

MATE CRIME

Presentation for Adult Services Operational Staff

Mate Crime – what is it?

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

Who may be a target?

- Someone with no close family or friends
- Someone with a physical or learning disability
- Someone experiencing mental health issues
- Someone who misuses drugs and/or alcohol
- Someone who is isolated from the community
- Someone with low self worth

What can be done to prevent Mate Crime?

- Become aware of your local community resources and networks
- Reduce isolation by enabling people to feel they are part of the community
- Consider use of advocacy and the MCA as a legal framework to support service users decision making
- Give posters/leaflets to those participating in the Safer Places Scheme, libraries, GP surgeries, hospitals, community centres etc

Mate Crime may involve financial abuse or theft -

- 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 and been shopping the perpetrator may visit and clear the cupboards of food and alcohol

Mate Crime can involve physical abuse or assault

- 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

Mate crime can involve 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

Mate crime can involve sexual abuse

- The person might be coerced into prostitution and placed at risk of STD's or unplanned pregnancy
- 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

Signs to look out for

- Unexplained injuries
- Bills not being paid/sudden loss of assets
- Weight loss
- Isolation from usual contacts
- Withdrawal from services
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- An overly critical or controlling friend or relative

Action to take if Mate Crime is identified

- Talk to the service user. What are their views and concerns? What outcomes would they like? Would they benefit from involvement of an advocate?
- If a crime is suspected, Police must be informed regardless of whether the victim is in agreement
- Appropriate action should be taken to ensure the safety of the service user
- Consider what action should be taken in line with section 42 duties e.g. information gathering, causing enquiries to be made

Ideas for raising awareness

- Share case examples with colleagues
- Distribution of posters e.g. care homes, offices, GP surgeries