



# Child Sexual Exploitation

Practice Guidance

## Child Sexual Exploitation

### Awareness raising in Tameside

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is defined as: -

*“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”.*

This definition is courtesy of supplementary guidance on CSE provided by, the then, DCSF.

For the purposes of this policy document the above definition will be used but it is important to look within the words to identify the most important points.

A **child** is any person who is under the age of **13** years

A **young person** is anyone who has attained the age of **13** years but is under **18** years old.

The exploitative element of the offending is identified as an inequality of power between the victim and the perpetrator. This inequality manifests itself in many ways but the most obvious factors include fear, deception and violence.

Barnardo’s have identified three kinds of CSE in their document, “Puppet on a String”. These are as follows-

- Inappropriate Relationships
- Boyfriend Model
- Organised Criminal Gangs

There is some crossover between the first two categories and this involves an imbalance of power, which perpetuates the abuse and undermines the will of the victim to the extent that they feel unable to remove themselves from the position they are in. Examples of this might include: -

- 15-year-old female has a “boyfriend” of 20 who has displayed violence to her in the past and threatened to harm himself should she attempt to end the relationship. This leads to the victim agreeing to unwanted sexual advances and suffering physical and emotional abuse.
- 48-year-old male befriends a young female of 13 years. Exposes her to sexualised behaviour in an attempt to normalise his behaviour and desensitise her. He proclaims his love for the victim who genuinely believes she is in a loving relationship with the perpetrator and readily accepts his sexual behaviour.
- 12-year-old male who is persistent missing from home. He regularly goes to Manchester City Centre to have sexual liaisons with older males who pay him in cigarettes, drugs and money.
- 72-year-old male allows schoolchildren to use his home where he provides alcohol and cigarettes for them in return for him taking abusive photographs of them.

Offending behaviour by organised criminal groups (OCGs) is much more complex and there has been much publicity in the media over some recent high profile cases. Certain features typify such cases. The victims are usually, but not exclusively, females from difficult home circumstances, possibly looked after children. They may also be asylum seekers or unaccompanied children who have recently entered the UK. Sometimes victims are moved around, geographically to cater for the needs of the OCG and may even be trafficked into and out of the UK. The OCG is often very well organised with very strong communication networks, usually through mobile phone technology. Offences committed by OCG's are very difficult to address and bring to a successful conclusion.

#### **Some common misinformation: -**

- CSE is not exclusively committed against females; there are male victims also, although research suggests they are fewer in number.
- It isn't just children who are in the care system or who come from troubled backgrounds that become the victims of CSE. Any child, from anywhere can potentially become the victim of CSE.
- CSE is more prevalent than anyone suspects and such of this type of offending can only be uncovered by people being vigilant and reporting their concerns.

#### **How would we recognise if a child were a victim of CSE?**

This isn't an easy thing to answer but there are some physical, emotional and habitual triggers, which may be as the result of a child or a young person being a victim of CSE. Please note that this list is only suggestive, it is not definitive and it may be that a child or young person displays several of these things but isn't a victim at all. They must only be used as a guide and to promote further thinking and exploration.

Going Missing from Home	Low self esteem
Truancy	Older acquaintances
Not associating with their regular friends	Poor sleeping habits
Change in appearance	Unaccounted absence (where are they?)
Unexplained possessions/money	Acquired another mobile phone
Secretive about use of computer/Internet	Sexualised behaviour
Issues with drinking/drugs	Failing mental health
Uncommunicative	Unexpected callers
Self-harming	Tiredness

### **Computers and Child Sexual Exploitation**

Computers and the Internet are present in almost everyone's lives, including perpetrators of CSE and their victims. Most children and young people have access to the Internet through a laptop, a PC or even through their mobile phone. People today talk less to each other but communicate infinitely through cyber-space. Perpetrators were quick to pick up on this and there are many people out there casting a net, looking for impressionable, vulnerable children and young people to latch onto. That doesn't mean to say that you shouldn't allow your child to have access to the Internet. However, if you do, a few simple rules will help to ensure they are less likely to be the victim of cyber-grooming.

- Always ensure you can access their laptop, PC, phone etc and that it isn't password protected. If they have a password on, have it removed and challenge if they resist.
- If your child has a web-accessible phone look into the cost of putting them on a contract rather than pay as you go. The reason for this is so that as the bill payer you can access their call data at any time, should you wish to do so.
- Learn how to access the history of your computer and set and lock the filter to keep out unwanted sites of a sexual nature.
- If your child is spending unusually long periods of time alone on their computer find out what it is that is so interesting.
- If your child has a Facebook account have a look at who their "friends" are. Be wary if there appear to be older individuals on there or if there are profiles, which have no photos and you don't know who they are.
- Always impress upon your child that they can speak with you if anything is wrong. What they may see as you being intrusive is actually you being caring.
- Keep an eye out for any file that end in .jpg or .gif. These are files that house photographs. These may be perfectly innocent, but they may not.

**What do you do if you suspect that a child is a victim, or about to be a victim of CSE?**

As a parent/carer, or any member of the public you must report any concerns you have whether it be a child you have responsibility for or any other child. It doesn't matter if you make a genuine mistake and any information will be treated in confidence initially, until the matter can be looked into further. Many of the activities around CSE are actually criminal offences and this includes such serious crimes as rape, kidnapping and assault etc. It may be that the police will need to speak with you at some later stage.

Many people are out there, practitioners such as Social Workers, Police, Health Workers, and Probation Officers etc, who are working hard to protect children from Sexual Exploitation. Never walk away without doing anything, if you have any suspicions then please call...

Tameside Children's Social Work	0161 342 4150
GMP-Tameside Public Protection Investigation Unit	0161 856 9314

Or, if you don't feel confident enough to give your details then please contact...

NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Crimestoppers	0800 555 1111

**DOING NOTHING IS NEVER AN ACCEPTABLE OPTION-PROTECT A CHILD IN  
TAMESIDE**