

# Safeguarding 7 minute briefing: Child Criminal Exploitation

## Questions

- Am I confident that I would know what to do if I suspected that someone was a victim of criminal exploitation?
- Do I know where to get further help and advice? DSL, DDSL, MARU.

## What to do

D&C police & partners continue to develop intelligence on those involved in criminal exploitation.

- Ensure details of vulnerable individuals involved are reported as soon as possible.
- Information & intelligence sharing will help to look at ways to mitigate the risk & protect vulnerable members of our communities.

## Risks for children and young people

Extreme violence being perpetrated by and upon those involved. This has included reprisal beatings, violent assault, threatening behaviour with firearms and spiralling inter gang rivalry. Young and vulnerable people who have been targeted are subjected to criminality which may include sexual exploitation, modern slavery and money laundering.



## Background

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a growing problem that occurs throughout the UK. It affects boys and girls who are under 18 from any social, ethnic and economic background, some victims are as young as primary school aged children. It robs victims of their childhood and has serious long-term effects on every aspect of their lives and may be life threatening. This is an issue of abuse not a lifestyle choice and the children who are criminally exploited are victims.

## What is it?

CCE is a growing issue where criminals target young people, often vulnerable, to carry out criminal activity. There is an imbalance of power that enables the perpetrator to coerce, control, manipulate and deceive the child. Children often do not realise they are victims and the activity can appear consensual; however, it is important to remember that this is not a 'choice'.

## Why it matters

Criminals/organised crime groups exploit C&YP to deal drugs and carry out criminal activity on their behalf. C&YP are seen by perpetrators to be easily controllable and inexpensive to resource. Victims can also fall into debt (debt bondage) which often lead to threats and violence. Children involved do not recognise that they are victims of CCE as they consider they have acted voluntarily and most often it can be about status –to be part of a group, a sense of belonging. Perpetrators groom C&YP- giving them money, drugs or clothing.

## The signs

CCE can be difficult to identify, however there are several factors to look out for. These include children who go missing from home/school, being found a distance from home, associating with other children at risk of CCE, carrying weapons, unexplained injuries, excessive receipt of calls or texts, self-harm or changes in emotional wellbeing, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, unexplained acquisition of money, phones or clothing, appearing nervous, scared, evasive or secretive, evidence of criminal behaviour

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