

Child Trafficking

To ensure that children are safeguarded it is important that as staff team we are aware of any community concerns, and to know signs of abuse who we need to report concerns our concerns too

Child trafficking and exploitation. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of [sexual abuse](#) in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be [groomed online](#). Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of [sexual abuse](#) or [exploitation](#).

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Some [children and young people are trafficked](#) into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to [young people in gangs](#). Sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour.

Young people who are being sexually exploited may:

- be involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hang out with groups of older people, or antisocial groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associate with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- get involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- spend time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels
- not know where they are, because they have been moved around the country
- go missing from home, care or education.

Things you may notice

If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour.

- withdrawn
- suddenly behaves differently
 - anxious
 - clingy
 - depressed
 - aggressive
- problems sleeping
- eating disorders
 - wets the bed
 - soils clothes
 - takes risks
 - misses school
- changes in eating habits
- obsessive behaviour
 - nightmares
 - drugs
 - alcohol
- self-harm thoughts about suicide

Sexual exploitation can happen to any young person – whatever their background, age, gender, race or sexuality or wherever they live.

Risk factors include:

- a history of abuse, particularly [sexual abuse](#)
- recent bereavement or loss
- homelessness
- low self-esteem or self-confidence
- being a young carer
- [being in or leaving care](#)
- links to a gang through relatives, peers or intimate relationships
- living in a gang-affected neighbourhood
- lacking friends from the same age group.

What research tells us about risk factors

Gender, age, ethnicity and missing children

In 2011, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) published a thematic assessment analysing 2,083 victims of child sexual exploitation ([CEOP, 2013](#)). The study found that:

- **the majority of victims were girls**

However in 31% of cases, gender was unknown. It is likely that male victims are under-represented due to difficulties in identifying sexual exploitation in boys and young men.

- **14 and 15 year olds are most likely to be noticed by authorities**

Some victims of sexual exploitation were as young as 9 or 10 years old, however young people most commonly came to the attention of statutory and non-statutory authorities aged 14 or 15.

- **the majority of victims were white**

61% of the victims were white, 3% were Asian and 1% were black. Ethnicity was unknown in 33% of cases. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to be under-represented in statistics face because of barriers to reporting and accessing services.

- **children who go missing are risk of sexual exploitation.**

Information about whether children went missing was incomplete but 842 children were reported as missing on at least one occasion. We don't know whether these children were sexually exploited before, during or after they went missing. **Offending behaviour.** Other research has shown that there are links between child sexual exploitation and youth offending.

Any concerns must be reported to the MASH Team