



**Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility**

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation is illegal activity by people who have power over young people and use it to sexually abuse them. This can involve a broad range of exploitative activity seemingly 'consensual' relationships and informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes through to very serious organised crimes.

The term 'sexual exploitation' is often used to refer to the sexual abuse of children during adolescence. This is the time when they are rapidly changing and developing, both sexually and emotionally. They may be dreaming of having boyfriends or girlfriends and, while they want to act like adults, they lack the knowledge and experience to recognise when an abusive adult or young person is taking advantage of them. All this makes young people particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Signs and Indicators

- Skipping school, coming home late or staying out overnight with no explanation
- Change in appearance, or overt sexualised dress
- Disengaging from family, friends and other support networks
- Becoming secretive
- Changing peer groups
- Unexplained money or gifts, including mobile phones
- Regularly going missing
- Offending behaviour
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Being seen in different cars, perhaps with different older people
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Having a much older boyfriend / girlfriend
- An increase in physical ailments and/or an increase in contact with healthcare
- Suffering from sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy and/or terminations
- Self-harming

There may be many reasons for changes in a young person's behaviour, but if you notice a combination of worrying signs it may be time to seek help or advice.