

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves those under 18 in exploitative situations, contexts and relationships.

It can be the young person (or their friends or associates) receiving tangible goods, such as food, alcohol, cigarettes. It can also involve less obvious rewards, such as affection or status in exchange for the young person and/or others engaging in sexual activity.

CSE is an abuse of power by someone who uses their age, gender, intellect and physical strength and/or economic or other resource to exploit a young person. It can take many forms including:

- peer on peer abuse
- older adults exploiting younger people
- online grooming.

Although in the UK the age of consent is 16, a 16 or 17-year-old can still be sexually exploited. Irrespective of age, a person's ability to give consent may be affected by a range of other factors, including alcohol, drugs, threats of violence, grooming or an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim.

What puts young people at risk of CSE?

There are different factors that can leave young people at risk of CSE:

Sexual health and behaviour

Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and termination; inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Absent from school or repeatedly running away

Truancy, periods of being missing from home, care or school.

Familial abuse and/or problems at home

Familial sexual abuse, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, risk of forced marriage or honour-based violence; domestic violence; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; parental criminality; experience of homelessness; living in care or temporary accommodation.

Emotional and physical condition

Suicidal ideation or attempts, self-harming; low self-esteem or self-confidence; problems relating to sexual orientation; learning difficulties or poor mental health; unexplained injuries or changes in physical appearance.

Gangs, older age groups and involvement in crime

Involvement in crime; direct involvement with gang members or living in a gang-afflicted community; involvement with older individuals or lacking friends from the same age group; contact with other individuals who are sexually exploited.

Use of technology and sexual bullying

Evidence of 'sexting', sexualised communication online.

Alcohol and drug misuse

Problematic substance use.

Receipt of unexplained gifts or money

Unexplained finances, including phone credit, clothes and money.

Distrust of authority figures

Resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social services, health, police and others.

Taken from the Pan-London CSE Operating Protocol, 2014

Potential risk factors:

Migrant/refugee/asylum seeker • Financially unsupported • Changes in behaviour
Death, loss or illness of a significant person • Staying out overnight with no explanation
Substance misuse by parents/carers/child • Experiencing homophobia
Being groomed on the internet • Disappearing from the 'system' with no contact or support
Being taken to clubs and hotels by adults and engaging in sexual activity
Disclosure of serious sexual assault and then withdrawal of statement
Being moved around for sexual activity • Abduction and forced imprisonment

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

An evidence-based framework to support professionals in the detection of CSE.



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Safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and families.

Safeguarding young people from CSE involves taking active steps to identify and prevent harm to young people. It is important to actively assess young people's vulnerability.

Identifying signs of CSE - what you can ask

Is there someone who they feel they can talk to?

How are things at home?

Do they often miss days or parts of the school day?

Do they have any contact with other professionals e.g.

- GP
- social workers
- mental health services

What do they understand 'sexual contact' to be?

Do they understand what consent is?

Do they feel they could say "no" to sex?

Have they ever

- felt uncomfortable or forced to send or receive sexual messages/images?
- been intimidated?
- pushed into doing something sexual?
- offered gifts, alcohol, drugs or protection for sex?
- tried to hurt themselves?

If they are having sexual contact...

Where and how did they meet the person they have sex with?

Do their friends or family know and/or like their sexual partner?

Where do they spend time together? Where do they have sex?

How old is their sexual partner?

Do they often drink alcohol / take drugs before sex?

Have they had a sexually transmitted infection?

Is anyone else there when they have sex (or any other form of sexual contact)?

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

If you identify evidence of any of these:

- Coercion
- Overt aggression (physical or verbal)
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suspicion of sexual exploitation/grooming
- Signs of sexual or physical abuse
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Power imbalance
- Other vulnerabilities

» **Keep records.**

» **Discuss your concerns with your CSE or Safeguarding Lead.**

» **Follow your own child protection policy and procedure.**

Useful links

Brook

brook.org.uk/CSE

brook.org.uk/spotting-the-signs-cse-proforma

brook.org.uk/askbrook

brook.org.uk/traffic-lights

National Crime Agency's CEOP Command (CEOP)

www.ceop.police.uk

Department of Health

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH)

www.bashh.org

Home Office

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office

