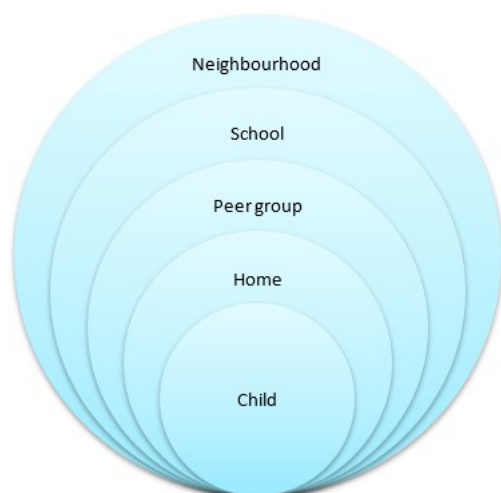


# Child Exploitation & SYV Indicator and Analysis Tool

## Guidance for completing

This indicator and analysis tool is designed to help all professionals working with children and families to identify possible vulnerabilities to exploitation or serious youth violence. It should be used when you have concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being harmed, due to exploitation or serious youth violence. Your observations alongside those of other professionals and family members of behaviours and any significant changes will be important as children will often deny, or be unaware, that they are being exploited.

The indicator and analysis tool has been developed using the contextual safeguarding framework and domains. Contextual Safeguarding recognises and responds to vulnerability and strengths beyond individuals' families and carers. This includes their peer groups, education settings, online, neighbourhood and cultural environment. Whilst the approach is focused on risk outside the home, it is important to look at the vulnerabilities and protective factors across the individual's entire context to ensure that risk of harm within the home is also considered.



The form is an Indicator and analysis tool, not a risk assessment. When completing the tool please be specific about details. For example, names of places, people, shops, registration numbers, dates/times, situations, websites and so on that can help to identify and consider harm that maybe happening to the individual.

It is important that we recognise that [language matters](#) when discussing children and young people who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation. Language implying that the child or young person is complicit in any way, or responsible for the crimes that have happened or may happen to them, must be avoided.

Additional information: [Child sexual and/or criminal exploitation, guidance for professionals](#)

Understanding the child's lived experience is not just about their spoken words. A child's views can be gained via observations, written words or via pictures etc. What is important is that professionals ensure that methods of communication are appropriate to the child's needs. Consider using direct work tools to gather information and promote engagement, such as ecomaps.

A recurring message in child safeguarding practice reviews is the key role adults who are in a position to speak on behalf of the child can play. This can include parents, grandparents, neighbours, and members of the public. It is essential that where adults have shared vital information, they are listened to, and their views taken seriously.

In the information gathering element of the tool are some suggested questions that enable engagement and discussion, **is it not envisaged that the numbered questions are posed to the child**, these are for the professional to determine through their engagement with the child, their family or other professionals working with the child. When identifying if the factor is current or previous, generally current would be

considered within three months, however, please consider if the factor is still having an impact. At the foot of each of these information gathering sections is space for the evidence that supports the statement.

Children who are part of the Children Speak Freely have provided the following advice for practitioners when looking to engage children in the completion of the tool:

1. Always ask, don't make assumptions. Just because I'm going missing it doesn't mean I am dealing drugs. Be curious, don't make judgements without asking and checking, when this happens it affects me (and maybe others) wanting to meet with you
2. Ask for our views so that we can have some agency in plans and safety management plans. Don't do things to us but with us...asking what the child needs would be helpful.
3. Do let children know that you have concerns and that you will discussing your concerns with other professionals.
4. Some children don't feel important enough to be noticed so if you ask questions, you make that child feel noticed and important.
5. Small, good things / positive things should be highlighted and noticed and not then dismissed or overshadowed by things that worry others
6. Some children who have been exploited and endured the worst of it (i.e. spending time in "trap houses") will be worried to talk about it or admit it, or let others know. Open the door for them by letting them know that you know or suspect they have been through that and offering to them an opportunity to talk about it. They most probably need that outlet, but don't tell them what they have been through or how they feel
7. Children being suddenly angry all the time and particularly children who have new friends (even disguised as old friends that have made a comeback) and maybe a change in their 'normal activity' are the biggest tell-tale signs that they are getting exploited or asked to do things that they don't want to do
8. Sometimes a child's behaviour may seem shady, or that they are maybe being exploited - this doesn't always mean they are
9. The children you often used to be worried about are those that were from 'broken families' however any child can be affected, often those from really 'happy families that have stable homes'. This seems to happen because gangs/ those that exploit children offer a sense of belonging.
10. Old tactics from those who exploit are still relevant- i.e waiting outside places, social media usage is huge, those being bullied
11. When someone in authority make a change to how things work; they didn't ask for our views but what they decided affected us - it would be helpful if people ask views of those decisions affect

## Child Exploitation Domains

The following diagram gives some examples of what to consider when you have concerns that a child is being exploited or is at risk of exploitation. Consider the information gathered within the context of the child's age and developmental stage and what they have experienced in their early years which may heighten their vulnerability to exploitation.



The contextual safeguarding element provides an opportunity to think about their context and what is both a strength or contexts that pose a risk – be specific as this will enable a more tailored approach to addressing the concerns in the context.

The final two pages collate the views of the child and their parent/carer, clearly capturing their voice. The analysis and professional view section is an opportunity to collate and summarise the risks identified around exploitation and SYV and provide a professional judgement about the risk of exploitation.

At the foot of the document is a plan, this is the place to capture the next steps that are being taken to safeguard the child and could be part of an existing plan or actions, this does not need to wait for the meeting but what is happening now – be SMART in your actions.