



<b>Policy No:</b> SJD/HS/04	<b>Authorised by:</b> Davina Powell	<b>Review Date:</b> 20th October 2023
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<b>CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION</b>		

### Definitions

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is the coercion or manipulation of young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, 'protection' or affection.

The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent.

### Policy

#### **Early Intervention**

To help children and young people achieve good outcomes it is important to identify issues and problems early and to take prompt preventative action. Early intervention is likely to be far more effective than intervention at a later stage when the impact on the young person's health or development is likely to have escalated.

#### **Child Sexual Exploitation Screening**

Keyworkers will complete a CSE screening on admissions to SJD Homes.

The aim is to identify any risk related to CSE and will then form part of the young person's Plan and risk assessments completed whilst at SJD Homes. These assessments' will be ongoing and will be completed on a 4–6-week basis, or earlier if required, within key work sessions until the Young Person is safe and risks are removed. When risks are identified the young person's Social Worker and any other network professionals involved will be updated, with the intention for the plan to be incorporated into their service plans for the Young Person.

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED A COPY OF THE CSE SCREENING TOOL WITH THIS POLICY.**

#### **A Child Centered Approach**

Young people at risk of CSE will often be in high-risk situations and isolated from protective, nurturing adults. They will need to be encouraged to express their wishes and feelings to make sense of their circumstances and contribute to decisions that affect them. Of particular relevance is the impact of those who may have groomed and conditioned children and young people, to coerce and abuse them. Young people may also be under very strong pressure, intimidated, afraid and/or dependent on those that have exploited them where substance misuse is a factor. Young people may therefore reject offers of help and support and appropriate interventions need to be designed to address this.

## **Recognising Risk Factors**

The key to safeguarding vulnerable young people is the ability to recognise 'at risk' children and young people and for agencies to work effectively together. Levels of risk can be identified by considering the number and range of risk indicators present in a young person's life.

### **Vulnerabilities include:**

- Family history of abuse or neglect.
- Family history of domestic abuse.
- Family history of substance misuse.
- Family history of mental health difficulties.
- Breakdown of family relationships.
- Low self-esteem.
- History of local authority care.

### **Risk indicators include:**

- Staying out late.
- Multiple callers (unknown adults/older young people);
- Use of a mobile phone that causes concern.
- Expressions of despair (self-harm, overdose, eating disorder, challenging behaviour, aggression).
- Disclosure of sexual or physical assault followed by withdrawal of the allegation.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Peers involved in clipping (receiving payment in exchange for agreement to perform sexual acts but not performing the sexual act) or sexual exploitation.
- Drugs misuse.
- Alcohol misuse.
- Use of the internet that causes concern.
- Unsuitable or inappropriate accommodation (including street homelessness and living in a place where needs are not met).
- Isolated from peers and social networks.
- Lack of positive relationship with a protective, nurturing adult.
- Exclusion from school, unexplained absences from school or not engaged in education or training.
- Living independently and failing to respond to attempts by workers to keep in touch.
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### **Significant risk indicators include:**

- Periods of going missing overnight or longer.
- Older 'boyfriend/girlfriend' or relationship with a controlling adult.
- Physical or emotional abuse by that 'boyfriend/girlfriend' or controlling adult.
- Entering vehicles driven by unknown adults.
- Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothing, or other items.
- Physical injury without plausible explanation.
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.

Child sexual exploitation is becoming more prevalent today and exposes young people to abuse, assault and emotional vulnerability. It can threaten their well-being and lead to a loss of self-esteem.

The young people in the care of SJD Homes are amongst the most vulnerable in society and as a result have little understanding of risks they may be exposed to. Simply because a young person is looked after by a residential home does not make them any less vulnerable to those who choose to abuse children and young people through exploitation or pornography and staff must be well aware of the potential risks open to the young people in our care.

Vulnerable young people will be identified and targeted by abusers/coercers, and we must ensure that both we and local agencies act quickly and sensitively in the best interests of the child or young person concerned.

It is vital that strong support and re-integration strategies are put into place to ensure a positive outcome. SJD Homes works alongside local agencies and adheres to local protocols developed within the framework of Working Together to address this form of abuse. It is our primary aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of our young people and to encourage the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity by those who coerce young people and abuse them through exploitation.

- It is our policy to discuss concerns regarding a young person's involvement in exploitation such as pornography etc. on a multi-agency level. Staff must collaborate to recognise the problem, treat the young person as a victim, safeguard and promote their welfare. They must also investigate and aid prosecutions and to develop strategies for young people to exit exploitation for good.
- A young person involved in exploitation may have been victim to physical and sexual abuse. The responsibilities of reporting and supporting the investigation of abuse are set out in the SJD Homes Safeguarding Policy. Staff should be particularly alert to relationships of young with older persons, the presence of gifts, money etc., and frequent absences from the home or encouraged visits to the person's home.
- Young people developing regular contact with older persons may result in them being picked up in cars, or them loitering around the premises. If concerns exist they should always be reported to senior staff and the police.
- Staff must be alert to disrupting such patterns of contacts and to the potential alienation the young person may feel from their peers, key workers etc. Any concerns raised should trigger SJD Homes procedures, local procedures and multi-agency protocols.
- SJD Homes Staff should be in contact with the local safeguarding team and Police and should remain aware of the extent of the local problem concerning exploitation of young people in the area.
- Key agency contacts will be LSCB, Police, Social Services, LADO, NSPCC, Health Authority, Education and Youth Services, YOT and local voluntary agencies.
- Staff must always consider:  
the needs of the young person  
arrangements for their immediate safety,  
continuing protection  
safeguarding the child or young person from exploitation.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the SJD Safeguarding Policy