



One Minute Guide



What is Mate Crime?

Mate Crime is a term used where people within communities, particularly people with learning disabilities, mental health issues or substance abuse issues, and older people are befriended with the intention of them being exploited and abused financially, physically, emotionally or otherwise

Mate Crime is also a form of Disability Hate Crime. The perpetrator is likely to be perceived as a close friend, a carer or a family member and will use this relationship for exploitation.

What might Mate Crime involve?

Mate Crime involves different types of abuse including:

1. Financial Abuse

Perpetrators might

- Demand/ask to be given money and then not pay it back
- Misuse or borrow property and not return it
- Take their benefits from them
- Clear their cupboards of food, alcohol or other purchases

2. Physical Abuse

The person may be

- Physically harmed for the amusement by the perpetrator or associates
- Seriously injured which may ultimately result in death

3. Emotional Abuse

Perpetrators might:

- Manipulate or mislead the person
- Make them feel worthless
- Call them names
- Groom the person for criminal offences

4. Sexual Abuse

The person might be:

- Sexually exploited by someone they think is their friend or partner
- Persuaded to perform sexual acts they do not feel comfortable with
- Coerced into prostitution

Who might be vulnerable to Mate Crime?

People who are more vulnerable to Mate Crime include people:

- With no close family or friends
- With a physical disability
- With a learning disability
- With verbal communication constraints
- Experiencing mental health issues
- Who misuse drugs and/or alcohol
- Who are isolated from the community
- Who have low self-worth or esteem

How can you spot Mate Crime?

Those who seek to abuse and exploit children, young people and adults will pretend to be their friends to gain their trust and loyalty. Mate Crime:

- ✓ Starts with people saying they are their target's friend
- ✓ Does not start with bullying but can become bullying
- ✓ Often happens in private where it is not seen by others

Indicators of Mate Crime can include:

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance, finances or household (e.g. new people visiting or staying over, lots of new 'friends', lots more noise or rubbish than there normally is).
- Unexplained injuries.
- Sudden sexualised behaviour/discussing sexual acts.
- Losing weight/gaining weight.
- Not taking care of themselves and looking dirty or scruffy.
- Bills not being paid.

- A 'friend' who does not respect, bullies or undermines the person.
- Suddenly short of money, losing possessions or changing their will.
- The person 'doing what they are told to' by a 'friend'.
- Showing signs of mental ill health.
- Not being with usual networks of friends/family or missing weekly activities.
- Goods or packages arriving at a person's house (and then being collected by someone else soon after).
- People coming around when benefits are paid, taking their target out and going to the pub to spending their money
- The house is a mess after lots of parties
- Being secretive
- A sexually transmitted disease
- Alcohol/drug use

How can Mate Crime be prevented?

Raising awareness of Mate Crime with family, friends and communities can be effective in reducing the risk of abuse, especially with those who are closest to people more vulnerable to mate crime.

Give posters/leaflets to those participating in the Safe Places Scheme, libraries, GP surgeries, hospitals and community centres.

What should I do if Mate Crime is suspected or identified?

Talk to the child, young person or adult you have concerns about to find out what their views and concerns are.

If Mate Crime is suspected, the **Police** must be informed regardless of whether the victim is in agreement.

If you have safeguarding concerns for a child, young person or adult you should also consider making a referral to the **Children and Families Service or Health and Adult Services**.

Raising a safeguarding concern regarding a child or young person:

If the suspected victim of Mate Crime is **less than 18** years of age contact the Customer Service Centre or the Emergency Duty Team outside of office hours.

Raising a safeguarding concern regarding an adult at risk:

If the suspected victim of Mate Crime is **over 18** years of age, in the first instance you may wish seek their consent to raise a concern and what outcome would they like to achieve from a concern being raised. If speaking to them would place them in danger or this is not appropriate/possible you should consider:

- **It is in the person's vital interests to prevent serious harm or distress or in a life-threatening situation**
- **Whether the person has fluctuating capacity to consent to a concern being raised**
- **The person is subject to coercion or undue influence, and is unable to give their consent**
- **There is an overriding public interest**

How to report a safeguarding concern

Members of the public should contact the Customer Service Centre/Emergency Duty Team on 01609 780780 or raise a safeguarding concern via the online [screening tool available from the North Yorkshire County Council Website](#).

Professionals wishing to raise a safeguarding concern should use the:

- [Universal Referral Form](#) for children, and
- The [Raising a concern form](#) for adults

If someone has been a victim of mate crime they can also contact Supporting Victims for support on [01609 643100](tel:01609643100) or fill in a [Mate Crime Reporting Form](#) online.