

Dated: 08/08/2025

POLICY TITLE: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) including Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE)

OWNING DIRECTORATE: Major Crime & Intelligence

AUTHOR: Detective Chief Inspector Cyber, Crime Department

CONTACT DETAILS: 101

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Complete

AIM OF POLICY: To ensure that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) issues are addressed in a consistent and efficient manner, whilst all CSE complaints are dealt with in a timely and consistent manner that emphasises the wellbeing and safety of victims in accordance with the needs of the investigation.

BENEFIT OF POLICY: The application of this policy will ensure that CSE issues and complaints are dealt with efficiently and the victim and their family are cared for and supported in a sensitive and compassionate way.

REASON FOR POLICY: To promote understanding of Northumbria Police's role in the protection of children and young people with regard to CSE matters.

Sexual exploitation is child abuse and children and young people who become involved face huge risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing.

The nationally agreed National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) definition of CSE is:

‘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.’

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, sex, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) includes the much broader threat from online communication with a child for the purposes of sexual exploitation and may include:

- Possession, production and sharing of prohibited indecent images of children (IIOC)

- Self-generated indecent imagery (SGII)
- Live video streaming
- Online Grooming
- Online coercion and blackmail

Northumbria Police will, with partners, safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation in accordance with the policies, procedures and guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). **Safeguarding will always take priority over investigation requirements.** In order to achieve this Northumbria Police will:

- Identify those children and young people at risk of being sexually exploited.
- Apply pro-active problem solving to address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations and ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people who are or may be at risk from sexual exploitation.
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way using police powers and assets alongside partnership disruption.
- Provide awareness raising and preventative education for the welfare of children and young people who are or may be sexually exploited.
- Provide timely and effective interventions with children and families to safeguard those vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

SOURCE DOCUMENT: Data Protection Act 1998

GROUPS AFFECTED: All staff

ACCESS AND DISCLOSURE RESTRICTIONS: None