

Busy Governor's Guide to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- 1. What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?** Child sexual exploitation 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.
- 2. What is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?** CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.
- 3. What is County lines?** County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.
- 4. Who is at risk?** Any child or young person under the age of 18 may be at risk of exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men as well as girls and young women and it happens in Devon.
- 5. However, some groups of young people are particularly vulnerable:** These include - missing or runaway or homeless children; children in care; children with prior experience of sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect; children not in education through exclusion or children persistently absent from school; children with learning difficulties and disabilities; children of parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (e.g. drug and/or alcohol abuse, mental illness, learning disability, domestic violence, their own history of an abusive childhood).
- 6. Why are these children particularly at risk?** The grooming techniques used to gain the child's attention, admiration and affection often taps into insecurities or a desire for

acceptance and status by the young person e.g. being liked by someone older; being liked/fancied enough that a stranger asks for their mobile number; meeting someone who thinks they are special on the internet; receiving alcohol, drugs, money or gifts; getting a buzz and the excitement of risk taking/forbidden behaviour; being offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules/boundaries; being taken along to adult entertainment venues, red light or gay cruising areas (public sex environments).

7. **Immediate indicators include:** Going missing; disengagement from education; physical symptoms e.g. sexually transmitted infections, miscarriage, abortion, bruising or marks indicating physical or sexual assault; associating with older men or other 'risky' adults; new possessions; acquisition of money; expensive clothes; drugs or other possessions without plausible explanation about their source; being alienated from family or community; being in care and having placement breakdown; associating with other young people who are known to be victims of exploitation.
8. **Blame:** Child exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.
9. **What should you do?** Ensure that every governor in the school or setting reads this guide and is aware of what CSE is, what CCE is and which children are most likely to be at risk and what the potential indicators are. Ensure that all children attend school regularly, follow up promptly when a child is absent and refer any concerns promptly to the Education Welfare Service. Governors have a statutory duty to ensure that their school is doing everything they can to address child exploitation in terms of prevention work, providing support to vulnerable children and reporting concerns as outlined in your schools' safeguarding procedures.
10. **The latest guidance:** Ensure that school staff are aware of the latest guidance [Child Sexual Exploitation 2017](#). It should be read together with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) last updated 2022, which continues to provide statutory guidance covering the legislative requirements on services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including in relation to child exploitation.