



Child Exploitation

Caroline Welton: CSE Lead

What is it?

Many of you will remember the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) scandal that surrounded Telford in the news. Due to the impact of previous failings, Telford & Wrekin Council commissioned and funded its own independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in 2018.

As a result, each school and college in Telford has been appointed a CSE lead who are working to raise awareness and include teaching about the dangers of CSE in an age-appropriate way. We are also providing the enquiry with a large amount of data around risk factors for CSE. This along with networking with the police, safeguarding team and CATE (Children Abused Through Exploitation) team, aims to create a clear procedure for highlighting children at risk and for getting the help and support needed.

Keep an eye on our website for information sessions, training and updates provided by the local authority.



What is CSE?

CSE stands for child sexual exploitation and is a type of abuse. It's when young people under the age of 18 are tricked into performing sexual acts. It can happen to anyone.

To begin with, the young person may think they're in a loving consensual relationship, as they can be given gifts, money, status, affection. In reality, they are being groomed.

Having gained the young person's trust, abusers can control them through threats and violence. They may force them to have sex with other people and even make them groom other young people for sex.



It's important to recognise that although the age of consent is 16 years old, children and young people over 16 can be exploited. Child sexual exploitation is a very complex form of abuse. It can be difficult for parents and carers to understand and hard for the young person to acknowledge that they are being exploited.

What to look for

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Being frightened of some people, places, or situations.
- Being secretive.
- Sudden changes in mood or character.
- A sudden change in their family relationships/dynamics.
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain, such as hotel key cards or unexplained gifts.
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area.
- Sudden change in physical appearance including clothes and hygiene levels.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- A sudden and urgent request to go onto contraception or to obtain the 'the pill'.

Child Exploitation



Online Dangers

- Having an older person they view as their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Staying out late or overnight.
- Having a new group of friends.
- Missing from home or care or stopping going to college.
- Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups.
- Involved in a gang.
- Involved in criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting.

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a young person's trust or control them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time.

When a child is sexually exploited online they might be persuaded or forced to:

- Send or post sexually explicit images of themselves.
- Film or stream sexual activities.
- Have sexual conversations.

Signs of Online Abuse

- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.
- Seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- Being secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone.
- Having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Both sexual exploitation in person and online can have long-term effects on a child or young person. They may:

- Struggle with trust and be fearful of forming new relationships.
- Become isolated from family and friends.
- Have struggles understanding [healthy relationships](#) and boundaries.
- Fail exams or drop out of education.
- Become pregnant at a young age.
- Experience unemployment.
- Have mental health problems, self-harm or attempt suicide, misuse alcohol and drugs, take part in criminal behaviour, experience homelessness.

If you are worried that a young person is being sexually exploited or you may be a victim yourself, it is important that you share your concern and report it.

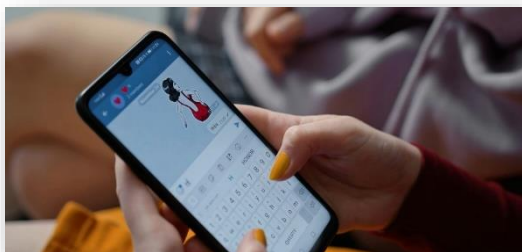
Alert Caroline Welson, CSE lead or a member of the BeSafe team to your concerns via the email below or call on 01952642220

BeSafe@telfordcollege.ac.uk

Please follow this link for further support and information on how to report your concerns:

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/#support

www.telford.gov.uk/info/21865/support_for_victims_and_their_families



Knowing what a healthy relationship looks like can help prevent sexual abuse and exploitation.

Find out more about healthy / unhealthy relationships here:

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/friends-relationships-sex/sex-relationships/healthy-unhealthy-relationships/