

# Jasmine's Story



**Jasmine's story is an example of how a child's vulnerabilities and a need to be loved can be targeted by adults for the purposes of exploitation. It shows how the process of grooming can lead to exploitation by multiple adults and that both men and women can be perpetrators of exploitation.**

Jasmine's story shows how her vulnerability and need for love are targeted and exploited by adult males. It also shows that it was only after she has disclosed her abuse that she got the help she needed.

Jasmine is now 13, has a CSO and lives in a children's unit. She was first taken into care when she was 8 due to neglect, exposure to domestic abuse and her parents' substance misuse. She has had six different foster placements and never stayed in one for more than a year. Her last foster placement broke down due to her challenging behaviour following the death of her mother. Jasmine was refusing to adhere to her carers' boundaries and had begun using drugs and alcohol.

Following the breakdown of this last foster placement, Jasmine was moved to a children's unit. She found it hard to settle and did not get on with the other children. She refused to go to school and ran away on a regular basis, often being returned by the police. After 4 months, Jasmine had settled a little and seemed to be growing in confidence, although she was still spending a lot of time outside the unit. She starts to take age appropriate pride in her appearance.

She begins to spend overnights away from the unit and refuses to tell staff where she has been. A number of times she has returned under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Her appearance has deteriorated and she often returns after absconding looking dishevelled and occasionally dirty. Unit staff and social work are concerned but agree that the placement best fits her needs.

The police execute a drugs search warrant at a flat a couple of miles from Jasmine's unit. A number of adults are present in the flat, all of whom are under the influence of alcohol/substances; and there are lots of empty cans and bottles and drug paraphernalia lying around. Jasmine is also present and is heavily intoxicated. When questioned she says that she went to the flat of her own accord and that the adults in the flat are her friends. Police return Jasmine to the children's unit. A police concern report is sent to the Children's Reporter which outlines the police's concerns that Jasmine is being sexually exploited.

A joint investigation by the police and social work starts. During meetings with her social worker, Jasmine begins to open up about what happened to her over the past few months. She tells her worker that she struggled with the breakdown of her foster placements and the move to the unit, and would often run away and drink alcohol with other young people to 'forget' about her situation.

It was during one of these times that she met a man called Stuart who complimented her on the way she looks and bought her presents including jewellery and perfume, and gave her alcohol. Jasmine said his attention made her feel loved. But after a while, things began to change.

Stuart started to make Jasmine have sex with him, often when she was under the influence of alcohol, telling her that if she loved him she would do whatever he wanted.

Before long, Stuart asked Jasmine to engage in sexual activities with his friends and other unknown males who came to his flat, telling her that if she did not do as he wanted he would finish their relationship.

Following Jasmine's disclosure, social work inform the police, who take a statement from Jasmine, and Stuart is arrested and charged. Jasmine is very emotional after this and often refuses to leave her room in the unit. A referral is made for Jasmine to receive mental health and victim support.

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