

Child Exploitation Assessment Guide

This guide should be used by professionals working with children who we believe are at risk of child sexual and / or criminal exploitation (either in person or online).

Professionals need to exercise their own professional judgement when filling in the assessment guide. This includes capturing concerns that are based on professional knowledge of signs and indicators, as well as concerns based on “gut feelings”.

Professionals need to use this guide to inform their assessment of exploitation and subsequent safeguarding and care planning. The prompts can be used to raise awareness of signs and indicators of exploitation, as well as highlight areas that need further exploration.

Professional judgement is needed to consider if the questions could be used directly with the child and/or their parent(s)/carer(s).

Professionals are required to update the guide alongside the child’s care plan (approximately every 6 months) to reflect the dynamic nature of extra-familial harm.

Child's Surname:	Child's forenames:
DOB / Age:	
Ethnicity:	
Gender identity:	

Section 1: Home Environment

Does the child's home or family situation contribute to their risk of / vulnerability to exploitation?

Prompts:

- *Instability / disruption within home setting*
- *Care experienced*
- *Adverse childhood experiences*
- *Custody/Secure Unit*
- *Homelessness*
- *Young carer*
- *Child's experience of being parented*
- *Other children in the house experiencing exploitation*
- *Concerning others visiting and/or threatening the home*
- *Family members complicit in exploitation*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

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Section 2: Identity

Are there aspects of how the child is exploring their own identity which could increase their vulnerability to exploitation?

Prompts:

- *Questioning or experiencing challenges around sexual orientation and/or gender identity*
- *Victim of hate crime, racism, bullying*
- *Unmet spiritual / religious needs*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 3: Mental health

Are there aspects of the child’s mental health that indicate they are being exploited and / or are at increased vulnerability?

Prompts:

- *Emotionally dysregulated*
- *Self-harm / suicidal ideation*
- *Bereavement / loss*
- *Difficulty recalling previous events / PTSD / symptoms of psychological trauma*
- *Low self-esteem / low mood*
- *Stress / anxiety / panic attacks*
- *Emotional and social withdrawal*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 4: Behaviour

How does the child’s behaviour tell us what might be happening to them?

Prompts:

- *Substance or alcohol use*
- *Escalating criminal and/or anti-social behaviour / possession of a weapon(s)*
- *Spending time in locations of concern or “hot spots” (be specific about known/suspected areas e.g. parks, hotels, addresses, locations linked to missing episodes)*
- *Reported missing / unknown whereabouts / missing episodes escalating*

- *Change in behaviour*
- *Introduction to adult activities (e.g. parties of concern / attending 18+ venues / accessing pornography / 'sex working')*
- *Shift in relationship dynamics (withdrawing from others / bullying concerns)*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 5: Developmental Needs

How does the child's developmental needs increase their vulnerability to exploitation?

Prompts:

- *Learning disability that impacts capacity to consent, decision making ability and/or perception of risk-taking behaviour*
- *Physical disability that increases likelihood of being targeted*
- *Speech and Language needs / developmental delay*
- *Autism Spectrum Disorder / ADHD*

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What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 6: Education

Does the child’s education provision contribute to their risk of exploitation?

Prompts:

- *Education disruptions (e.g. exclusions, non-attendance, lateness)*
- *Changes in attainment / performance*
- *Limited timetable or alternative provision*
- *Not in education / training / employment*
- *Harm in learning environment*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 7: Associations and Relationships

What is happening within the child’s network that indicates that they may be experiencing coercion / grooming and/or control?

Prompts:

- *Who do we suspect or know has/is causing harm to this child directly or through association (e.g. names, street names)*

- Consider power dynamics (e.g. domestic abuse and/or are they associating with older people (2+ years) / unknown adults / adults thought to pose risk / new contacts / concerning networks)
- Associates/peers at risk of exploitation
- Entering vehicles / travelling with unknown or risky adults
- Possesses keys to unknown properties
- Threatened, coerced or intimidated into sexual activity / criminal activity
- Mobile / social media is controlled and/or monitored
- Receiving unexplained gifts / unaccounted for money / phone top ups / bank deposits
- Concerns around how the child is funding drug / alcohol use
- Concerns re trafficking (moved for the purpose of exploitation)
- Child has injuries (e.g. victim of stabbing, bruising, cigarette burns, broken bones) / has been marked (e.g. tattoos, branding)

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 8: Sexual Health and Activity

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Do the child's sexual health activity and / or needs indicate that they are experiencing or are at risk of child sexual exploitation?

- *Repeat access to emergency contraception / sexual health services*
- *Untreated / frequent / recurrent STIs*
Pregnancy / young parent
- *Harmful / problematic sexual behaviour (e.g. comments, exposure, inappropriate touching, online activity)*
- *Concerns around disclosed or suspected sexual partners*
- *Child is victim of sexual assault / rape (statutory rape if under 13)*

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 9: Social Media and Technology

Does the child's use and access to social media and technology raise concern for their safety and/or indicate that the child is experiencing exploitation?

Prompts:

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- *Multiple phones / changing phones regularly / concern around phone activity (e.g. numerous calls day or night, urgency / anxiety over calls)*
- *Increased time spent accessing the internet / social media / live streaming / gaming platforms*
- *Accessing inappropriate networking forums (e.g. dating websites, specialist forums for anorexia, self-harm, sexual fetish)*
- *Unsafe use of internet (e.g. low / no security, posting personal details, befriending unknown individuals online / meeting someone in person that they met online / sharing explicit images / receiving messages of a sexual nature)*
Child is being groomed online

Historic
Current <6 months

What strengths can you identify in this area that can increase safety and mitigate exploitation risks?

Section 10: Summary

<p>Are there areas that need more exploration and how can this be done? <i>e.g. a lack of understanding around their online presence could prompt conversations with the young person around what sites they access, online safety work etc</i></p>

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What do the historical concerns tell us about the child’s vulnerability to exploitation? How can this be mitigated through care planning? <i>e.g. do they need therapeutic intervention in response to witnessing domestic abuse?</i>
What is your analysis of the current concerns? How can we increase safety in the child’s plan? <i>Consider the child’s unmet wants and needs and how these could be safely responded to</i>

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Do the following need to be considered?	Already in place	Needed	N/A
Strategy Discussion			
Referral to National Referral Mechanism https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/humantrafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms			
Regular Risk Management Meetings (Risk Management Episode triggered on LCS/EHM)			
Discussion with Safer Options to consider support available in the community and/or specialist consultation or peer mapping (safer.options@bristol.gov.uk)			
Update LCS: CSE case status / CCE Hazard			
Specialist intervention required from external agency (e.g. services that specialise in CCE, CSE, substance misuse, mental health etc)			
Share relevant safeguarding information with Operation Topaz via the portal (www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/cse)			
Missing Trigger Plan (contact relevant missing coordinator within the police)			
Review of child's care plan to consider how to safely meet child's unmet wants / needs			

