



Child Sexual Exploitation

“The sexual exploitation of children and young people **under 18** involves situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. 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.”

The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children & Young People, 2008

Both girls and boys can be exploited.

Online Sexual Exploitation includes:

- Befriending through online chat rooms/messaging services
- Online grooming techniques, e.g. stalking, identity pretense, false promises e.g. meeting celebrities, tickets, gifts
- Asking children to take and share indecent images of themselves
- Leverage for further demands, e.g. threat to show other people recorded sexual acts by child/young person
- Arranging offline meeting for purpose of sexually abusing child
- Contact from perpetrators in other countries, & abused online
- Speed of grooming can be **very** quick - leaving little ‘thinking time’

The restrained influencing of a child over several months has been largely replaced by rapid escalation to threats, intimidation and coercion.

Governors/Management Committees and the senior management of all schools/colleges need to make clear their commitment to deal effectively with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

All schools/colleges should ensure that:

- they identify, and make known to staff & pupils, a designated lead person for CSE who is fully trained and updated regularly
- the designated lead person for CSE and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (if they are different people) work closely together
- all staff are made aware of and understand CSE indicators and referral pathways
- pupils/students are taught about CSE and how to protect themselves and each other
- pupils/students are taught about healthy (including sexual) relationships, peer pressure, bullying, e-safety, gang activity etc. and how these topics can relate to CSE
- all pupils/students know who to go to for help and support, and to report CSE concerns to, both within and without school/college
- relevant staff work in partnership with other agencies
- procedures are in place to continually gather, record and share CSE information with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service as soon as practicable, including ongoing data on pupils/students’ running away or going missing episodes
- they consider effective ways of raising awareness of CSE with mothers/fathers/carers



What to look out for:

Vulnerabilities:

ALL children and young people, including those from supportive families can be vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, some children and young people are known to be at greater risk. For example, those that:

- Have a chaotic home/family life
- Have a history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Have experienced loss/bereavement
- Are associated with gangs through relatives/peers, or are living in a gang neighbourhood
- Have friendships with children/young people who are being sexually exploited
- Have learning difficulties
- Live in residential care, or hostel/bed & breakfast accommodation
- Have low self-esteem/confidence
- Are Young Carers (i.e. have caring responsibilities for parents/family members with mental or physical health problems, or who are misusing substances)

Warning signs:

Children and young people who are being sexually exploited may be:

- Going missing from home or care
- Absent from school
- Increasing their use of social media, dating sites, image sharing apps etc.
- Involved in risky online relationships including new contacts with people out of city
- Sharing inappropriate/indecent online images with peers, or with people only met online
- Becoming isolated/estranged from family and friends
- Meeting people befriended online
- Involved in offending behaviour
- Misusing drugs/alcohol
- Experiencing sexual cyber-bullying
- Changing their physical appearance
- Experiencing repeated sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- In poor mental health and/or self-harming, having thoughts of, or attempting, suicide
- Receiving money & gifts from unknown sources

Risk assessment and consent:

"In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, or at risk of becoming a victim, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- a child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching;
- sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- it is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered;
- non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- if the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group."



What to do next:

Any member of staff who suspects or receives information that a child or young person **may be** involved in sexual exploitation (including suspicion that they are being groomed online), should refer their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, who will refer the matter to Children's Social Care.

Children's Social Care will initiate a child protection enquiry and contact the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service to consider convening a Sexual Exploitation Meeting based on the indicators of risks.

If there are concerns about the involvement of a person who:

- works with children, and/or
- is in a 'Position of Trust'

...the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** should be informed, via the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Advisory Service, details below.

Where appropriate, the child or young person's wishes and feelings, as well as those of their mothers, fathers and carers should be sought and taken into consideration when deciding how to proceed.

However, practitioners should be aware that this may not always be in the child or young person's best interest and may put them at further risk of harm.

Some children or young people may have been trafficked and need support to access services.

Practitioners should refer to the 'Designated Competent Authorities' based within the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and The United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA).

Their contact details are below.

Useful websites:

- **Sheffield Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures**, including a factsheet about **Sexual Exploitation**
- **Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation** 'PACSE' is the leading national charity working with mothers, fathers & carers whose children are sexually exploited
- **NSPCC** definitions, statistics, facts and resources about Child Sexual Exploitation
- **Thinkuknow**
- **Barnardo's** spot the signs: Advice for parents, professionals and young people on the signs of sexual exploitation and how to keep safe
- **UK Border Agency (UKBA)**

Advice and Support:

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service:

Tel. 0114 2018645

Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Safeguarding Children Advisory Service:

Tel 0114 2053535

Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC):

Tel. 0844 778 2406;

Fax: 08704965534

Email: UKHTC@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk

Publications and research:

- **What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited, DforE June 2012**
- **Qualitative study of children, young people and 'sexting', NSPCC 2012**