

WORKING FOR MARCUS

AWARENESS BOOKLET ON CHILD EXPLOITATION
FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS



loudmouth
education & training through theatre

This booklet is for parents and guardians of the students who will be having the theatre in education programme, Working for Marcus into their school.

Working for Marcus is a theatre in education programme run with students in years 8-13 (ages 13 upwards). It is an age appropriate and well researched programme designed specifically to raise awareness around the topics of child exploitation.

Working for Marcus was created and delivered by Loudmouth Education and Training. The company has been delivering Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) since 1994 and has reached over one million children, young people, professionals and parents across the UK.

The programme, Working for Marcus, links directly to the Government's RSHE statutory curriculum that states that pupils should...

- know how sexual consent, sexual exploitation, grooming and coercion can affect current and future relationships.
- be made aware of the relevant legal position on sexual exploitation, violence and exploitation by gangs, extremism/radicalisation and criminal exploitation including 'county lines'.

The programme uses dramas, characters Q&A session and discussion to teach about a wide range of child exploitation issues including child sexual exploitation, exploitation into crime e.g. county lines and knife crime.

Below is further information about the programme, Working for Marcus, and some tips and suggestions on how to use your child's participation in this programme as a way to start discussions at home around the issues it covers and ways to support your child if they are affected by the issues.



Your child will have seen two dramas as part of this programme. The first is about child sexual exploitation and follows Caz, 14 as she is groomed by Marcus, the man she believes to be her boyfriend. Caz eventually gets out of the relationship. In the second drama, Mikey looks back on how he was exploited as a child to commit crimes including running county lines for a drugs gang.

After the drama, the students get the opportunity to ask Caz and Mikey questions about the key themes for the drama. The Loudmouth facilitators then run small group discussions with the pupils on the signs of grooming, victim blaming and the impacts of child exploitation.

The session ends with information of where the students can go for help if they have any concerns about the issues and want further information and/or support including ChildLine, Faceup2it.org, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the Loudmouth website (www.loudmouth.co.uk)



The term **child exploitation** is used in the programme Working for Marcus.

You may want to ask your child if they know what this term means and if they learnt any examples of child exploitation from the Working for Marcus programme.

Child Exploitation is where a person under 18 years old, is taken advantage of for the benefit of others.

Examples of child exploitation include

1. **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** – where victims are groomed and then forced into sexual activity or forced to create inappropriate videos and images. Caz's story is an example of CSE.
2. **Child Criminal Exploitation (CE)** – where victims are groomed by gangs or criminal networks into committing crimes e.g. delivering drugs, weapons or both. This is often called running county lines. Mikey's story is an example of CE.

Other examples of child exploitation are human trafficking, modern slavery and radicalisation.

It is important to mention here that any child or young person can be a victim of child exploitation and anyone can be a perpetrator of these forms of exploitation. A perpetrator is someone who commits a crime or a violent or harmful act. Perpetrators groom their victims.

“Children and young people are often given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection or tricked into believing they’re in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming.” NSPCC 2021

You may want to ask your child if they can talk you through how Caz and Mikey were groomed in the dramas they saw.

Signposting

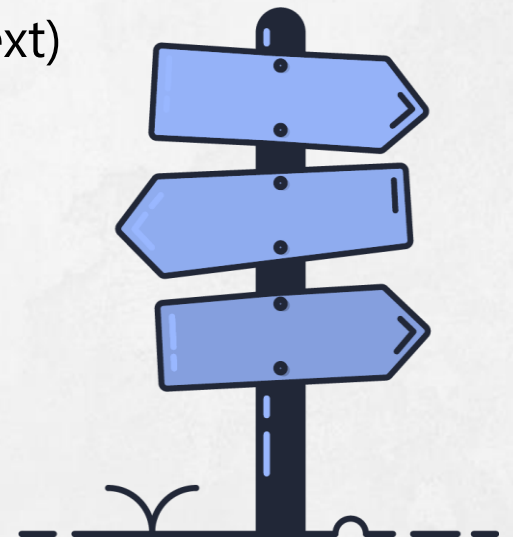
There are many people that your child can go to for help and support around the issues covered in the Working for Marcus programme including family and school/college staff including the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSLs).

There are also many organisations that can offer specialist support. Further information and additional signposting for young people can be found on the young people's pages on the Loudmouth website www.loudmouth.co.uk
They could also contact...

- www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111
- www.somethingsnotright.co.uk Warwickshire specific
- www.faceup2it.org Say Something 116 000 (call or text)
- www.fearless.org

Reporting

- Police on 101 (non emergency) and 999 (emergency)

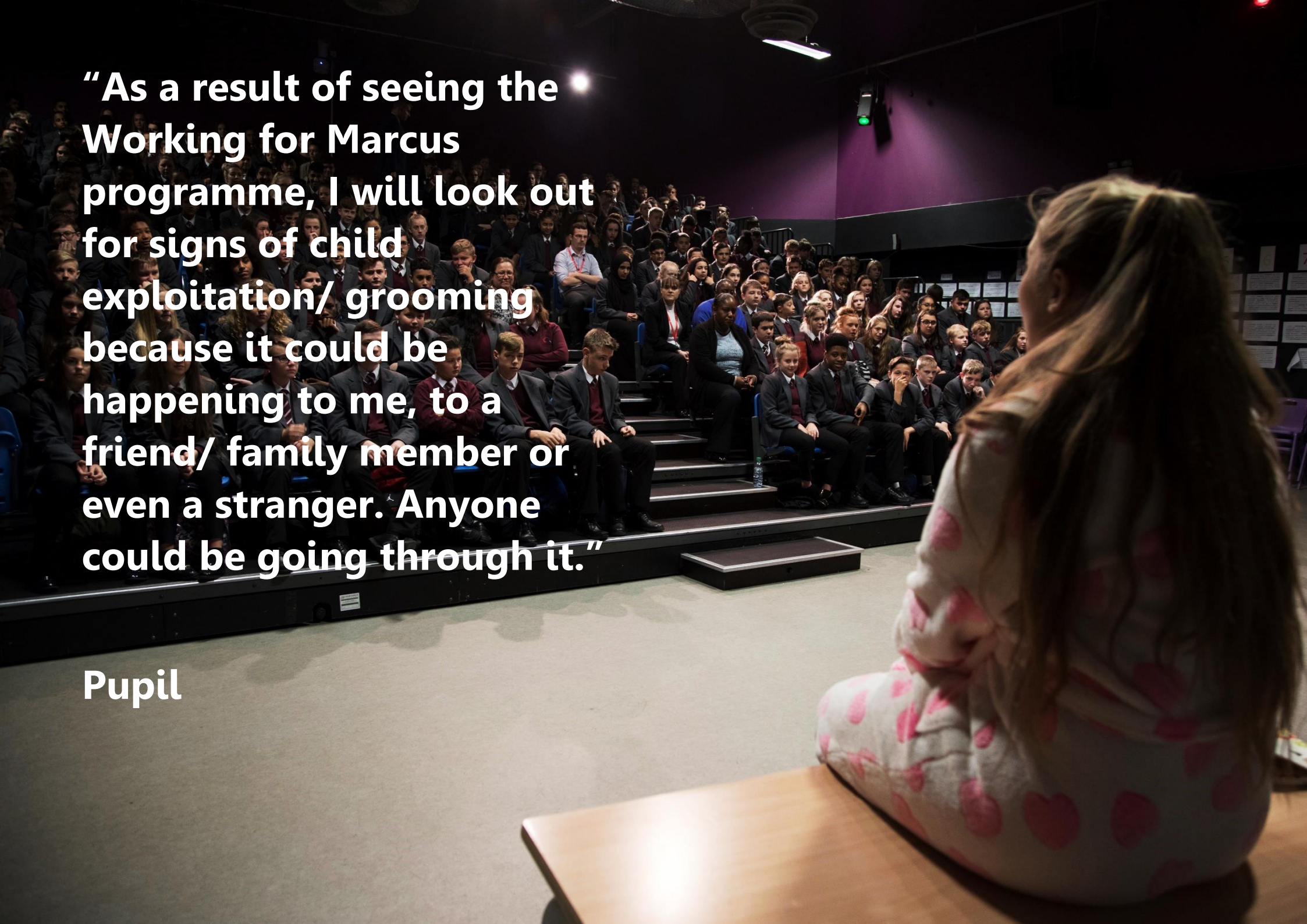


Supporting parents and guardians to spot warning signs of exploitation

Parents and guardians are encouraged to look out for the behaviours below that could be signs that their child is being exploited.

- Absence – school, home or care.
- Secretive about where they have been or working.
- Increase in taxis or unknown lifts.
- Petty crime.
- Change in social circles, new online friends.
- Much older “partner” or “friends”.
- Being forced to target others for abuse.
- Being isolated.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Carrying a weapon.
- Having more money than usual.
- Gifts from unknown sources.
- Have two phones or two sim cards.
- Change in appearance.
- Physical injuries.
- Poor mental health.

You may want to ask your child what warning signs, Caz or Mikey’s friends or family might have noticed.



“As a result of seeing the Working for Marcus programme, I will look out for signs of child exploitation/ grooming because it could be happening to me, to a friend/ family member or even a stranger. Anyone could be going through it.”

Pupil

Starting a discussion

Loudmouth uses drama as a safe way to discuss issues. Students can talk about the characters and the situations shown in the drama without feeling pressured to talk about themselves. This can also help to start discussions at home about topics that could be embarrassing or awkward for some people.

On the next page are some ideas for questions that you could use as conversation starters at home with any student who has watched the Working for Marcus drama. These can be a safe and easy way to begin this discussion on these issues, especially if they are not topics that you usually talk openly about.

What signs were there that Caz and Mikey were being groomed?

How might Caz and Mikey felt when people blamed them for what happened to them?

Where could Caz and Mikey have got support or help?

What can someone do if they are worried that someone they know is being exploited?