

CSE is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult to identify and assess. The indicators can sometimes be mistaken for normal adolescent behaviour. One of the key factors found in most cases of CSE is the presence of some form of exchange (sexual activity in return for something).

- ANY CHILD, ANY COMMUNITY
- The 12-15 year age group are the most at risk although cases of children as young as 8 have been identified
 - Mostly amongst girls but boys are also at risk
 - Affects all ethnic groups
 - Children can be perpetrators as well as victims

Child exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. The abuse may be physical but also may involve non-contact activities such as forcing children to produce sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming children in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

- It can still be abuse if the sexual activity appears consensual
 - It can take place in person or via technology
 - It may occur without the child's immediate knowledge
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males, females, adults or children



Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation



What makes a child susceptible to CSE?

- Prior experience of neglect and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home life, children in care
 - Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation and/or difficulties and physical or learning disability
 - Absence of a safe environment to explore sexually
 - Economic vulnerability
 - Homelessness
- Connections with other children experiencing CSE or family members in sex work

What are the indicators?

- Acquisition of money, clothes etc without plausible reason
 - Gang association
 - Unexplained absence from school
- Excessive receipt of text messages and phone calls
- Returning home under influence of drugs/alcohol
 - Inappropriate sexualised behaviours
 - Concerning use of social media
 - Secretiveness
- Self harm and changes in emotional well-being