



THE SOURCE

The Source Academy Safeguarding Newsletter

May 2017

Child sexual exploitation continues to make the news headlines. As an organisation, we will be judged on the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements and we need to demonstrate that we are meeting our statutory and moral responsibilities. We need to be vigilant about abuse and have a duty of care to safeguard our learners (and colleagues).

What is child sexual exploitation?

The age of consent (the age at which it is legal to have sex) is 16 for everyone in the UK. Under the age of 16, any sort of sexual touching is illegal.

It is illegal to take, show or distribute indecent photographs of children, or to pay or arrange for sexual services from children.

It is also against the law if someone in a position of trust (such as a teacher) has sex with a person under 18 that they have responsibility for.

Child sexual exploitation is when people use the power they have over young people to sexually abuse them. Their power may result from a difference in age, gender, intellect, strength, money or other resources.

People often think of child sexual exploitation in terms of serious organised crime, but it also covers abuse in relationships and may involve informal exchanges of sex for something a child wants or needs, such as accommodation, gifts, cigarettes or attention. Some children are "groomed" through "boyfriends" who then force the child or young person into having sex with friends or associates.

Sexual abuse covers penetrative sexual acts, sexual touching, masturbation and the misuse of sexual images – such as on the internet or by mobile phone.

Part of the challenge of tackling child sexual exploitation is that the children and young people involved may not understand that non-consensual sex (sex they haven't agreed to) or forced sex – including oral sex – is rape.

Source – NHS (<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/abuse/Pages/child-sexual-exploitation-signs.aspx>)

Signs of grooming and child sexual exploitation

Signs of child sexual exploitation include the child or young person:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- skipping school, being absent or being disruptive in class
- appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for
- experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection
- having mood swings and changes in temperament
- using drugs and/or alcohol
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone ("sexting")
- they may also show signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising and cigarette burns

Who is sexually exploiting children?

People of all backgrounds and ethnicities, and of many different ages, are involved in sexually exploiting children. Although most are male, women can also be involved in sexually exploiting children. For instance, women will sometimes be involved through befriending victims.

Criminals can be hard to identify because the victims are often only given nicknames, rather than the real name of the abuser.

Some children and young people are sexually exploited by criminal gangs specifically set up for child sexual exploitation.

Read more ... <http://www.southyorks.police.uk/help-and-advice/child-sexual-exploitation>

What should you do if you suspect that one of your learners is being exploited in this way?

Follow the safeguarding reporting procedure found on the I drive / Safeguarding
Speak to the Safeguarding Officers:

- **Andy Womble on 0114 263 5638 / 075843981447**
- **Helen Lee on 0114 263 5619 / 078278552504**

More information can be found on:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>