

Amy was 13 when she first started talking to people on a music-sharing website that had a chatroom attached to it.

“I had written that I was 16 on my profile because that was the minimum age to be on there. Guys would ask for photos and videos and there were so many going back and forth that it just became normalised. I was taking pictures of myself to send every day. They were intimate, naked. I sent dozens of them.”

When one man, who lived not far from her home, asked to meet her she agreed. “I was quite young and I didn’t realise I was being used by this person. I really cared about him. I thought I was in love. I was 14 and he was 25.

“We met and I thought it was perfectly fine to get in his car and go to his house. He lived with his mum and took me there when she was out.

“My mum found out because she saw a message I’d sent to a friend on Messenger. The police intervened but they didn’t know what to do. I lied and denied it because I was really embarrassed, ashamed and scared I would get into trouble. I had a social worker but they just filled out the boxes on their form; it was all very formulaic and I didn’t feel that they really cared.

“I rang the guy and told him the police were involved. He asked why and I told him I was really 14. He said that was bad but told me not to say anything. I thought it was so cool.” Amy carried on seeing the man. In total their ‘relationship’ lasted for over a year.

“Although he knew my real age he still wanted to meet me. At first it was nice enough. Gradually it got more abusive in terms of what he was asking me to do and what he was doing to me, but by then I had lied to the police.

“It was humiliating and got more violent. Now I’m in my 20s, if one of the guys I’m friends with was hanging out with a young teenage girl I would have a word with them and say it’s not right.”

Amy chose not to give evidence about the man. A year ago, almost a decade later, he contacted her via Facebook. “He can’t see that there was anything wrong in what he did. “The fact that the pictures are still out there doesn’t worry me too much. For me, it was my first experience of a relationship and sex. I was a virgin. Now I don’t enjoy sex. I can’t enjoy relationships. It’s sad because sometimes I meet nice guys but I know it won’t go anywhere. “Because it was my first sexual experience I suppose it’s coloured my view. The only thing that turns me on now is violence. I know it’s horrible but I’ve slept with other people who have been violent.

“It affected my self-esteem. I suppose I was prostituting myself but the stereotype of that type of person is they’re scum. It makes you feel bad about yourself.

“I’m not very good at talking to people and I’m not close to my family any more. It happened at a time when people didn’t really talk about this stuff and I don’t think they understood the grooming element of what happened to me.”