

GSCP CHILD CRIMINAL
AND SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION
SCREENING TOOL
GUIDANCE

2023

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership



Guidance for completing the revised CCE/CSE Screening Tool

This guidance is designed to help you identify whether a child or young person may be at risk of Child Exploitation and provide direction in completing the Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation CCE/CSE screening tool. Remember that a child at risk through exploitation is a child in need of protection and not a young adult making poor choices.

The tool has been revised following the publication of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership's Child Sexual Exploitation Commissioning Strategy 2022.

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Document Revision Table

Version	Date	Comment
1.0	October 2023	Draft Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool Guidance – to be signed off
	November 2023	Signed off

What is Child Sexual Exploitation? (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.’ Revised statutory definition of child sexual exploitation (Feb 2017)

What is Child Criminal Exploitation? (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms, theft and commit acts of violence. (Home Office, 2018)

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categories offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. It is possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country and therefore applies to UK and non-UK resident children. (Modern Slavery Act, 2015)

What is County Lines?

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. (Home Office, September 2018)

One of the key factors found in most cases of county lines exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g., carrying drugs in return for something). Where it is the victim who is offered, promised, or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs, or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a young person or vulnerable adult does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a young person who engages in county lines activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Both the definition and guidance document can also be downloaded from the [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership website](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/professional-resources/child-criminal-sexual-exploitation/), alongside other resources for professionals including the CE Protocol, GSCP CE Strategy and links to both e-learning and multi-agency CE training. A direct link to the CE Screening Tool and Guidance can be found here; <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/professional-resources/child-criminal-sexual-exploitation/>

Key Points to remember whilst working through the tool:

- **Who is vulnerable to Child Exploitation?** - Any child, in any community: Child exploitation is occurring across the country. All professionals should be open to the possibility that the children they work with might be affected. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation can often be interlinked, with young people at risk of or experiencing both forms of abuse.
- It is important to remember that children are not exploited because they are vulnerable, but because someone is prepared to take advantage of their vulnerabilities and at that moment there is insufficient protection around them.
- This area of work is inevitably saturated with acronyms and ‘professional’ language, and it is important to avoid this type of terminology when working with young people.
- The coercers are usually of ‘adult’ age; thereby an imbalance of power will inevitably be a prominent factor in the relationship. However, peer on peer exploitation/abuse is also not uncommon.
- Although it is rare Parents/Carers may also be involved in the sexual/criminal exploitation of their child.
- **Gender** - Both girls and boys can be victims of child exploitation and are equally vulnerable.
- **Ethnicity** – Child Exploitation affects all ethnic groups.
- Should a child be approaching 18 and still considered vulnerable consideration should be given to making a referral to adult safeguarding.
- Children under the age of 13 and young people with learning disabilities cannot be assessed as low risk if behaviours indicate any kind of involvement in CCE/CSE.
- Practitioners should be mindful of the importance of contextual safeguarding within CCE/CSE and be ready to conduct further assessments on individuals or sectors which have a significant influence/impact on the young person (e.g., peer group, social media, neighbourhood)

Who should you use this tool with?

The screening tool can be applied to all children and young people under the age of 18 years and is to be used by professionals who have concerns that a child/young person may be being exploited.

The Screening Tool is designed to help identify vulnerabilities and risks associated with exploitation and for you to explain your concerns relating to the child. Your observations of behaviours and any significant changes will be important as children will often deny or be unaware that they are being exploited. Significant changes in behaviours, a single high-risk episode or multiple risk factors may indicate that the child is a victim of abuse through exploitation rather than a teenager experimenting with risk taking. Please complete as fully as possible.

Professionals should be aware that the child or young person may not initially relay accurate information about their circumstances, particularly if they do not identify themselves as a victim, or if they are under the power and control of a perpetrator or group/gang. Please also be aware that some children or young people may no longer be at risk of harm but will already be being significantly harmed. It is important to retain a sense of professional curiosity about the behaviours you are seeing and support the child in discussing this with you.

Guidance for completing the screening tool.

- Where there are concerns of possible exploitation any professional should, in the first instance, have a discussion with their agencies designated safeguarding lead.
- Complete as much as you can – it is not expected that every box must be ticked. Please put down whatever evidence or information you have.
- Something has prompted your concern about a child or young person. Please complete the form. CCE/CSE may be ruled out at a later step however it may still be appropriate for the child to receive support or intervention.
- The form **MUST** be submitted as a **Word** document and not a PDF to enable teams to process and add CE response.
- The referrer identifying the concerns and completing the screening tool should also involve liaison with other agencies to ensure that there is multi agency approach.
- The screening tool must be updated where there is an increase or decrease in the level of risk.
- Screening tools will be recorded and stored allowing information to be gathered over time to strengthen or clarify what is known.
- **Appropriate Language in Relation to Child Exploitation** - It is imperative that appropriate terminology is used 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 responsible in any way for abuse and crime that they are subjected to, must be avoided to ensure we safeguard them appropriately. It is also important to recognise that a child cannot consent to their own exploitation. – (Childrens Society 2022) https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Child_Exploitation%20Appropriate_Language_Guide%202022.pdf
- The Home Office Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit can be found here. – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit>


Next steps for the completed Screening tool

Upon completion this form may contain data categorised as 'official sensitive'. You therefore need to be very careful when submitting the completed Screening Tool.


The Screening Tool is sent to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) through a secure route:

Internal GCC (but not the allocated social worker)	If you are an internal GCC staff member use the 'Egress' system to send the email securely to Childrenshelpdesk-gcsx@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Non GCC	If your organisation has access to Government secure e-mail (GCSX / PSN / .net / CJSM/ .nhs.uk)) please use: Childrenshelpdesk-gcsx@gloucestershire.gov.uk You can also use encrypted email (such as 'Egress') to send the email securely to: childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk
By Post	If you do not have access to any of these email addresses or systems, please send the document in the post recorded delivery or deliver it by hand, marked 'official sensitive and confidential' and 'For the attention of the Children and Families Helpdesk' to Shire Hall main reception, Westgate Street, Gloucester.

The CCE/CSE process is as follows:



Referring Professional




Complete CE SCREENING Tool

Information can be sought from other agencies and incorporated into the screening tool.




Screening tool sent to Children's Helpdesk.
Sent to Child Exploitation Tray and is picked up by Child Exploitation team.



Child Exploitation Team

CE Coordinator/Senior Social Worker and Detective sergeant read the screening tool, discussion takes place and systems are checked for information. Risk level is identified and agreed.

CE response is added to screening tool.



CE Coordinator/Senior Social Worker completes a CE consultation with the referrer to discuss the identified risk level, explore services that are in place, share resources and identify/signpost to appropriate services.

Should further support be required CE team are available in an advisory role.

