BACKGROUND

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 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 excuse or mitigate the abusive nature of the act.

National Guidance for CP in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023

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QUESTIONS FOR TEAM MEETINGS & SUPERVISION

Do we remain curious & inquisitive about what we see & assess? Do we "look beneath" presenting behaviour?

Do we assume that no disclosure means nothing happened?
Do we understand the power of grooming and the push and pull factors

associated with CSE?
What strategies do we think might help
when working with children who deny
they have been abused?

WHY IT MATTERS

Any child under the age of 18 can experience CSE.

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Children of any sex, sexual orientation, colour, ethnicity, ability/disability, religion can be sexually exploited. CSE can, and does, affect children and young people from all walks of life, with no obvious pre-identified vulnerabilities. No child is immune from this form of abuse.

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Exploitation can happen in the real world and on line

WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The exploiters come from any ethnic, cultural or religious background. They could be anyone, they are predominantly male, but females can and do engage in child sexual exploitation. Abusers may act as individuals, in groups and in gangs and may also be known to the child either as a family member or friend. They may also be a stranger. Children can also engage in sexual exploitation of other children; this can be led by an adult but can sometimes be peer led.

WEST LOTHIAN PROCEDURES

The CPC approved a revised CSE
Procedure (2024) which is focused on large
scale or organised CSE. The aim of this
procedure is to provide multi-agency support to
the police identification, investigation and
disruption of perpetrators and coordinate
multi-agency support for potentially large
numbers of victims.

CSE is child abuse and the CP Procedures must be followed in all cases 5

WHAT MAKES CHILDREN VULNERABLE?

History of abuse/neglect. Physical or learning disability/poor mental health.
Alienated from family/community.
Bereavement and loss. Disrupted family life.
No or little adult support or guidance.
Looked after and accommodated. Not attending school/trouble at school. Drug/alcohol misuse
Parents with their own issues. Insecure immigration status
History of disadvantage, Low self-esteem/poor self-image
Peer pressure. Lack of awareness/understanding.
Environment: gangs, poverty, lack of resources

WHY DON'T CHILDREN TELL?

difficult for children. The sophisticated process of grooming by abusing adults and the exchange element of this form of abuse can act as additional barriers, which increase denial and make disclosure especially difficult. The grooming process may be so effective that young people believe they are in a real relationship that they have control over.

Disclosure of any form of abuse is often

Further Information:

<u>Organised/Large scale CSE Procedure</u> CSE Guidance