

ALL WALES PRACTICE GUIDE

Last updated: February 2021

Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation (cse)

To be used in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

Who is this practice guide for?

This guide is primarily for practitioners working with children (up to the age of 18).

This includes those working in early years, social care, education, health, the police, youth offending and youth, community and family support services (including the third sector) and foster care and residential care.

What is this guide for?

Safeguarding children is a responsibility shared by everyone in contact with children.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures support individuals and agencies across Wales to understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and adults safe. They support a consistent approach to safeguarding practice and procedures.

This practice guide provides additional information about safeguarding responses where a child is at risk of abuse through Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). It should be used in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Effective safeguarding arrangements in every local authority area should be underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each practitioner and organisation must play their full part both individually and in collaboration; **and**
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the personal outcomes for the child and what matters to them. The rights of the child should be central to the approach and their best interests should always be paramount.

There are some issues which are common across safeguarding practice guides and some which are specific to the safeguarding issue being considered:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) guarantees every child the right to grow up healthy, happy and safe. This includes to be protected from harm and be appropriately supported to recover from abuse. Practitioners and professionals should adopt [A Children's Rights Approach](#) in line with the duty of due regard to the (UNCRC) and follow [National Participation Standards](#)
- Agencies must work together to provide a joined up response to safeguarding issues as set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- There is a statutory Duty to Report Children at Risk on relevant partners under Section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 Safeguarding Summary](#)
- Information sharing is central to good safeguarding practice. Practitioners must share information in accordance with data protection legislation. Data protection legislation allows for the sharing of information and should not be automatically used as a reason for not doing so. **One of the specific circumstances which provides for information sharing is in order to prevent abuse or serious harm to others.** When information is not shared in a timely and effective way, decisions about how to respond may be ill informed and this can lead to poor safeguarding practice and leave children at risk of harm.
- We know that sensory impaired and disabled children are at an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled / non-sensory impaired peers. They are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need when they have been abused. Practitioners and professionals should explicitly recognise the increased vulnerability of sensory impaired and disabled children to abuse and neglect, as well as the barriers they may face, especially around communication and provide for any additional safeguards needed to protect them.

- Professionals and practitioners should familiarise themselves with the culture and beliefs of those families they work with. Practitioners should not be afraid to ask about particular behaviours and the reasons for them in a sensitive manner and should never overlook potential harmful practices on the basis of cultural sensitivity.
- There are central and obvious concerns to be addressed in planning for the care and support needs of children with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) status. [Welsh Government Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Guidance for Professionals](#) is available. However it is important to remember that practitioners must still consider specific safeguarding measures as part of their planning with and for the child.
- All practitioners must be alert to the possibility of the child being at risk of harm regardless of the setting they are living in, whether in foster care, adoptive placements or a children's home. Children in placements or those who are adopted will have relationships that may include foster carers, adoptive parents, birth parents, siblings or other birth relatives. These relationships and any contact may be positive and welcomed or undesired and deemed a risk. Children's past experience of abuse and neglect may leave them at risk of having emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties, which may continue to make them vulnerable.
- Our response to safeguarding issues should be proportionate, child centred and based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. Children need to be meaningfully involved in the planning of their care and support.
- **Children should be seen and heard.** Evidence from Child Practice Reviews has highlighted the need for children to meet on their own with practitioners, away from parents and carers in an environment where they feel safe, so that the child can speak about the impact that the circumstances which have prompted safeguarding concerns are having on them. There are too many cases where the child was not seen or asked their views or feelings, or where this did not happen enough. Providing time and space to listen directly to children supports a child-centred system and promotes good safeguarding practice.
- **CSE is a form of child sexual abuse** which involves an element of exchange.
- Any child can be sexually exploited irrespective of gender, ethnicity or sexuality.
- CSE can be perpetrated in many different ways. The way in which children experience CSE is diverse and may be part of a complex picture of interrelated safeguarding issues. Online and offline exploitation often overlap.

- Perpetrators of CSE come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, they are predominantly male but females do offend. They act as individuals, in groups and in gangs and offenders may be family members.
- Peer-on-peer abuse needs to be understood in the context in which it occurs and children who abuse need support. All Wales Practice Guidance on children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour is available for use in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- Children rarely disclose CSE and the identification of CSE is particularly reliant on the knowledge and understanding of practitioners and professionals. Everyone who works with children should be alert to the signs that a child is being sexually exploited and understand their duty to report a child at risk.

Definition

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) -

- ▶ **Is a form of sexual abuse** That can include sex or any form of sexual activity with a child; the production of indecent images and/or any other indecent material involving children.
- ▶ **Involves a child** It occurs to those up to the age of 18 years old.
- ▶ **Involves some form of exchange** The exchange can include the giving or withdrawal of something; such as the withdrawal of violence or threats to abuse another person.

There may be a facilitator who receives something in addition to or instead of the child who is exploited.

Children may not recognise the exploitative nature of the relationship or exchange. Children may feel that they have given consent.

Evidence base

- **Exchange** is a fundamental part of abuse through CSE. The involvement of exchange is what makes CSE distinct from other forms of child sexual abuse. The thing that is exchanged may be tangible (money, goods, accommodation, experiences) or/and may involve the meeting of an emotional need, a need related to self esteem or freedom

from something such as physical violence or threats to someone that the child cares about. There may be a person who facilitates and/or organises the exploitation of a child and who receives something in addition to or instead of the child. This person may or may not carry out contact sexual abuse with the child.

- **Grooming** involves a situation where a person communicates with and attempts to form a relationship with a child with the intention of putting them in a position where they can be abused. Grooming can take place online or offline and will often involve the groomer providing the child with a relationship in which they feel understood or important. Grooming may involve the provision of material goods or experiences. Groomers work to develop a situation where the child trusts them and/or feels that the groomer can provide them with something they cannot get from anyone else. This could be friendship, a relationship which the child believes is a romantic relationship, a sense of belonging or a sense of importance where they are given status or goods which impress their peers. Grooming is often employed to get children into a position where a perpetrator or facilitator of sexual exploitation can abuse the child. However, **the grooming process is not evident in every case of child sexual exploitation**. Children can come into contact with perpetrators in many different ways and the time between first contact and abuse taking place can be very short.
- **Coercion and control are often employed by perpetrators and facilitators of CSE** as a tool to ensure that children engage in sexual acts. This can include control through the provision of something the child wants or needs such as money, alcohol or drugs, relationship(s), a promise to keep the child safe from others or accommodation. Or control can be exercised through the threat that these things will be withdrawn if the child does not participate in sexual acts. Coercion may take the form of threats of or actual physical violence, emotional abuse or threats to hurt someone that the child cares about. However **CSE can also occur in absence of any obvious signs of coercion or control**.
- **The way in which exploitation is understood by the child will vary from child to child**. Children abused through CSE can fail to recognise their experiences as exploitative. However, many children do understand that they are being exploited but may still struggle to disclose or seek help because of stigma or because the thing they are receiving in exchange for the abuse is important to them. Some children may understand that they are being exploited but still believe the exploitation is the best option available to them because their choices are constrained. Some children may feel that they have very little control over the decisions that are made about them in other areas of their life and that the exchange involved in this form of abuse gives them a sense of control over what is happening to them in one part of their lives. Some children

may accept abuse as a normal part of life or feel that it is deserved because of their earlier experiences of abuse or feelings of worthlessness.

- **Consent:** The age of consent (the legal age to have sex) in the UK is 16 years old. The laws are there to protect children. They are not there to prosecute under-16s who have mutually consenting sexual activity but will be used if there is abuse or exploitation involved. To help protect younger children the law says anyone under the age of 13 can never legally give consent. This means that anyone engaging in sexual activity with a child who is 12 or younger will be subject to penalties set out under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The law also gives extra protection to young people who are 16 to 17 years old. It is illegal to:
 - take, show or distribute indecent photographs
 - pay for or arrange sexual services
 - for a person in a position of trust (for example, teachers, care workers) to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- **Conditions of consent:** Part of the reason why CSE was not understood as a form of abuse in the past was because children appeared to be consenting to participate in sexual acts in order to receive something or so that someone else would receive something. We must be clear that children cannot consent to their own abuse. However it is important to recognise that children may believe that they are consenting or may appear to consent and the concept of 'conditions of consent' can assist us in understanding this. Research conducted by Hallett (2017)¹ suggests that central to an understanding of CSE is the need to acknowledge that underpinning the exchange of sex is often a pattern of unmet needs for the child. Factors such as attitudes towards sex, past experiences, relationships (or lack of relationships), emotional and economic needs all shape the context in which we should consider the engagement of a child in sexual exploitation.
- **Online and offline abuse can overlap:**² Children do not differentiate between the online and offline world in the same way that adults currently do and increasingly technology is a key part of the social lives and learning experiences of children. Online CSE can occur through social networking, chat rooms, instant messaging, live streamlining, dating sites and many more platforms. Often the exploitation occurs without the child's realisation. Exploitation and abuse can take some of the following forms:
 - encouraging a child to take part in or perform a sexual activity

- encouraging or asking a child to take and share explicit images of themselves
- encouraging or asking a child to film themselves performing a sexual activity
- grooming
- bullying
- harassment
- baiting (a form of cyberbullying where a victim is accused of sexual promiscuity)

Online exploitation does not always lead to contact abuse (the child may not ever meet the person abusing them) but does cause great harm to the child. Technology can also facilitate the offline sexual exploitation of children. Offenders also use social media to identify young people whom they can groom for CSE, they may use threats to share content or images of the child that they have procured on-line as a way of exercising control over a child and they may use technology to communicate with the child in order to facilitate offline abuse through CSE.

An All Wales Practice Guide- safeguarding children from online abuse is available with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

- **CSE and other child protection concerns can overlap:** Different types of abuse and exploitation are interrelated and this is one of the reasons why our response to children must be child focussed rather than issue based. Children who are abused through sexual exploitation may also experience child sexual abuse that does not involve exchange. We know that CSE is strongly related to other safeguarding issues such as going missing and child trafficking. Going missing from home or care can put children at risk of being sexually exploited or may be an indication that CSE is already taking place. Child trafficking involves the movement of a child from one place to another in order to exploit them. Children may also experience CSE as a part of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) or may be targeted for criminal exploitation because they are already being sexually exploited and vice versa³. There is emerging evidence from research that some children presenting with Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) later disclose that they have been also abused through CSE.⁴ CSE may therefore be one part of an individual and complex experience of interrelated abuse and exploitation for each child.
- It can be useful to consider the concepts of complex safeguarding and contextual safeguarding when working with children at risk where the abuse is extra-familial. However CSE is a form of child sexual abuse and should be considered following the

procedures relevant to the report of risk related to a child (up to the age of 18 years). [Safeguarding during adolescence briefing](#)

- **As with all forms of child abuse any child can be abused through CSE.** However there are some circumstances and experiences which may make some children particularly vulnerable. This does not mean that every child with a specific set of vulnerabilities will be abused through CSE and it does not mean that children without particular vulnerabilities will not be abused through CSE.
- **Children with adverse childhood experiences:** We know that some children may be particularly vulnerable. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)⁵ range from suffering verbal, mental, sexual and physical abuse, to being raised in a household where domestic violence, alcohol abuse, parental separation or drug abuse is present. Evidence shows children who experience stressful and poor quality childhoods are more likely to have poor well-being outcomes. This includes children who have unstable home or care experiences, children who have experienced trauma and abuse, children with low self esteem and children who are experiencing problems with education, mental health, alcohol/drug misuse or offending behaviour. These are children whose adverse childhood experiences and circumstances mean that they are more likely to have unmet needs and this in turns means that they are vulnerable to exploitation which may appear to offer a way to meet those needs. However, children who have not had adverse childhood experiences can also be sexually exploited.
- **Care experienced children and children living with their families:** Care experienced children will have been subject to Social Services intervention because of abuse, neglect and other adverse childhood experiences. This may help to explain why care experienced children account for a disproportionate number of victims of CSE and can be particularly vulnerable.⁶ However, overall the majority of children abused through CSE live at home.⁷ This means that family work is an important element in meeting the care and support needs of sexually exploited children.
- **Girls and boys:** Evidence from research and practice suggests that more girls are abused through CSE than boys; however this does not mean that boys are not sexually exploited. Boys can be, and are, sexually exploited. Research undertaken in Wales⁸ has identified some of the reasons why boys may be under identified as victims of CSE. The research suggests that the abuse of boys is poorly understood; that their entry into CSE may be particularly complex and that practitioners may be affected by stereotypes which impact on their ability to see boys as possible victims of CSE.

- **Disabled children:** Research⁹ has found that children with learning disabilities are vulnerable to CSE due to factors that include overprotection, social isolation and a lack of acknowledgment of them as sexual beings. The research also suggests that a lack of awareness of the sexual exploitation of children with learning disabilities among practitioners also contributes to their vulnerability. Evidence from practice suggests that children who do not meet a threshold for a formal diagnosis of a learning disability or who have never been assessed are over-represented among children who are abused through CSE. Children with a disability are three times more likely to be abused than children without a disability. Within this group, children with behaviour or conduct disorders are particularly vulnerable.¹⁰
- **White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children:** Victims of sexual exploitation come from all ethnic backgrounds. Research¹¹ evidences that two thirds of CSE service users of some specialist services were White and one third were BAME. The research also suggests that cultural and religious views and practices, particularly those that prize a female's virginity or a male's heterosexuality, may prevent victims from speaking out due to a fear of retribution or rejection from families. Research¹² has found that Asian children are not being identified or protected from abuse through CSE.
- CSE involves children who are UK residents and can also involve children who are trafficked into the UK in order to be sexually exploited.
- **Straight and LGBT+ children:** However children identify in terms of their sexuality or gender they may be abused through CSE. For children who are LGBT+ research suggests that a lack of appropriate information and support and feelings of isolation may mean that boys seek out adult gay on-line and off-line communities and this may put them at risk. The same research suggests that LGBT+ children may face additional barriers to seeking help if they are exploited and that professionals do not give sufficient consideration to the possibility of abuse through CSE for LGBT+ children, especially within lesbian and trans relationships.¹³
- **Individuals, groups and gangs:** There are cases from Wales involving single perpetrators who have exploited children for their own sexual gratification and for financial gain. There have also been police operations related to the arrest of connected perpetrators operating in groups. There is also evidence of children in Wales abused through County Lines networks.
- **Groups** – involves people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, co-ordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way.

- **Gangs** – mainly comprising men and boys, who take part in many forms of criminal activity (eg, knife crime or robbery) who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers, for example a territory, a name, or sometimes clothing.¹⁴
- An All Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from Child Criminal Exploitation is also available with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- **Peer-on-peer exploitation:** young people with, and without, pre-existing vulnerabilities can be affected by peer-on-peer abuse. As young people grow up and spend increasing amounts of time with their friends, at school and in their local neighbourhood, what happens in these environments will be reflected in the nature of the abuse they experience.¹⁵ Research has informed the concept of Contextual Safeguarding that 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.¹⁶ Children who perpetrate abuse through CSE should be considered as children with care and support needs and receive support for Harmful Sexual Behaviour as set out in All Wales Practice Guidance on children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour is available for use in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- **Exploitation within families:** CSE can, and does, take place in families. The fact that the majority of CSE is extra-familial does not mean that CSE cannot take place within families or be facilitated by a family member. There have been cases in Wales of parents financially benefitting through the exploitation of their children who they have offered to others for sex in return for money. The element that differentiates this from other forms of child sexual abuse within families (which may be occurring at the same time) is that there is an exchange of money or goods involved, with a family member benefitting from the abuse of a child from the family.

Identifying and reporting Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Prompt for practitioners

This prompt provides some information to assist in the consistent identification of CSE. When considering risk of CSE it is crucial that a child-centred approach which considers the holistic needs of the child is taken. Risk management should only be one element of the response to children's care and support needs where CSE is a concern.

Everyone who works with children should be alert to the signs that a child is being sexually exploited and understand their duty to report a child at risk. Speak to your manager or safeguarding lead about any concerns you have and make a child protection referral to your local authority Social Services. If you suspect a child is at immediate risk of harm you should phone the Police on 999.

- ▶ **Physical signs:** bruising, unexplained injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.
- ▶ **Emotional signs:** withdrawn, extreme mood changes, angry, self harm, suicidal, disengaged.
- ▶ **Material signs:** mobile phone/technological equipment, clothing/footwear, regularly under the influence of alcohol or drugs, in possession of money, **when** there is no reasonable explanation for how they have attained or paid for these things.
- ▶ **Behavioural signs:** secretive, periods of going missing, getting in or out of cars driven by unknown adults, described as out of control or as having risky behaviour by their family, carers or by practitioners, concerns about the way in which the child uses their mobile phone or the internet.

There is a statutory Duty to Report Children at Risk on relevant partners under Section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 Safeguarding Summary](#) This means making a referral to Social Services where you have any concerns that a child is at risk. You should ensure you understand the process for making a referral to Social Services and what information they will require - talk to your manager.

If you work in a health setting and have limited knowledge of the child you can use the Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Questionnaire (CSERQ) to inform your decision about making a child protection referral. <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/91733#CSE>

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse which involves an element of exchange between the abused child and the person perpetrating the abuse.

Children (that means anyone up to the age of 18 years) who are abused in this way are unlikely to tell anyone about what is happening to them. The reasons for this are complicated and could be because they are frightened of what will happen if they tell, because they do not recognise that they are being abused, because they fear that they won't be believed or will be judged or because they feel that they are exercising control over what is happening to them in some way.

As with all forms of child abuse, CSE can happen to any child. However we know that some children may be particularly vulnerable. This includes children who have unstable home or care experiences, children who have experienced abuse in earlier childhood, children with low self esteem and children who are experiencing problems with education, mental health, alcohol/drug misuse or offending behaviour. There is evidence that children with additional learning needs or functioning difficulties may be particularly vulnerable. CSE happens to boys and young men as well as to girls and young women. There is evidence of additional barriers to disclosure and identification for some children including Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority (BAME) children; disabled children and LGBT+ children.

The way in which exploitation is understood by the child will vary from child to child. Children can fail to recognise their experiences as exploitative. However, many children do understand that they are being exploited but may still struggle to disclose or seek help because of stigma or because the thing they are receiving in exchange for the abuse is important to them. Some children may understand that they are being exploited but still perceive the exploitation as the best option available to them within the context of constrained choices. Some children may accept abuse as a normal part of life or feel that it is deserved because of their earlier experiences of abuse or feelings of worthlessness.

As with any form of child abuse it is essential that practitioners act on their concerns. We know that different people involved in a child's life may all have different pieces of information or concerns which in isolation may seem to be worrying but not warrant further investigation, but when put together these concerns can evidence that the child has care and support needs.

Children identified as at risk of CSE should have any care and support needs considered in order to prevent abuse. Abuse through CSE is usually (but not always) extra-familial. This provides an opportunity to work with parent/carers and families to keep the child safe and to meet care and support needs in a way that will reduce risk of CSE. However, practitioners should also be alert to any safeguarding or care and support issues within the family.

A proportionate response

- If the child is at immediate risk or you suspect they may go missing before their safety can be secured contact the Police on 999.
- If any agency involved with the child has concerns that the child may have care and support needs that their parent(s)/carer(s) cannot meet without support, they should

seek parental consent to refer the child to the home local authority Information, Advice and Assistance service for an assessment of their needs.

- Relevant partners have a Duty to Report Children at Risk (Section 130) under [Part 7](#) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Section 130(4) defines a “child at risk” as a child who:
 - **a)** is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
 - **b)** has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local authority is meeting any of those needs).

When a child has been reported under section 130, the local authority must consider whether there are grounds for carrying out an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

- If Social Services make a decision that the report/referral received does not relate to a child at risk they will make a record of this and the rationale for their decision.
- Social Services of the local authority in which the child is located should make a decision on the evidence on whether to convene a multi-agency strategy discussion, to inform a decision on a response for the child, including whether to hold a multi-agency Strategy Meeting. Representatives of each local authority relevant to the child and any Youth Offending Service relevant to the child should be involved in the multi-agency strategy discussion. There should be no delay in responding to information about a child at risk because the child is not ordinarily resident in the local authority where the safeguarding issue is identified.
- If the initial assessment or multi-agency strategy discussion indicate that there are no grounds to proceed to a Strategy Meeting or to a Section 47 Inquiry, consideration should be given to a referral for preventative work to reduce the likelihood of future risk of harm.
- Where there is already a care and support plan, child protection plan or they are a looked after child or they are in the secure estate, there should be a multi-agency strategy discussion to decide whether a Strategy Meeting is necessary to inform the development or review of a plan for the child.
- The arrangements for carrying out a Strategy Meeting are set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and in Welsh Government [Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 5- Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk](#) issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Wherever possible, the practitioners

attending the Strategy Meeting should have direct knowledge of the child. It is, however, recognised that some agencies may come into contact with a child for the first time as a result of the issues being considered at the Strategy Meeting.

- The Strategy Meeting should consider if there is any information or evidence relating to the child which suggests that there are other specific safeguarding issues that need to be considered in addition to the primary presenting safeguarding issue. **The Strategy Meeting should be child centred rather than issue based.**
- Social Services should also refer to All Wales Practice Guides issued with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures on any relevant related issues such as, Going missing from home or care, Child Trafficking, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) or Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB).
- All children identified as potentially trafficked **must** be referred into the [Independent Child Trafficking Advocates](#) service and the ICTA service will allocate the case for direct support to the child or for support via the ICTA Regional Practice Co-ordinator. Making a referral quickly after identification could support in reducing missing and re-trafficking.
- **The Strategy Meeting must result in a set of agreed actions to inform the development or review of a child protection and/or care and support plan for the child.** This plan must consider the holistic needs of the child in order to promote well-being and prevent future harm and must not be focussed exclusively on the management of risk.
- Where the Strategy Meeting results in an agreement that a plan is not required the rationale for this decision should be recorded and consideration should be given to making a referral to preventative services.
- Children and young people are entitled to an active offer of advocacy from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) when they become looked after or become subject of child protection enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference. The **‘active offer’** is made directly to the child by the Advocacy Service. An ‘active offer’ is a sharing of information about the statutory right and entitlement of a child in particular circumstances to access support from an Independent Professional Advocacy Service. Information should be shared with them that includes an explanation about the role of Independent Professional Advocacy. This includes what it can and cannot do, how it operates based on their wishes and feelings, its independence and how it works solely for the child/young person, its policy on confidentiality and significant harm – it explains the statutory right of children and young people to be supported to express their views, wishes and feelings as well as their right to make a representation or complaint.

Planning for a child as they reach the age of 18

- Some children will not be identified as abused through CSE or as a victim of trafficking until they are older. Child protection duties towards them remain in place up until the date of their 18th birthday.
- Some children will remain at risk of sexual violence and exploitation into adulthood. It is important that planning for the child includes timely referral onto adult services as their 18th birthday approaches. If the child is looked after then these matters should be considered as part of the Pathway planning process.
- Arrangements should be made for the case to be reported as an adult at risk by a relevant partner under Section 128 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Consideration should be given to whether the case is appropriate for referral to Bawso 0800 731 8147, New Pathways 01685 379 310 (Mid, West and South Wales) or Welsh Women's Aid 0808 80 10 800. They can provide support to adult victims of trafficking, modern slavery and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. More information is available at [Live Fear Free](#)

Appendices

These organisations are there for all children and young people in Wales. Practitioners should let children know about these organisations and how to contact them.

Meic is the helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. From finding out what's going on in your local area to help dealing with a tricky situation, Meic will listen even when no-one else will. They won't judge you and will help by giving you information, useful advice and the support you need to make a change. You can:

- Chat to someone from Meic on-line: <https://www.meiccymru.org/>
- Call Meic for free and talk to someone: **0808 802 3456**
- Text Meic for free on: 84001

You can contact the [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#) Investigation and Advice service which is free and confidential. It's there as a source of help and support if children and young people or those who care for them feel that a child's been treated unfairly. You or you parent/carer can:

- Call the service for free: **0808 801 1000**
- Email the service: advice@childcomwales.org.uk

Childline is a free, private and confidential service where anyone under 19 can access support and advice. The Childline website www.childline.org.uk has information and advice pages as well as tools to help you work through problems yourself. If you want to talk or chat to Childline you can:

- Call Childline for free: **0800 1111**
- Register on-line to email Childline or chat on-line to a counsellor: www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

If you want to talk to Childline in Welsh see www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

Certain frontline staff who encounter a potential victim modern slavery or human trafficking have a duty to notify the Home Office under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This requirement applies to the Police, Local Authorities, the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority. Supporting guidance and resources have been issued in relation to the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

¹ Hallett, S. (2017) Making sense of child sexual exploitation: exchange, abuse and young people. Bristol: Policy Press.

² Fox, C. and Kalkan, G. (2016) Barnardo's Survey on Online Grooming Barkingside: Barnardo's

³ <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/832-county-lines-violence-exploitation-and-drug-supply-2017/file>

⁴ Barnardo's Cymru – *Boys 2 research*, 2018

⁵ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/88524>

⁶ J. Lerpiniere et al (2013) Research Report RR-2013-05 :The Sexual Exploitation of Looked After Children in Scotland: A scoping study to inform methodology for

inspection, Scotland: CELCIS <https://www.celcis.org/files/9114/3877/4674/Sexual-Exploitation-of-Looked-After-Children.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Licensing-LGA-CSE-myth-v-reality.pdf>

⁸ M.Thomas and E.Speyer (2016) 'I Never Spoke About It'...Supporting sexually exploited boys and young men in Wales', Cardiff: Barnardo's Cymru.

⁹ A.Franklin, P.Raws and E.Smeaton (2015) *Unprotected, overprotected: meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation*. The report was commissioned by Comic Relief, and undertaken by Barnardo's, The Children's Society, British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD), Paradigm Research and Coventry University. **Download the Wales Briefing**

¹⁰ Miller, D; Brown, J (2014) 'We have the right to be safe': Protecting disabled children from abuse.

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¹⁶ <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>