



# Keeping children safe from sexual exploitation



This is an easy read version of ‘**Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Working Together to Safeguard People. Volume 7 – Safeguarding Children from Child Sexual Exploitation**’.

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# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 30**.



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# Introduction



In Wales we have a law called the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**. It helps keep people safe from harm.



There are 7 guides that go with this law. The guides help services and organisations follow the law and keep people safe.



Together the guides are known as **Working Together to Safeguard People**.



This is guide number 7. Guide 7 is about keeping children safe from **child sexual exploitation**.



**Child sexual exploitation** is when a child is **sexually abused** by someone.



**Abuse** is any kind of behaviour that causes harm to someone. **Sexual abuse** is when someone does something sexual to the child. Or shows a child sexual pictures.

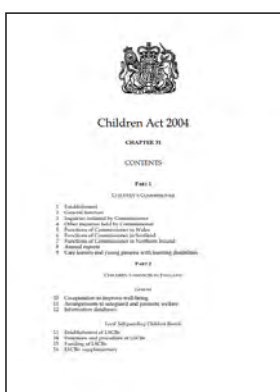
## Guide 7 tells staff and services:



- what to do if a child is being **abused** or is at risk of being **abused**



- and how to help stop it happening.



This guide is also important to another law called the **Children's Act 2004**.



When we say **child** we mean any children or young people up to the age of 18.

# 1. About child sexual exploitation



**Child sexual exploitation** is a type of **sexual abuse**. It involves the child either being given something good. Or having something bad taken away. For example:



- The child may be given something like gifts, money or attention for a sex act.



- The child might be told if they go along with the **abuse** they will not get hurt.



- Or a child might be told something bad will happen to someone else if they do not do what the person says.



Any child could be at risk of **child sexual exploitation**. No matter where they are from. Or if they are a girl or a boy.



It is important for people to understand the signs of **child sexual exploitation**.



It can be different in every situation. For example, some children may be **groomed**.

**Grooming** is when a person will try and gain the trust of a child so they can **abuse** them.



Or some people might try to control the child or force them to do something.



It can also happen online – on the internet.



The people who **abuse** children are often men. But sometimes they are women.



It could be 1 person. Or it could be a group of people.



It could be family members.



Sometimes children **abuse** other children.



Most children do not tell anyone that they are being **abused**.



So it is really important that staff in services for children look for the signs. And report it.

## 2. Stopping child sexual exploitation



It is important for people to understand what this type of **abuse** looks like.



It is also important to make sure children get help early on when they need it.



Sometimes children may be at risk in other ways. For example children who have had difficult lives. This is sometimes called **Adverse Childhood Experiences**.



It is important to make sure children grow up in a safe place with love and care.



Sometimes, children who have had difficult lives also experience **child sexual exploitation**.



We need to support children, families and their communities and help make them stronger.



We need to make sure children are well cared for. This could be through family or going into care.



This can help stop **child sexual exploitation** from happening.



We need to support children who have had a lot of problems in their lives early on.



We need to make sure more people know what **child sexual exploitation** is.



We need to make sure there are safe places in the community for children.

### 3. What to do if a child is being abused



There are rules in place to help protect children if they are being **abused**. These rules must still be followed by staff working with children.



The child must be put first.



And children should be asked how they would like to be supported when they have care and support needs.



The rules for what to do are called **The Wales Safeguarding Procedures**.



There are also guides for what to do in different situations. They are called **All Wales Practice Guides**.

## 4. Putting the child first



**Child sexual exploitation** has a bad effect on children. It often affects them for a very long time. It can:



- affect other relationships, and make it difficult to have happy relationships



- affect their mental health
- make them more likely to use alcohol or drugs



- make it less likely to have a job or a home.



We must think about this when planning their care and support.



It is really important that we get their support right because of all these risks. And the risks to **their** children, if they have them.



Care and support is more likely to help the child when we understand what they have been through. And when we look at their strengths.



Children need to be supported to reach their goals.



We need to understand they may find it hard to trust people.



Children who have been **abused** have told us that they sometimes feel staff do not understand them. They feel judged.



Staff working with them need to take the time to get to know them and gain their trust.



They also need to make sure their rights are protected. And their choices are heard. The child must be put first.



Children have told us they are often not given the information they need. For example, about meetings taking place about them.



When working with children, staff need to understand what they have been through. And the effects this can have on other parts of their lives.



They also need to understand the child's needs and choices. For example, their religion or culture.



They need to involve the child's family where possible.



Children with learning disabilities are at a higher risk of **child sexual exploitation**.

## 5. People who cause child sexual exploitation



It is important that we can recognise the people who are causing the **abuse**. And stop them from doing it.



The police work with organisations in Wales to help make this happen.



We also need to make sure they are charged for their crimes.



Children will need support when all of this is happening. And after someone has been to court.



How to support the child should be written in the care and support plan.

# Understanding and reporting child sexual exploitation



The Welsh Government has made guides about what to do.



The child must always be put first.



Everyone who works with children should understand **sexual abuse** better. And know how to report it.



They should tell their manager if they are worried about a child.



They should tell social services.



In an emergency they should phone the police on 999.



Some signs that someone is being **abused**:

### Physical signs:



- Bruising



- Injuries that cannot be explained



- **Sexually transmitted diseases**

**Sexually transmitted diseases** are when someone catches a disease because of sex acts.

### Emotional signs:



- Very quiet



- Mood changes



- Angry



- **Self-harm**

**Self-harm** is when someone injures themselves on purpose.



- The person may want to kill themselves



- They may not want to be around other people

## Signs in their behaviour:



- They keep secrets



- They go missing



- Seen with strangers

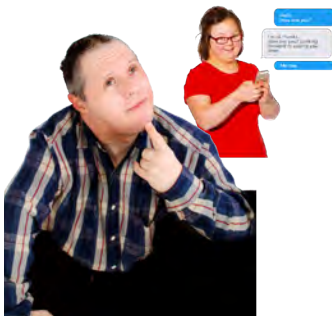


- They seem out of control

## Other signs:



- They are using a different phone or computer



- Someone is worried about how they are using their mobile phone or the internet



- They have new clothes or shoes but they will not say where from



- They use alcohol or illegal drugs



- They have a lot more money but will not say where from



If staff who work with children are worried a child is in danger it must be reported. This means contacting social services.



This is part of the law **The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.**



Some staff work in children's services but do not have much contact with children. They can get help about how to report something if they are worried.



There are questions they can answer that help find out if a child is at risk. They should ask their manager for the questions.



Children do not normally tell someone they are being **abused**.



They may be frightened.



They may not know what is happening to them.



They may think people will not believe them.



**Child sexual exploitation** can happen to any child. But it is more likely to happen where the child has had a lot of other problems.



Children that have more learning needs may be more at risk.



It can happen to girls or boys.



It is harder for some children to report it. For example, if they come from another background. Or if they are disabled.



Some children do not report what is happening to them because they are getting something they want for it.



They may think it is the best choice they have.



They may feel they are not important so they deserve it.



It is really important that staff do something when they are worried about a child.



**Child sexual exploitation** is usually done by someone outside of the family.



Children at risk should be given support to help stop **abuse** from happening.



Staff must also report any worries they have about the family.

# How to support children who have been abused in this way

## 1. Understand what children have been through:



- Give them choices



- Work with them



- Help them trust you



- Help them feel stronger



- Keep them safe

## 2. Put the child first:



- Think about if they are a boy or girl



- Think about their background



- Think about their **sexuality**

**Sexuality** means if they fancy boys or girls.



- Think about if they are disabled



- Think about their family and where they live

### 3. Help the child feel stronger



- Let the child set their own goals



- When the child is **assessed** look at what they are good at

An **assessment** gathers lots of information so you can understand someone better. It helps you make decisions about how to support them.



- Look for support from other people in the child's life and community



- Help the child be positive – hopeful, happy and confident



- Listen to the child and understand they know their feelings best

#### 4. A good relationship with staff who are supporting the child:



- Staff must take the time to get to know the child



- Staff are there for the child when they need it



- Staff do not judge the child



- Staff listen to the child



- Staff understand the child



- Staff are interested in the child



- Staff talk to the child about what is happening and about their care and support



- Staff do what they say they will do



- Staff are honest

## 5. Working together:



- Staff should tell children and families about services that could help them

# Hard words

## Assessment

An assessment gathers lots of information so you can understand someone better. It helps you make decisions about how to support them.

## Abuse

Abuse is any kind of behaviour that causes harm to someone.

## Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is when a child is sexually abused by someone.

## Grooming

This is when a person will try and gain the trust of a child so they can abuse them.

## Self-harm

This is when someone injures themselves on purpose.

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone does something sexual to the child. Or shows a child sexual images.

## Sexuality

Sexuality means if a person fancies boys or girls.

## Sexually transmitted diseases

Sexually transmitted diseases are when someone catches a disease because of sex acts.



