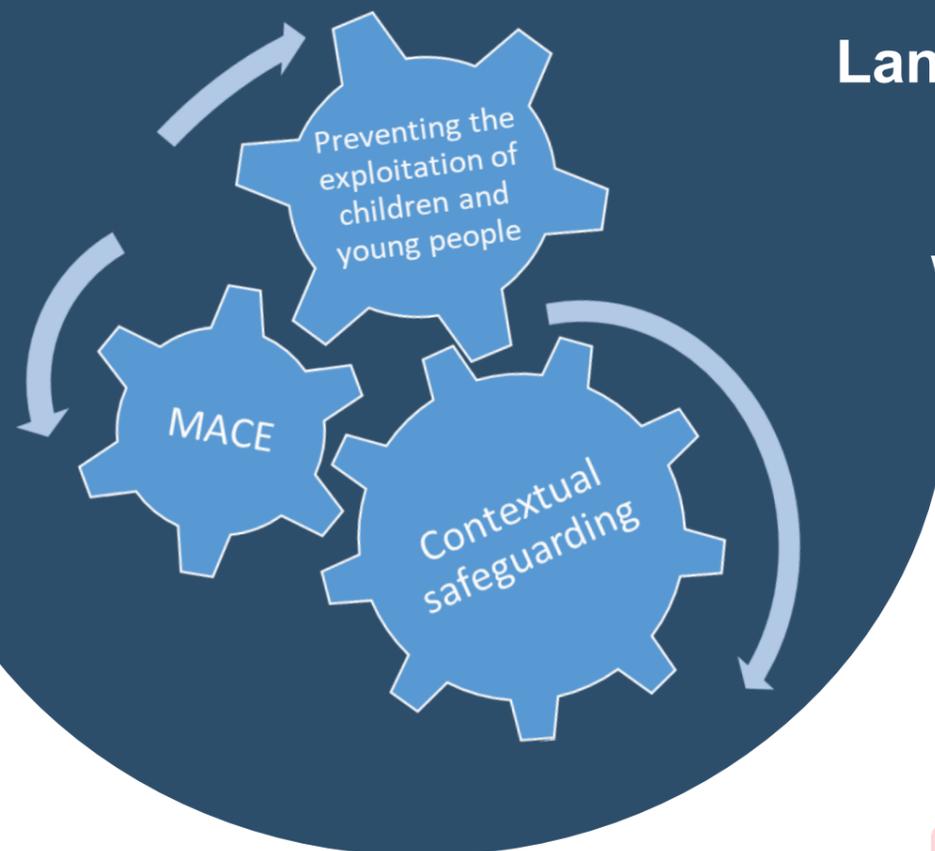


# Language Guide for Practitioners - Supporting children and young people who may be at risk of exploitation



Professionals need to think about the language they use when working with children and young people who experience harm outside of their home environment. Our spoken and recorded language should always recognise and be responsive to trauma resulting from the harm children/young people have experienced. If support services don't make these considerations, this may contribute to the continuing victimisation of children and young people and prevent young people and those that care for them from accessing the right help at the right time for them. Here are some **do's** and **don'ts**:



Terms not to be used



Why?



Use these instead...

The full language guide can be accessed [HERE](#)

## Top Tips - Remember...

- ➔ The child is not responsible for the risks presented by the perpetrator.
- ➔ The child or young person is not responsible for and cannot consent to the abuse / exploitation they suffer.
- ➔ The child is not choosing this lifestyle or situation, they have been groomed and / or their vulnerabilities have been exploited. There is likely some imbalance of power and control.

All language used to describe the situation for the child and the concerns of professionals should keep these consideration at the heart.

**Putting themselves at risk**

This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the risks presented by the perpetrator and that they are able to make free and informed choices.

**The situation reduces the child's safety  
There is a power imbalance forcing the child to act in this way**

**Drug running**

This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context .

**The child is being criminally exploited / trafficked**

**Associating or spending time with adults of concern**

This implies that the child or young people are responsible for their exploitation and have the capacity to make a free and informed choice.

**They are friends with a person or group and there are concerns about the ages of those people, the imbalance of power / coercion / control / exploitation / offending**

**Despite the risk s/he continues to return to the location**

This implies that the child or young people are responsible for any exploitation they experience in a location. It does not recognise abusive or exploitative context or their right to be in the location without experiencing harm.

**The child(ren) have an existing peer network in this location  
The child(ren) feel under threat / have been groomed or coerced into being in this neighbourhood/location**