WHO'S AT RISK

In a word – anyone. Boy or girl. Child or teenager. Someone who’s happy at home or someone who’s experiencing difficulties. Basically, young people of any age, gender, sexual orientation, background or race.

Common to all, is that the offender will hold power over the young person – this may include being older, physically stronger, more popular or having more money. But it’s not just older people who can exploit a young person. Sometimes offenders are a similar age as their victim and may even go to the same school.

RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Recognising child sexual exploitation isn’t always easy, especially when the warning signs often come at a time when young people are already going through the ups and downs of growing up.

However there are changes in their behaviour that might be a sign something serious is going on. The more you’re aware of what to look out for, the better placed you’ll be to help protect your child.

GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

Whether you need immediate help for a young person in danger or are looking for general advice, there are a number of people and places trained to offer help and support.

If you think a young person is in immediate danger dial 999 and speak to the police now.

If you feel someone is exploiting, or likely to exploit a young person, or you believe a young person is at risk of being a victim, call Police Scotland on 101.

You can also make your concerns known to the local council for the area where the child lives. Visit csetheesigns.scot and search for the social services available in your area.

If you’re not ready to report your concern, but want to talk to someone call the 24-hour helpline, ParentlineScotland.

All calls are free. Simply dial 08000 28 22 33 9am-10pm Monday to Friday or 12noon to 8pm Saturdays and Sundays.

FOR MORE INFORMATION INCLUDING:

- the various forms CSE can take
- advice for talking to your child about the issue
- practical tips for keeping your child safe online and offline

visit csetheesigns.scot

Together we can all help to keep children and young people safe in Scotland.
KNOW WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Are they suffering severe mood swings?
Mood swings in themselves are nothing unusual but does gut instinct tell you the ones your child is experiencing are something different entirely?

Have they become unusually secretive?
Has your child stopped talking about their day at school or about where and whom they’ve been with?

Are they late home or skipping school?
Has your child started coming home later than they were supposed to? Are they staying out overnight with no notice? Have they been skipping classes or missing school altogether?

Are they acting differently when they access the internet?
Has your child started becoming overly protective of their phone, tablet or computer, as if they don’t want you to see who’s contacting or messaging them? Alternatively, are they avoiding their phone or laptop altogether as if they’re scared to hear from someone?

Have their tastes changed suddenly?
Is your child dressing differently – in a more revealing way perhaps? Or have they swapped one friend or group of friends for another?

Do they have unexplained marks and scars?
Have you noticed your child trying to conceal unexplained marks and scars by covering themselves up or wearing loose clothing? When you ask about them, do they avoid giving you a clear answer?

Are they being picked up or dropped off by people you don’t know?
Offenders may groom young people by offering to give them lifts. Are there people you don’t know taking your child out? Is your child defensive and secretive if you ask questions about them?

CSE EXPLAINED

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves a young person under the age of 18 being manipulated, forced or pressurised into taking part in a sexual act in exchange for gifts, money, alcohol or simply the promise of affection.

Many people think CSE only happens to vulnerable young girls who are in care or from dysfunctional families, but the fact is, CSE can happen to boys and girls from all backgrounds. It can happen online or in the real world. It can take place on a one to one basis between an offender and a young person as well as in gangs and groups.

Often, due to the manipulative tactics offenders use, a young person will believe they’re in a loving and supportive relationship, and won’t be aware that they are a victim of abuse.

As a parent or carer, it can be difficult to think of anyone wanting to have sexual contact with your child. But by finding out more about CSE, you’re taking positive action for your child’s safety.

Watching your child, or the child that you care for, develop and grow into their own person brings its own challenges, without the added worry of dealing with the devastating effects that could result from your child becoming a victim of child sexual exploitation.

But understanding the signs and symptoms, and knowing where to get help and support if you are in any way concerned, can go a long way to helping protect your child.