CAUGHT UP – SESSION PLAN

Lesson Rationale & Educational Context

"Caught Up" has been designed as a realistic, discussion-led safeguarding session that helps young people understand how criminal exploitation develops gradually through manipulation, trust-building, fear and control.

Rather than relying on shock tactics or sensationalised portrayals of gangs, the session focuses on the emotional and psychological processes behind grooming and child criminal exploitation (CCE). This approach encourages critical thinking, reflection and safer decision-making while remaining age-appropriate for Key Stage 3 learners.

The lesson has been structured to align with current national PSHE, RSHE and safeguarding guidance for secondary schools in England. It supports key themes around:

- exploitation and coercion
- unhealthy relationships and manipulation
- peer pressure and influence
- recognising risk and vulnerability
- emotional wellbeing
- contextual safeguarding
- accessing help and support safely

The session also reflects current safeguarding priorities linked to:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- coercive control
- vulnerability outside the home
- trusted adult reporting pathways

A key strength of the lesson is its focus on how organised criminals often view exploited young people as disposable commodities rather than genuine friends or equals. Through the characters of Quasim and Rizwan, students are encouraged to explore how grooming works,

why fear becomes powerful control, and how exploitation can happen to ordinary young people.

The session intentionally avoids glamorising criminality and instead promotes:

- empathy
- critical thinking
- resilience
- help-seeking behaviour
- safer peer awareness

Activities are designed to be reflective rather than confrontational, creating a calm environment where students can engage safely with difficult themes without pressure to disclose personal experiences.

Importantly, the lesson reinforces throughout that:

- exploitation is never the victim's fault,
- fear can make people feel trapped,
- and support is always available.

This session is suitable for delivery within:

- PSHE
- RSHE
- safeguarding programmes
- personal development curriculum
- contextual safeguarding interventions
- targeted vulnerability awareness work

It complements statutory safeguarding responsibilities under:

- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- wider safeguarding and child protection duties within schools.

“Caught Up” Lesson Plan

(Ages 13–17)

Duration: 45 Minutes
Theme: Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Grooming & County Lines
Curriculum Area: PSHE / RSHE / Safeguarding

📚 Curriculum Links (England)

This lesson supports the statutory RSHE and Health Education guidance for secondary schools in England, particularly around:

- **Keeping safe**
- **Healthy and respectful relationships**
- **Online and offline exploitation**
- **Recognising coercive and controlling behaviour**
- **Mental wellbeing**
- **Safeguarding and seeking support**

It also aligns with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*
- Contextual safeguarding guidance
- County Lines and child criminal exploitation awareness

The lesson particularly supports teaching around:

- exploitation and abuse
- peer influence and coercion
- consent and pressure
- recognising unsafe situations
- how and when to seek help safely

🔗 Specific PSHE / RSHE Curriculum Links

Relationships Education / RSHE

Students should know:

- how to identify harmful, exploitative and abusive behaviours
- how manipulation and coercion can occur in relationships
- how gangs and organised crime groups groom young people
- how to recognise pressure, control and intimidation
- where and how to seek support safely

Health Education

Students should know:

- how fear, stress and anxiety affect decision making
- strategies for accessing support
- how to recognise when someone may be at risk
- how to support others safely without placing themselves at risk

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Safeguarding / KCSIE Links

This lesson supports safeguarding education relating to:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- coercion and intimidation
- contextual safeguarding
- vulnerability and exploitation outside the home
- trusted adult reporting pathways

🔗 **Useful National Guidance Links**

- Department for Education RSHE Guidance
- Updated RSHE Guidance 2026 PDF
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Draft 2026
- PSHE Association Guidance

🎯 Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, students will:

- Understand how grooming can begin and develop
- Recognise how young people can become trapped through fear, debt and intimidation
- Explore how organised criminals really view the young people they exploit
- Know where and how to get help safely for themselves or others

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🧭 Session Overview

Duration	Activity	Focus
0–5 mins (5 mins)	Introduction & Ground Rules	Safe discussion
5–20 mins (15 mins)	Watch “Caught Up”	Film
20–30 mins (10 mins)	Topic 1: Grooming	The Hook
30–40 mins (10 mins)	Topic 2: Debt, Threats & Control	The Trap
40–45 mins (5 mins)	Topic 3: Getting Help	The Exit
Total Duration = 45 minutes		

Print the CCE Handout Sheet for the end of the session – one per person

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🟢 0–5 mins | Introduction & Ground Rules

Facilitator Script

“Today we’re going to look at how some young people are groomed into criminal activity and how control can quickly escalate. This session is not about judging people. It’s about understanding how manipulation works and knowing how to stay safe.”

Ground Rules

- Respect everyone’s opinions
- No naming local people or gangs
- No pressure to share personal experiences
- One person speaks at a time
- Support is available afterwards if needed

Starter Discussion

Ask:

- Where do you think criminals target young people?
- Why do you think some teenagers get drawn in?

Prompt ideas:

- Outside schools
- Parks
- Fast food places
- Online/social media
- Gaming platforms
- Older friendship groups

🎬 5–20 mins | Watch “Caught Up”

Facilitator Notes

Before starting the film:

- Ask students to think about:
    - How Quasim builds trust
    - Changes in Rizwan's behaviour
    - Moments where things start to feel uncomfortable or controlling

Encourage students to notice:

- The "friendly" stage
- Pressure increasing
- Fear replacing choice

🧩 20–30 mins | Topic 1: Grooming ("The Hook")

Teaching Points

Explain that grooming rarely starts with threats.

It often begins with:

- Attention
- Kindness
- Gifts
- Money
- Lifts
- Protection
- Making someone feel important

👉 Key Message

"If it feels good at the start… that can be part of the plan."

💭 Discussion Questions

Ask:

- Why do you think Quasim spends time with Rizwan?
- Does Quasim see Rizwan as a real friend?
- What might Quasim want back later?

🧠 What Exploiters Look For

What a Young Person Might Feel	Why Criminals Target It
Lonely	Easier to pull into a fake “family”
Wanting money	Easy to tempt with quick cash
Wanting status or attention	Easier to influence
Problems at home	Criminal lifestyle can feel like an escape
Friends already involved	Makes exploitation feel normal
Fearful or anxious	Easier to control
Not enjoying school	More time and fewer protective adults
Wanting expensive things	Gifts create emotional pressure

✍️ Mini Activity (Pairs – 3 mins)

Task

Using sticky notes or verbally:

Question:

“Quasim gives Rizwan gifts, attention and time. Why might he be doing this?”

Students come up with:

- 5 reasons it *might* seem genuine
- 5 reasons it *might not be*

Debrief

Highlight:

- Grooming works because it often feels positive at first
- Manipulation can look like friendship

⚠️ 30–40 mins | Topic 2: Debt Bondage, Threats & Enforcement (“The Trap”)

Explain Simply

After Rizwan loses the car and drugs:

- Quasim says Rizwan now “owes” him
- The debt becomes a tool for control

Ask:

“Is that fair?”

Discuss:

- Rizwan never truly had control
- The debt may be exaggerated or completely invented

👉 **Key Message**

“The debt isn’t always real… but the fear becomes real.”

📈 How Control Escalates

Draw a ladder on the board or use PowerPoint.

Stage 1: Pressure

- “Sort this out.”
- “Don’t let me down.”

Stage 2: Intimidation

- Constant messages
- Turning up unexpectedly
- Making someone panic

Stage 3: Threats

- “We know where you live.”
- “Don’t make this worse.”

Stage 4: Family Leverage

- Mentioning parents or siblings
- Threatening homes or property
- Creating fear around loved ones

👉 **Key Message**

“Sometimes fear alone is enough to trap someone.”

🎬 Scenario Discussion (Whole Group)

Scenario:

Rizwan loses the car and drugs.

Discuss:

- What choices did Rizwan realistically have?
- How do you think he felt?
- Why might someone feel unable to walk away?
- How could fear affect decision-making?

Explore:

- Family fear
- Shame
- Isolation
- Fear of violence
- Fear of police
- Feeling trapped

👉 **Key Message**

“This is how control works. Not through freedom, but through fear.”

🛟 40–45 mins | Topic 3: Getting Out & Getting Help

Make It Practical

Trusted Adults Can Include:

- Parents/carers
- Teachers
- Sports coaches
- Youth workers
- School safeguarding staff

Other Help:

- Police

- Fearless / Crimestoppers
- School support teams

Distribute the CCE Handout Sheet – One Per Person

💬 Important Messages

Reassure Students:

- Asking for help does not mean you are weak
- You will not automatically get into trouble
- The earlier someone speaks up, the more support options there are
- Exploitation is never the victim's fault

👉 Final Key Message

"Feeling stuck does not mean you are stuck."

🧠 Teacher / Facilitator Safeguarding Notes

- Keep the tone calm and factual
- Avoid sensationalising violence or gangs
- Do not ask students for personal disclosures publicly
- Watch for emotional reactions or withdrawal
- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately if concerns arise
- Allow students to leave briefly if overwhelmed

🏁 Closing Reflection

Ask students:

"What is one thing from today that you think young people need to understand more?"

Finish with:

"Anyone who puts you in danger to protect themselves has already made their choice. You still have yours."