

Keeping Children Safe in Aberdeenshire

RECOGNISE RESPOND REPORT



WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)? – Practitioner Guidance

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity *in return for something* received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.

Children and Young People have the right to be protected and to be safe from harm from others; they expect that we, as adults will get them the help they need, when they need it.

RECOGNISE

POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

What you might see:

- Physical symptoms (bruising / trauma indicating either physical or sexual assault)
- Child/young person repeatedly seeking emergency contraception or terminations, or with
- Repeat STIs or urinary infections
- Child/young person expressing despair e.g. challenging behaviour, aggression, self-harming
- Child/young person presenting intoxicated or misusing alcohol or drugs
- Late presentation of or unexplained injuries or symptoms
- Disclosure of sexual and / or physical assault, followed by withdrawal of allegation
- Evidence of physical abuse associated with sexual contact
- Aggressive mood swings
- Signs of self-harm/suicidal thought
- Presence of a controlling or older adult or ‘boyfriend / girlfriend’
- Evidence that a child/young person is being monitored through their mobile phone
- Child/young person with unexplained amounts of money or expensive presents or possessions
- Child/young person with more than one mobile phone
- Child/young person who fails to attend follow-up appointments and disengages from health services or/and school
- Changes in behaviour, including changes in eating habits
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
- Placement breakdown if involved if in foster and residential placement/s
- Forming inappropriate on-line relationships or evidence of ‘grooming’
- Sudden changes in appearance, e.g. dressing to look older, taking less care in their appearance
- More information is available on the CSE page of the GIRFEC Website - [LINK](#)

RESPOND

- What have I seen?
- What have I heard?
- What do I feel is unusual or concerning?
- What has actually happened?
- What is my concern?
- What is this telling me?
- What should I do now?

Listen To Children and Young People. What they may say:

- Child/young person describes peers or friends as involved in sexual exploitation
- Child/young person talks about staying out late or has unexplained absences from home/school
- Child/young person mentions multiple sexual partners
- Child/young person describes being in or taken to (or were found in) houses / flats / other accommodation where they engaged in sexual activity with multiple or older adults
- Child/young person talks about going to party flats where alcohol/drugs freely available

What to do if a child/young person tells you that they have been abused

- Take them seriously
- Listen and hear, stay calm
- Involve them
- Think about their lives as a whole
- Do not promise to keep secrets - tell them you will have to let someone else know
- Reassure them they were not to blame and they have done the right thing in telling you
- Do not ask leading questions: it is not your job to investigate
- Let them know you are worried about their wellbeing and safety

What to do if you are concerned about a child/young person:

- Discuss concerns straight away with a senior member of staff / designated child protection person
- Engage with the designated person about whether this information needs to be shared, and if so with whom, including consideration of the Named Person
- Ensure all this information is accurately recorded, with reasons for any decision reached
- If you cannot contact the designated person and there are immediate concerns for the child's safety, contact social work or police yourself
- Do not trivialise or exaggerate information, be factual, remember to record in your chronology
- Consider if there is evidence that can be protected/saved, such as images on phones, text content
- Consider if the concerns are related to just this child/young person, or are their concerns surrounding a group of children, share why you think this
- Sharing information can help to build up a picture. It is important not to wait for a disclosure from a young person or the accumulation of 'hard' evidence, prior to making a referral

REPORT

When contacting the Police or Social Work you will be asked for as much information as possible.

The kind of thing they might want to know is:

- Why you are concerned?
- Is the child in immediate danger?
- Are there other children who may be at risk?
- Child's name, age, date of birth and address
- Names of any adults who have care of the child
- Who you think has harmed, or might harm, the child and when it may have happened?
- Follow CP procedure on Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website [Report a Child Protection Concern](#)
- In complex investigations, which require thorough planning, Aberdeenshire: Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Guidance for Services in Aberdeenshire can be utilised [LINK](#)

Useful Contact Numbers

Police Scotland Emergency 999 Non-Emergency 101	Social Work Link to Social Work Offices Numbers Social Work Out-with Office Hours - 03456 08 12 06	NHS Grampian Designated Doctor/Nurse Consultant in Child Protection Tel: 01224 551706 during office hours Out of hours or urgent referrals: Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital & Dr Gray's Hospital, Tel: 0845 456 6000
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