



Safety Net Friend or Fake?

An Easy Read Guidance Booklet about
Hate Crime and Mate Crime

This booklet is for people with a learning disability, families and supporters. It is a booklet for people to share and go through together and talk about. This booklet talks about a type of Disability Hate Crime called 'Mate Crime' – which means that sometimes friends are fakes. This booklet tells you what to look out for and what to do if a 'Mate Crime' happens to you or someone you know. All Disability Hate Crime is wrong and we want to stop it. **Don't stand for it, report it!**

What is Hate Crime and Mate Crime?

- Disability Hate Crime is: *'Any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon a person's disability'*.
- If you think people are picking on you because of your disability then it is a Hate Crime.
- Hate Crime is serious and needs reporting to the police when it happens.
- Mate Crime happens when someone pretends to be your friend and then uses you instead of being a good friend.
- You might have met them recently or you might have known them for a long time. A 'mate' may be a friend, family member, supporter, paid staff or another person with a disability.
- Mate Crime is done by someone you know.



How do you know when a friend is really a friend?

Most friends really are friends... but sometimes people might pretend to be your friend. People who commit Mate Crimes might be nice to your face. These people are often not rude, violent or aggressive, nor do they steal your things. They pretend to be nice to you.

- Mate Crime does not **start** with bullying but it can become bullying. It starts with people saying they are your friend.
- Mate Crimes often happen in private and are not seen by others.
- Mate crimes are Disability Hate Crimes and should be reported to the Police.

Find more resources and information on the website www.arcsafety.net

All of these might be a Disability Hate Crime

- Kids throwing stones at my window.
- Someone borrowing my mobile and using up all the credit.
- A group of people beating me up outside the local shops and stealing my shopping.
- My mate coming round every time it's my benefit day so we can go to the pub and spend my money.
- Family members taking my money from me without asking.
- My friend comes round every Thursday and we go out in his car for the afternoon. He only charges me 20 quid for petrol each time.
- My neighbour calling me names when she sees me.
- People sending abusive text messages to my mobile phone.
- My mates always come to my flat for a party on a Friday night – I don't mind getting the food and drink in for them.
- My boyfriend saying I should have sex with other men for money.



Be safe on your computer as well

- Sometimes people pretend to be your friend 'online' as well.
- Keep your personal details safe and private.
- Have a look at the [Think U Know](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) website for more information. Some of this is in easy read and there are some clips to watch:
www.thinkuknow.co.uk



Find more resources and information on the website www.arcsafety.net



What do you do if Mate Crime happens to you?

- ✓ Tell someone - tell lots of people.
- ✓ Tell the **Police**.
- ✓ Tell Your Local **Adult Safeguarding Team**.
- ✓ Use a **3rd Party Reporting Centre** like:
 - **Stop Hate UK** (only operate in certain areas)
Tel: 0800 138 1625
Email: talk@stophateuk.org
 - **Voice UK** (operates a helpline: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm)
Tel: 080 880 28686
Email: helpline@voiceuk.org.uk
 - **True Vision** (you can report a Hate Crime through their website)
Website: www.report-it.org.uk
- ✓ Tell them what happened to you is a **Disability Hate Crime**.

Remember!

- ✓ Not all of your friends want to hurt you or take advantage of you.
- ✓ Most of your friends are good friends. All of them might be.
- ✓ You have rights.
- ✓ You have the right to be believed.
- ✓ You have the right to be taken seriously when you report incidents.
- ✓ You have the right to be safe and free from fear.
- ✓ Don't stand for it, report it!
- ✓ **Be aware not scared – get out there and enjoy life!**

Find more resources and information on the website www.arcsafety.net





Families and Supporters – who, how and what can help?

Pages 7, 8 and 9 are for families, good friends and supporters to read. There are lots of people who need to know what Mate Crime is, how to spot the signs and what to do about it.

Who might notice Mate Crime?

- Real friends
- Family
- Staff (including Personal Assistants)
- Supporters
- Neighbours
- Accident and Emergency staff
- Anybody who knows the person well. This could be someone at the Post Office, the bank or the local shop who might notice a change in routine.

How can you spot Mate Crime?

These are the signs you need to look out for. If you notice any of these things it could mean the person is a victim of Mate Crime.

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance, finances or household (e.g. 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 which they have not agreed to.
- Losing weight.
- Not taking care of themselves and looking dirty or scruffy.
- Bills not being paid.
- A 'friend' who does not respect, bullies or undermines the person.
- Suddenly short of money, losing possessions or changing their will.
- The person 'doing what they are told to' by a 'friend'.
- Showing signs of mental ill health.
- Not being with usual networks of friends/family or missing weekly activities.
- Goods or packages arriving at a person's house (and then being collected by someone else soon after).
- The house is a mess after lots of parties.

Find more resources and information on the website www.arcsafety.net



What can help?

- Listen, use your eyes and ask questions.
- Everyone needs training and information.
- Use technology and telecare.
- Share information with the right people.
- Support people to have good positive relationships within the community.
- Make and keep good records.
- Support people with their legal rights e.g. taking out injunctions against ‘fake friends’ to keep them away.

Don't stand for it, report it!

If you think this is happening to someone you know tell someone – but make sure the ‘right’ people find out. Tell the Police, 3rd Party Hate Crime reporting centres or your Local Adult Safeguarding Team. You can find contact details on page 5 of this booklet. Use the words Disability Hate Crime when you report it and check back later to make sure that it gets followed-up.

Key Messages

- You have the right to be safe and free from fear.
- If Mate Crime is happening to you or someone you know – tell someone! Tell lots of people!!
- If it's a crime, tell the Police. If it's not, talk to the Adult Safeguarding Team.
- Talk to each other about it. Get angry! But not with each other!
- Talk to the Police, Partnership Board, carers, staff, Adult Safeguarding Team – tell them this is happening.
- Use the Safety Net website: www.arcsafety.net
- **Don't stand for it, report it!**
And don't forget to say it's a **Disability Hate Crime** when you report it.

Find more resources and information on the website www.arcsafety.net



This booklet is supported by the following organisations:



This booklet was produced by **ARC** (the Association for Real Change), a national charity committed to championing the development of high quality person centred services for everyone with a learning disability within the UK. For more information about ARC or to become a member please go to our website: www.arcuk.org.uk or call us on **01246 555043**.

The Safety Net project was developed by ARC and funded by the Department of Health. The project aims to make people with a learning disability safer in their communities. For more information about the project, to access FREE resources, or for help and advice please go to the Safety Net website.



www.arcsafety.net

