



LHPA Sexual Exploitation Addendum to Safeguarding Policy

Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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 are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

(UK National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) and is used in statutory guidance for England)

Child sexual exploitation(CSE) tends to be a hidden crime. It is more likely to occur in private residences than on the streets. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

CSE tends to fall into 3 categories:-

1. Inappropriate relationships
2. Boyfriend/peer exploitation
3. Organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking

Organised/trafficking is the most complex of the exploitations and is therefore considered a very high risk but the other forms can expose a person to extreme levels of intimidation and/or physical and/or sexual violence CSE can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, including oral and anal rape. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

Child sexual abuse online

Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

When sexual exploitation happens online, young people may be persuaded, or forced, to:

- send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone
- have sexual conversations by text or online.

Abusers may threaten to send images, video or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity.

Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped.

Child sexual exploitation in gangs

Sexual exploitation is used in gangs to:

- exert power and control over members
- initiate young people into the gang
- exchange sexual activity for status or protection
- entrap rival gang members by exploiting girls and young women
- inflict sexual assault as a weapon in conflict.

Girls and young women are frequently forced into sexual activity by gang members.

Signs of CSE

Children;-

- Going missing for periods of time
- Returning home late
- Disengagement from education
- Appearing with new possessions/unexplained gifts/eg jewellery, phones, money with no plausible explanation
- Sexual health issues e.g. inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Changes in mood/temperament
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Over familiarity with strangers
- Sending sexualised images over the internet or mobile phones

- Involvement in exploitative relationships or association with 'risky' relationships or association with 'risky' Adults

Who is most at risk

Any child or young person can be exploited regardless of gender, age or background. Research, however shows that certain factors can increase vulnerability :-

- Domestic violence
- Disrupted home life
- Poor mental health of child/in family
- parenting Issues
- Drugs/alcohol misuse
- Children in care (LAC)
- Children excluded from school

What to do if you think a child may be vulnerable to CSE

Any concerns should be reported to the Designated Lead for Safeguarding (DSL)