

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type 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



2. Who is at risk of CSE?

Children and young people may be given things such as gifts, money, alcohol, drugs, affection or a sense of status in exchange for taking part in sexual activities. This often happens through **grooming**, where the abuser builds trust and convinces the young person that they are in a caring or consensual relationship. As a result, they may not recognise that they are being abused.

Those who are exploited may also be pressured or manipulated into recruiting or coercing other children and young people into the same group or situation.



3. Signs & Indicators

- Sexual health and behaviour
- Absent from school/running away
- Familial abuse/problems at home
- Emotional and physical condition
- Gangs and involvement in crime
- Use of technology and sexual bullying
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Receipt of unexplained gifts or money
- Distrust of authority figures



7. Respond

If you believe a child is in **immediate danger**, contact the **police on 999**.

Any disclosure of child sexual exploitation must be referred to **Children's Social Work (CSC)** on **01467 537 111** (or **03456 08 12 06** outside normal office hours).

For more information visit aberdeenshirechildprotection.org.



6. Resources

- [Lucy Faithfull Foundation - Preventing child sexual abuse](#)
- [Sexual abuse | Childline](#)
- [Child sexual abuse and exploitation: support for parents and carers | Barnardo's](#)
- [CELCIS | Child Sexual Exploitation](#)



4.

- Going missing
- Estranged from their family.
- Being collected from home/school in unknown cars.
- Secretive mobile phone use.
- Being friends with significantly older people. Becoming involved in crime
- Physical injuries/ unexplained bruising.
- Change of physical appearance.
- Poor mental health/self-harm/thoughts of suicide.



5. Communication Matters

Effective communication is essential when supporting a child or young person who may be experiencing sexual exploitation. Children are more likely to talk when they feel safe, listened to and believed, so a calm, non-judgemental approach is key.

Use clear, age-appropriate language, avoid leading questions, and allow the child to speak in their own words. How adults respond can strongly influence whether a child feels able to share more.