

Discussion item for staff/team meetings

What can schools do to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation? -NSPCC factsheet 6(b)

Schools are well placed to teach pupils how to make positive choices and informed decisions in their relationships so that they can protect themselves from sexual exploitation. Positive relationships with school staff will encourage children to disclose any worries about their own safety or the safety of another pupil.

School policy, ethos and training

Schools should promote healthy friendships and relationships through their whole school ethos, child protection and behaviour policy, and anti-bullying work. A commitment from senior management and governors in the school to deal with the issue of child sexual exploitation is needed to ensure it is done in an appropriate and supportive way.

The Designated Senior Person for child protection could organise a session for all staff to raise awareness of the risk factors, signs and indicators, useful resources and details of local services. Similar sessions could be organised for parents, perhaps in conjunction with specialist services.

It is also important for schools to display posters and distribute leaflets to advertise services that children can use to get information and advice about sexual exploitation.

Preventative education

Linking the teaching with relevant school policies, including those on sex and relationships education, e-safety, anti-bullying and child protection will help to ensure clear links with the whole school ethos. It will also help to take account of cultural and faith dimensions.

Primary

Key messages about healthy relationships can be taught to all ages using age and stage appropriate language to explore topics such as friendships, appropriate touch, keeping safe, recognising and assessing risk and knowing how and where to get help when needed.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials are a useful resource for covering these topics in primary schools. Examples can be found on the [National Archives website](#).

Secondary

Messages about healthy relationships and risky behaviour can be taught through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in secondary schools. A wider range of topics relevant to the age and experiences of young people can also be covered such as:

- respect and responsibilities
- awareness of unhealthy relationships, sexual exploitation and grooming
- understanding of dangerous and exploitative situations
- exploring gender stereotypes and gender roles

- increasing awareness of risk, assessing risk and the consequences of risk taking, including sexual bullying and peer pressure
 - building skills and confidence in developing positive, healthy relationships.
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E-safety

All children and young people are at risk of online sexual exploitation. Schools should ensure that their e-safety procedures are robust and that pupils are taught online safety skills so they know:

- online risks
- how to recognise unsafe online contact
- to be confident to report any concerns about themselves or others to staff in school staff.

Questions for schools when planning to teach about child sexual exploitation

- Have you identified staff training needs to increase knowledge and develop confidence?
- Has the school explored working in partnership with the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) and other local specialist agencies?
- Are lessons integrated into the PSHE/SRE or other health and well-being programme in school?
- Is there sufficient time and resources to support the work?
- Have you planned how to create a safe learning environment?
- Have you prioritised topics in consultation with young people's learning needs?
- Are all staff clear about the child protection procedures in school and do you have plans in place to support young people who may disclose?

Creating a safe learning environment

Young people need to feel safe and confident to fully participate in lessons and discussions. It is important to create a safe learning environment.

- Agree ground rules with young people, including confidentiality. Confidentiality should be maintained in line with the school policy and the child protection policy.
 - Model behaviour – be aware of values and attitudes, preconceptions and feelings. Be prepared to challenge any inappropriate language and attitudes including stereotyping. Recognise diversity within the teaching group and be aware of gender groupings. Consider whether mixed or separate gender groups are appropriate.
 - Build trust – this sets the tone for lessons and helps to reinforce positive relationships.
 - If using external teaching staff, ensure that school based staff are also involved in the lesson(s).
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Partnership working

Find out about local services for sexually exploited young people, and invite representatives to your school to take part in a lesson or assembly. Many such services will have a ready-prepared set of resources that schools can use and are willing to work alongside school staff to teach lessons or present assemblies and workshops.

Working in partnership with the LSCB and being familiar with the LSCB procedures will help to support the school with any child protection concerns that arise as a result of this area of work.

Working with parents

Sharing concerns with parents may seem daunting but schools are often the first agency to notice that a pupil may be at risk. School staff can be a source of support for parents who have concerns about their child's behaviour, appearance or friends who are not part of the school community. Schools can listen to parents' concerns and work with them to access appropriate agencies for further help.

Practical resources for teachers and schools

Search [TES Connect](#) for lesson plans and assemblies and guidance on the subject of sexual exploitation.

The secrets of child sexual exploitation.

Christian, A M

Every Child Journal, (4), 2013: pp 20-25

Discusses sexual exploitation and the role that schools can play in protecting children. Addresses online safety; signs of possible child exploitation; and, practical examples for tackling exploitation for school-based staff.

Protect and Respect animations and session plans focusing on child sexual exploitation.

ChildLine and NSPCC, 2012

These 3 animations and the accompanying session plans have been created by the NSPCC to help multi-agency professionals deliver awareness-raising sessions to young people at risk of, or who have experienced, sexual exploitation.

- **Protect and Respect: session plans focusing on child sexual exploitation (PDF, 5.14MB)**
The sessions will help young people understand the meaning of 'child sexual exploitation', 'grooming' and 'trafficking'. They cover what might make a young person vulnerable to sexual exploitation, what's OK and what's not OK, and how young people who have experienced sexual exploitation can access support and advice. There is also a session aimed specifically at professionals.
- **Losing control: my story is real**
Short animation (1 min 55 secs) depicting one girl's experience of child trafficking. She is physically and sexually abused before her auntie finds her and they travel to England. She discusses coping with feelings of fear and shame and more positive emotions now that she is about to attend college.
- **Losing control: Jay**
Short animation (2 mins) with a girl talking about how she met an older boy, Jay, who is better than the boys at school. Jay gives her access to alcohol and drugs and she falls in love with him. She ignores the comments of her friends and family and has sex with his friends and soon she is dependent on Jay.
- **When someone cares about you**
Short animation (1 min 3 secs) showing situations in which children and young people may become involved in abusive and exploitative relationships. Describes how people should be treated by someone who cares. Includes depictions of sexting, grooming, drug use and anger and control problems.

Discussing child abuse.

Acred, C

Issues (248)

Cambridge: Independence, 2013

Educational resource aimed at informing and stimulating debate among 14-18 year-olds. Provides an overview of the topic of child abuse, discussing: what child abuse is, its prevalence, talking to children about keeping safe, sexual abuse, internet safety and child protection laws. Includes a selection of assignments to aid exploration of the ideas, facts and opinions presented in the resource from sources including newspaper articles, magazines, government reports and statistics and surveys.

Keep them safe: protecting children from child sexual exploitation.

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) Safeguarding Children e-Academy [Ilkley, West Yorkshire]:

Safeguarding Children e-Academy, 2013

Online training aimed at equipping parents with the knowledge to protect their children against child sexual exploitation (CSE). Explains what CSE is, key myths and facts about CSE and how to spot the signs that a child may be being sexually exploited. Course takes 20-30 minutes and is free to use but requires registration.

Tackling child sexual exploitation: a study of current practice in London: summary report (PDF).

Beckett, H. et al

London: London Councils, 2014

Executive summary of a report mapping responses to child sexual exploitation (CSE) across London. Presents findings from a survey with 30 boroughs and local safeguarding children boards and interviews with eight statutory and voluntary sector providers. Presents a snapshot of: local scoping of the issue; local policies and procedures; training and awareness-raising; identification and early intervention; responding to issues of CSE; and overarching reflections of progress and challenges.

Child sexual exploitation: a guide for those working with children and young people (PDF).

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)

Belfast: Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), 2013

Short booklet aimed at professionals working with children and young people, explaining what child sexual exploitation (CSE) is. Covers different types of CSE, who is affected, warning signs that a child is being sexually exploited and steps professionals can take if they suspect CSE.

The sexual exploitation of children: can you recognise the signs?

Asset TV, Association of Chief Police Officers National Policing Improvement Agency and Siyona Tech

London: Siyona Tech, 2012

A film (20 mins) to raise awareness about grooming and sexual exploitation. Aimed at training police officers but can be used with anyone. Uses the Eastenders storyline of Whitney, an adolescent girl who has previously been abused. She is now living away from home and is struggling to make money. She meets a Rob who treats her well and tells her he loves her. Rob isolates her from her friends and makes her dependent on him. He takes her to a party and asks her for a favour; to have sex with his friends. She escapes but he continues to contact her. Actress Shona McGarty talks about why Whitney is vulnerable and how Rob manipulates her. Lists key indicators.

Disturbing signs.

Pemberton, C

Community care, 1870, 7 July 2011: pp 16-17

Introduces an interactive tool, compiled with help from Barnardo's, containing details of signs which could indicate a child is at risk of sexual exploitation. The tool presents three abuse models (inappropriate relationships, boyfriend, and organised exploitation and trafficking) and details how and why certain behaviours, such as mobile phone use, or sexualised behaviour, can be signs of exploitation.

Bwise2 sexual exploitation: a preventative education pack for use with 12 to 17 year olds in pupil referral units, residential units and schools. England and Wales edition.

Kork, L. et al

Barkingside, Essex: Barnardo's, 2010

An educational programme for professionals to teach young people about sexual exploitation. Sets out six sessions on: what is sexual exploitation?; grooming; power and control; risk management; equal consensual and respectful relationships; and support, protection and the law. Based on real-life experiences. Provides activities, handouts, case studies, and facilitator notes with practical tips. Can be used as part of the PSHE curriculum for key stages 3 and 4. Includes a CD-ROM of the session resources for printing or projecting and three posters.

My dangerous loverboy: stop sex trafficking: the official music video.

Heath, V.

Morpeth: VKH Films, 2010

Music video (4 mins) made to accompany and promote the My dangerous lover boy film and campaign to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation. The song lyrics and film tell the story of a girl who meets an older boy. He buys her gifts, alcohol and takes her to parties. He drugs her and she becomes entrapped in sex trafficking and exploitation.

(RES) Commissioned by the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). Hosted by YouTube.
See also [Love or Lies? – Who Can You Trust \(resource pack\)](#)

Pieces of me: writing by young people who are at risk of, or who have experience of, sexual exploitation.

Taking Stock

Sheffield: Taking Stock, 2010

Presents narrative stories and poetry exploring the experiences and emotions of young authors' who are at risk of, or who have experienced sexual exploitation. Includes information on what sexual exploitation is, its effects on young people and what makes children and young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Guide to safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: identification, response and prevention.

Durham, A.

London: Community Care Inform, 2010

Guidance for mainstream practitioners working in children's social work, social care, youth justice, education, health and probation. Includes information on children's vulnerability to sexual abuse, prevention, local strategies, how to identify those at risk of sexual exploitation, and key principles informing effective practice.

Innocence

Barnardo's Concept Pictures

Middlesbrough: Barnardo's, 2009

Short film (14 mins) about a young adolescent girl, Milly, who is groomed by an older man into having sex with men for money. Milly lives with her mother and her mother's violent partner. She meets Steve who woos her and separates her from her friends. Milly moves in with Steve and starts having sex with men. She runs away after hearing Steve arranging to take her to Leeds. The film begins and ends with Milly taking to a support worker. Based on real life experiences of young people from Barnardo's SECOS (Sexual Exploitation of Children On the Streets) service.

Further reading

Joint working protects young people at risk.

Chandiramani, R.

Children and Young People Now, 21 January - 2014: 30-31

Looks at the work the London Borough of Merton has been doing to tackle child sexual exploitation. Focuses on the Promote and Protect Young People initiative which set up a multi-agency response to identify children at risk of exploitation and provides tailored support to them and their families. Highlights outcomes of the project, including: improved school attendance, increased numbers of children in secure and stable accommodation, decreased contact with "risky" peers.

He said he loved me.

Fursland, E.

Children and Young People Now, 7 January 2014: 24-25

Discusses the impact of a play which aims to raise awareness in schools of grooming and sexual exploitation of young people. Concludes that the play raises important issues in an engaging way. After seeing the play, the number of children agreeing with the statement "I feel I know enough about sexual exploitation to be as safe as I can be" increased from 56 to 95%.

How councils are raising awareness of child sexual exploitation: case study report.

London: Local Government Association, 2013

Six case studies showing how councils across England are raising awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in their local areas, among partner agencies, young people, parents, faith groups and local media. Covers: listening to children and young people; raising awareness; engaging communities; coordinating responses to CSE; and working with schools.

Lessons to learn: recognising the links between running away and absence from school.

Williams, N.

Every Child Journal (5), 2013: 30-37

Explains the signs and symptoms that schools and educational professionals need to know to identify and protect a young person who is running away. Looks at the push and pull factors and links with child sexual exploitation. Presents statistics on school absence and the relationship runaway children have with school. Outlines what a school needs to do covering: recognising the risks and indicators; recording and monitoring absences; working with other agencies; and providing support to children and families. Sets out the relevant policy documents, duties and a checklist.

Sexual exploitation: is it happening on your school?

Christian, A. M.

Protecting Children Update (91), September 2012: 4-5

Discusses child sexual exploitation with a focus on the role of schools in identifying and preventing it. Includes three case studies looking at self-blame, disbelief in sexual exploitation (girls in love with older men and not realising that they are being exploited), and sexual exploitation among boys. Outlines how teachers and school staff can recognise the signs of sexual exploitation and briefly discusses two NSPCC briefings for schools on grooming and neglect.

Preventing sexual exploitation.

Dagon, D

Children and Young People Now, 6 March 2012: 36

Looks at the different models of child sexual exploitation, including the 'boyfriend' model, organised sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Looks at the characteristics of children who could be particularly vulnerable, what advice children can be given to help protect them, and how to respond if child sexual exploitation is identified.

[Search the NSPCC Library Online for more publications on child sexual exploitation](#)
