**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

**Quick guide for Practitioners in Somerset**

**This quick guide is for all practitioners in Somerset regardless of their role as safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility.**

**CONTEXT AND SCOPE**

This quick guide focuses on young people aged 13 years until their 18th birthday. However children younger than 13 years may also be victims of Child Sexual Exploitation. Practitioners should use their professional judgement and consider consulting their safeguarding lead or with Child Sexual Exploitation Champions if they have concerns about any child, regardless of their age. Note: children who have not yet reached their 13th birthday cannot consent to sex. Sexual intercourse below 13 years of age is termed “statutory rape” and is a serious criminal offence which must **always** be reported to the Police.

**DEFINITION**

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.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Remember any child or young person can be at risk of sexual exploitation**

Therefore practitioners should be inquisitive and establish a rapport with young people to enable them to ask questions in a conversational and exploratory style using the following themes, making it as easy as possible for the young person to “open up” and trust the practitioner:

**Home life** (Who do you live with? Are you happy? Do you feel good about yourself?)

**School/college life** (What’s going well for you? What are you worried about?)

**Personal relationships** (Who can you talk to? Do you use social media?)

**Sexual activity** (Are you in a relationship? Are you having sex? Are you happy with the sex you are having? Has anything changed in how your partner treats you?)

**Practitioner relationships** (are you being supported by any other practitioners? e.g. CAMHS, Social Worker, Counsellor)

Practitioners should be relaxed, adapt to the individual young person’s presentation and needs and ask direct questions in a calm, reassuring, professional and respectful way.

**POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS / INDICATORS**

**Home life** – not happy at home, spend minimum time at home, young person Looked After, “missing” episodes, signs of a chaotic, dysfunctional home life, unaccompanied asylum seeker, domestic abuse, drugs misuse, parental mental health issues / learning difficulties, step parents (“blended family”)

**School / college life** – not in education or employment, doesn’t enjoy education, poor attendance, exclusions from education, social isolation, and poor or non-existent friendship groups

**Personal relationships** – evidence of self-harm, poor self-esteem, known to CAMHS, evidence of social media / on-line vulnerabilities (e.g. risk taking on-line, sending explicit images, “sexting”), drug and alcohol misuse, learning difficulties

**Sexual activity** – repeat requests for emergency contraception and / or Sexually Transmitted Infection testing, repeat pregnancies / abortions, non consensual sex, (“I didn’t really want to”, “ I didn’t say no but I wish now that I had”), disclosures of violent, controlling and physically abusive relationships, sexual relationships involving drugs and alcohol

**Practitioner relationships** – evidence that the young person is accessing other support services, for example CAMHS, School / College Counsellor, sexual health services, Social Worker, Targeted Youth Support, Youth Offending Team, other support services, such as the Barnardo’s BASE project.

**WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?**

Research into Child Sexual Exploitation shows that there is not one type of abuser. Perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be male or female, come from any ethnic background and be any age. They may have a low social and/or economic status or they could be a wealthy individual in a considerable position of authority. Exploitation can also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who may profit financially from trafficking children / young people between different locations to engage in sexual activity often with multiple men

**ACTIONS ON IDENTIFYING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

If any of the above indicators are present and / or on the basis of professional judgement a practitioner considers the young person is at risk of sexual exploitation or is a victim of sexual exploitation the practitioner must:

* complete a Somerset Safeguarding Children Board [*CSE Screening Tool*](http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CSE-Initial-Screening-Tool.docx)
* share it with the relevant Safeguarding Children Practitioner and / or CSE Champion for discussion and quality assurance
* Agree what support needs to be put in place at an Early Help level and / or with specialist services

***NB*** *see pathway on back page.*

**CONCLUSION - KEY MESSAGES**

* Any child or young person can be a victim of Child Sexual Exploitation
* It can happen to boys as well as girls
* It can happen to children and young people of all races and backgrounds
* Children and young people experiencing problems at home, who go missing or are Looked After can be vulnerable and particularly at risk, but Child Sexual Exploitation can also happen to those from a loving, supportive home
* No matter who is affected by Child Sexual Exploitation, it is never, ever their fault – even if they agreed to the sexual activity because they felt they “should”
* A child or young person may agree to sexual activity because they felt they had no other choice and or do not fully understand consent
* All practitioners who identify Child Sexual Exploitation must take protective action, **doing nothing is not an option**

**REFERENCES**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278849/Safeguarding_Children_and_Young_People_from_Sexual_Exploitation.pdf>

[Somerset Safeguarding Children Board CSE site](http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/cse-protocols/)

Local Agency Safeguarding, Child Protection and CSE policies NHS England Child Sexual Exploitation: Advice for Healthcare staff, a pocket guide, (NHSE, March 2016)

Spotting the signs, (DoH, BASHH and Brooke, April 2014)

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners, (HMGov, March 2015)

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

This guidance has been produced in partnership with Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset Children’s Social Care and Somerset Safeguarding Children Board

Key: CSC: Children Social Care EHA: Early Help Assessment TAS: Team Around the School TAC: Team Around the Child

Young person attends a service

Use CSE Quick Guide (this booklet)

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No concerns

Some concerns

High / many concerns

Deliver commissioned service, complete any routine screening tools eg C card

Complete CSE screening tool

Who else is involved with the young person?

Discuss with Safeguarding Nurse / CSE Champion and follow advice

Arrange for most appropriate practitioner to refer into TAS or to complete EHA

Referral to CSC / Police

TAS / TAC meetings

If concerned escalate

**Child Sexual Exploitation Pathway**

All staff to consider sexual and emotional health and continue to deliver commissioned services

