



Fortitude Fostering Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Foreword

Child sexual exploitation is a form of 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. Working Together (2018). Sexual exploitation also means sexual, physical and emotional abuse and sometimes neglect. Therefore, sexually exploited children are victims of abuse. Children under the age of 16 cannot give consent to sexual activity.

The aim of Fortitude Fostering's Child Sexual Exploitation Policy is to define and identify child sexual exploitation (CSE) and to detail an effective response. It is a legal requirement that fostering service providers notify the police and the Local Authority (LA) in whose area the child is placed, where a child is suspected of being a victim of sexual exploitation.

This Policy seeks to provide a framework for best practice whilst being consistent with national guidance for protecting children and young people from child sexual exploitation. Fortitude Fostering will seek to work in partnership with Local Authorities abiding by procedures set by Local Safeguarding Partners.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Fortitude Fostering's Safeguarding Strategy, as the problems are inter-related. For example, a child who is part of a gang, can also be sexually exploited, or trafficked, they may also be made additionally vulnerable through special needs.

2. POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

2.1 The signs of abuse

The Munro Review of Child Protection concluded that the signs of abuse are rarely present in clear, unequivocal ways. What is important is that those working with children and families understand the totality of a child's experience in order to assess the nature and level of risk faced by children and respond swiftly and proportionately.



Children at risk of sexual exploitation are some of the most vulnerable in our society. Younger victims are being targeted. In only a few years, research from Barnardo's indicates that the average age has dropped from 15 to 13 and more recently to 8.

Perpetrators of these crimes are becoming increasingly sophisticated; using the internet to protect their identity and trafficking children around the country to avoid detection. Children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by peers already involved, or coerced by an older man or women; drugs and alcohol may be involved. The child/young person may become alienated from the very people (friends, family, and professionals) who could help.

2.2 Risk Factors

The signs of abuse are interlinked with a number of risk factors as set out in statutory guidance and confirmed by CEOP research. These are as follows:

- Adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence.
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks.
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups.
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation.
- Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people).
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation. • Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- Concerning use of internet/excessive receipt of texts/phone calls/and or multiple callers/unknown callers.
- Unexplained absences/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school.
- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language.
- Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing.
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults.
- Hostility in relationship with parents/carers and other family members; and
- returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base.
- Showing signs of sexual activity/abuse, including sexually transmitted infections, terminations and pregnancy scares
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; a
- • self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

2.3 Missing and Sexual Exploitation

There is a clear link between children and young people who go missing and sexual exploitation. Under national missing guidance it is a requirement that fostering service providers notify the police and the LA in whose area the child is placed, where a child is suspected of being a victim of sexual exploitation. The agency will complete a referral and work alongside the police and LA, details of this procedure are outlined in Fortitude Fostering's Missing Policy.



Child sexual exploitation or suspected sexual exploitation and 'missing' are critical incidents and require notifications to the respective Ofsted. Clear action plans and time scales are essential. Children and young people must have a return interview following a missing episode. This is an opportunity for foster carers, local authorities and police to gain information that can effectively be used to protect children and young people.

Children and young people placed 'out of borough' can be particularly vulnerable to usual procedures not taking place and additional exploitation such as county lines. County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

2.4 Trafficking

It is clear that all forms of trafficking children is an abuse. Cases also involve UK-born children being trafficked within the UK, it is essential that all professionals who come into contact with children who may have been trafficked are fully aware of the background to this activity and know how to apply the procedures for safeguarding children and to meet the needs of those who have been trafficked. Children who are sexually exploited are often trafficked and therefore trafficking legislation may be appropriate. Children who have been trafficked who have no parent or guardian are entitled to services as a looked after child and part of the assessment that is carried out must be a risk assessment. Main risks are continued influence of the traffickers and that the child may go missing. Any claims by adults that they are family members of the child need to be carefully verified.

2.5 Sexual Exploitation and technology

Sexual exploitation can include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Children and young people need to know of the risks that can be posed by the misuse of technology. For example, vulnerable children can be inadvertently grouped via social networking sites. Fortitude Fostering offers a comprehensive Policy on Internet and Mobile Phone use, digital use agreements, plus a range of guidance tools and a comprehensive training course for foster carers. It is recommended that each foster carer complete a 'digital safe care agreement' with the child or young person they care for (where age appropriate). Those who work with and care for children can struggle to remain up-to-date with the latest sites and potential connection points, so practitioners should always seek specialist support if unsure about online environments. Support is offered through NWG, PACE and CEOP.

2.6 Child Pornography

Child pornography offending involves the trading, collection, viewing and taking and producing sexual images of children on line. This is not a homogeneous group e.g. Some offenders will look at and collect child pornography, whilst others will involve a direct risk using child pornography. This could involve the perpetrator meeting and abusing a child e.g. finding it easier to overcome victim resistance for example by posing on line as sympathetic peer or adult in chat rooms with a clear intent to commit sexual assaults off line.



2.7 Online Gaming

Perpetrators are increasingly targeting children and young people via online gaming sites pretending to be people they are not. This can lead to grooming and sexual exploitation. Perpetrators build on the shared online experience they have with the young person and access their gaming history, this can be a way of tricking the young person into friendship. Carers should advise young people:

- To Play on only authorised versions of game
- Do not reveal personal information
- Report incidents which make them feel uncomfortable or scared

3. RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

At the point of referral local authorities identify children and young people at risk of and experiencing sexual exploitation through risk assessment documentation. Fortitude Fostering completes its own risk assessments, and safer caring policies. In all cases where there is a concern that a child is at risk of CSE the Designated Manager will be notified to manage, monitor and review the agencies practice and ensure a coordinated response from all partner agencies.

It is important to remember that risk assessments only capture risk at the point of assessment and that levels of risk vary over time, and that the presence of these indicators may be explained by other forms of vulnerability rather than child sexual exploitation. Therefore it is important to keep risk assessments under regular review.

Generally, all agencies assess whether a child for whom they have a concern is at risk, at medium risk or high risk of harm through sexual exploitation. Risk of harm can be grouped in the categories:

Category 1 (At Risk):

a vulnerable child who is at risk of being targeted and groomed for sexual exploitation;

Category 2 (Medium Risk):

a child who is targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, accommodation (overnight stays) and goods, etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is significant

Category 3 (High Risk):

a child whose sexual exploitation is habitual, often self-defined and where coercion / control is implicit.

The framework needs to be used flexibly to take account of each child's individuality, the uniqueness of his / her circumstances and the changes that may occur for him / her over time. Different local authorities may operate different frameworks

4. EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CSE

Sexually exploited children are children in need of services under the Children Act 1989 and Fortitude Fostering December 2020



2004. They are children in need of protection. A multi-agency network or planning meeting/discussion should take place when a child is at risk of sexual exploitation, however reporting and responding to concerns about children at risk of CSE should be guided by the following principles:

- Foster carers who are concerned that the child they care for is being sexually exploited or is at risk of sexual exploitation or is involved in the sexual exploitation of another child/ren should immediately contact the respective child's social worker and their supervising social worker and ensure that all information is shared. If the need is urgent contact emergency services 999.
- Foster carer recording where appropriate should be linked with risks assessments and care plans; so for example details of any acquaintances, registration numbers of suspect vehicles, records of unusual amounts of cash or gifts, records of missing and absent from education etc.
- Supervising Social Workers Upon receiving a report of suspected child sexual exploitation risk of sexual exploitation from a foster carer, or indeed from any adult, or child with involvement with a child in foster care, must take appropriate action if the need is urgent contact emergency services 999.
- It is crucial that the supervising social worker listen to the facts, record them on the system as soon as possible and ensure that the foster carer has captured the facts in their daily records. Supervising Social Workers should inform Fortitude Fostering's Designated Manager of the facts, both verbally and in writing.
- Reporting of concerns must be done immediately and written record completed as soon as possible (no later than 24 hours). It is the Supervising Social Workers responsibility to ensure that the appropriate local authorities have been informed. The Designated Manager will check that this has taken place.
- In all cases where there is evidence of involvement in sexual exploitation – the Designated Manager will notify Ofsted within 24 hrs of the concern being reported and ensure Ofsted are kept updated of all actions on the respective case.
- The Designated Manager will ensure that the supervising social worker and foster carers are keeping up to date and comprehensive daily records
- Local Authority Children's social care hold the lead responsibility for responding to children abused through or at risk of sexual exploitation. Social care should assess whether sexual exploitation is a risk for any child or young person even where it isn't raised by the person making contact.
- The police hold the lead responsibility for the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.
- The work to support children and young people at risk of or experiencing CSE should be carried out in conjunction with the work to disrupt and/or prosecute perpetrators.
- Where sexual exploitation is identified as a potential risk, LA children's social care will carry out an assessment to identify the child's level of risk and need for service provision and will advise the referrer of the outcome of this assessment:
 - The assessment may identify the child to be at risk of significant harm and in need of protection. This may necessitate a child protection enquiry or
 - The assessment may indicate that the child is in need and that services are needed prevent impairment to their health and development;
 - Where no concerns are identified, there will be no further action but the child may require early help or universal services. In these cases, LA



children's social care will advise the referrer verbally and in writing as to why the agency is to take this position.

- Early multi-agency intervention Interventions to interrupt abuse through sexual exploitation and support children to recover a healthy lifestyle are more likely to be successful if a child who is at risk can be identified and information about concerns shared within a multi-agency support network, as early as possible.
- Professionals are often in a position of having to develop the child's trust, or having built it up are concerned about breaking that trust through the sharing of confidential information with other agencies.
- All professionals should maintain clear contemporaneous records of contact with the child, their concerns, all information shared and discussed (and with whom), decisions made and actions taken.
- In cases where there are indications that a child is at risk of being groomed for abuse through sexual exploitation, professionals in the respective local authority may, after consultation with their agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser, call a meeting or discussion of the network of agencies currently in contact with the child (network meeting / discussion, called a MAP meeting). The aim of the meeting / discussion should be to develop a diversion plan to enable the child to protect themselves, to recognise and avoid risky behaviours and people and to engage in positive activities and relationships.
- The MAP meeting should be attended by Children's social care lead professional and agencies currently providing services for the child. Fortitude Fostering's Designated Manager would seek an invitation to this meeting and ideally the Supervising Social Worker, foster carer, the child's school, health services as appropriate (school nurse, sexual health professional, GP), and any other agency which is in a position to contribute significantly to the development of diversion plan for the child.
- Where appropriate, the child and their family should be made aware of the concerns, engaged in developing the diversion plan and involved in all subsequent network meetings to review the plan.
- However, engaging the child and family and alerting them to the risks should be approached with a high level of sensitivity to avoid compounding risks or furthering alienation. There are circumstances where a child's parent/carer may not be invited to attend a network meeting.
- The meeting / discussion should be minuted and the diversion plan should be shared with relevant professionals in the child's professional network.
- Remember assessment of, and planning for young people at risk of, or being sexually exploited, needs to be flexible and take account of each child's individuality, the uniqueness of his / her circumstances and the changes that may occur for him / her over time. Child sexual exploitation is dynamic; the young person's circumstances can change and on occasions deteriorate very rapidly. All professionals should be aware that assessments need to be continual and display vigilance.



5. FURTHER INFORMATION – RECOMMENDED READING

Keep them Safe – Protecting children from sexual exploitation: A free, interactive online resource for parents

www.paceuk.info/keepthemsafe

Pace (Parents against child sexual exploitation) Supports parents through information, empowerment, guidance and support. PACE can also approach the LA on behalf of foster carers or SSW

www.paceuk.info

NWG Network A charity and UK wide network of policy makers and researchers working with children at risk of CSE.

www.nwgnetwork.org

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Ofsted

The Sexual Exploitation of Children- It Couldn't Happen Here Could It – Ofsted Report Department for Education Working together to safeguard children, 2018

www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00305-2010

Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children, www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00689-2009

Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care, www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguarding/a0066653/young-runaways

Letting Children Be Children - Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood, www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208078

Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked - Practice guidance 2011 www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00084-2011

Munro review – reports and Government response

www.education.gov.uk/munroreview

Department for Health Resources and publications related to violence against women and children

www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/ViolenceagainstWomenandChildren/Resources/index.htm

Taskforce on the Health Aspects of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children - consultation with children, 2009

www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_113821.

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Helpful Organisations

NWG Network Case advise. Up to date and multi-disciplinary training. www.nwgnetwork.org
01332 585371

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre www.ceop.police.uk The CEOP Centre is the UK's national police agency set up to tackle child sexual abuse. If you are worried



about someone's behaviour towards a child, online or offline, you can report this at www.ceop.police.uk. You can get help, advice and support on all issues related to internet safety for young people by visiting www.clickceop.net.

Childnet International www.childnet-int.org Childnet International is a non-profit organisation working with others to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children.

Childline www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111 Get help and advice about a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online. You can also send ChildLine an email or post on the message boards.

Barnardos www.barnardos.org.uk A children's charity working to improve the lives of children and has done much helpful research and work in respect of sexually exploited children. Barnardos have undertaken research to understand the extent to which boys and young men are at risk and how this may be under reported Thomas, M; & Speyer, E; 2015 I Never Spoke About It...Supporting sexually exploited boys and young men in Wales http://www.barnardos.org.uk/17595_bs_i_never_spoke_about_it_cse_report_e.pdf Welsh Adverse

Parentline Plus www.parentlineplus.org.uk Helpline: 0808 800 2222 Parentline Plus is a national charity that works for, and with, parents. It works to offer help and support through an innovative range of free, flexible, responsive services - shaped by parents for parents.

NSPCC Helpline www.nspcc.org.uk NSPCC Child Protection Helpline - 0808 800 5000 The NSPCC is the UK's leading charity dedicated to stopping child abuse. You can call their child protection helpline or contact them via email at help@nspcc.org.uk.

Samaritans www.samaritans.org.uk 08457 90 90 90 Samaritans provides confidential emotional support 24/7 to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings.

Victim Support www.victimsupport.org.uk Supportline: 0845 30 30 900 Victim Support is the national charity for victims of crime.

Citizen's Advice Guide www.adviceguide.org.uk Advice guide provides information on your rights, including benefits, housing, family matters and employment, and on debt, consumer and legal issues. Produced by Citizens Advice. www.chatdanger.com A site all about the potential dangers on interactive services online like chat, IM, online games, email and on mobiles.

Kid Smart www.kidsmart.org.uk Teaches children and adults about the internet and being a SMART surfer. Action for Children www.actionforchildren.org.uk A children's charity that supports and speaks out for the UK's most vulnerable and neglected children and young people.

MAPPA www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/output/page4.asp Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) support the assessment and management of the most serious sexual and violent offenders.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) is the only UK-wide child protection charity committed solely to reducing the risk of children being sexually abused. LFF's staff work with all those affected by abuse including adult male and female sexual abusers; young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours; victims of



abuse and other family members. The Home Office Disclosure Scheme Keeping children safe: your right to ask for a police check

MOSAC (Mothers of Sexually Abused Children) www.mosac.org.uk MOSAC is a voluntary organisation supporting all non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused. They provide advocacy, advice and information, befriending, counselling, play therapy and support groups following alleged child sexual abuse. Visit their website or call their national helpline on 0800 980 1958. NAPAC www.napac.org.uk/

NAPAC is the National Association for People Abused in Childhood. It is a registered charity providing support and information for people abused in childhood. SURVIVORS UK www.survivorsuk.org/ Helpline: 0845 1221201. Survivors UK provides information, support and counselling for men who have been raped or sexually abuses. Thousands of men contact them each year.

The Safe Network www.safenetwork.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx Run by NSPCC, Children England & Child Accident Prevention Trust, the Safe Network works with voluntary and community organisations to help keep children and young people safe when taking part in activities. There is a wide range of free information and advice available, access to safeguarding standards, training materials and other vital resources.

The Internet Watch Foundation You can report child sexual abuse images hosted anywhere in the world, criminally obscene adult content hosted in the UK and non-photographic child sexual abuse images hosted in the UK, to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk. Enough Abuse www.enoughabuse.co.uk Enough Abuse (EA Child Protection Ltd.) is a child protection consultancy focusing on all elements of child sexual abuse. All consultants are survivors of abuse either as children or as parents of children who were abused.

Remember also if you have information but want to remain anonymous **crimestoppers** www.crimestoppers-uk.org/ 0800 555111