



Child Sexual Exploitation

Practice Guidance



Children's Social Care

Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. [Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and a Guide for Practitioners, Local Leaders and Decision Makers Working to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation \(DFE February 2017\)](#).

Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation is a multi-agency activity. Sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, and in all parts of the world.

It affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. It is a form of sexual abuse and can have a serious impact on every aspect of the lives of the children involved. Whilst it is not known how prevalent sexual exploitation is, it has become increasingly recognisable as practitioners gain more understanding of grooming and other methods of sexual exploitation and begin to take a proactive and coordinated approach to respond to it.

Research has shown that particular groups of young people are especially vulnerable:

- Looked After Young People
- Young people with unstable or chaotic homes (e.g. Domestic Violence, Young Carers, parents with substance misuse issues)
- Young People who have substance misuse issues
- Young people who do not attend school (exclusions, missing in education, truancy, part-time timetables)

- Those young people with vulnerable friendship groups (bully, victim of bullying, isolation from friends, friends with other young people at risk of CSE)
- Young people with a history of sexual or physical abuse, or neglect
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) young people exploring their sexuality in an unsupported way (e.g. chat rooms, social networking)
- Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities

Some key indicators that a young person may be at risk of, or experiencing CSE include the following:

- Missing from home or care
- History of neglect/ abuse/ domestic violence
- Substance misuse/ Anti-Social Behaviour
- Low self-esteem/ self-harming/ mental health concerns
- Inappropriate friendships with adults/ older teenagers
- Unexplained money or possessions
- Truancy/ Exclusions/ Missing from Education
- Secretive or extensive use of the mobile phone/ internet
- Unexplained injuries or sexually transmitted infections
- Sudden changes in behaviour/ appearance/ friends
- Older boyfriend/ older female friend
- Talking about visiting different places/ being in cars
- Increased use of drugs and alcohol

The role of the Child Sexual Exploitation Team in Coventry

Horizon is a multi-agency team which consist of Social Workers, Youth Workers, Health and Police representatives.

The Horizon Team was established in 2015 and at this time was primarily a team that completed intensive one to one work with children to support disclosures and carried out training and awareness raising in the city.

In 2016, the remit of the team changed and became case holding. The aim was to work closely with partner agencies to build relationships with children and young people, provide consistency and support to help them to understand their abuse, to support them in exiting exploitation and ensure they were protected.

Relationship based practice is followed and workers will visit a young person sometimes multiple times a week and can have daily phone / text message contact to enable them to build a good rapport. Workers support the young person at home / placement, in meetings, prepare them for court – whilst also meeting the statutory requirements.

Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool

The purpose of the screening tool is to enable professionals to assess a child's level of risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in a quick and consistent manner. The screening tool can be applied to all children (male and female) under the age of 18 years.

Who is this the screening tool for?

The screening tool is to be used by anyone who has a concern that a child may be being sexually exploited. The screening toolkit has been adopted by all the LSCB areas in the West Midlands that work within the West Midlands Police Force area.

Important points to remember when considering CSE;

- Both girls and boys can be victims of child sexual exploitation and are equally vulnerable.

Exploitation of boys and young men can often be overlooked by professionals. There is some evidence that boys and young men who are being sexually exploited are more likely to be criminalised for their behaviour and viewed as a perpetrator. Young men's victim hood often goes unrecognised and professionals may tend to focus on boys and young men's outward behaviour, such as offending or drug or alcohol use, without questioning the reasons behind it.

Behaviours that may be likely to be recognised as evidence of risk for a girl or young woman may be interpreted as a young man experimenting with their sexuality or demonstrating sexually harmful behaviour to others.

- The coercer(s) and perpetrator(s) are usually an adult(s), but children and young people can also act in a sexually abusive way towards other young people or exert power e.g. group/gang members of either gender.
- Children and young people may exchange or sell sex as a result of constrained choices such as poverty, isolation and historic abuse.
- Although it is rare, parents/carers may be involved in the sexual exploitation of their children.
- Groups of children and multiple perpetrators may be involved (organised abuse).
- No child under 13 years should be assessed as Low Risk if behaviours indicate a risk of CSE.
- Children with additional needs require special consideration up to the age of 21 years.
- No child with a learning disability should be assessed as Low Risk if behaviours indicate involvement in or risk of CSE.
- Disclosure of information by the child may take time and evident risks may only emerge during ongoing assessment, support and interventions with the child and/or family.

Any young person who has been subject to a complex pattern of life experiences including sophisticated grooming processes that have brought them to a point where they are at risk of, or are abused through CSE does not stop needing support and protection when they reach the age of 18, they remain a vulnerable young person with on-going needs.

A person's vulnerability will depend on their circumstances and environment, and each case must be judged on its own merits and support offered as appropriate by the relevant agencies.

The level of intervention required depends on the assessed level of risk

Risk levels

*** No Evidence of CSE risk identified.**

*** Category 1: Low – at risk of harm: A child who is at risk of being groomed for sexual exploitation.** A vulnerable child or young person, where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any vulnerability factors have been identified. However, at this stage there is no evidence of any offences.

Agencies to complete work with children, young people and families to develop an awareness of the risks that can lead to a situation in which they may be exposed to sexual exploitation - delivered as a single agency or integrated into existing multi-agency plan.

*** Category 2: Medium – significant risk of harm:** Evidence a child or young person is being targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, perceived affection, sense of belonging, accommodation (overnight stays), money and goods etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is significant.

A MASE meeting should be convened in relation to children and young people assessed as at “Medium risk”.

*** Category 3: Significant – serious risk of harm:** A child who is entrenched in sexual exploitation, but often does not recognise or self denies the nature of their abuse often in denial, and where coercion/control is implicit.

A multi-agency strategy meeting should be convened in relation to children and young people assessed as at ‘significant risk’.

Assessing or screening for child sexual exploitation should not be seen as a one off event.

Young people can move very quickly between the risk categories, therefore regular assessment should be undertaken using the screening tool on a 3 monthly basis.

All screening tools should include a management oversight.

Completed screening tools should be emailed to the following address:
cse@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk

The CSE Team Manager / Senior Practitioner will then review the risk level and decide if a MASE meeting is required.



Blank CSE Screening
Tool.docx

Multi-agency approach to managing Medium and High Risk Cases

MASE meetings:

Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meetings (MASE) are held when a child/young person is deemed to be at Medium or High Risk of Sexual Exploitation. This will be agreed after the completion of the Screening Tool, and /or Strategy discussion and are chaired by either a Team Manager or Senior Practitioner from the Horizon Team.

If the young person's case is not held within the Horizon Team, the case holding team arranges the MASE meeting (including the venue, arranging a minute taker and inviting the relevant professionals).

Attendance at the meeting should include:

- The referrer, if a professional;
- Education and health services;
- Police
- Social worker;

- CSE Coordinator/ member of CSE team;
- Child/young person;
- Parent(s)/carer(s);
- Any other relevant person (e.g. fostering link worker, residential key worker / manager, YOS worker, voluntary agency worker, GP).

Children/family/carers will be invited to all or part of the meeting where appropriate; however a decision will be made on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of each case. It may be necessary if there is a confidential police investigation underway, surveillance or concerns about the parents or carers that the child and parents/carers are excluded from all or part of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Share and clarify information
- Establish exact nature of concerns and the child or young person's needs;
- Share information pertaining to a suspected perpetrator(s) with police, i.e. car registration, nickname/ alias, descriptions, tattoos, premises/locations etc;
- Consider the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators;
- Consider a referral using the National Referral Mechanism in cases where a child/ young person may have been trafficked;
- Develop a multi-agency plan to meet the child's needs including support for parents/carers.

If a young person is under a Child In Need plan / Child Protection deemed to be at Medium or High risk of CSE and are held outside of the CSE team – a transfer to the Horizon Team will be agreed following the MASE meeting being held.

Risk assessment and safety plans

These NWG documents are used within the team as part of an ongoing risk assessment framework and are updated in line with the CSE screening tool (every 3 months).



Risk Assessment -
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CSE Safety and
Disruption Plan.doc

Mapping

Horizon completes social network mapping on cases held within the team – this assists in identifying interactions between victims and perpetrators, between them and other young people and helps evidence patterns of behaviours with provides information and intelligence about perpetrators of sexual exploitation.



Horizon Mapping
Guidance NEW.PDF

Missing

Going missing or being absent from home or school has been consistently identified as a key vulnerability in relation to CSE and one of the main indicators that a child is already being exploited There are many reasons why a child may not be where they are supposed to be, but consideration should always be given to whether they might be at risk of sexual exploitation or are being exploited.

Current research findings estimate that approximately 25 per cent of children and young people that go missing are at risk of serious harm and there are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of exploitation.

The Missing Coordinator is based within the CSE team and has oversight of children and young people who go missing within the Coventry area.

Return Home Interviews are offered to anyone under the age of 18 years on their return after being reported missing and are completed within 72 hours. Most of the time these interviews will be completed by Youth Workers.



Coventry Return
Home Interview Form.

Multi-Agency Triage Panels for children and young people at risk of CSE / who regularly go missing.

A multi-agency triage panel meets monthly to consider information gained from all return home interviews and safe and well checks.

The Panel is made up of representatives from the Police, Children's Social Care, Health, Youth Services, Education and the Youth Offending Service. Following the triage process, children that are deemed to be at risk of CSE in relation to missing, will be progressed to Child Sexual Exploitation Group (COG), which meets monthly. The purpose of COG is of directing medium and long term actions to safeguard, disrupt, and reduce opportunity for children to be harmed through sexual exploitation.

Children about whom there are concerns in relation to missing, but no immediate indication of cse involvement will be progressed to a monthly Missing Operational Group (MOG) meeting. The role of MOG is to identify additional support for children and young people that have been missing and to monitor the effectiveness of any referrals and recommendations it makes.



Wider exploitation

Criminal exploitation is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities the UK, while also simultaneously victimising vulnerable young people and leaving them at risk of harm.

Criminal exploitation often occurs without the victim being aware that they are being exploited and involves young people being encouraged, cajoled or threatened to carry out crime for the benefit of others. In return they are offered friendship or peer acceptance, but also cigarettes, drugs (especially cannabis), alcohol or food and accommodation.

Victims of criminal exploitation are often fearful of getting into trouble themselves – for the very actions they have been exploited into carrying out – so it can also be difficult to get these young people to come forward and speak out about their situation

Criminal exploitation is increasingly being recognised by the CSE team and partner agencies within Coventry. A number of young people are assessed as being at low risk of sexual exploitation but are identified as being at risk of wider exploitation.

The Missing Operational Group is currently considering approaches used to support children who are at risk of / are being criminally exploited – this includes a wider exploitation model and screening tool.

Child Sexual Exploitation Perpetrator Forum:

The Coventry Child Sexual Exploitation Perpetrator Forum is a multi-agency response to lead, oversee, review and recommend actions in relation to identified perpetrators that pose an element of risk to children.

The CSE Perpetrators Forum is a sub group of the Coventry Offender Management Group that oversees the development and performance of integrated offender management approaches and monitors the delivery of all associated offender management programmes in Coventry.

The forum supports investigations and ensures a joined up approach between police and partner agencies is maintained. The group seeks to minimise the risk of harm to victims through the use of civil measures and interventions alongside criminal justice interventions against perpetrators.

The forum complements Coventry COG (victim focused) and City Tasking (location focused) therefore adhering to the regional guidance around victim, offender and location as set out in the West Midlands Metropolitan CSE Regional Framework (June 2015).

Any new perpetrator CSE referral needs to be raised on the below CSE referral form and sent to the following email address: Cv_om@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



Once received, the referral is passed to officers to review what information is detailed on Police systems and to populate a CSE risk matrix that would give Police (albeit a subjective) understanding of their risk. The referral would also be sent to all other relevant agencies who attend the forum for them to search their systems and share the information. The new referral would then be discussed in full at the forum and a decision made to accept or not.

West Midlands Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Form

The purpose of the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Form, also referred to as the West Midlands Police Information Report, is to inform the police of any intelligence that has been gathered during day to day working.

The document is linked to several strands including CSE; Child Abuse; Female Genital Mutilation; Forced Marriage; Honour Based Violence; Prostitution; Modern Day Slavery; Domestic Abuse; Rape and Serious Sexual Offences.

The FIB is quick and easy to complete and any information, however small, will help in intelligence gathering. There is written guidance within the form.

This form should be used to share information. It is NOT to be used to report crime. Partners are advised to call 101 to report a crime or in an emergency to dial 999.

Please ensure that any information you send is sent via secure email to: fib@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk.

Good FIB Forms:

- Are short and to the point (use bullet points if easier)
- Provide facts
- Use correct spellings of names with a date of birth for all individuals mentioned
- Do not use initials (assuming that the police know who is being referred to)
- Do not duplicate information (especially if the information has been reported as a crime to the police)
- Relate to one person only (unless the persons are connected) so that information for individuals is not mixed up



Partnership
Information Form.doc

National Referral Mechanism form

The National Referral Mechanism is a process set up by the Government to identify and support victims of trafficking in the UK. It was born out of the Government's obligation to identify victims under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking, which came into force on 1 February 2008.

What is the National Referral Mechanism?

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support.

The NRM is also the mechanism through which the National Crime Agency (NCA) collects data about victims. This information aims to help build a clearer picture about the scope of human trafficking in the UK.

Why refer a child into the NRM?

Referring children into the NRM encourages the sharing of information between agencies and can help to ensure an appropriate safeguarding response.

It also helps the UK to collect evidence and build an understanding of the patterns of child trafficking. This helps to shape policy and can aid police investigations into trafficking.

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

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