

# Mowbray Safeguarding Bulletin

March 2024 – Child Sexual Exploitation



**STOP**  **PCE**  
AWARENESS DAY 18TH MARCH



## Upcoming Awareness Days

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Self-Harm Awareness Day - 1<sup>st</sup> March

International Women's Day - 8<sup>th</sup> March

Neurodiversity Celebration Week - 11-17<sup>th</sup> March

Red Nose Day - 15<sup>th</sup> March

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day - 18<sup>th</sup> March

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse. It happens when a young person is coerced, manipulated, or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want such as gifts, drugs, money, or affection.

Children and young people can be tricked into believing that they are in loving relationships so the abuse may appear consensual. This is called grooming and the victim often trusts their abuser and does not believe that they are being abused.

CSE does not always involve physical contact but can often occur online and can also lead to trafficking within and out of the UK for further sexual exploitation.

It is important to recognise that although the age of consent is 16 years old, children and young people over 16 can be exploited.





## Types of CSE

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a child's trust or control them through threats and violence. This can escalate to sexual exploitation in a short space of time.

When a child is sexually exploited, they might be persuaded to:

- Send or post explicit images of themselves
- Film or stream sexual activities
- Have sexual conversations
- Meet the abuser in person
- Engage in sexual activity

## Signs of CSE

Sexual exploitation can be difficult to spot and can sometimes be mistaken for "normal" teenage behaviour. Some signs can include:

- Sexualized behaviour
- Being frightened of certain people or places
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or behaviour
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain, such as gift cards, large amounts of money or hotel keys
- Physical signs of abuse such as bruises
- Sudden change in physical appearance such as clothing
- Alcohol or drug use
- Having an older person they see as their boyfriend or girlfriend
- Hanging around with older people

**Pace**  
Parents against  
child exploitation



### Spot the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation

Children are often groomed into believing they are in a relationship with the exploiter. They can be manipulated into sexual acts through blackmail, threats and coercion. Children may be given items such as money, drugs and phones. The offenders can make the child feel protected, loved or dependent on them. Children can be exploited online without ever meeting the offender.

#### Some facts



- Children can be targeted from any location or background
- Offenders can be male, female, groups or individuals
- Victims of CSE rarely disclose their abuse

#### Signs

- Frequently going missing from home or school
- Being secretive
- Physical signs of abuse
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Unexplained absences from home or school
- Anxiety/distress over mobile phone
- Unexplained money, mobile phones, clothes or electronics
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- New friends or associates who they are secretive about
- Unexplained injuries or marks

### Worried about your child?

#### Contact the Police

If you think a young person is in immediate danger, call the Emergency Services on 999.

#### Contact Pace

Parents can access support and advice from Pace about how to intervene early, liaise with local services and put measures in place to keep children safe from exploitation.

[www.paceuk.info](http://www.paceuk.info)

## Preventing CSE

Teaching children and young people about staying safe and healthy relationships can help prevent CSE. NSPCC's PANTS rules are a simple way to teach children how to stay safe from abuse. There are tips and advice on PANTS rule and how to have difficult conversations with your children on the NSPCC website. It's also important to make sure children know who their trusted adults are. These can be parents, teachers, or family members who they can go to for support.

Privates are private

Always remember your body belongs to you

No means no

Talk about secrets that upset you

Speak up, someone can help

## Resources

Worried about a child? Call 999 if the child is at immediate risk or 101 if you think a crime has been committed.

Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000

Childline 0800 1111

Children can contact any of the above as well as:

- "Fearless" - to report a crime anonymously
- "Runaway" - helpline for young people thinking about running away or have left home
- "Victim Support" - if they've experienced crime
- "Report Remove" - if you need to remove nude images online

## If a child discloses CSE

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

- Listen carefully
- See what immediate help they need such as medical attention
- Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- Tell them it's not their fault
- Reassure them that you believe them
- Don't confront the alleged abuser
- Explain what you'll do next
- Report the disclosure as soon as possible

If you suspect CSE is happening, it's important to seek support. There are some things you can do to help your child, like gathering any information that may be useful such as names, places, ages, social media accounts or phone numbers.