

Child Protection Committee



South Lanarkshire



Information for people who work with children on Child Sexual Exploitation

**South Lanarkshire
Keeping Children Safe**

www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Practitioner's working definition

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is Child Sexual Abuse.

CSE has two distinctive characteristics – exploitation and exchange. **CSE** is the sexual exploitation of children and young people under the age of 18 and may involve a child or young person being enticed, coerced, manipulated, forced or deceived into performing and/or allowing others to perform on them sexual acts in exchange for, and with them receiving, some form of material goods or rewards, e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gifts, affection or money.

What does Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) involve?

CSE is a complex issue and can affect any child or young person: male or female anytime, anywhere – regardless of their social, economic, or ethnic background. **CSE** should not be seen in isolation, but in the wider context of vulnerability.

CSE is often hidden and involves features of violence, coercion and intimidation. Involvement in exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social, situational, psychological, physical, economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

CSE can also occur through the use of technology and without the child's immediate recognition, e.g. being

persuaded to post sexual images of themselves on the internet or mobile phones without any immediate payment or gain. **CSE** perpetrators have power over their victims by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength, and/or economic or other resource. The gain for those perpetrating or facilitating **CSE** can include financial benefit, sexual gratification, status or control.

Victims of **CSE** rarely disclose their abuse. This may be due to fear, but very often they may not recognise that they are a victim of **CSE**. They may consider themselves to be in a loving adult relationship with the abuser. The sophisticated grooming and priming processes conducted by the perpetrators and the exchange element can also act as additional inhibitors and/or barriers to disclosure.

In some **CSE** cases, the sexual abuse may take place between the victim and the perpetrator. In other **CSE** cases the victim may be passed between two or more perpetrators. In some **CSE** cases this may be organised by criminal gangs or organised groups.

No child or young person can consent to their own abuse

All children and young people across South Lanarkshire have a right to be cared for and protected from harm and/or abuse.

It's everyone's job to make sure they are alright and that they get the help they need when they need it.

Who might be affected by CSE?

CSE may affect any child or young person but those at higher risk may have some of the following vulnerability factors:

- ☉ A history of abuse and/or neglect
- ☉ Being looked after or formerly looked after or homeless
- ☉ Disrupted family life including family breakdown, separation, divorce, domestic violence, parental alcohol and/or drug misuse, mental ill health, learning disabilities
- ☉ Disengagement from education and isolation from other support mechanisms
- ☉ Low self-esteem, low self-confidence
- ☉ Recent bereavement or loss
- ☉ Being in a state of poverty, financial hardship or unemployment
- ☉ Having a disability – particularly autistic spectrum disorder or a learning disability
- ☉ Involvement in crime/offending behaviour
- ☉ Offline vulnerability and lack of recognition of risk in the online world
- ☉ Uncertainty of sexual orientation or inability to disclose sexual orientation to family and friends
- ☉ Risk of forced marriage/honour-based violence/FGM
- ☉ Links with other young people who are sexually exploited



What are the signs to look out for?

- 🔔 Staying out late or regular episodes of being missing overnight or longer without permission
- 🔔 Reduced contact with family and friends and/or other support networks
- 🔔 Multiple callers to home (unknown adults/older young people)
- 🔔 Peers involved in sexual exploitation
- 🔔 Exclusion, truancy or unexplained absences from school or college
- 🔔 Frequently entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults or taxicabs
- 🔔 Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone(s) etc without plausible explanation
- 🔔 Receiving a number of texts/phone calls prior to leaving home/care/school
- 🔔 Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care/school
- 🔔 Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age and development
- 🔔 Physical signs of bruising or bite marks
- 🔔 Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'
- 🔔 Self-harm and other expressions of despair
- 🔔 Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse/alcohol and drug use

What can I do as a professional?

Doing nothing is not an option! Do not assume someone else will do something!

As a professional working with children and young people you should familiarise yourself with the signs that they are being exploited and share this information with colleagues.

You should also:

- ☛ Stay alert to changes in behaviour or any physical signs of abuse
- ☛ Ensure you know who the child protection lead is in your workplace and the procedure to follow if you have concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
- ☛ Think about ways you can support and help young people to share information if they are worried about their own or another young person's situation
- ☛ Identify opportunities to educate young people and parents about healthy relationships and sexual exploitation

If you have concerns or require more information please contact your line manager. If you think a child or young person is at risk of harm or abuse contact:

Social Work Resources

0303 123 1008

or

Police Scotland

Non emergency number 101

In an emergency call 999

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 0303 123 1015

Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk

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