

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is Child Sexual Abuse.

CSE is the sexual exploitation of children and young people under the age of 18 and may involve a child or young person being forced or deceived into performing and/or allowing others to perform on them, sexual acts in exchange for, material goods, reward or affection.

CSE can affect **any child** or young person, from any background, male or female, anytime, anywhere.

CSE can also occur through the use of **technology** and without the child's immediate recognition, eg being persuaded to post sexual images of themselves on the internet or on mobile phones.

CSE perpetrators have **power** over their victims and use very subtle grooming processes, eg gaining trust over a long period of time. This may mean that the victims of **CSE** **rarely disclose** their abuse but very often they may not even be aware they are being abused. They may consider themselves to be in a loving adult relationship with the abuser. The sophisticated grooming and priming processes conducted by the perpetrators and the exchange element can also act as additional inhibitors and/or barriers to disclosure.

What are the signs to look out for?

- *Staying out late or regular episodes of being missing overnight or longer without permission.*
- *Reduced contact with family and friends and/ or other support networks.*
- *A number of different callers to home (unknown adults or older young people).*
- *Exclusion, truancy or unexplained absences from school or college.*
- *Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults or taxicabs.*
- *Possession of multiple mobile phones or sim cards*
- *Suddenly has money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation.*
- *Receiving lots of texts or phone calls prior to leaving home.*
- *Agitated or stressed prior to going out.*
- *Inappropriate sexualized behavior for age and development.*
- *Physical signs of bruising or bite marks.*
- *Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'.*
- *Self-harm and other expressions of distress.*
- *Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse, alcohol and drug use.*
- *Sexualized risk taking online and associating with unknown people online (more secretive).*

What can I do as a parent or carer?

As a parent or carer it is important for you to discuss with your child the differences between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship. There are also a number of practical steps you can take to protect children such as:

- *staying alert to changes in behavior or any physical signs of abuse such as bruising;*
- *being aware of new, unexplained gifts or possessions;*
- *carefully monitoring any episodes of staying out late or not returning home;*
- *exercising caution around any older friends your child may have, or relationships with other young people where there appears to be a power imbalance;*
- *Making sure you are aware of the risks associated with your child being online and putting measures in place to minimize these risks.*

There could be many reasons for changes in a child or young person's behavior, but if you notice a number of worrying signs it may be time to seek help or advice.

For more information, below are some useful websites:

Argyll and Bute CSE

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/social-care-and-health

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

<http://ceop.police.uk>

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Children 1st

<http://www.children1st.org.uk>

NSPCC Scotland

www.nspcc.org.uk/

Barnardos Scotland

www.barnardos.org.uk

Children and Young People have a right to be protected and be safe from harm from others.

We all have a responsibility to make sure that all our children live safely. Families, neighbors, professionals and members of communities play a vital role in protecting children. Most children in our society grow up in a safe protected environment, but sadly the minority do not, and need extra help from adults to keep them safe.

Every day people pick up the phone and tell us about children and adults who may be at risk of harm in their communities, because of this we can work together to support and protect them.

If you have a concern please tell us by calling the child protection duty team on

01546 605517 or Police on 999 if the person you are worried about is in immediate danger.

Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee

Information for Parents and Carers on Child Sexual Exploitation

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/abcpc

