

Gangs



What is it?

The word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.



- ◆ **Peer group**

A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.

- ◆ **Street gang**

"Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."

- ◆ **Organised criminal gangs**

"A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation.'"

Source: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/>

How are young people recruited?

A child or young person might be recruited into a gang because of where they live or because of who their family is. They might join because they don't see another option or because they feel like they need protection. Children and young people may become involved in gangs for many reasons, including:



- peer pressure and wanting to fit in with their friends
- they feel respected and important
- they want to feel protected from other gangs, or bullies
- they want to make money, and are promised rewards
- they want to gain status, and feel powerful
- they've been excluded from school and don't feel they have a future

Organised criminal gangs groom children and young people because they're less suspicious and are given lighter sentences than adults.

Signs that a young person has joined a gang:

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent.
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.





What to do if you are worried:

There are things you can do to help stop a child from getting involved in a gang, or to help them once they've joined.

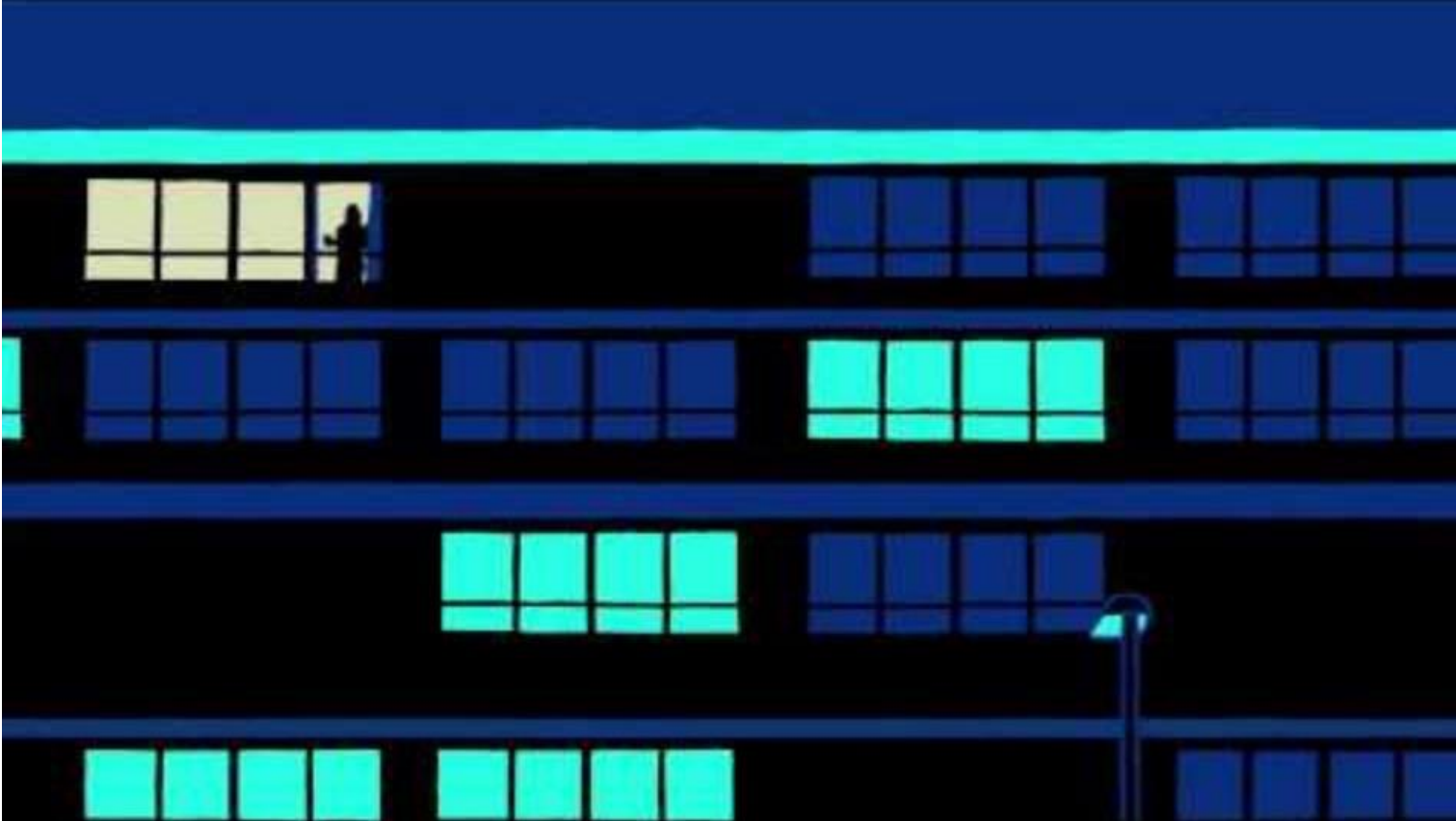
- Talk to them and listen
- Be aware
- Ask for support
- Encourage a change

Who to call:

- NSPCC Helpline: help@nspcc.org.uk **0808 800 5000**
- Contact the police immediately if you're worried the child is in danger
- Contact Children's Services – you can find them through [your local council](#)
- Talk to the safeguarding lead at the child's school and ask for support.
At Christ the King our safeguarding team are:
 - Mrs Carter
 - Mrs Marshall
 - Mrs Glassford
 - Mrs Wheeldon
 - Mrs Hansrani
 - Miss Hurren



Other resources:



NSPCC Gang animation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYFw6kiRkus>