

7 Minute Briefing

Child Sexual Exploitation

RNOH Safeguarding Children Team

Background

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Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18, into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

Why it Matters

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Children and young people may not recognise they are a victim of CSE therefore it is professionals/parents responsibility to report concerns and support appropriately.

CSE is a form of abuse and is a crime with devastating and long lasting consequences for its victims and their families.

The hidden nature of child CSE and the complexities involved means professionals curiosity and always being alert to the issue is vital.

If a child talks to you about sexual exploitation It's important to:

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Listen carefully to what they're saying

Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you

Tell them it's not their fault

Say you'll take them seriously

Don't confront the alleged abuser

Explain what you'll do next

Report what the child has told you as soon as possible

What to do?

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Recognise the warning signs of CSE.

If a disclosure is made or you are concerned someone is affected by child sexual exploitation, your priority is to get help as soon as you possibly can. The person concerned may be worried about not being believed or being judged. It is important to remember that child sexual exploitation is never their fault, no matter how or why it happened. Child sexual exploitation is a crime and there are several organisations, including Barnardo's that have special, expert services that can help those affected.

The Safeguarding Children Team can be contacted on 020 8909 5337 and will give you information or advice on what action needs to be taken.

Information

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Females and males can be victims of CSE. The only difference in signs and indicators is that females can become pregnant.

The grooming process can happen in a number of minutes, over a couple of months or years.

Anyone can be a perpetrator of CSE regardless of age, gender, intellect, ethnicity or sexuality.

Child sexual exploitations takes different forms. It can include contact and non-contact sexual activities and can occur online or in person, or a combination of each.

Categories of CSE –

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CSE can take various forms including: online grooming; gang exploitation; boyfriend / girl-friend model; party model; street model; peer model.

CSE offences always include an element of grooming – manipulating a child in order to exploit them.

Vulnerability

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Factors that will make a child more vulnerable include;

- Missing from home;
- Disengaged from education;
- Feeling alienated from family;
- Lack of friends/peers;
- Mental health issues;
- Criminality

Victims often become secretive and estranged from family and friends

