



Purpose: To enable a wide range of professionals to improve their awareness of the signs of potential or actual child sexual exploitation.

This document is targeted towards professional colleagues whilst working with and safeguarding children and young people.



Increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation:

Children in care are particularly vulnerable due to their “distance” from the Guardian/Carer.

Children and young people with disability, additional needs, poor social skills, or very low self - esteem may be open to approaches by exploitative adults, peers or older young persons.

Children and young people who feel that they don't 'belong' may be easily convinced by plausible approaches, e.g. by an older person who says they are 'not like the rest' of their contemporaries; who says they love them; who convinces them that they can make money by sexual favours.

Children and young people who are introduced to drugs/ alcohol/substance misuse by exploitative adults / peers may be afraid of their family discovering their behaviours.

Young people may spend time at 'parties' where they are introduced to other abusers.



Likely behaviours may include:

- Repeatedly going missing, particularly overnight
- Coming home with unaccounted gifts, i.e. clothes, money, food, jewellery and drugs. (Common one being a mobile phone.)
- Having a relationship with an older partner with whom there may be concerns
- Excessive & secret use of internet and/or mobile (potential grooming?)
- Having several SIM cards, frequent mobile phone top ups
- Being unusually secretive (where have they been, who are their friends)
- Mood swings and changes in behaviour

Warning Signs



“Can you recognize the warning signals? It is important that we are all aware of the indicators of sexual and physical abuse and exploitation”

“There could be other explanations and further exploration with family, carers, friends and inter-agency discussion could prove helpful”

“If a child confides in you it's important that you believe them; reassure them that disclosure was the right thing to do”

“Some parents or carers might not recognize the signals at all – share this list of signs with them”

Children Who Go Missing & Child Sexual Exploitation – Warning Signals & Guidance



- Losing contact with family and friends of their own age & associating with an older age group.
- Unrecognised cars arriving at the home, particularly at unusual times
- Alcohol//substance misuse
- Unexplained injuries
- Low self esteem, leading to a change in personal appearance
- Excessive washing or bathing particularly when returning from 'missing' episodes

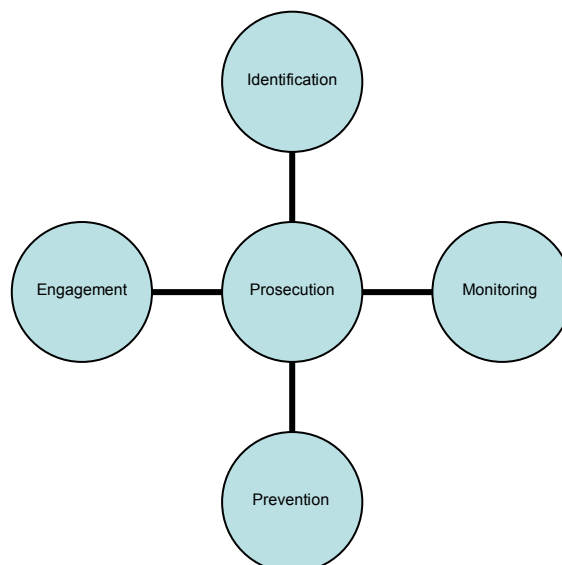
How to proceed:



Discuss your concerns with family/carer of child **(only where appropriate)**

- Concerns if child is spending disproportionate amounts of time away from home and/or seems guarded in front of parents or carer.
- As soon as possible, discuss with your Supervisor
- As soon as possible, inform the Cambridgeshire or Peterborough Contact Centre if a Child Protection Concern
- Police should always submit a National Intelligence Report
- Check/understand/apply your agency procedures
- View Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LSCB websites for inter-agency procedures around Child Sexual Exploitation

Peterborough & Cambridgeshire - Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2012 – 14



Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Safeguarding Children Boards - 10/2012

www.cambslscb.org.uk – www.peterboroughlscb.org.uk