

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And of course, yeah, we have got the Sea Up report button there. We've got the child line with Crime Stoppers, NSPCC, useful links to have on your school websites as well or highlight them on your child protection policy.

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And of course we've got our safeguarding teams that way. Uh or a Pastoral care teams UH within our school who are a great source of advice.

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Please remember to refer to our commonly asked questions document on the Cognos website. We're constantly updating

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this document with any questions that come in. We get asked a range of questions on a daily basis and the ones that we think actually if one person's asking, everyone's going to need the answer, We put them onto this document. It's a live document, so again regularly updated

22:42  
and of course our bite size and training. So again, every half term there'll be new content which is available on the website.

22:54  
And thank you for listening. Um, our next Bite size will be out just before the May half term. So again, if you have any ideas or themes that you would like us to cover, please get in touch with the member of the team. Thanks everyone.