



One Minute Guide



What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. Child sexual exploitation is never the child's fault, even if it appears they 'agree' to the sexual activity.

It occurs where an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or the increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Perpetrators can be adults or young people. When a child is exploited, they are often given gifts such as drugs, money, status and to exploit the child to perform sexual activities.

Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child to carry out acts making them feel as if they have no choice, other times children are groomed and believe they are consenting to the acts.

What are the vulnerability and risk factors to consider?

All children can be criminally exploited. All children can be sexually exploited. Some groups of children are at an increased risk of CSE.

These include children:

- with learning difficulties or disabilities
- who are children in care
- who are migrants
- who are seeking asylum
- who are homeless
- who run away from home and care and/or are missing from education

Sexual exploitation can sometimes be difficult to identify and can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour.

CSE rarely occurs in isolation of other vulnerability and risk factors. It is also often linked to other types of criminal activity such as: child trafficking; domestic abuse and violence; interpersonal violence and abuse in intimate relationships; drug-related offences; gang-related activity; and modern-day slavery.

Absence of any of the potential indicators of CSE does not mean that a child is not experiencing abuse and exploitation. Assessing if a child is at risk of or is experiencing CSE requires a full and holistic assessment of all concerns.

What are the signs of CSE?

- Going missing for periods of time, staying out overnight or coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Hanging out with older people and / or being in a gang
- Unexplained gifts, new possessions or money that they can't explain
- Association with other children involved with exploitation
- Having older boyfriend /girlfriends
- Suffering from Sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy
- Mood swings and changes in wellbeing
- Frightened by some people, places or situation
- Signs of physical abuse
- Drug and alcohol misuse



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What to do if you are worried a child is being sexually exploited?

It is important that practitioners are open to the fact that a child cannot consent to their own exploitation and children do not always recognise that they are being sexually exploited. They will often not wish to disclose information due to fear of repercussions or of losing the group they belong to and identify with. Many children are groomed prior to the sexual exploitation occurring. It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs.

If any practitioner believes that a child in Wakefield is at risk of, or is being sexually exploited, it is important that they report their concerns immediately to the Integrated Front Door team and to the Police. For additional support specific for Wakefield, please see the list below: ([click here for more information](#))

CVE Drop Inn Clinic - The CVE service ensures a co-ordinated response from West Yorkshire Police and Wakefield Children and Young People's Social Care to the identification, investigation, and intervention with cases of exploitation, developing effective joint strategies to tackle exploitation throughout the district.

RAM (Risk Assessment Management Meeting) for children identified as at risk of Criminal/Sexual Exploitation – The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM) to review cases open to Wakefield's Children and Young People Service (CYPS) where a risk of Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CCE) and/or Trafficking has been identified.

PIP (Partnership Intelligence Portal) - This system and access to it is for authorised partners and organisations to submit information to West Yorkshire Police.

If you believe a child is in immediate risk of harm, you

should contact the police by calling 999. Practitioners should also consider if the child or young person has been trafficked and consider a referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

Contact Information

- [Worried about a child?](#)
- [LADO allegations](#)

Additional Resources / Tools

- Child Exploitation Knowledge Hub
- Risk Identification Tool
- [The MACE Strategy](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [West Yorkshire Consortium Child Exploitation Procedure](#)
- [Research in Practice: Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm](#)