

What is Child Exploitation?

- Child exploitation is a form of child abuse involving manipulation, coercion, or control of a young person to benefit the perpetrator.
- It can happen online or offline and often involves an imbalance of power.
- Children can be at risk from people they know and from strangers.
- Child Exploitation often occurs with an adult perpetrator but can occur with a child perpetrator.

What is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?

- CCE occurs when individuals or groups force or coerce a child into criminal activities such as transporting drugs, money, or weapons.
- Exploitation may occur without physical contact, often through technology.

What is County Lines?

- County Lines refers to criminal networks that use phone lines to distribute drugs across regions, from larger urban areas to seaside and rural areas, and market towns.
- Children can be exploited to transport or store drugs, money, or weapons.
- County Lines and CCE involve the use of threats towards the young person and often their loved ones, meaning victims can be scared to seek help.
- What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?
- CSE involves manipulating or coercing a young person into sexual activity in exchange for attention, gifts, money, or status.
- It can occur online or offline and is never the child's fault.
- CSE can happen to boys and girls, and perpetrators can be male or female, individuals or groups.

What does the data tell us?

- There was an 82% rise in online grooming crimes against children in the 5 years to 2022 (NSPCC, 2022).
- An estimated 500,000 online predators are online each day (Offender Watch, 2022).
- 73% of online grooming crimes involved Snapchat (NSPCC, 2023).
- The most at-risk age group is known to be 12-15 years old.
- It is believed that 14,500 children are affected by CCE in the UK; however, we know that abuse and exploitation often go unreported.

What are the Signs and Indicators of Exploitation?

- Becoming withdrawn or suddenly changing behaviour.
- Unexplained gifts or money, including online gifts such as vouchers and gaming credits.
- Going missing or staying out late.
- Secretive use of mobile phones or social media.
- Receiving large numbers of texts or calls.
- Appearing anxious, fearful, or distressed, especially when restricted to accessing their mobile phone.
- Changes in friendship groups, spending time with older people.

What Can Parents Do?

- Stay involved and maintain open communication.
- Know the signs and look for behaviour changes.
- Set clear boundaries around online and offline safety.
- Discuss peer pressure, grooming, and unhealthy influences.
- Seek professional help early if concerned.

How Can Parents Protect Children Online?

- Talk regularly about online activities and risks.
- Agree online boundaries including screentime.
- Use parental controls and adjust privacy settings. Examples include Google SafeSearch, Google Family Link, Apple Screen Time, Net Nanny, Qustodio and Bark.
- Discourage sharing personal information online, including live location.
- Discourage joining group chats.
- Discuss harmful content and how to report/block users.

Encourage critical thinking about online interactions.

- Where Can Parents Get Help?
- Contact the Safeguarding Team in school: Mrs Browne, Mrs Taylor, Miss Roijers
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000.
- Police: 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-urgent).
- Warwickshire Children's Services: Family Connect 01926 414144
- Crimestoppers (anonymous reporting): [crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)
- Specialist charities such as Barnardo's: www.barnados.org.uk

