

Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Exploitation Indicator Tool Guidance

The indicator tool, alongside this guidance document, should be used to assess children and young people under the age of 18 where you suspect there is a possible risk of exploitation. The indicator tool should help you to focus on the specific indicators of exploitation in order to make a professional judgement to determine the risk to that child based on the 'Signs of Safety' framework. The flow chart at the end of this document should help to advise the most appropriate pathway for this concern on completion of the tool.

Whilst completing the indicator tool, it is important to remember:

- To keep an open mind about the category of exploitation this child or young person may be subject to; it is possible for a child or young person to be subject to more than one type of exploitation.
- The child or young person may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Often, children do not recognise themselves as victims, or that they are being groomed.
- Child exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology, online social networks etc.

Contextual Safeguarding (Extra Familial Harm)

1	Sexual Exploitation	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 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.
2	Criminal Exploitation	Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This can include- but is not limited to- 'County Lines'. Which is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or another form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
3	Forced Labour	Employing a child to undertake some form of employment to pay off any 'debts' or to pay them minimal amounts. Engage in work that is illegal for their age.
4	Other	Radicalisation, the illegal removal of a child's organ to be sold for human organ transplant, illegal adoption, etc.

All children can be exploited but the following are additional vulnerability factors:

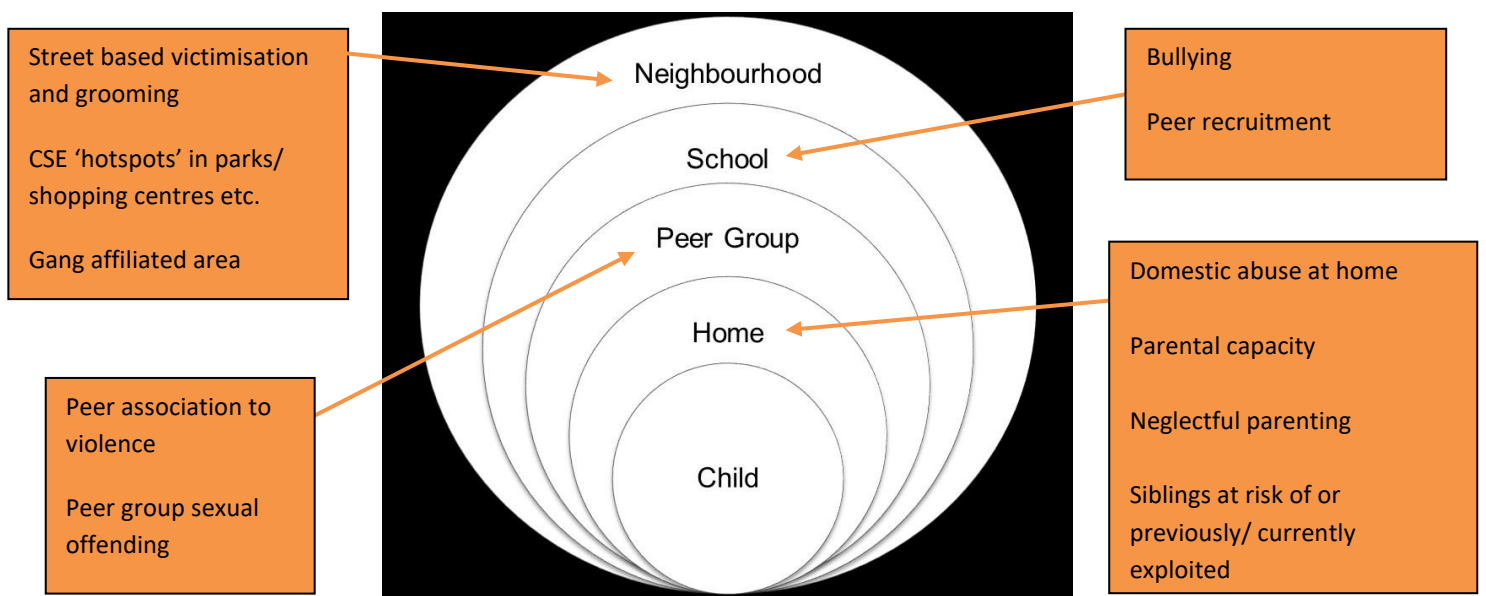
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (e.g. domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality)
- Having mental health or substance misuse issues
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being excluded from mainstream education or attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Poor/ limited ability to identify exploitative behaviours

[Contextual Safeguarding](#) is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

Read the [Contextual Safeguarding One Minute Guide](#) for more information



Don't forget online and social media contexts!

Capturing the Voice of the Child

The language we use when speaking to children and young people, matters.

Where possible, the tool should be completed in the presence of the child or young person. The thoughts and opinions of the child are sought throughout the tool, so it is preferable that they are actively engaged in the process. You- as the professional completing the tool- may be well known to the child or young person (e.g. their social worker or teacher) or conversely, you may not have met prior to this. In either case, it is important that a rapport is built with the intention of making the child feel as comfortable as possible, to therefore engender a situation whereby they feel able to provide full and honest responses to questions asked of them.

It is important that open and carefully considered questions are asked. This should be in accordance with the child's receptive and expressive ability to communicate.

It is recommended that you use probing questions to elicit an account of what is being alleged and in what context. This will provide clarity around 'what', 'where' and 'when' something happened and 'who' was involved or present. Further questions can then be considered for clarification and elaboration on the initial account.

You should avoid:

- Asking leading or suggestive questions
- Use of emotive words within the question
- Changing the words use by the child
- Pre-cursing a question with an opinion
- Asking forced choice questions
- Yes and No options and limited option posing
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The information shared by the child or young person needs to be recorded and documented correctly. The boxes at the end of each of the domains are intended to capture further observations, concerns or strengths noted by the professional completing the tool. There should be a clear distinction between facts and things that are known for certain, from opinions, 'gut feelings' about things and circumstances relayed that equate to 'hearsay'.

If you have cause to record any disclosures or further information provided by the child or young person, it is important that you also consider recording: the circumstances of the disclosure and what prompted it, the exact words used by you and the exact words used by the child or young person. This is in order to prevent misinterpretation.

Summary of Concerns – Signs of Safety Framework

[Find out more about Signs of Safety](#)

Professional Judgement - from the information gathered through use of the indicator tool, what is your best analysis of this child's exploitation risk what are your recommended action(s) to mitigate these risks and safeguard this child?

Considerations –

- *What is the information telling you about this child's current harm or the risk of harm in the future if nothing is done to help this child?*
- *Consider the existing safety in place that is helping to keep this child safe from CE, and other strengths that could be explored further to help keep this child safe and well in the future.*
- *Any information that is missing or unknown that need to be looked into further should also be considered as part of your recommendations as this could help with creating a better understanding of this child's situation, as well as helping with planning future safety for this child.*

1. What are you worried about for this child?

- Who is currently worried about this child and for what reason(s)?
- Has something already happened, or is there a risk of something happening, that could cause harm to this child or that makes you concerned for this child's welfare?

2. What are the existing safety measures and strengths in place to keep this child safe & well?

- Actions already taken by the child him/herself, parents, carers and professionals to ensure this child is safe and well. And have these been tested so we know the actions are working well to keep this child safe?
- What are their future plans to help increase safety in light of the identified risk of harm?

3. What does the child think needs to happen next to keep them safe?

- Their perceived risk of harm (even if potential), and any support this child wants to reduce the risk and increase their safety and wellbeing.

4. What do the parents / carers think needs to happen next to keep the child safe?

- Their perceived risk of harm to this child (even if potential), and any support parents / carers would want to reduce the risk and increase the child's safety and wellbeing.

5. Scaling question

- Professional judgement of risk based on responses to questions 1-4 and on information captured within the indicator tool.
- On a scale of 0-10 where:

- 10 equates to there being no current risk of harm or exploitation and professional intervention is not required.
 - 0 equates to there being a significant risk of harm, necessitating immediate professional intervention.
- The below categories can be referenced to qualify the level of risk.

Tips to write effective Danger Statements, Goals and sliding scales

Elements of an effective Danger Statement

- Clearly describes **what** the agency is worried will happen to the child if nothing changes
- Describes the adult behaviour that is causing the harm and where past harm has occurred, the danger should be grounded in this behaviour
- Describes the likely future negative impact on the child, both immediately and in the longer term
- Captures the seriousness the professionals see in the situation – and what other family members might be saying as well
- Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents/carers, even if they don't agree

Elements of an effective Safety Goal

- Except for a minimal set of bottom line requirements, avoids saying **how** safety will be created leaving this detail to parents and their support network (consider as part of empowering, enabling, engaging with families)
- Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents/carers

Elements of an effective Safety Scale

- Scaling questions matched with a danger statement and safety goal pair
- Clearly defines both ends of the scale (the 0 and the 10) specific to the particular case. The safety scale should link in with the detail of the danger statement and safety goal it is paired with to engage the parents (and professionals) in thinking about the issue more carefully via rating and giving meaning to their rating.
- The 10 should be used to describe the desired behaviour and the 0 the concerning behaviour, since the most common way of understanding a rating scale is that the higher rating is a better rating
- Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents/carers

Read the [Right Help Time](#) guidance for more information

Category of Risk	Indicators of Risk	Description
Universal Risk 9-10	No risk indicators but may have one or more vulnerabilities present.	A child or young person who may be 'in need' but who is not currently at risk of being groomed for exploitation.
Low Mild Risk 6-8	Multiple vulnerabilities. One or two risk indicators may also be present.	A vulnerable child or young person who may be at risk of being groomed for exploitation.

Medium Moderate Risk 3-5	Multiple vulnerabilities and risk indicators present.	Indication that a child or young person is at risk of or may already be being exploited.
High Significant Risk 0-2	Multiple vulnerabilities and risk indicators. One or more significant risk indicators also likely.	Indication that a child or young person is at significant risk of or is already being exploited. Exploitation is likely to be habitual, often self-denied and coercion/control is implicit.

6. What do you think needs to happen next to help this child?

- CE Safety Goals – what do you need to see to **not** have the CE concerns and to know this child will be safe from harm –and what timescale would you expect this to happen by?
- What possible actions could help to achieve these safety goals?

Information and Intelligence Sharing

If, through completion of the tool, it becomes apparent that any significant locations or spaces of risk have been identified, or if any information is shared regarding potential exploiters, please submit a [Force Intelligence Bureau Form](#) to West Midlands Police.

The following would be useful for intelligence sharing purposes:

- Names and/or nicknames
- Any distinguishing marks e.g. tattoos, piercings, scars etc.
- Details of any vehicles driven by the suspect(s)
- Locations/premises where the suspect has been seen/or is known to frequent
- Social media accounts and/or usernames
- Patterns identified e.g. children from a certain area or school being targeted by exploiters, hotspots etc.

National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. If you think you have encountered a child or young person who has been a victim of modern slavery in England and Wales, you should complete a [referral](#).

Modern slavery is a complex crime and may involve multiple forms of exploitation. It encompasses human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour.

For a person to have been a victim of human trafficking there must have been:

- action (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, which can include either domestic or cross-border movement)
- means (threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability - however, there does not need to be a means used for children as they are not able to give informed consent)
- purpose of exploitation (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, removal of organs)

For a person to have been a victim of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour there must have been:

- means (being held, either physically or through threat of penalty – e.g. threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability. However, there does not need to be a means used for children as they are not able to give informed consent)
- service (an individual provides a service for benefit, e.g. begging, sexual services, manual labour, domestic service)