

## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

CSE is a form 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

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CSE is a terrible crime with destructive and far reaching consequences for victims, their families, and society. It is not limited to any particular geography, ethnic or social background. Having a shared definition of CSE is critical to identification, monitoring & effective multi-agency responses

The impacts of CSE are wide-ranging, & can be profound & long lasting. This is particularly true when victims do not receive appropriate support. Victims can suffer a range of health impacts including physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections & longer-term gynaecological consequences for females.



Children/ Young People can experience emotional trauma/mental illness such as depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder & drug/alcohol problems. CSE also impacts longer-term, being associated with higher rates of youth offending, poor educational

prospects, involvement in adult sex work, isolation from family & friends, negative future relationships & increased risk of other forms of violence or abuse.

CSE can also create strong ripple effects on friendship circles, family networks & the wider community.

### **RECOGNITION:**

Like any other form of child sexual abuse, CSE:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16/17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Is abuse - even if sexual activity appears consensual.
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance & may/may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others creating videos/ images & posting on social media).

### **KEY ISSUES;**

The fact that children & young people often see themselves as making a choice can prevent them from seeking support.

Understanding the context within which 'choices' are made by victims is critical to our ability to respond effectively to CSE.

The response to CSE requires a shift to viewing parents/carers as partners in the safeguarding process (rather than a source of risk).



[North Wales Safeguarding Board](http://www.northwales.gov.uk/safeguarding)