



St Helena Government

Exploitation Prevention and Response Policy for children under the age of 18 years old.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse that is based on an on-going exploitative relationship between perpetrator and child. A child or young person under the age of 18 is sexually exploited when they have received 'something' (e.g. attention, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money) in exchange for sex.

CSE is a hidden crime, any child or young person can be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused.

Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and causes significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents and carers are often traumatised and under severe stress. Siblings can feel alienated and their self-esteem affected.

Children and young people can be sexually exploited through the use of technology - for example by being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or via a mobile phone.

Sexually exploitative relationships are characterised by an imbalance of power and the use of controlling behaviours to keep the child or young person in a dependent position.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Children are not only exploited sexually, the exploitation of children for criminal gain is an emerging issue affecting communities both in St Helena and in the UK.

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or a 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.

Grooming

All forms of child exploitation can involve a 'grooming stage'. The term 'grooming' describes the variety of methods that are used to manipulate and control victims. This can include:

- The giving of gifts, money, food or presents;
- Rewards - like mobile phone top-ups or games credits;
- False promises of love and/or affection;
- The provision of alcohol and drugs.
- Taking them for rides in a vehicle.
- Invitations to join gatherings of a popular circle of friends.

Grooming is a way of developing an exclusive bond between abuser and victim. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to grooming where the abuser deceptively constructs a connection between sought after love and affection, increased status, or offers a sense of belonging.

As a result of this process, children and young people rarely recognise the coercive and abusive nature of the relationship and will prioritise their attachment and loyalty to the offender over their own safety and wellbeing.

The early stages of the grooming process can seem an exciting time for a child or young person - particularly if they are given high status gifts or are taken to parties, pubs, or clubs that they wouldn't normally get into.

In cases of sexual exploitation it is common for grooming to take place online.

Once a bond is established, offenders will use a variety of coercive and controlling behaviours to maintain their hold over the child. These can include:

- Isolating the child from friends and family
- Monitoring use of social media
- Threatening or inflicting violence or injury
- Excluding them from social gatherings
- Making threats to harm themselves if the child withdraws from the 'relationship'.

Local Arrangements

The St Helena Safeguarding Board (SHSB) Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Screening Tool can be used by any professional who has concerns that a child may be at risk of either sexual or criminal exploitation.

MACE meetings

The Child Exploitation Screening Tool is discussed at ALL Multi Agency Child Exploitation Meetings (Weekly MACE) where it is reviewed alongside other information and intelligence and a risk category is assigned.

Strategic MACE

The key purpose of the Strategic MACE will be to provide a detailed overview of the profile of Child Exploitation within St Helena. This includes emerging concerns about particular localities, addresses, businesses or professions.

Training

The St Helena Community College (SHCC) provides an e-learning module: Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation which is designed to improved awareness. The SHSB recommends that all agencies make the e-learning module mandatory for all staff who come into contact with children and young people.

Professionals who have already completed the CSE e-learning and have also attended the two day inter-agency Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults and the specific Exploitation prevention and response training that will be available under the umbrella of the Safeguarding Board from February 2020.

To access the e-learning or apply for the one day training please liaise directly with Wendy Henry, Training & Policy Lead on telephone 22713 email: wendy.henry@sainthelena.gov.sh

St Helena Safeguarding Board Resources

Legal framework

Children and Adults social care have an overarching responsibility for safeguarding all ; their statutory functions under the Welfare of Children Ordinance include specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Local agencies, including the police and health services, also have a duty to effectively safeguard children from harm and abuse. St Helena's working together document and the safeguarding board also outlines the roles and responsibility of all partner agencies to work together to effectively safeguard children from abuse and harm.

It is common practice to use a range of different written and visual resources as a way of raising awareness of exploitation with children and young people. Some of these resources are as follows:

In Schools:

Curriculum includes Personal Social Health & Citizenship Education for all students at PAS and Key Stage 2 Primary, with input from the School Nurse. Topics include defining abuse, accessing help and reporting abuse, safe touch, confusing touch and bad touch, healthy relationships, consent, age of consent, age verification, sex and the law.

Resources include:

'Disrespect nobody' – PSHE association

Talk PANTS – NSPCC

'Teaching good touch, bad touch' – Kids safety council

Schools also have:

- Whole School Assemblies
- Theme days e.g. White Ribbon, Rights of the Child Day etc.
- Anti-bullying week and policies
- ICT aids: e.g. CD, PowerPoint Presentations, Posters
- Circle time discussions
- 1 on 1 Emotional Literacy Support sessions

Children Social Care:

- Referral system to Children's Social Care Services
- Child Sex Exploitation Risk Assessments
- Child in need meetings
- Multi-agency meetings
- Direct work with child/young person and family using the Signs of Safety framework
- Child Protection Conferences
- SALT involvement using figures/pictures and alternative forms of communication/safe or unsafe talking mat.
- Therapeutic Practitioner
- Social Care Workers/Officers who are experienced in actively listening to children and young people
- Workforce trained by the National Autistic Society
- Police and Social Workers trained in Achieving Best Evidence Interviews with young people and vulnerable adults
- Working Together Document
- Safe Haven

Police Directorate:

- Experienced Police Officers of investigation all areas of exploitation
- Exploitation Leaflets and information about Sexting and the safe use of the internet
- Youth Prevention Scheme aimed at diverting inappropriate behaviours of youth which includes inappropriate sexual attitudes and healthy relationships.

Health Directorate:

- Psychologist/Education Psychologist/CPN

Enduring relationships and support

Support will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual, taking into account their age, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, language and maturity. Lasting, trusting relationships with professionals who offer consistent support are crucial to support and protect children and young people and aid their recovery.

Effective information-sharing within and between agencies

There is in place an effective information-sharing protocol. All relevant agencies and services should be signatories and it should clearly state what information should be shared, by whom and the process for doing this.

MACE Document

Low risk - Vulnerable Child – Emerging risk of exploitation. A vulnerable child or young person, where a limited number of concerns are identified which suggest that they are more likely to be at risk of exploitation.

There is currently no evidence that they are being exploited at this time or that a criminal offence has occurred.

Medium risk - Moderate risk of exploitation - A vulnerable child or young person, where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any of the CE warning signs have been identified. However, at this stage there is no evidence of a criminal offence.

High Risk - Significant risk of exploitation evidence. A child or young person is being targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex or criminal acts for drugs, perceived affection, accommodation (overnight stays), money and goods etc.

The likelihood or evidence of coercion and control is significant.

