

## Bath & North East Somerset Council 'One Minute Guide' to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

In Bath & North East Somerset Council, the definition of CCE is:

Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature.

Child Criminal Exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economical and/or emotional vulnerability.

Children's involvement in CCE is indicative of coercion or desperation rather than choice. CCE is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess.

The indicators for CCE can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given.

The law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of CCE) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

It is important to note that perpetrators of CCE may themselves be children who are criminally exploited and that the victims of CCE may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators.



What to do if you are  
worried about a child  
or young person

**Any practitioner working with a child who they think may be at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation should follow the guidance set out in Working Together and share this information with Bath & North East Somerset Council Children's Services. You should refer any concerns about a child's welfare to Bath & North East Somerset Council Children's Services [www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection)**

**If you believe a child is in immediate risk of harm, you should contact the police**

For more information or to contact us:-

<https://www.safeguarding-bathnes.org.uk/children/local-safeguarding-children-s-board/4-lscb-multi-agency-policy-and-procedures>

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection)

Duty Team 01225 396313 (Out of hours 01454 615165)

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### Risk Indicators

A young person's involvement in Child Criminal Exploitation activity often leaves signs. A young person might exhibit these signs, either as a member or an associate of a gang or group dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a young person's lifestyle should be discussed with them.

Some indicators are:

- ✿ Persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out of area;
- ✿ Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones
- ✿ Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- ✿ Relationships with controlling/ older individuals or groups
- ✿ Leaving home/care without explanation
- ✿ Suspicion of physical assault/unexplained injuries
- ✿ Parental concerns
- ✿ Carrying weapons
- ✿ Significant decline in school results/performance
- ✿ Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- ✿ Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.

### Who is vulnerable to CCE

All children are vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation. The national picture on Child Criminal Exploitation continues to develop but there are recorded cases of:

- ✿ 15/16 years is the most common age range
- ✿ Both males and females being exploited
- ✿ White British children being targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection
- ✿ The use of social media to make initial contact with children and young people
- ✿ Class A drug users being targeted so that gangs can take over their homes (known as cuckooing).

Gangs and groups are known to target vulnerable children and adults, some factors that heighten a person's vulnerability include:

- ✿ Having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- ✿ Lack of a safe/stable home environment now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality for example)
- ✿ Social isolation or social difficulties
- ✿ Economic vulnerability
- ✿ Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- ✿ Connections with other people involved in gangs
- ✿ Having a physical or learning disability
- ✿ Having mental health or substance misuse issues
- ✿ Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories).