



**HEDDLU**  
**GOGLEDD CYMRU**  
**NORTH WALES**  
**POLICE**

# GUIDE TO MATE CRIME

## MATE CRIME DEFINITION

When a person is harmed or taken advantage of by someone they thought was their friend.



In partnership with North Wales  
Public Sector Equality Network.



People with learning disabilities, autism, mental ill health and some older people can be particularly vulnerable to **'Mate Crime'**; physical, mental or financial abuse by those they regard as friends.

While they might consider reporting an attack by a stranger, they may be reluctant and confused about reporting the abusive behavior of someone whose friendship they do not want to lose.

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## → FORMS OF MATE CRIME

### Financial Abuse

- The perpetrator might demand or ask to be lent money and then not pay it back.
- The perpetrator might misuse or borrow and not return the property of a person.
- When the person has received their benefits or wages and been shopping the perpetrator may visit and clear the cupboards of food and alcohol.



### Emotional Abuse

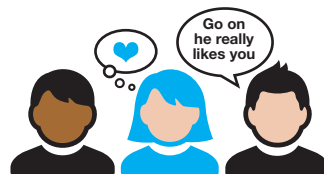
- The perpetrator might manipulate or mislead the person.
- The perpetrator might make them feel worthless.
- The perpetrator might call them names.
- The perpetrator might groom the person for criminal offences.

### Physical Abuse

- The person may be kicked, punched etc. for the amusement of the perpetrator and others.
- The person may be seriously injured or ultimately the abuse may result in death.

### Sexual Abuse

- The person might be coerced into prostitution.
- The person might be sexually exploited by someone they think is their partner or friend.
- The person might be persuaded to perform sexual acts they do not feel comfortable with.



## → HOW CAN YOU SPOT MATE CRIME?

These are the signs you need to look out for. If you notice any of these things it could mean the person is a victim of Mate Crime.



- 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.
- Being involved in sexual acts which they have not agreed to.
- Losing 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).
- The house is a mess after lots of parties.
- Withdrawal from support services.

Vulnerable adults often do not recognise that they have been the subject of Mate Crime. The focus of enabling safety needs to be on encouraging an understanding for the individual of their right to make choices, but also their right to remain free from abuse.

## → ACTION TO TAKE IF MATE CRIME IS IDENTIFIED

- Talk to the victim. What are their views and concerns?
- Appropriate action should be taken to ensure the safety of the victim.
- If a crime is suspected, Police must be informed regardless of whether the victim is in agreement.
- If the victim receives Direct Payments and the money is being abused, seek advice from the Direct Payments Team e.g. would a 'managed account' be more suitable.
- Investigate if the victim needs assistance with cancelling bank cards etc.
- Offer assessments / support as appropriate.



## → PREVENTATIVE ACTION

- Consideration should be given as to whether the safeguarding process for your organisation should be invoked when suspicions are raised rather than waiting for hard evidence.
- People need to be enabled to feel they are part of the community.
- Ensure staff have an understanding of what Mate Crime is and how to detect it and report.
- Raising community awareness of Mate Crime.
- Establishing Mate Crime champions within a variety of agencies who will link with other professionals, service users, carers.

## → PARTNERSHIP WORKING

### Consider involving other agencies:

- North Wales Police
- Victim Support
- North Wales Fire and Rescue  
Community Safety Officers
- Council Officers
- Social Workers
- Anti Social Behaviour Officers
- Community Health Services



## → CASE STUDY ONE

**Concern Raised:** Two male perpetrators from the North Wales area befriended a vulnerable adult with learning disabilities. The perpetrators were well known to the police for violence and theft. In this case they were financially abusing the vulnerable adult who gave them money, when asked; he felt he had no choice but to do this. Fortunately he told his care worker what was happening and the details were passed to the police.

**Response from Services:** The Police then made a referral to Social Services and Victim Support and made a request for them to visit the victim. With the agreement of the victim, weekly well being visits were established. This resulted in the perpetrators withdrawing once they became aware that the Police were involved. The vulnerable male was pleased that people in the community cared and he could share his problems with people he could trust.

## → CASE STUDY TWO

**Concern Raised:** A service user with a learning and physical disability was befriended by a group of people. They borrowed money from her and encouraged her to claim to her insurance company that her laptop was broken, whereas in fact they had sold it.

**Response from Services:** With assistance, the service user was able to distance herself from this group of people and join alternative social groups. However, although she recognises that she was taken advantage of, she still misses this group of people, saying that they made her feel 'attractive' and 'normal'.

