

Child Sexual Exploitation

WORKBOOK



This workbook is designed to increase your awareness around Child Sexual Exploitation

Name	
Job Title	
Agency	
Date	
Email	



Contents

By working through this booklet you will learn:

- What child sexual exploitation is
- How child sexual exploitation happens
- What makes a child more vulnerable to being exploited
- What grooming is
- Spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation
- The role of the partner agencies and the law
- What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited

Take you time to work through this booklet, answer the questions by referring to the information on the surrounding pages.

When you have finished, complete the question and answer section at the end of the booklet and email it to your manager. Your manager will then discuss your answers with you, and will inform the Children's MARS team that you have completed your training.



What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative 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 them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without 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. Violence, coercion and intimidation. People's understanding of this subject has changed over time. It is important to note that before the Sexual Offences Act (2003), child sexual exploitation was called 'child prostitution'.

What does it involve?

Young people, male and female, are exploited. This means they are forced into carrying out penetrative sexual acts, sexual touching, masturbation or misuse of sexual images. In return, they, or another person, receive 'something' for performing sexual activities. They may be provided with drugs, alcohol, a roof over their head, affection, attention or other 'gifts' such as clothes or mobile phones.

How does Child Sexual Exploitation happen?

Child Sexual Exploitation can happen in a number of ways.

The internet

The internet can be used by child abusers as the anonymity, social networking sites and instant messaging provide easy access to children and young people.

Using the internet means that sexual exploitation can also occur when the child has no direct contact with the person exploiting them. For example, the child is persuaded to post sexual images of themselves on the internet for the gratification of another person

Organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking

Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances between towns where they may be forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties', and young people involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the buying and selling of young people by the perpetrators.

'Boyfriend', 'Girlfriend' and peer exploitation

The perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship', then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates. The young person believes they are in a happy relationship.

Recent research shows a rise in peer exploitation where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers and associates. Sometimes this can be associated with gang activity.

Inappropriate relationships

This usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical, emotional or financial). There may be a significant age gap but not always. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.

Who is at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation?

Any child or young person can be at risk, however those at high risk of child sexual exploitation include:

- Homeless young people
- Children with low self-esteem
- Children who misuse substances and alcohol
- Children with additional needs, such as those with learning disabilities or mental health issues
- Those who have had difficult childhood experiences, which may feature neglectful or abusive parenting, or domestic abuse in the household
- Children in care
- Children whose parents misuse substances or alcohol
- Children who have experienced the death, loss or illness of a significant person
- Children who are from migrant families, refugees or those seeking asylum
- Mostly young women but young men can also become victims



Spotting the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation

Anyone who has regular contact with children and young people is in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs which may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation. Since victims of sexual exploitation often do not identify themselves as such, people must be proactive in identifying concerns rather than waiting for the child or young person to disclose.

Signs of child sexual exploitation include the child or young person:

- Returning late, missing from home, skipping school
- Being secretive about new friends and having older, predominately male (but not always) friends
- Changing the way they dress
- Having gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for
- Experiencing health problems, such as STIs
- Showing changes in mood or temperament
- Being picked up or dropped off in strange or different cars
- Using drugs and alcohol
- Behaving in an inappropriately sexualised way
- Engaging in 'sexting' - sending sexualised images or messages - and being secretive about using social networking sites. This is against the law if under the age of 16.
- Having unexplained signs of physical harm such as bruising
- Showing expressions of despair, such as, self-harm, eating disorders, or displaying challenging behaviour

What is Grooming?

Regardless of the nature of the sexual exploitation, one feature is consistent: in order to ensure the child or young person complies, the perpetrator will 'groom' them. Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

This is when an offender who wants to sexually exploit a young person isn't upfront about their intentions. They take time to make the young person, and sometimes their family, trust them.

Once grooming has taken place, the groomer's behaviour sometimes changes. They no longer need to convince the child they are trustworthy and the only person who really understands them, and the 'nice' behaviour is replaced with threats and intimidation.

There is no profile or stereotype of someone who grooms or sexually exploits children. They can be male or female, from any ethnic origin, LGBTQ+, younger or older etc

Grooming

- Can take a short time or a long time
- Can involve the young person's parents
- Can be either online or in person
- Is a very clever, often well practised, process
- Many children don't understand that they have been groomed, or what has happened is abuse

Signs of Grooming

Although it's difficult for someone to identify when an offender is targeting and grooming a young person, there are a number of indicators to be aware of.

- What's the age of the new friend? CSE usually involve someone older than the young person
- Is the young person having inappropriate conversations either in person or by text or social media?
- Something out of the ordinary - is the person prepared to put themselves out/travel a great distance to have contact with the young person?
- Are they keen to get the young person alone?
- Do they seem overfamiliar with the young person after a short time?
- Are they trying to isolate the young person from peers or family?
- Is a person involved in other illegal activity?
- Has the young person's behaviour recently changed?
- Have they started to tell lies about their whereabouts and keep secrets from those close to them?
- Does this other person's behaviour seem inappropriate in any other way?



Assessing risk

Vulnerabilities of children at risk of CSE

- Living in chaotic for dysfunctional households (including parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental health issues)
- History of abuse
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Association either through peers, intimate relationships or relatives
- Attend school with younger people who are sexually exploited
- A learning disability
- Unsure about their sexual orientation / unable to disclose sexual orientation
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care
- Living in hostel, Bed & Breakfasts
- Low self-esteem and self-confidence
- Young carers



Child Sexual Exploitation and the law

Non-consensual sex is always considered rape

What the law says about sexual activity

- 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
- 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.

(Serious Crime Act 2015)



Role of the police

The Police

Police have powers to disrupt exploitation by issuing 'child abduction notices' when they become aware that a child is spending time with an adult who could be harmful to them e.g. if there is existing intelligence suggesting the adult has a sexual interest in children, or if parents report a child missing and the child is found at a particular individual's address.

It is important that the police disrupt the activity of perpetrators as this reduces the incidence of abuse and sends a very valuable message to young people, their families and their carers.

Suspecting a child is being sexually exploited - Prosecuting Perpetrators

It can be very difficult for victims of CSE to disclose their experiences because of fear, shame, not recognising what is happening to them is 'wrong', or 'love' for the perpetrator. Agencies and parents have to work together to help support young people who are suffering CSE. The support also includes the police who want to build a strong case against the perpetrator to take them to court and have them convicted for the offences they have committed. This is important so children and young people do not continue to suffer abuse and violence.

The police must work with Crown Prosecution Service solicitors who have an understanding of the issues in order to assess evidence from victims often perceived as unreliable witnesses.

Multi-agency support needs to be available to help victims and their families during court appearances and social care practitioners are in the best position to support young people through these processes.

Making a referral

So, who should you contact if you are concerned about a child or believe a child is at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation?

Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to children's services and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so.

North Lincolnshire Children's Services, Single Point of Contact:

- **01724 296500 (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm Friday)**
- **08081 689667 (free phone)**
- **01724 296555 (answerphone –out of hours and at weekends)**

Children's Social Care will need as much information as possible. This includes details about:

- what have you seen or been told?
- details of the child or young person at risk of harm
- information about individuals posing the risk - for example, details of vehicles used, user names on internet sites, information about names used

If you do not have all of the above information, still pass on your concerns.



Dealing with disclosure

If a child / young person discloses to you that they have been sexually abused / exploited you should:

Receive

Listen

Accept

Reassure

Stay calm

Don't promise confidentiality

React

No leading questions

No judgements

Explain what you will do next

Inform your designated
safeguarding lead or
appropriate manager

Make a referral to children's
services

Record

Brief notes—date/time/place/
signed etc.

Be objective

Use child's words

Support

Give child/young person time
and a safe place



Supporting parents and carers to keep their child safe

It is very traumatic for carers or parents to suspect or discover a child is being sexually abused. Reporting concerns can be difficult, particularly when the abuser is someone that may be known and trusted by the family and young person.

When practitioners work with families or care providers, an essential part of the role is to ensure the work undertaken between carers and young people creates an open and honest relationship so young people feel able to speak about what may be worrying them.

Practitioners should also seek to raise awareness with parents and care providers about what some of the indicators are that suggest a young person is vulnerable to CSE. For example, noticing if they are mixing with a new group of friends, changes in their pattern of going out and socialising, receiving gifts.

The Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) website (www.paceuk.info) is dedicated to parents wanting to keep their children safe. Parents can also contact Children Services Single Point of Contact for advice and information on 01724 296500



Supporting a child who has been exploited

Young people who have suffered sexual exploitation require support which is...

Child-centred

Focused on the child's needs and involving them in decision making whilst acknowledging that they may not recognise they are in a situation of exploitation or abuse.

Involving parents

Where interventions are necessary, they should support families in making their own plans for the welfare and protection of their children, as long as this is consistent with the safety and welfare of the child.

Based on integrated approach

Plans for safeguarding and promoting each child's welfare should be based on a wide-ranging assessment of the needs of the child, their family and their circumstances.

Based on shared responsibility

Education providers, health services including sexual health services, youth services, homelessness services, children's social care, together with criminal justice agencies and private and voluntary sector services must support children and families.

Overcoming perception issues

Different people can help children and young people overcome these perception issues by positively influencing the young person and helping them change their perception of a relationship through building a trusting, professional relationship with the young person.

Supporting a child who has been exploited

Use appropriate language

Victim blaming language may reinforce messages from perpetrators around shame and guilt, which in turn may lead to a child not disclosing harm they have suffered. Language implying that the child or young person is complicit in any way, or responsible for the crimes that have happened or may happen to them, must be avoided.

Sometimes, language used brings the significant risk of 'normalising' and minimising the child's experiences and harm suffered and it is vital that we lead the way in representing and advocating for our children and their families.

For more information see the [Children's MARS Mind Your Language toolkit](#)

Self-esteem & self-confidence

Children and young people should be supported to positively develop the self-esteem and self-confidence.

Sexual health

Help the young person to understand about good sexual health and what constitutes risky, exploitative relationships.

Seeking justice for the criminal acts committed against them

Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as a child or young person making an informed choice but as child sexual abuse, where the responsibility lies with the exploiter.

Questions

What is child sexual exploitation?	
What is grooming?	
The definition of CSE only applies to young people up to the age of 16 years?	True False
Name three things that make a child more vulnerable to CSE and/or grooming	
What are some of things that may lead you to be concerned that a child is being sexually exploited?	
What should you do if a child discloses to you that they have been harmed?	

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness

E-Workbook Completion

Please email this e-workbook to your manager or safeguarding lead who will discuss completion of this training with you. Your manager or safeguarding lead will then confirm that you have completed this training and have sufficient understanding of the topic covered.

Your manager or safeguarding lead will confirm the completion of the e-workbook with the Children's MARS team by filling in the details below and emailing these details to mars@northlincs.gov.uk

A certificate of completion will be issued on behalf of the Children's MARS Board. Please retain the copy of your e-workbook for your training records.

Name of E-workbook completed	
Name and email	
Job Title	
Agency	
Date of Completion	

If you do not have access to a computer, you can print and complete this e-workbook and send it to your manager who will fill in the details above and post this page to:

Children's Multi Agency Resilience Safeguarding Board

Church Square House

30-40 High St

Scunthorpe

DN15 6NL

If you do not have a manager or safeguarding lead, a peer or colleague can confirm completion of this e-workbook.