

## What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Child Sexual Exploitation is sexual abuse of children and young people under the age of 18 and it is illegal. This form of child abuse happens when children are given things in exchange for the purpose of being exploited for sexual purposes in person and/or online.

Exploitation can happen to any child regardless of their age, gender, background, socio-economic status, religion or culture. It occurs across all communities in the UK and whilst some children have additional vulnerabilities, any child can be targeted.

## What can Child Sexual Exploitation look like?

The child might be tricked into thinking they are in a positive consensual relationship with the exploiter, that having a 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' is their choice and they can leave if they wish. However exploiters are skilful in targeting and manipulating children, often they can pinpoint something that the child wants or needs and are able to provide that as part of the grooming process. This can be physical items such as food, clothes, gifts, money, drugs or alcohol or it may be emotional needs that aren't being met for the child elsewhere such as affection, attention, feeling valued, noticed or loved.

Once the exploiter has control of the child, the child can feel trapped and unable to leave due to threats, control, intimidation and abuse from the individual they once trusted and liked.

Whatever the child is offered it is likely to connect to a deep-seeded need or aspiration and may be difficult or impossible for them to refuse.

## One Minute Guide

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)



Child Sexual Exploitation does not always involve a physical aspect, it can also happen through technology for example being told to send or post child sexual abuse images of themselves or having sexual conversations.

**Remember!**

**Children can never consent  
to their own exploitation.**

## Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation

Some signs that a child is being sexually exploited might include:

- Going missing for periods of time, regularly returning home late or staying out late or overnight
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education.
- Appearing with unexplained gifts, money or possessions.
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Being in a controlling relationship or having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Having a new group of friends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy
- Uncharacteristic and significant mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Drug and alcohol misuse.
- Spending time in CSE hotspots.
- Changes in behaviour
- Self-harming.
- Displaying unhealthy or inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language.
- Use of mobile phone and internet that causes concern.
- Being frightened of certain people, places or situations.
- Physical signs of abuse, such as bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal area



## What to do if you think it's happening

If you have a concern that a child may have suffered or be at risk of significant harm a referral to MASH should be made using a MARF [Multi-agency referral and initial information - Introduction and Consent - Coventry City Council](#)

You may wish contact Coventry's Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub for advice on **024 7678 8555**

If the child is at immediate risk of significant harm call the police on **999**. To discuss a non-emergency matter with the Police call **101**.

Out of office hours please call the Emergency Duty Team on 024 7683 2222.

For more information about Child Exploitation see our [website](#)

## Key Contacts and Further Information

[Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#)

[Horizon – Coventry](#)

[Fearless](#)

[St Giles](#)

