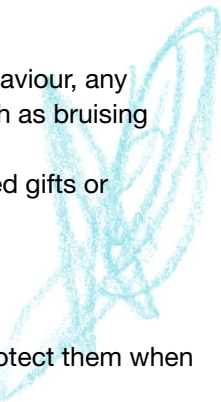


- Self harm and other expressions of despair
- Evidence or suspicion of substance misuse



What can I do?

- Talk about the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Let them know they can come to you with any worries or problems
- Stay alert to changes in behaviour, any physical signs of abuse such as bruising
- Be aware of new unexplained gifts or possessions
- Know who their friends are
- Put measures in place to protect them when they're online
- Advise on the dangers of staying out late or not returning home
- Equip yourself with information so you can educate/support them to make safe choices



Contacts:

If a child or young person is in immediate danger call 999 or contact the PSNI on **T: 0845 600 8000**.

If you have specific concerns about child sexual exploitation or want further information about this issue, you can contact: **0800 389 1701**

This is a helpline staffed by the NSPCC providing 24 hour confidential advice and support to allow us to take protective action to safeguard children and young people.

Your local Gateway team:

Belfast HSC Trust	T: 028 9050 7000
South Eastern HSC Trust	T: 0300 1000 300
Northern HSC Trust	T: 0300 1234 333
Southern HSC Trust	T: 0800 7837 745
Western HSC Trust	T: 028 7131 4090

Barnardo's has a specialist child sexual exploitation service based in Northern Ireland that you can also contact:

Barnardo's NI, Safe Choices **T: 028 9065 8511**



Child sexual exploitation:

A guide for parents/carers of children and young people

Supported by



Child sexual exploitation affects children and young people from all walks of life, across Northern Ireland. As a parent/carer you can have an important role to play in protecting children/young people from this horrific form of abuse.

What is child sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a child or young person is exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of **sexual activity in return for something** they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person.

The 'something' received by the child or young person can include both tangible items such as food, somewhere to stay, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or money and more intangible 'rewards' such as perceived affection, protection, or a sense of belonging. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor.

Common to all these scenarios is an imbalance of power in favour of the abuser and some degree of

coercion, intimidation, exploitation, violence and/or enticement of the child or young person (DSCF 2009).

The abuse can be perpetrated by groups or individuals, and by adults or peers.

There are a variety of different forms of child sexual exploitation. These include:

- internet exploitation
- exploitation at party houses
- abuse through prostitution, involving third party gain
- other abuse through prostitution
- inappropriate/sexually exploitative relationships
- child abuse images
- internal trafficking for sexual exploitation



Who does it affect?

This type of abuse can happen to any young person from any background. It happens to boys and young men as well as girls and young women.

Although 16 and 17 year olds can legally consent to sex they can still be victims of sexual exploitation.

How do I spot the signs?

Children and young people often do not recognize that they are being sexually exploited. It is therefore important that those caring for them are aware of and can recognize the signs. These include:

- Persistently going missing or returning late
- Agitated/stressed prior to leaving home/care
- Returning distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving
- Truancy from school
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age
- Physical symptoms or infections e.g. bruising, bite marks, sexually transmitted infections
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'
- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phone etc without plausible explanation
- Leaving home/care without permission
- Low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less)