

Background:

Sexual Exploitation is a type of abuse which can happen to children irrespective of social background, gender, ethnic and other backgrounds.

This is an issue of abuse and should not be mistaken for a lifestyle choice

Why it matters:

Sexual exploitation is child abuse as well as a crime. Children and young people (C&YP) who become involved face huge risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health and long term wellbeing

Information:

Sexual exploitation of C&YP under 18 often involves exploitative situations, contexts, and relationships where they receive 'something' (e.g. affection, attention, food, gifts, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, money) as a result of sexual act or activities. Many YP don't think of themselves as victims because they are led to believe they are in control or making their own choices whereas in reality their behaviour is not voluntary or consenting

Questions to consider:

- What sort of issues might make some young people more vulnerable to CSE?
- How might you come across children, young people or their families where Child Sexual Exploitation is an issue?
- How might you observe any of the warning signs?
- How might they be groomed?

What to do:

Remember to...

- Recognise (know and heed warning signs)
- Record (write down what was said and done, by whom)
- If you are a professional making a referral you will be asked to complete the CSE screening tool and risk assessment
- This information is to be emailed to MARVEReferrals@merton.gov.uk



7 minutes briefing: Child sexual exploitation

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Factors 2:

Physical: Physical injuries/ unexplained bruising. Drug and alcohol misuse. Sexually transmitted infections/pregnancy/termination. Change of physical appearance. Poor mental health/self-harm/thoughts of suicide. Unexplained gifts or money. What all CSE offences have in common is grooming. Grooming is preparing the child/location/situation in order to exploit and take advantage of the child/young person. Grooming aims to manipulate others into believing that it is their fault/choice. This can happen over a long time or very quickly. Even adults and professionals can be groomed in order to facilitate abuse

Factors 1:

Certain factors make children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In general, they are the factors within the family, young person or social situation which renders young people vulnerable.

Warning signs might be:

Social: Going missing from home or care or school. 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 e.g. stealing

Supporting material

- <https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MARVE-Protocol-final-Sep-2018-2-1.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>