



**PORN**



**SEX**



**PLEASURE  
Vs PROFIT**

**SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION**

**INFORMATION PACK  
FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS**

# SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

## WHAT IS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 is a form of child sexual abuse. The term sexual exploitation takes account of the new ways that CYP are groomed and tricked into sex.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The predator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops

Sexual exploitation is often linked to other issues in the life of a child or young person, or in the wider community context. It should not be regarded as an isolated issue. Sexual exploitation has links to other types of crime such as:

- child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK)
- domestic abuse
- sexual violence in intimate relationships
- grooming (both online and offline)
- abusive images of children and their distribution
- organised sexual abuse of children
- drugs-related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating)
- gang-related activity
- immigration-related offences
- domestic servitude.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' says "Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways."

<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

## WHAT IS VULNERABILITY?

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men but it happens much more often with girls and young women. Some groups are particularly vulnerable and these include CYP:

- who have a history of running away or going missing
- with special needs
- in and leaving residential and foster care
- migrant children
- unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- who have disengaged from education
- who have experienced previous forms of abuse
- who are abusing drugs and alcohol
- those involved in gangs.

It also links to other factors likely to affect CYP including:

- drug and alcohol misuse
- early or precocious puberty
- sexual health
- sexually risky behaviour
- bullying
- domestic servitude, neglect and violence
- teenage pregnancy
- long-term sexual, physical and psychological harm
- forced marriage
- self-harm and suicide.

It can be related to other factors in the lives of children and young people:

- mental health issues
- non-attendance at school and school phobia
- learning disabilities
- being in residential and foster care
- forced isolation from community and family
- immigration status.

## HOW IS IT HAPPENING?

Sexual exploitation of children and young people can be difficult to identify, but as we gain more understanding of grooming and other methods of sexual exploitation, we are better able to identify the risk and pull factors. We need to take a proactive and coordinated approach to this type of abuse.

Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from their peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying), and grooming for sexual activity. Technology can also play a part in sexual abuse, for example, through its use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people in order to groom them. A common factor in all cases is the lack of free economic or moral choice.

Predators use sophisticated tactics and will target areas where CYP are without much adult supervision, such as shopping centres, cafes, takeaways, pubs, sports centres, cinemas, bus or train stations, local parks, playgrounds and taxi ranks, or websites with lots of CYP. The process of grooming may also be visible in venues such as pubs and clubs. In some cases predators will use CYP to groom others, usually younger, into exploitation and abuse.

Sexual exploitation is not a new phenomenon and has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, and in all parts of the world. There is no reason to think that it would not be happening in Scotland and we know that all police forces have dealt with cases in their area but data collected by individual forces has not been centrally collated to date.

## WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

Sexual exploitation can have a serious impact on the life of children and young people and can result in children and young people suffering harm and significant damage to their physical and mental health.

It can lead to difficulties in forming relationships with others, a lack of confidence or self-esteem and can affect their mental and physical health. Sexual exploitation can create feelings of worthlessness within children and young people, which can lead to acts of self-harm, including cutting themselves, overdosing and eating disorders. It can put the young person at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, as well as long-term sexual and reproductive health problems.

Many adults involved in prostitution report difficult childhood histories that include domestic abuse, familial child abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, time spent in care, disrupted schooling and low educational attainment. Many were also coerced into sexual exploitation as CYP.

Other long lasting impacts can be made worse if abusive images have been posted on or shared online. Very often, there is little hope of getting them removed. Survivors of abuse and exploitation talk of feeling no control over who can access them and this leads to further distress and trauma.

Sexual exploitation can have damaging consequences for parents and carers, siblings and extended family members. It can impact on their health, work life, family relationships, finances and social life. Parents and families can be distraught, traumatised and under severe stress. They feel helpless and guilty for not being able to protect their children from sexual predators and can be the victim of serious threats of violence, intimidation and assault from predators.

The stress of dealing with such difficult situations can lead to despair with parents / carers time and energy taken up with dealing with the exploited CYP, limiting their availability to support other children in the family. One child within a family being sexually exploited can make other children vulnerable to exploitation as well. Siblings can feel isolated and face bullying, with their self-esteem, confidence and schoolwork affected.

# READING, LINKS AND RESOURCES

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION USEFUL READING

### **Stop! She's My Daughter**

Mothers of abuse victims share stories of grooming and child sexual exploitation in the UK. CROP (2007).

### **Girls Like Us**

Rachel Lloyd 2011

A survivor of the sex industry shares her own and other young women's experiences along with highlighting the importance of tackling the demand side.

### **Strategic Overview 2009–10**

CEOP (2010)

### **Online Child Grooming: a literature review on the misuse of social networking sites for grooming children for sexual offences**

Kim-Kwang Raymond Choo© Australian Institute of Criminology 2009

ISSN 1836-2060 (Print) 1836-2079 (Online)

ISBN 978 1 921185 86 1 (Print) 978 1 921532 33 7 (Online)

<http://www.aic.gov.au>

### **Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation**

London Safeguarding Children Board (2006)

Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION FURTHER READING

### **Participation and Young People Involved in Prostitution**

Brown, K (2006)

Child Abuse Review Volume 15, no. 5, 294-312

### **Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in the UK: A Review**

Chase, E and Statham, J (2005)

Child Abuse Review, Volume 14, 4-25

### **Young Women, Local Authority Care and Selling Sex: findings from research**

Coy, M (2007)

British Journal of Social Work Advanced Access

Oxford University Press on behalf of the British Association of Social Workers

### **A Guide to Parent Support Work**

CROP (2008)

A worker's guide to supporting parents affected by the sexual exploitation of their children

### **Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later**

David Finkelhor, Kimberly J. Mitchell, and Janis Wolak

Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 2006, pages 7-8, 33

### **Meeting the Needs of Sexually Exploited Young People in London**

Harper, Z and Scott, S (2005)

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**

HM Government (2006)

The Stationery Office, HM Government (2007)

### **UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking**

The Stationery Office HM Government (2008)

### **Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked**

Department for Children, Schools and Families

### **Children and Families: Safer from Sexual Crime**

Home Office leaflet

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/children-safer-fr-sex-crime>

### **Risks and Safety on the Internet**

Livingstone S, Haddon, L, Görzig, A et al. (2010)

[http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Initial\\_findings\\_report.pdf](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Initial_findings_report.pdf)

### **Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation**

London Safeguarding Children Board

### **Young People and Sexual Exploitation**

Lowe K and Pearce JJ (2006)

Special edition – Child Abuse Review, Vol 15.

### **It's Someone Taking a Part of You: a study of young women and sexual exploitation**

Pearce, JJ and Williams, M and Galvin, C (2002)

London: The National Children's Bureau. ISBN 1-900990-83-0.

### **Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution: Guidance Review**

Swann, S and Balding V (2002)

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION USEFUL RESOURCES & SITES

### **Barnardo's**

Nae Danger, Bwise2 sexual exploitation, Protecting Self and Keeping Safe, Respecting Self – Consensual Relationships, No Son of Mine!

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

<http://www.barnardos.org.uk/search.htm?Go=Search&qt=sexual+exploitation&ql=&charset=iso-8859-1&col=mainsite>

### **The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-International**

(CATW) promotes women's human rights by working internationally to combat sexual exploitation in all its forms and was the first international charity to focus on human trafficking, especially sex trafficking of women and girls.

<http://www.catwinternational.org/>

### **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)**

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>

### **Childwise**

A collection of articles and writing on the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

<http://www.childwise.net/>

### **The Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP)**

Advice and information for parents and workers on the sexual exploitation of children and young people.

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

### **End Child Pornography, Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT)**

<http://www.ecpat.net>

### **Family Planning Association (FPA)**

Is this Love?

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

### **Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS)**

Supports girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking.

<http://www.gems-girls.org/>

### **NSPCC**

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/reading\\_lists/commercial\\_exploitation\\_of\\_children\\_wd\\_a54798.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/reading_lists/commercial_exploitation_of_children_wd_a54798.html)

### **The Polaris Project**

A leading American organization challenging all forms of human trafficking.

<http://www.polarisproject.org/>

### **Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service**

Friend or Foe – Who can you trust? The Children's Society. My Life 4 Schools.



[www.womenssupportproject.co.uk](http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk)