

**Child Exploitation Screening Tool**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the screening tool is to enable practitioners to assess a child’s level of risk of **child sexual exploitation (CSE) and/or child criminal exploitation (CCE**) in a concise and consistent manner. The screening tool can be applied to all children (male and female) under the age of 18 years.

Important points to remember when considering child exploitation:

* Both girls and boys can be victims of child exploitation and are equally vulnerable.
* Young people may be both criminally and sexually exploited.
* The coercer(s) and perpetrator(s) are usually an adult(s), but children and young people can also act in an exploitative or abusive way towards other young people or exert power e.g. group/gang members of either gender.
* Children and young people may not view themselves as having been exploited.
* Children and young people can be coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for something they need or want such as money, drugs, alcohol or accommodation.
* Although it is rare, parents/carers may be involved in the exploitation of their children.
* Groups of children and multiple perpetrators may be involved (organised abuse).
* No child under 13 years should be considered at low risk if behaviours indicate a risk of CSE or CCE.
* Children with additional needs require special consideration up to the age of 21 years.
* No child with a learning disability should be considered at low risk if behaviours indicate involvement in or risk of CSE or CCE.
* Be aware: disclosure of information by the child may take time and evident risks may only emerge during ongoing assessment, support and interventions with the child and/or family.

**Guidance on the use of the screening tool**

1. Completion of the Screening Tool by the practitioner identifying the concerns should involve liaison with other agencies to ensure that there is multiagency information sharing and support.

2. The screening tool is intended to assist professional judgment. Risk and vulnerability factors are listed to assist practitioners in making a judgement as to whether a young person is vulnerable to exploitation, being groomed for exploitation or actively exploited. It is intended to be a starting point and not a replacement for a full and thorough assessment of the risk to a young person.

3. Assessing or screening for child exploitation should not be seen as a one off event. Young people can move very quickly between the risk categories, therefore regular use of the Screening Tool is advised. Any escalation of risk should be immediately brought to the attention of a Service Manager.

4. Where a young person is at risk of being exploited or is actively exploited, then a referral must be made to Children’s Services or the allocated Social Worker where the child is already known. In addition, the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators is important and where names are known this information should also be made clear to the relevant local authority.

**Child Exploitation Screening Tool**

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| **Name:** |  | **ECMS ref:** |  |

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| **Reason for completing screening tool:** |

**Child Exploitation Screening Tool**

Child exploitation (including CSE and CCE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal or sexual nature. This exploitation often occurs without the child’s immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/ or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social, economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

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| **Significant Risk Indicators** | **Current or during the past six months:** | **Over six months ago:** |
| Period of absence/missing (day and/or night), which may include being found out of area or in locations with no known connection to the young person or where the absence is significant or out of ordinary for the young person |  |  |
| Relationship of concern with a controlling individual (male or female), young person or group, which might involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity |  |  |
| Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults (not car theft) |  |  |
| Transported from one location to another for sexual and/or criminal activity |  |  |
| Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation |  |  |
| Frequenting areas known for risky activities – CSE or CCE hotspots |  |  |
| Groomed/abused via the Internet and mobile technology |  |  |
| Recruitment of others to be exploited |  |  |
| Sexually transmitted infections / pregnancies / termination of pregnancies |  |  |
| Found with large quantities of drugs or weapons, or found with drugs inside rectum or vagina |  |  |

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| **Risk Indicators** | **Brief description** |
| Whereabouts unclear or unknown – day and/or night |  |
| Absences/exclusion from school or not engaged in school / college / training / work |  |
| Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes, mobile phones or other items. |  |
| Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies or fast food outlets |  |
| Significant change in behaviour and/or emotional state including becoming more withdrawn, changes in peer group or becoming more isolated |  |
| Regular/multiple contacts from unknown adults/young people including frequent callers to address or mobile phone |  |
| Use of a mobile phone which causes concern – including sexting / multiple phones or SIM cards |  |
| Suspicious bank account activity |  |
| Physical injuries without plausible explanation |  |
| Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation |  |
| Drug misuse |  |
| Alcohol misuse |  |
| Self-harming/challenging behaviours / suicide attempts / eating disorders / aggression |  |
| Unsafe use of internet |  |
| Risky/inappropriate sexual behaviour |  |
| Lack of awareness/understanding of being safe |  |
| Expressions of invincibility or not caring what happens to them |  |
| Increased interest in making money and/or use of language relating to drug dealing, or signs of gang involvement in their language or clothing |  |
| Living independently and failing to respond to attempts by workers to keep in touch |  |
| A&E attendance because of alcohol/drug misuse |  |
| Seeking emergency hormonal contraception |  |
| Being accompanied to appointments by an unknown person that causes concern |  |
| Associating with others considered to be at risk or to be suffering child exploitation |  |

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| **Vulnerability Factors** | **Brief description** |
| Previous victim of CSE or CCE |  |
| Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation / ’sofa surfing’ / financially unsupported / migrant / refugee |  |
| Subject to bullying |  |
| Isolated from peers / family / social networks |  |
| Low self-esteem and confidence |  |
| Learning disabilities/special needs or mental health issues |  |
| History of being Looked After, Child Protection involvement or suffering significant harm |  |
| Living in residential or foster care |  |
| Family conflict / breakdown, lack of love / security, death, loss, illness of a significant person in child’s life |  |
| Family history of domestic abuse and/or substance misuse and/or mental health difficulties |  |

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| **Professional Judgement** | **Decision and brief analysis** |
| **Vulnerable to exploitation** |  |
| **Being groomed or targeted for exploitation** |  |
| **Being actively exploited** |  |

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| **Possible outcomes**  *There may be more than one outcome* | **Please tick** |
| Situational supervision |  |
| Alert manager to risk |  |
| Book consultation with Practice Expert via NIS Support mailbox:   * Sarah Cockburn, Child Trafficking. * Chris MacDonald, Gangs and County Lines |  |
| Book consultation with National Psychology Service via NIS Support mailbox |  |
| Liaise with local Child Exploitation Champion |  |

**The suggested questions below can be used as scoping questions in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation. The screening tool for CSE indicates key risk areas which will assist in narrowing and defining potential risk factors.**

Tell me about school/college.

Tell me about the people you most often spend your time with.

Do you have a lot of people that you count as friends, say more than seven?

How did you get to know them?

Of the people you meet - do you know all their names?

Do you keep the names of your friends in your phone so that you can face or message them or do they mainly contact you?

The school say that you are often absent - tell me what you do when you're not at school

Do you have one special friend/boyfriend?  (Tell me more about them).  How did you decide to have them as a special friend/ boyfriend?  Do you always get on or do you sometimes fall out?  Who speaks first after a fall out?  Do you always like being with them, and their friends, or are there times when for some reason they make you unhappy or hurt?

Are you having sexual contact with this person?

Has anyone ever asked or made you do something that you are unhappy about? Tell me more about that.

Have you had sexual contact with others in the past three months?

Is there someone you can talk to about relationships and sex?

I often work with children and young people who believe no-one can help - do you know anyone like that?  (What is it that they are scared about?)

I've been told that you self-harm – could you tell me more about that?

Does anyone in your friendship group take drugs or use alcohol?