



Mate Crime

This leaflet explains what Mate Crime is and what you can do about it.

We have also published other leaflets about adult safeguarding.

What is Mate Crime?

Mate crime is a type of disability hate crime when someone pretends to be your friend and then they commit a crime against you.

They may even persuade or trick you into doing things.

A 'Mate' can be anyone.

They might be someone you have met recently, or you might have known them for a long time.

They could be:

- A friend
- A family member
- Someone that helps you

Please remember that not everyone is pretending to be your friend and is going to commit a crime against you.

Most of them, if not all of them, will be good people.

It is important you know who to tell if you are not happy with the way a friend is treating you.

How does Mate Crime start?

Mate Crime starts with people saying they want to be your friend but moves to bullying and other behaviour that you do not want.

Some people who are victims of Mate Crime are scared of losing their friends if they say "No" to what is happening.

A real friend won't get upset if you say "No" to them.

Mate Crime often happens in private so that it is not seen by others.

Sometimes people pretend to be your friend online as well.

How does Mate Crime happen?

Some of the things that this friend may try to do are:

- Take money from you without asking
- Ask to borrow money from you and not give it back
- Use all your credit on your mobile phone
- Take you out but ask you for lots of money in return
- Take you out but expect you to always pay for everything
- Take your food
- Have parties in your house
- Hurt you
- Tell you to hurt yourself
- Tell you to take drugs or drink alcohol
- Tell you to have sex with them or with their friend
- Tell you to do things that you are not happy about. This could be when you are with them or online

A real friend does not need to be bought, and someone who takes your money, asks you to pay for lots of things, or

makes you feel uncomfortable is not a true friend.

If someone who says they are your friend hurts you, steals from you or makes you do something you don't want to do, you should tell someone you trust right away.

How can other people spot Mate Crime?

If you notice any of these things it could mean the person is a victim of Mate Crime:

- Changes in routine, behaviour, relationships, appearance, finances, and household. This could include 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 that have not been agreed to
- Self Neglect
- Bills not paid for, short of money
- A friend that appears to bully the person
- Suddenly short of money, losing possessions or changing their will

- The person says that they are "doing what they are told to" by a "friend"
- Signs of mental ill health
- Not being with their usual friends or family or not doing the things they normally do each week
- Missing appointments
- Packages turning up at the person's house and being collected by someone else soon after

What can I do to stop it and how do I get help?

Talk to someone that can help:

- Tell someone you trust who is not involved in the Mate Crime.
- Tell the Police:
 - **You can call them using 101** or in an emergency 999
- Tell Somerset County Council's Adult Safeguarding Team by calling Somerset Direct
 - **You can call them on 0300 123 22 24** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday and Sunday closed)
 - **You can email them using: adults@somerset.gov.uk**
 - The phone number for Adults and Mental Health out of hours is **0300 123 23 27**

Further information:

Please use the following link to view other leaflets on our website: bit.ly/SSABLeaflets

