

Chapter Eight: CSE Information for Parents

“Child sexual exploitation can be hard to detect and abusers are very clever in their manipulation. Some young people won’t even be aware that it is happening to them.

It’s not always easy to know what our children are up to or if anything is bothering them, but any combination of these tell-tale signs is a strong indicator that something is wrong and you should get help.”

-- www.itsnotokay.co.uk (okay, 2015)

Before reading this chapter parents are asked to read Chapter One so that they are familiar with the early warning signs and tell-tale signs of children who may be at risk of being sexually exploited.

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people are vulnerable to many risks, some of which are related to the ever changing world of technology and social culture.

As a parent it is important to talk to the agencies working with your child, this could be the school, the police, and social services and if you have worries about your child being sexually exploited. We cannot stress enough that parents are the most important people in keeping children safe.

YOUR CHILD AND THE INTERNET

“The use of the internet and mobile technology to target and groom children and young people is becoming increasingly more common and is known to initiate, organise and maintain the sexual exploitation of children.”

Office of the Children’s Commissioner (Beckett, Factor, & Melrose, 2013 - “If it’s not better, it’s not the end” – Inquiry into CSE in gangs and groups, one year on)

Today’s children know more than the adults in their lives about the internet and how to access the online world. It is vital that parents, carers and all adults involved with children and young people acknowledge that they are often a step behind the young people in terms of technological know-how, and do what they can to be aware of the dangers the internet carries.

The internet is sometimes used to enable the grooming process which can lead to children being sexually exploited. Children, without thinking, will often share on-line personal information or their plans for the evening with people on-line that they have not met in the real world. These people can use this information to get to know a child and then to exploit them. The internet is the mechanism which the exploiter will use to infiltrate themselves into a child’s life,

Parents and carers need to know what their children are doing online and put controls in place in relation to their children’s internet access. One way of doing this is to have an

agreed policy in place at home, with reasonable sanctions for children being found to have breached the policy. You can then carry out random device checks agreed with your child or young person to closely monitor what they are up to online.

At the end of this chapter we have included written agreements on using the internet for parents and children to use at home; there is one for a primary and one for a secondary age school child.

PARENTS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING CSE RISK

“Child Sexual Exploitation is a hugely distressing, but fairly rare form of sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children. Knowing the signs and being aware of the support available can help to equip parents and carers with the knowledge and tools to act.”

- <http://www.paceuk.info/the-problem/> (PACE, 2015)

Parents and carers play an instrumental role in being able to identify risk of CSE and find help for their child and their family as soon as an issue has been detected. As well as making yourself aware as a parent/carer, there are simple steps you can take in terms of a 'LAWE' to tackle CSE.

L – Listen; listen to your child in an open-minded, non-judgemental way

A – Ask; ask about anything you experience Early Warning Signs about

W – Watch; what is your child up to? - Where? When? Who? Why? How?

E – Empower; how can you empower your child to feel in control, and make safer choices?

Parents and carers may also find it useful to be mindful of the points in the Pan-London Safeguarding Against CSE. The points are as follows:

- **S** - exual health and behaviour concerns
- **A** - bsent from school or repeatedly running away
- **F** - amilial abuse and/or problems at home
- **E** - motional and physical condition
- **G** - angs, older age groups and involvement in crime
- **U** - se of technology and sexual bullying
- **A** - lcohol and drug misuse
- **R** - eceipt of unexplained gifts or money
- **D** - istrust of authority figures

So as a parent you have spotted the early warning signs of CSE in your child or a child that is known to you. What do you do now? Please follow our local campaign “say something if you see something” and ring the police on 101 and report your concerns.



HELPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDERSTAND CONSENT

Many young people struggle to understand that to enter into a sexual act, there needs to be consent. But what does consent mean and how as parents can we help our young people understand? The Office of the Children’s Commissioner (*Maddy Coy, 2013*) spoke to young people about consent and this is what the young people said themselves.

CONSENT IS	
YOUNG MEN	YOUNG WOMEN
<i>“You have to the other person’s agreement to do it”</i>	<i>“Both agreeing to it. Like they’re happy to do it”</i>
<i>“For someone to say yeah, you can do it “</i>	<i>“Permission to do something”</i>
<i>“The other person is willing to have sex “</i>	<i>“If people are saying yes and being happy with it “</i>
<i>“Permission, approval “</i>	<i>“You both have got to be on the same level of wanting what’s going to occur after you’ve given that consent “</i>
<i>“The boy is like waiting for her to be ready for it and like so they can both enjoy it “</i>	<i>“Both people wanting to do it, 100% wanting to do it, not ‘shall I’? ‘Shall I’? “</i>
<i>“If a girl says no, she means no “</i>	<i>“You’ve always got to get permission “</i>
<i>“If someone says no then you can’t do it “</i>	<i>“Both people coming to a mutual understanding and agreeing that they do want to have sex”</i>
<i>“The other person is ready “</i>	

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 outlines what is and is not consent to sexual activity please see the box below.

SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT (2003)

12 years 364 (and under)	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 and 17 years
<p>Any sexual activity is an offence – unable to consent to sexual activity.</p> <p>Refer on Sexual activity will be statutory rape</p>	<p>“Sexual activity can be mutually agreed, but remains an offence</p>			<p>Sexual activity is legal in a <u>consenting relationship</u> otherwise it is a criminal offence.</p> <p>It is an offence to take, distribute possess an indecent image of a child under 18</p>
	<p>Risks to be assessed and young people vulnerable to abuse / exploitation to be referred on as appropriate</p>			

(Above slide courtesy of Andy Bowly from Barnados)

The best way to protect your young people is have an open and honest relationship with them. Show an interest in what they are doing. Encourage them to bring their friends home so you get to know them. Above all keep talking with them and remind them you are always there to help them. By providing this support to your child it makes it harder for an abuser to undermine the protection of the family.

The section below provides you with some useful resources that you may wish to access on CSE.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Website: www.selfiecop.com

This app is currently in development and will send a copy of any picture taken on a child's phone to the parents email address. Parents should inform young people they have installed the app as this would be preventative rather than as a spying mechanism.

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/parental-control-software/>

This is web site that will help parents understand internet safety. Has info about fraud, how to keep buying online secure and looks at dating web sites and how to protect tablets and smart phones.

<http://www.paceuk.info/> Web site dedicated to helping parents fight against child sexual exploitation. There is an online training package for parents that will help them spot signs and indicators and give tools to keep their children safe.

www.nwgnetwork.org The national working group for sexually exploited children. Gives lots of information re what is CSE. There is a public space but also a closed space for professionals that sign up. They deliver training and have workshops for professionals.

Sexual Exploitation: Sex, Secrets and Lies 'Sexual Exploitation - Sex, Secrets & Lies', This guide examines the risks young people face and explore ways of keeping safe. The colourful, easy to read booklet is illustrated and has been designed to be used by young people as well as family members and carers who are concerned about the safety of young people. **FREE** to download from www.barnardos.org.uk along with lots of other good resources.

<http://www.paceuk.info/>

For parents and carers, PACE is a charity for parents and carers to find information and help. It was set up for families against Child Sexual Exploitation. There is an online training package for parents that will help them spot signs and indicators and give tools to keep their children safe.

<http://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/parents/>

The It's Not Okay website is the resource website which was created through Project Phoenix in the aftermath of the CSE enquiry in Greater Manchester. There are sections for parents and for children and young people.

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns.htm

Support, guidance and advice on CSE for parents and professionals, as well as downloadable leaflets.

<http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland is a useful website for anyone with concerns about child sexual abuse. The Stop it Now! campaign operates a confidential freephone helpline for any adult with concerns including those worried about a child or young person. Ph 0808 100 900 or help@stopitnow.org.uk

See Me, Hear Me

<http://www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/>

See Me, Hear Me is promoted in the West Midlands for people wanting information or ways to find help relating to indicators of CSE.

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation/>

The NSPCC works to prevent child abuse and cruelty to children. Their website includes information on different topics, including definitions and signs of CSE.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/abuse/Pages/child-sexual-exploitation-signs.aspx>

Advice from the NHS on the possible signs and indicators of risk of CSE in children and young people.

www.pbpeople.org

The Protective Behaviours process is promoted in Northamptonshire through schools to develop resilience and self-empowerment in young people, while highlighting their right to feel safe, and the importance of talking to get help.

HOME INTERNET AGREEMENT

It is a good idea to have an internet agreement with your children that is placed on either their bedroom wall and/or in the room where the computer is generally accessed. Please see the following pages for a sample internet agreement for primary and secondary school aged children.

HOME INTERNET SAFER USE POLICY

(suggested 7-12 years)

I understand that I must use ICT in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety of people at home, or our devices.

- I will only access websites and apps agreed with adults at home. An approved list will be kept centrally and reviewed regularly.
- I will keep my username and passwords secret – I will never share them, or use any other person's username and passwords.
- I will never share ANY personal information about myself or others when online. This includes giving my name, address, email addresses, telephone numbers, age, gender, school name, or bank information. If I am asked for any of this type of information by someone I know or don't know online, I will speak to an adult at home before I do anything else.

*****I WILL NEVER ARRANGE TO MEET ANYONE IN PERSON WHO I ONLY MET ONLINE. I KNOW THAT PEOPLE CAN TRICK CHILDREN AND MIGHT NOT BE WHO THEY SEEM!**

- I will immediately speak to an adult at home if someone asks me to meet them.
- I will report anything I see or read on the internet which I feel uncomfortable or unsafe with. This includes unpleasant or inappropriate images, material or messages or anything I feel uncomfortable about online. I know I can tell an adult at home or school, and I know how to use Click CEOP.
- I will never open an email if I don't recognise the sender.
- I will always respect others' right to feel safe and will not use devices or the internet to behave in an unkind way, or in ways that might feel unsafe for others.
- I will not share images of anyone, including myself on the internet. If people don't want their picture taken on a device, or if they want images deleting, I will respect their wishes. I know it can be against the law to use and share photographs as a form of bullying.
- I understand the risks and will not upload, download or access anything without asking an adult first.

- I will not download and play games on any device which I am too young for. If I need clarification, I will ask an adult. If the game is for 18 and up, I know I am too young.
- I will NOT use social media sites as I am too young to do so legally.

I agree to this policy.

I understand and accept the terms.

I know that if I do not keep to the policy, my device will be confiscated for a period of time to be determined by the adults at home.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Adults _____

Please feel free to access other chapters in the toolkit. The following chapters we think would be of most use to you.

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- Chapter One: what is CSE and what you need to know
 - Chapter Two: CSE and the local response