



## **Child Sexual Exploitation Information for Children's Workforce Induction**

### **Definition**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child abuse which is complex and can manifest itself in different ways. Essentially it involves children and young people (boys and girls) receiving something – for example accommodation, food, drugs and alcohol, gifts, money or affection – in exchange for sexual activity or having others perform sexual activities on them.

It can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

It is abuse against children and young people under 18 –a young person can consent to sex at 16, but they can not consent to sexual abuse/exploitation. They are still children in Law and should be protected.

### **Extent and nature of child sexual exploitation**

- It is difficult to quantify how many children are sexually exploited. Children and young people usually do not recognise that they are being exploited and there are many situations where young people can be enticed into Sexual Exploitation.
- Perpetrators target areas where young people gather including shopping, centres, cafés, takeaways, pubs, bus/train stations, parks, taxi ranks, residential units and schools...
- Perpetrators may use other young people to build initial relationships
- Perpetrators can operate individually as well as part of a group/organised
- Young people can be groomed and sexually exploited by their peers
- Young people may be groomed into 'party' lifestyles where they go to houses/flats with numerous adults and other young people. These parties introduce young people to alcohol and drugs as a means to exploit them
- The majority of sexually exploited children will be hidden from public view. They are more likely to be in private houses/flats.
- Sexual exploitation also takes place over the internet, through mobile phones, online gaming and instant messaging, with social networking sites and mobile technology usually playing a role in the grooming process

## **Key Risks/Vulnerabilities**

The following factors may make a child/young person vulnerable to sexual exploitation. But any child can be vulnerable regardless of background or circumstance. Abusive adults will look out for vulnerability in selecting a child to target.

- Running away/Missing Episodes
- In Care
- Disengaged from Education
- Involved with criminal justice system (victims and offenders)
- Childhood abuse, including sexual abuse
- Family issues including Domestic Violence, Family drug/alcohol misuse, Family mental health problems, Family breakdown/disrupted family life
- Isolated from peers/family/social networks
- Low self esteem
- Lack of awareness of keeping safe, including special needs (eg autism, learning difficulties)

## **Indicators**

Young people with the following characteristics are likely to be at high risk of sexual exploitation:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Uncharacteristic and significant mood swings or changes in emotional well being
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Use of mobile phone and internet that causes concern

## **What should I do?**

- Attend Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Training
- Get to know the signs of sexual exploitation
- Share this information with your colleagues
- Think of ways you might be able to help raise awareness of these issues with young people – and what support there could be if a young person shared any concerns.
- Identify opportunities to educate young people and their parents about healthy relationships and about sexual exploitation
- Look beyond the problem behaviours and challenges.
- Ask the questions that help you identify the vulnerabilities and risks.

## If I am worried?

- Child Sexual Exploitation is a child protection issue. Children can not consent to their own abuse. Talk to your safeguarding lead.
- Refer to Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Procedures.
- Don't dismiss concerns about these children on the basis that they are 'choosing' this lifestyle. These young people are skilfully manipulated either not to recognise that they are being exploited, or are controlled through threats and violence.
- Think about reporting your concerns even if you don't think you have firm evidence of sexual exploitation. In most cases, there is no firm evidence – it is a collection of risk indicators and vulnerabilities that we recognise.
- Remember that 16 & 17 year olds are children too. They can consent to sex but they can't consent to abuse and exploitation.
- Don't forget parents/carers. Some may contribute to the problems but most parents are equal partners in wanting to secure their child's safety, will be supportive and protective, and are part of the solution

## Induction Checklist CSE

Question	Answer	Date achieved	Further reading	Managers signature on completion
How do I recognise Child Sexual Exploitation				
What is my initial response if I think a child is being sexually exploited?				
Who are the key contacts and agencies, in this area, for me to use when I identify that a child has been sexually exploited?				

### Further Information – Child Sexual Exploitation

CEOP (thinkuknow) <http://ceop.police.uk>

NWG National Working Group <http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org/>

PACE Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation <http://www.paceuk.info/>

Barnardo's <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>

[Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance](#)