

#LookCloser

A briefing for businesses
Join us in making public
spaces safe for children
and young people.



Key Messages

Children and young people who are being exploited may not always look or act vulnerable. If something doesn't feel right, it may not be.

#LookCloser focuses on public spaces where exploitation may be most visible to the public - parks, supermarkets, transport, banks and online environments like gaming platforms and social media.

We also know that bias can be a huge barrier in identifying young people who are being exploited. **#LookCloser** highlights that any child from any background can be exploited.

Members of the public and those working in the service, retail or transport industries are in a position to spot signs of exploitation and abuse.

Young people can be exploited and abused anywhere.

Ensure public spaces are safe for all young people.

Look beyond the obvious – trauma can manifest in many different behaviours.

Collectively we can safeguard more young people if we all know what to look out for and how to report concerns to the police.

It's important to challenge our stereotypes and expectations of how a 'typical victim' of exploitation should look or act.

Why should businesses

#LookCloser

- We see businesses as a vital part of every community. We need your help to create safe spaces for young people that are free from exploitation.
- Child exploitation is happening everywhere and its only by everyone in society working together, that we can protect children from harm.
- Criminals use business platforms and spaces to groom and exploit children, therefore we need you to work with us to stop this.
- As businesses, you have the power to reach and influence huge audiences. Work with us to encourage your customers to **#LookCloser**.

As well as sharing the materials with your colleagues and customers, please pledge to take a **#LookCloser** action using the template in our pack.

See how businesses are already supporting the #LookCloser campaign:

- Private Hire News
- Drawing The Line (thelpportal.com)
- Rotherham United Community Sports Trust'

Case studies

Hotel receptionist

Whilst two young people were checking into a hotel, staff overheard them saying they had travelled that day, but they did not seem familiar with the area. Staff completed welfare check-ins and saw them go in and out of the hotel, returning with cash after meeting with adults. Staff then shared information with the local police who also alerted the British Transport Police, providing observation notes and the details of the adult who had booked the room. Whilst the police worked on disrupting the perpetrator, local services offered the young people support.

Taxi driver

A taxi driver collected a young person waiting alone at a train station taxi rank. The driver noticed that he seemed very young and did not have a local accent. The young person provided a destination he had been sent by an adult on social media. The taxi driver recognised these as indicators of exploitation and returned to the train station immediately and flagged down police. The police then intervened, preventing the young person from meeting this adult and coming to harm.

Retail staff

A local pharmacy realised that more young people had begun to use their services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pharmacy made sure they had a 'safe space' where young people could talk to a pharmacist one on one about any worries. Through this approach young people felt able to share difficult experiences including of controlling relationships. The pharmacy then worked proactively with local services to offer appropriate onward referral and safeguarding support.

What's included in the pack and how can you help?

#LookCloser is a partnership campaign aiming to raise awareness of child exploitation and abuse, with a particular focus on public spaces.

This digital pack has been put together as a guide for partners and businesses to help us spread the **#LookCloser** messages.

There are a number of resources included in this pack. Please download and follow the steps below to help spread the **#LookCloser** message:

- 1.** Distribute our posters, leaflets, stickers and business cards across your organisation and display in prominent places to help us spread the word.
- 2.** Use our social media assets to share our campaign online.
- 3.** Attend our learning session for businesses to learn more about how businesses are joining the fight against child exploitation.
- 4.** Visit our **#LookCloser webpage** and share our key messages.
- 5.** Make a **#LookCloser pledge**.

Thank you for helping us to share the #LookCloser campaign

This is just the beginning. Contact us to work together
beyond this #LookCloser awareness week at

prevention@childrenssociety.org.uk
childrenssociety.org.uk/lookcloser



**The
Children's
Society**

