

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** are both forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The abuse can:

- be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults.
- be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time
- range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.
- involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence

Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and exploitation, as well as being physical, can be facilitated and/or take place online.

## Vulnerabilities:

**ALL** children and young people can be vulnerable to criminal/sexual exploitation, but some are known to be at greater risk if they:

- have a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- lack or have lacked a safe & stable home environment e.g. experiencing domestic violence, parental substance misuse, mental health issues, criminal activity
- have experienced recent bereavement or loss
- experience social isolation or social difficulties
- do not have a safe environment to explore sexuality
- are economically vulnerable
- are homeless or in insecure accommodation
- have connections with other children and young people who are being exploited
- have family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- have a physical or learning disability
- in care, particularly residential
- are exploring their sexual identity
- are excluded from mainstream education
- have gang connections
- are a foreign exchange student
- are a Class A drug user
- use social media unsafely

## Warning signs:

- acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation
- gang association and/or isolation from peers & social networks
- exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work
- leaving home or care without explanation and persistently going missing, returning late and/or being found out-of-area
- excessive texts, phone calls, multiple handsets
- returning home under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour or sexually transmitted infections for age
- evidence or suspicions of physical or sexual assault, unexplained injuries
- relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups
- multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- frequenting areas known for sex work
- concerning use of internet/other social media
- increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being
- Carrying weapons
- Parental concerns
- Decline in academic results & performance

**A key factor in CSE/CCE is the presence of some form of exchange in return for something:**

- **Tangible** e.g. money, drugs, alcohol
- **Intangible** e.g. status, protection, perceived love or affection
- **Prevention** of something negative e.g. a child engages in sexual or criminal activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm their family.

As this exchange occurs within an unequal power dynamic, the receipt of something by a child or young person still makes them a victim.

Exploitation can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.

In the case of CSE, 16 and 17 year olds can legally consent to have sex but only if it does not involve coercion or abuse.

Similarly to other forms of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity (e.g. online abuse).

Sexual exploitation may also occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Child exploitation is perpetrated by men and women, from all ethnic & socio-economic backgrounds.

**Your safeguarding duty to protect and support does not depend on the child or young person's willingness to be safeguarded.**

**Trafficking** can be within a very small area, a city, the UK or abroad.

A child or young person who is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purposes of any form of exploitation is considered to be a trafficking victim, whether or not they have been forced or deceived.

**County lines** is a form of exploitation and the term is used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas e.g. within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move, sell and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

**Protective factors for a child or young person can include:**

- Enjoying & participating in learning, good home/school links
- Engaging in education, employment, training, planning future career
- Good physical & mental health & development
- Age-appropriate sexual activity, no drug/alcohol misuse
- Positive boundaries, guidance, services, activities & peers
- Parental warmth, support, physical care & good safety network

## Useful Web-links:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2020](#)
- [County Lines Guidance, Home Office](#)
- [NSPCC: Child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation & gangs, child trafficking](#)
- [Child sexual exploitation: definition and a guide for practitioners, DfE 2017](#)
- [Sheffield Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures \(Section 3, Children in Specific Circumstances\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked, DfE & Home Office](#)
- [The National Referral Mechanism](#) identifying & supporting victims of human trafficking or modern slavery
- [Sheffield Child Exploitation Screening Tool](#) to help professionals to recognise the signs, indicators and protective factors in relation to child exploitation
- [Child Sexual Exploitation, November 16, SCSP Learning Brief](#)
- [Contextual Safeguarding, December 19](#) SCSP Team Talk

## What to do:

- Tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy (DSL/D) immediately if you are concerned about any individual, group or community issue involving or suspecting child exploitation, trafficking, etc.
- The DSL/D will use the CSE/CCE screening tool to consider a child or young person's level of risk and contact either the child's social worker or the **Sheffield Safeguarding Hub (tel. 0114 2734855)** as appropriate
- If you are concerned about a group or community you or your DSL/D can ring 101
- If someone is in immediate danger ring 999
- If you are concerned about the behaviour of a person who works (paid or unpaid) with children, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** should be informed via a [LADO Request form](#).

Where appropriate, the child or young person's wishes and feelings, and those of their parents and carers should be sought and taken into consideration when deciding how to proceed.

However, practitioners should be aware that this may not always be in the child or young person's best interest and may put them at further risk of harm.

Some children or young people may have been trafficked and need support to access services.

[The National Referral Mechanism](#) (NRM) is the framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

**The Amber Project** is a service for children who are being exploited i.e. are being used for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit which results in harm of the child.

The project brings together the statutory CSE and CCE social work teams as part of a multiagency response. The team also includes police, health, specialist exploitation workers and social workers, working with young people, their families and professionals to educate and support around individuals who are identified at high risk of, or involved in, sexual exploitation, at risk of criminal exploitation, organised crime, grooming, violence and exploitation.

Practitioners cannot refer directly to this service; you must make referrals through the child's current social worker or by ringing the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub directly – see above.

## All education settings should ensure that:

- a trained and regularly updated **Child Exploitation (CE) Lead** is identified to staff & students
- the CE Lead & the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (DSL/D) (if they are different people) work closely together
- all staff are made aware of and understand CSE/CCE indicators and referral pathways
- students are taught (age-appropriately) about:
  - CSE/CCE and how to protect themselves and each other
  - Healthy (including sexual) relationships, peer pressure, bullying, online-safety, gang activity etc. and how these topics can relate to CSE/CCE
- students know who to go to for help and support, and who to report CSE/CCE concerns to inside and outside the education setting
- relevant staff work in partnership with other agencies
- procedures are in place to gather, record and share CSE/CCE information with the Amber Project, including data on pupils who run away or go missing
- they consider effective ways of raising awareness of CSE/CCE with parents and carers