



Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership:

Multi-agency guidance on extra-familial harm and
child exploitation

2024

CONTENTS

| | Page no: |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 Introduction | 2 |
| 2 Purpose of guidance | 2 |
| 3 Information on extra-familial harm and exploitation | 2 |
| 4 Principles for working with victims | 5 |
| 5 Prevention | 5 |
| 6 Identification | 6 |
| 7 Referral | 8 |
| 8 Exploitation response meeting | 10 |
| 9 Exploitation plans | 11 |
| 10 Working with children and families | 12 |
| 11 Multi-agency Child Exploitation group (MACE) | 13 |
| 12 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) | 13 |
| Appendix 1: Information on forms of exploitation | 14 |
| Appendix 2: Indicators of risk and levels of harm | 20 |

1 Introduction

Although safeguarding risks are traditionally associated with the home environment and linked to parenting capacity, children can also face significant safeguarding risks outside the home (**extra-familial harm**), for example from drugs, gangs and youth violence and sexual and criminal exploitation.

Adolescents may be more vulnerable to these forms of extra-familial harm as they become more independent and enjoy more freedom, and as peer influence increases and family influence declines. This occurs against a backdrop of physical, emotional and cognitive changes present during adolescence that results in young people being more open to risky behaviours.

2 Purpose of this guidance

To address the issue of extra-familial harm, Camden has developed a **Vulnerable Adolescent's strategy** that aims to tackle child exploitation by providing support for individual children and targeting exploiters in order to safeguard children and disrupt all forms of child exploitation in Camden.

<https://cscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Vulnerable-Adolescents-Risk-and-Exploitation-Strategy-2019-21.pdf>

This guidance provides information on extra familial harm and child exploitation and a framework for multi-agency working so that professionals working with children can recognise extra-familial harm and forms of child exploitation, identify the children who are vulnerable to and experiencing harm and exploitation and the actions to be taken to ensure children are afforded the protection they need.

3 Information on extra-familial harm and exploitation

3.1 Definition and forms of extra-familial harm

Extra-familial harm is defined as risks to the welfare of children that arise within the community or peer group, including sexual and criminal exploitation. A key element of extrafamilial harm is that in general, harm does not arise from the home environment; parents may not be aware that their child is at risk or may be struggling to protect their child and the family from harm against exploiters.

However, sometimes parental neglect and lack of supervision may contribute to the young person's exposure to extra-familial harm. Children who experience difficulties or instability at home may be more likely to spend more time outside of home and hence be more vulnerable to extra-familial harm.

Extra-familial harm can take the form of:

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

- child sexual exploitation
- child criminal exploitation including drug dealing both locally and through county lines
- modern slavery and trafficking
- gang activity and youth violence
- radicalisation.

Further details on types of extra-familial harm and exploitation can be found in appendix 1, however child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines drug dealing, are the main forms of exploitation in Camden and are the main focus of this guidance.

3.2 Models of exploitation

Child exploitation is based on a power imbalance in the relationship between the child and their exploiter from which the exploiter is able to control the movement and behaviour of the child and enable them to be used for the exploiters personal or financial gain.

Exploiters may “groom” victims first in order to gain influence over them and thus enable their exploitation, and once they have the child’s trust the method of control moves to manipulation, duress, force, or fear, making exit from the exploitation very difficult. The key element is that the child is not able to give valid consent to their exploitation and will not be acting as a free agent.

General indicators that a child is a victim of exploitation are that:

- their movements appear to be controlled by others through fear or manipulation;
- they seem afraid of their exploiters or in most cases are unaware that they are being exploited;
- they do not trust those in authority and are wary of sharing information;
- they may be required to earn a certain sum of money to repay a debt;
- they may be required to recruit other children.

3.3 Link with modern slavery and trafficking

Child exploitation is a form of modern slavery, and the ***Modern Slavery Act 2015*** makes it a criminal offence to hold a person in slavery or servitude or to require them to carry out forced or compulsory labour.

Exploitation covers:

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

- slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour
- sexual exploitation
- removal of organs
- securing services by threats, force or deception
- securing services from a child or vulnerable adult.

The Modern Slavery Act also makes it an offence to facilitate the transport of a child with a view to exploiting them. Trafficking involves the control of children's movements either to bring them into the UK or to move them around towns and cities within the UK in order to further their exploitation. Further information on child trafficking can be found in appendix 1.

Modern slavery is a serious crime that violates children's human rights and can pose a serious threat to their safety and wellbeing; it should be noted that a child cannot give consent to their exploitation or trafficking.

3.4 Link with missing episodes

Where children go missing from home, placement or school, this provides exploiters with opportunities to groom them for exploitation. Equally, going missing can be an indicator that a child is already being exploited. Professionals should refer to the CSCP missing protocol for more details on action to take where a child goes missing as this may provide an opportunity to divert the child from potential exploitation.

[..\Missing children\CSCP missing protocol 2020.doc](#)

3.5 Online exploitation

Social media and gaming sites provide opportunities to target, groom and recruit young people for sexual and criminal exploitation.

- For CSE, online grooming can lead to online abuse or the exploiter may arrange to meet so abuse can take place offline.
- For CCE, offers of quick money for a day's work, sometimes as adverts, can be circulated on various social media sites such as Facebook and Snapchat. Social media sites can also be used by exploiters to contact, befriend, coerce and threaten children and music videos on YouTube can be used to glamorise gangs and to draw in children from wider social and geographical areas.

This brings a new set of challenges:

- Parents and professionals are not always aware of how the rapidly evolving technology is being used for exploitation or which sites and forums are involved.

- The grooming process can take place faster and more easily online than in the real world.
- The internet provides some anonymity and secrecy to exploiters.
- Exploiters and victims can behave differently online than in the real world due to a lowering of inhibitions as the consequences and potential harm arising from the behaviour are more remote.
- Sexual images can be distributed quickly and without the victim's knowledge; this extends the capacity for continuing exploitation and makes it difficult to contain the harm.

4 Principles for working with victims of exploitation

- Victims of exploitation will be seen as children first and their welfare will be the paramount consideration.
- Children who are in the criminal justice system as a result of their exploitation should be regarded as being a victim rather than a perpetrator of crime.
- Agency responses will be proportionate to the level of risk to the child and child protection procedures and other legal interventions will be used where needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- Agencies will share information and intelligence in a timely manner.
- Agencies will use language that adequately describes the child's experience of exploitation and will avoid placing blame on the child for their situation.

5 Prevention

The *Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy* emphasises the need for preventative work in order to raise awareness of extra-familial harm and exploitation with children with the aim of reducing the risk to those susceptible to exploitation. The preventative strategy aims to support adolescents to make safe choices, develop healthy behaviours and relationships and build resilience against exploitation.

- Schools will take the lead in providing information to children, delivering key messages within the curriculum in line with statutory relationships and sex education, PHSE and online safety lessons to ensure a high level of awareness and understanding of exploitation.
- Health settings delivering sexual health services will provide information on healthy relationships and sexual health.

- Early help services and private and voluntary services working with young people will provide activities to divert young people from exploitation and deliver key safety messages.

6 Identification

6.1 Role of agencies

There are a variety of contexts in which professionals and agencies may come into contact with children who are at risk of extra-familial harm or who are being groomed for or experiencing exploitation:

- **Camden Police and the Youth Offending Service** may come into contact with children who have been arrested and enter the criminal justice system as a result of youth violence, gangs or because of their exploitation, for example where they are found in possession of drugs connected with drug dealing and county lines.
- **Camden schools** may become aware of pupils who are vulnerable to or experiencing extra-familial harm, particularly those who are frequently missing from education, and may have information about individuals who may be targeting the school for grooming purposes. Schools should be aware of their duties under *Keeping children safe in education (2021)*.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf
- **Health service professionals** are most likely to be the first agency to become aware of a child who is experiencing harm as a result of extra-familial harm and exploitation. Children who are being sexually exploited may request contraceptives or present with sexually transmitted infections or be pregnant. Health professionals are most likely to become aware of children with physical injuries linked to criminal exploitation or gang violence.
- **Early Help workers and CSFH social workers** may have concerns that a young person with whom they work is presenting as being vulnerable to or experiencing extra-familial harm or exploitation.
- **Housing and Community Safety** may identify addresses that are being used for the purposes of child exploitation, for example premises used for child sexual/criminal exploitation or where the home of a vulnerable adult is

taken over by drug dealers for the purposes of county lines dealing (known as cuckooing).

6.2 Vulnerability

Some young people may be vulnerable to exploitation due to their circumstances or personal attributes, and may be specifically targeted by exploiters, for example young people:

- with learning disabilities
- who are looked after
- who have experienced abuse or trauma and/or known to social care services
- who are excluded from mainstream education
- with mental health or substance misuse issues
- who are involved in gang activity
- who are living in unstable accommodation
- who regularly go missing from home, care settings or educational settings.

6.3 Indicators of exploitation

The following are general indicators of child exploitation: further details on levels of risk and indicators can be found at appendix 2 and in the London Safeguarding Children thresholds and continuum of needs document available at: [Threshold \(london safeguarding children procedures.co.uk\)](https://london safeguarding children procedures.co.uk)

- staying out late or staying out overnight
- going missing from home or school or excluded
- unexplained money and/or gifts
- being seen in “hotspots” associated with exploitation and grooming
- changes in friendship groups
- secretive or obsessive use of mobile phones or having more than one mobile
- having movements controlled by others
- for CSE, having an “older boyfriend” and presence of STIs/pregnancy
- for drug dealing and county lines, being found in areas not known to the child and being found in possession of drugs.

6.4 Barriers to identification and engagement

Recognising that a young person is at risk from extra-familial harm and exploitation can be difficult for a variety of reasons; young people may find disclosure difficult or may be difficult to engage:

Victims may not readily disclose or engage with services because:

- they may not recognise the exploitative nature of their relationship/situation;
- the pull of the risk-taking behaviour may outweigh the influence of family or professionals;
- intervention may be seen as an interference with their assertion of independence and self-determination;
- they may fear a “loss of control” to coping mechanisms in the face of interventions;
- they may be distrustful of adults or statutory agencies and think that no-one will believe them;
- they may be fearful of reprisals from exploiters against them or their family;
- their movements may be controlled by their exploiters so that they are unable to engage with services;
- children who are missing or travel out of London as part of county lines exploitation will have difficulty engaging with services.

6.5 Professionals may not recognise exploitation because:

- in the case of CSE, they believe the young person has consented to sex (particularly for 16 and 17 year olds);
- they believe the young person has made a “lifestyle choice”
- in the absence of a disclosure or other indicators, the young person’s behaviour may be attributed to other factors or seen as normal teenage behaviour.

7 Referral

7.1 Referral pathways

- The Children and Families Contact Service, which also contains the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), is the single point of contact for children’s social care services in Camden and all referrals should be sent to the service via an e-CAF referral.
- Early Help Services and Youth Offending Services should complete a CCE/CSE risk assessment available on MOSAIC whenever there are reasonable concerns that a child may be being criminally or sexually exploited. Where there is an Amber or Red RAG rating the child should be considered at the Daily Discussion.

- All other services should make a referral wherever there are concerns that a child may be at risk due to extra-familial harm or exploitation.
- Any decision to make a referral to the Contact Service should be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead within the agency in the first instance. Agencies may also contact social workers in the Contact Service for advice on a “no names” basis.
- Urgent child protection referrals can be made by telephone but must be followed up in writing within 48 hours. These cases will be passed to the MASH to be dealt with.
- The Contact Service social workers will carry out a threshold assessment to assess the level of risk and the child’s needs and to decide the most appropriate service based on these needs.
 - Where risk of exploitation is identified, a CSE/CCE risk assessment will be requested from the team receiving the referral. This would include Early Help and social work services.

7.2 Obtaining consent for a referral

Where there are safeguarding concerns, a referral can be made without consent being given as agencies have a legal basis to refer under the Children Act 2004. For further details see the CSCP information sharing statement available at: [Camden-Information-Sharing-Statement.pdf \(cscp.org.uk\)](https://www.cscp.org.uk/Camden-Information-Sharing-Statement.pdf)

However, it is good practice to try to obtain consent although children and parents must be made aware that a referral will be made regardless of whether their consent is given.

Where there are no safeguarding concerns, consent must be sought prior to referral.

- Consent may be obtained from the young person where:
 - they are aged 16 or 17 and are considered to have capacity to consent under the Mental Health Act 2005.
 - they are aged 13 to 15 and are considered to be *Gillick competent*; they understand the nature of the decision and the consequences of the referral being made.

- Where young people are not able to give consent, parental consent must be obtained.
- Where a child is under 13, parental consent must be obtained.

Where a young person's consent is sought, in general parents should be informed of concerns unless the young person strongly objects and cannot be persuaded otherwise.

8 Exploitation response meeting

An exploitation response meeting is a specialist meeting held whenever there are concerns that a child is being groomed for or experiencing exploitation and where a risk assessment indicates a RAG rating of Amber or Red.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- share and clarify information on the type of exploitation and establish the level of concerns and appropriate level of intervention;
- consider what can be done by the family and professional network to reduce risk;
- consider what therapeutic support or preventative input the child may need;
- consider whether any other children associated with the subject are also at risk from exploitation, including siblings, and agree any action needed to safeguard them;
- consider whether any immediate action, including legal action, is needed to safeguard the child;
- share intelligence on exploiters and other victims and consider any action to be taken by the police in order to disrupt CCE or CSE activity in the borough or prosecute exploiters, including a referral to the MACE group;
- draw up an outline CCE or CSE plan.

Professionals working with the child will be invited to attend the meeting to share information and the network will then decide on the next steps depending on the assessed level of risk (see below).

As an outcome of the meeting:

Cases will be given a risk level that corresponds to the most appropriate level of intervention:

Low risk cases where the child is vulnerable to exploitation will be referred to Early Help services for preventative work to address vulnerabilities and increase resilience but may be referred to CSFH for a statutory social work service where:

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

- the child has experienced adverse childhood experiences and CSFH has previously been involved with the family;
- 3 or more risk exploitation assessments have been carried out in relation to an individual child;
- there are concerns around parenting or parents are thought to be complicit with or involved in the exploitation.

Moderate risk cases where there is evidence that the child is being groomed for exploitation will be referred to CSFH if the child meets the threshold as a child in need, but otherwise will be referred to a suitable youth early help service. The purpose of intervention is to build resilience, address the child's needs in order to decrease vulnerability and disrupt the grooming process.

High risk cases where there is evidence of exploitation will be referred to CSFH for a child in need service or a child protection response where this is thought to be proportionate and necessary based on the level of risk to the child, and a strategy meeting will be convened by the social worker.

9 Exploitation plans

Children for whom there are concerns around exploitation will have a CCE or CSE plan that aims to keep them safe and address their needs and vulnerabilities. Where the child is receiving a service, the exploitation plan will be incorporated into their main plan which will be regularly reviewed by the professional network.

- For children known to the YJS, the plan will be part of the child's intervention plan and will be reviewed every 3 months.
- For children known to Early Help, the plan will be incorporated into the Team Around the Child plan and will be reviewed every 3 months.
- For children known to CSFH, the plan will be incorporated into the child in need, child protection or care plan and will be reviewed at the child in need review, child protection case conference or statutory LAC review on a 6 monthly basis.

10 Working with children and their families

10.1 Working with children

- It is essential that professionals work with children in a non-judgemental way and recognise that they are being exploited rather than making free choices.
- Engagement is likely to be difficult and professionals should persevere and try to build strong working relationships with children and understand the barriers that they face (see section 6.4).
- Where there are concerns, professionals should make timely referrals rather than “wait and see” how matters progress. It is likely that other agencies share similar concerns and have information that can give a clearer picture of risk.
- The professional network may wish to discuss the best person within the network to work directly with the child, for example who has the best relationship and is seen as the least “threatening”; independent advocates can also be used where possible to bridge gaps in trust.

10.2 Children placed in Camden by other authorities

Professionals may find that a child they work with who presents as being vulnerable to or at risk of exploitation is looked after by another authority but placed in Camden. Professionals should;

- notify any concerns or incidents to the child’s allocated social worker in the home local authority as they still retain overall responsibility for the child’s welfare and safety;
- notify any concerns and details of referrals to the home local authority to the Children and Families Contact Service so that the information can be passed on to the MACE group;
- in an emergency requiring urgent intervention to ensure a child’s safety, refer the case to the MASH team or the Emergency Duty team out of hours.

10.3 Working with parents

When dealing with cases involving extra-familial harm, Camden follows the relational safeguarding model whereby children and parents and carers are encouraged and supported to become fully involved in planning for the child’s safety.

Therefore it is essential that they are fully involved in completing risk assessments and informed of actions taken by agencies unless there is clear evidence that they are involved in the child's exploitation.

Parents will be anxious to work with staff to protect their child, are likely to have important information about the exploitation and will play a key role in implementing any safety plan. Many of the children for whom there are concerns about exploitation will be living at home so the role of parents in protecting their child and gathering evidence of grooming and exploitation will be crucial.

11 Multi-agency Child Exploitation group (MACE)

The MACE group is a tactical group with responsibility for strategic borough-wide responses to all forms of child exploitation, including sexual exploitation, county lines, modern slavery and trafficking. The group will focus on prevention, intervention, diversion and disruption elements of the *Vulnerable adolescents risk and exploitation strategy* in order to reduce the impact and risk of child exploitation across the community.

The MACE panel tactically responds to child exploitation through the VOLT model (Victim, Offender, Location, Theme) in line with the London Operating Protocol 2021. It provides multiagency support for high-risk cases, or those with challenges or barriers which require support beyond the case level child exploitation response. It considers people of concern, locations and themes through a contextual lens, developing plans to reduce the risk to all young people. The Vulnerable Adolescents Risk and Exploitation Strategy Group has strategic oversight of MACE, allowing for escalation of strategic issues and best practice.

12 National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the national framework for the collection and collation of data on victims of trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. The NRM allows agencies to share information and intelligence in order to support victims and gather evidence against exploiters.

Where an exploitation response meeting establishes that a child is a victim of trafficking and modern slavery as a result of their exploitation, the meeting should then decide whether the threshold is met to make a referral to the NRM. This will be done by either the YJS team or the CSFH social worker.

Camden is part of a devolved Home Office decision making pilot, allowing us to make localised decisions for potential child victims of Modern Slavery. This is a joint decision-making panel with Islington council and allows for timely decision making.

Appendix 1: Information on forms of exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) the financial advantage of increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through use of technology. (*Department for Education*).

Sexual exploitation may take one of the following forms, but the model of exploitation may change over time, for example an inappropriate relationship may be the starting point of organised exploitation, and children may be exploited through the various models of exploitation.

- ***Inappropriate relationships***: The child has an older partner who exerts a great deal of influence and control over them. The child is likely to believe they are in a serious adult relationship and not recognise its exploitative nature.
- ***Peer exploitation***: The exploitation of a child by another child with whom they have a relationship and who subsequently facilitates their exploitation by others as part of their own exploitation. This is the model that exploitation within a group or gang context can follow.
- ***Organised exploitation***: Networks of perpetrators grooming a child for coercion into sexual activity with different men and perhaps potentially exploiting the child into recruiting others.

Sexual exploitation may include a wide range of sexual activities including the use of children to make pornographic images. Children may be coerced into sexual activity with one perpetrator but gradually be exploited by a number of perpetrators.

Exploitation may take place in a variety of locations such as private flats, cars, hotels or business premises. Victims may speak of attending “parties” where they are offered alcohol and drugs in order to disinhibit them so that they can be more easily controlled and abused.

Online exploitation is also a key factor to consider as part of a child’s experience, either occurring in isolation, with exploitation only occurring online, or as part of other types of face-to-face exploitation.

Children may be at risk of experiencing sexual exploitation as they are seeking to fulfil an unmet need, a sense of belonging, respect, love or financial need. Children may be more vulnerable to grooming if they have an unstable family background or history of neglect, low self-esteem, learning disabilities, concerns regarding mental health and/or self-harm, frequent missing episodes or if they are not attending school.

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

Perpetrators may target children in public locations where they gather without adult supervision, such as shopping centres, sports centres, parks, bus and train stations, cafes and online.

The perpetrator may establish a “boyfriend” relationship with the child and during this time give them gifts or money, eventually creating a dependency, possibly through drug or alcohol use or restriction of movements, so that the child becomes more isolated from family and friends.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into carrying out a criminal act, and includes:

- drug trafficking and dealing both locally and through county lines
- forced theft such as pickpocketing and shoplifting
- forced begging
- using the child’s bank account to launder proceeds of crime (money mule)
- cannabis cultivation.

In Camden exploitation into selling, moving or holding drugs is one form of criminal exploitation. Children may be groomed, forced, coerced or deceived into selling or carrying drugs, or to participate in other associated criminality such as violence or the storing of weapons or money. Exploited children may be forced to ‘work’ in order to pay off a perceived debt and may also be set up by their exploiter, such as having drugs ‘stolen’ from them by their exploiter. Creating this debt allows the exploiter to force the child to work to pay off this debt. Children exploited through the drugs market are at risk of violence and physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

County lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and/or local authority boundaries, although not always. Children and vulnerable people are often used by exploiters in this model, for example to carry, transport or sell the drugs, or to collect money or weapons. ‘County line’ refers to the mobile phone line used to deal the drugs. Children are often used as they are less likely to be stopped by police, allowing adult dealers to avoid the risk of arrest. The county lines model can also involve cuckooing addresses and the exploitation of children and vulnerable people in the new area.

Exploiters may take over a local property to use a base for their criminal activity; this is known as ‘cuckooing’. Vulnerable people such as those with drug dependency or a learning disability may be targeted and exploited children may be found on such premises.

Young people at risk profile:

- having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- lack of a safe/stable home environment, homelessness;
- regularly going missing from home or care;
- social isolation or social difficulties;

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

- connections with other people involved in gangs and drug dealing;
- having a physical or learning disability;
- having mental health concerns;
- substance misuse
- be looked after by the local authority;

Indicators of exploitation are:

- going missing from home or staying out late;
- being found in areas away from home that they have no connection with or in areas connected with exploitation;
- being found in possession of drugs or money;
- having more than 1 mobile phone, concerns of control through their mobile phones;
- changes in peer relationships, being guarded
- behaviour and/or exclusion;
- involvement in criminal behaviour;
- decline in physical or mental health and wellbeing;
- returning home looking dishevelled or with injuries;
- out of parental control.
- excluded from mainstream education or frequently missing school.

Various methods are used to recruit children:

- Children may be lured by the promise of earnings and given gifts such as designer clothing and jewellery.
- Children may be targeted because they are perceived as vulnerable or in crisis.
- Social media is often used to recruit children. Offers of quick money for a day's work, sometimes as adverts, can be circulated on various social media sites such as Facebook and snapchat. Social media sites can also be used by exploiters to contact, befriend, coerce and threaten children.
- Music videos on YouTube, including Drill music, can be used to glamorise gangs culture and escalate tensions between communities.
- Peer on peer grooming can take place in schools and via social media. There may be a cycle of exploitation in which exploited children recruit other vulnerable children as part of their own exploitation.
- Once established, children can be further enmeshed into criminal activity through drug debts which are often inflated or staged. For example the child is robbed of drugs/proceeds of crime by people known to the dealer and forced to pay back the debt.
- Children's own substance use may be exploited as part of the grooming process (with drugs being given as gifts).
- Exploiters may also deceive children into debt bondage, for example, by giving them a mobile phone only to later demand repayment for the cost of the phone.
- Exploiters often use threats, coercion and violence.
- Exploiters may threaten family members, using violence and intimidation to ensure engagement and cooperation.

Risk of harm to children includes:

- Children who are criminally exploited are very likely to be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse.
- Organised crime groups use high levels of violence and intimidation to establish control of drug markets. Levels of violence vary considerably but it often includes the use of knives, corrosives, firearms and other weapons.
- Violence against children involved may include 'taxing' where violence is used to punish children for making mistakes or failing to meet drugs sales targets and as part of the debt bondage used to further enmesh children into the exploitation.
- Risks may also include sexual violence and sexual exploitation. It is used either as a means of control or exploitation, for the gratification of exploiters, or as a means of exacting punishment. Girls are particularly at risk and may be considered as a commodity by exploiters.
- 'Plugging' is the practice of concealing drugs internally used by both males and females. It is a common tactic used for the transport of drugs between the urban hub and rural marketplace, but also for the storage of drugs. This poses significant health risks, as those concealing the drugs will often do so for extended periods of time.

Youth violence risk

Child criminal exploitation always carries a risk of harm through youth violence (SYV). However, sometimes children can be at risk of SYV even where there are no clear indicators of CCE. The vulnerabilities of CCE and SYV are overlapping. However, some indicators of CCE can be more indicative of risk of SYV including:

- victim of bullying within the last 12 months
- found in possession of a knife/weapon within the last 6 months
- victim of physical or sexual assault within the last 6 months
- victim of incident (eg: physical assault) filmed and/or shared on social media or messaging
- child identifying as being part of a gang/group.

If the risk assessment does not meet the threshold for Child Exploitation response meeting but there are youth violence concerns relating to the indicators above, please contact Lizzie Skalski and Lucy Southern for further guidance.

Trafficked children

Children who are trafficked from abroad are often targeted by traffickers because they are hoping to escape from war and instability at home. They may travel alone and claim to be meeting up with family members or may travel with an adult who claims to be their parent or carer. Some may request asylum on arrival in the UK and will become looked after. However, these children may remain under the control of their exploiters and may go “missing” from local authority care.

Indicators that a child may have been trafficked into the UK for the purposes of modern slavery are:

- being cared for by an unrelated adult and who appears to have little or no knowledge of the child and no real relationship;
- living at an address with other unrelated children;
- appears to be mature beyond their years;
- not registered for any universal services or enrolled at a school for a short time before disappearing;
- in the country illegally and/or travel documents held by exploiters.

Children who are trafficked within the UK may be born in the UK or from outside the UK but in all cases are being moved in order to continue their exploitation. Children who are most likely to be internally trafficked are:

- young people who are being moved within the UK for the purposes of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- young people who are sent out of the borough in order to carry or deal drugs.

Domestic servitude and privately fostered children

Domestic servitude is where children are obliged to provide domestic services in a private household, for example cleaning, childcare etc. They may not be aware of their servitude and may have been groomed to believe that this is an agreement whereby they are given food and lodging in return for their services. Victims:

- are likely to be poorly treated and forced to work long hours in poor conditions
- will be working for little or no pay
- may not be attending school regularly
- will have their movements limited and/or be unable to leave the house except with their exploiter
- may only be offered left-over food and may sleep in an inappropriate space.

Private fostering arrangements where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they are disabled) is looked after full-time by someone who is not a close relative such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling, may hide the exploitation of children in domestic servitude.

All professionals have a duty to report any private fostering arrangements to CSFH that they become aware of. For more information on recognising private fostering arrangements and notifying CSFH please visit the CSCP website at: [http://www.CSCP-new.co.uk/downloads/policies_guidance/local/Private_Fostering_for_Professionals\[1\].pdf](http://www.CSCP-new.co.uk/downloads/policies_guidance/local/Private_Fostering_for_Professionals[1].pdf)

Radicalisation and extremism

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Some young people are more vulnerable to the influence of those holding extremist views and may be placed at risk if this influence is used to radicalise and incite them to carry out criminal and/or violent acts.

Radicalisation of young people by extremists in order to manipulate them to carry out violent or criminal acts, including acting as recruiters, is a form of extra-familial harm and child criminal exploitation. More information is available in the CSCP *Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism* available at: [link](#)

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

Appendix 2: Indicators of risk and levels of harm

| | Low risk | Moderate risk | High risk |
|------------|---|---|--|
| CCE | <p>The child is vulnerable to CCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ some episodes of going missing from home or school ○ emerging problems with engagement at school ○ changes in peer group/reduced contact with family ○ low level concerns about health and mental wellbeing ○ some experimental use of substances ○ beginning to be known by police because of peer group and possible links with drug dealing. | <p>There is evidence that the child is being groomed for CCE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ frequent missing episodes from home or school and staying out overnight ○ poor school attendance and engagement ○ peer group that includes those known to be at risk of or already experiencing CCE ○ unaccounted for money and possessions ○ seen in locations associated with CCE ○ excessive and secretive mobile phone use ○ regular use of substances ○ growing concern about their health and mental wellbeing ○ known to police as possibly being involved in drug dealing and use of weapons. | <p>There is clear evidence that the child is being criminally exploited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ persistently going missing from home or school and staying out overnight ○ not in education/excluded ○ out of parental control ○ known to associate with older adults or gang members ○ excessive use of mobile phone and owning more than one ○ found in areas that they have no connection to or in “cuckooed” premises ○ arrested in possession of drugs/money ○ dependency on drugs and drug debts ○ serious concerns about health and mental wellbeing, presence of injuries ○ known to have been physically or sexually abused ○ well known to police as being involved in county lines drug dealing and carrying weapons. ○ at risk of violence from County lines drug dealers |

Multi-agency extra-familial harm and child exploitation guidance

| | | | |
|------------|--|--|---|
| | | | |
| CSE | <p>The child is vulnerable to CSE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truanting or excluded from school • Occasionally missing from home or placement • Difficult or distrustful relationships with parents and other adults • Lack of parental supervision or living in hostel accommodation • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Early gang involvement • Experimental use of substances | <p>There is evidence that the child is being groomed for CSE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained gifts , money or new mobile phone • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Older boyfriend • Associates with young people thought to be involved in CSE • Speaks of attending parties with possible adult perpetrators • Established gang involvement • Regular use of substances • Frequently missing from home or placement • Sexual risk taking behaviour • Evidence of on-line grooming • Weakening links with family and friends • Involved in sexual activity in exchange for money/drugs/alcohol/accommodation • Secretive when using mobile phone or internet • Increase in level of personal grooming and appearance, new clothes etc | <p>There is evidence that the child is being sexually exploited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of STIs or pregnancy • Movements restricted or controlled through mobile phone • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Known or suspected to associate with known CSE perpetrators • Problem use of substances • Serious emotional or behavioural issues, poor mental health and self-harming • Missing for long periods of time, possibly trafficked • Estrangement from family and friends • Used to recruit others into CSE • Decrease in level of personal grooming and appearance |