



form for SEND School DSLs

Share challenges, solutions and good practice related to safeguarding children with SEND

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Definitions

Child Sexual Exploitation is form of child sexual abuse. Occurs where an individual or group coerces, controls, manipulates, or deceives 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.

Child Criminal Exploitation happens when an individual or group coerces, controls, manipulates, or deceives a child or young person under the age of 18 to commit crimes.

- The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears to have consensual - Legally, young people cannot consent to their own exploitation. For this reason, all victims must be effectively identified, safeguarded, and supported.
- Can happen in person but also online or using other technology.

<https://thechildrensociety.notion.site/Working-with-Education-to-Protect-Young-People-from-Exploitation-13d2cb10916a43db8d64e2eba58a822c>

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What does it look like when children are being criminally exploited?

This is in part because safeguarding partners have different understandings of what constitutes criminal exploitation. Recently, CCE has become strongly associated with one specific model known as 'county lines', but it can also include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs (often forced to insert drugs in their vagina or anus in a practice known as 'plugging') or money across the country, forced to commit financial fraud, forced to shoplift or pickpocket.

Financial exploitation can take many forms, but for the purposes of this document, we refer to the practice of using a child's bank accounts (or online wallets) to hold, transfer, or hide funds or assets for the purposes of exploitation. These funds are often the direct proceeds of crime.

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Children with SEND are at greater risk of criminal and sexual exploitation


MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS

Internal trafficking and exploitation of children with special educational needs and disability

Research summary

July 2024




Presented by: 

MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS

Opening Conversations

Improving the early identification of children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) at risk of modern slavery in England

November 2024




Presented by: 

<https://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/improving-early-identification-of-children-with-send-at-risk-of-modern-slavery>

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Key Findings:




- **Identification and prevention** - many toolkits, designed to identify exploitation after harm occurs, do not sufficiently account for SEND-specific risk, relying on tick-box approaches, limiting personalised insights into each child's unique needs
- **Trusted staff faces** – importance approachable adults, or “faces,” who establish safe spaces and build trust
- **Spaces:** time and environment for open conversations - accessible, private, calm, and welcoming, rather than clinical or punitive, to foster open dialogue (not only physical settings but also the organisational culture)
- **Places:** to be heard and to hear - punitive measures like exclusion and isolation rooms can undermine the sense of safety and trust increasing the risk of exploitation
- **Creating a culture of conversation** – where safeguarding involves proactive, ongoing dialogue rather than reactive interventions. This aligns with professional curiosity, where even small behavioural or emotional changes are taken seriously, rather than dismissed as typical adolescent behaviours or attributed to SEND.


<https://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/improving-early-identification-of-children-with-send-at-risk-of-modern-slavery>

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Recommendations:



Frontline staff




- Recognising behaviour as communication
- Noticing and responding proactively
- Building trusted relationships
- Flexible access to support
- Appropriate communication

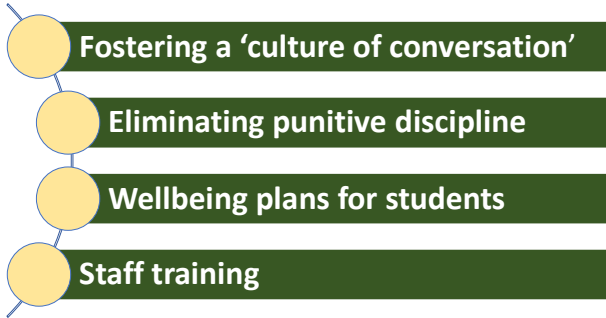
<https://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/improving-early-identification-of-children-with-send-at-risk-of-modern-slavery>

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Recommendations:



School leadership




- Fostering a 'culture of conversation'
- Eliminating punitive discipline
- Wellbeing plans for students
- Staff training

<https://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/improving-early-identification-of-children-with-send-at-risk-of-modern-slavery>

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Parents and missed opportunities



- There are missed opportunities for early intervention and disrupting patterns of exploitation, for example when responding to reports from parents of missing episodes for young people with SEND.
- Engagement with education services is one of the most significant factors in keeping children with SEND safe from exploitation. Practitioners and parents were very clear that the most significant factor in keeping children and young people safe from modern slavery was their engagement within an education system that met their SEND needs.
- Responding well and responding early requires parents' concerns being listened to, with training and multi-agency support being in place.

<https://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/children-special-needs-disabilities>

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Including children with SEND in school life

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- Good child to adult **ratios** are vital, good **relationships & open conversations**.
- Before children join the school, **introductions/Induction** is vital, see as many key people as possible, not just one key person.
- Board designed for safeguarding and includes who you need to talk to for safeguarding worries
- Name **trusted adult** on a child's School Passport
- Offering inclusive **clubs, after school sessions, holiday camps** – things that tap into and promote skills, motivation and aspirations to help children develop a sense of belonging at school and foster identity and self worth
- Staff are given **structures** and **guidelines** to help involve students in school life as well as independent living, creative opportunities
- **Weekly meetings** with keyworker to help pick up anything that needs addressing – not structured but informal conversation

CONSIDER: how do you develop a strong sense of positive relationship? How do you help to foster children's self worth, belonging & identity, empower them and instil ambition?

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Increasing Cognitive understanding

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- Flip it to educate children on why the exploiters groom
- Very explicit **language** and direct language used with students.
- Use of **social stories** and **comic strip conversations** to put the message across.
- Strong use of training younger pupils to say 'no', 'it's my body'. In the playground, even EYFS pupils are shown to use open hand signals to indicate 'no'. It's the beginning of understanding **consent**.
- Teaching children about tactics of groomers- children promised new/ better smartphones (that parents don't want them to have) if they agree to help the exploiters. Used to tempt and engage.
- **LA: offer support and guidance** seeing neurodiversity students increase, more time to unpick SEND needs, **RSHE curriculum, 1:1 work**, same message but repeated, making sure that different contexts are applied
- **Drama groups** bought in to deliver plays and workshops
- VR workshop via **Police**

CONSIDER: how do you help children with SEND build their resilience to exploitation and promote critical thinking skills, including online?

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Communication barriers

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- Books Beyond Words-great **pictorial books** on a range of topics <https://www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/bookshop>
- PSHE sessions and more explicit and approach with **clear vocabulary being used and examples**.
- Use **play & drawing** to explore concepts and communicate messages if children respond well to this.
- **Talking MATS/symbols, heat mats** (divide the school in parts) ask the students where they feel safe in the school by rating, and also outside of school
- Agreeing a Comfort indicator – ie if someone is struggling they can indicate this without directly saying so
- Individual/personalised questionnaires for children
- Have a 'nest' – sensory room where students can come and talk

CONSIDER: how do you make sure that children have the communication skills and vocab (as appropriate) to voice when something is worrying them? How do you create varied opportunities for disclosures to be made?

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Working with Parents

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- Run **Online Safeguarding Coffee Mornings** for parents
- **SafeCall** – free helpline for parents affected by children going missing and being exploited (<https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/get-help/help-services/exploitation-and-county-lines>)
- **Ivison Trust** – offer support and training to parents who have been impacted by exploitation (<https://ivisontrust.org.uk/>)
- **Wellbeing cafes** with biscuits/cakes for parents to attend, where guest speakers are invited, e.g. Ed psych, outreach, specialist speakers... providing the opportunity to digest info, revisit and raise awareness – well attended

CONSIDER: how do you develop good relationships with parents so that they are better supported to understand about risks such as exploitation, and so they will talk to staff if they are concerned about their child? What does relational practice mean and look like in your school? How do you know it is effective?

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Staff Training

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- NSPCC – speak out stay safe resource
- Exploitation Team Manager in Children’s Services delivered training
- LGfL’s course: <https://lgfl.bookinglive.com/book/add/p/178>

CONSIDER: do you offer training and support to staff to identify and manage concerns of exploitation of SEND children?

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Other

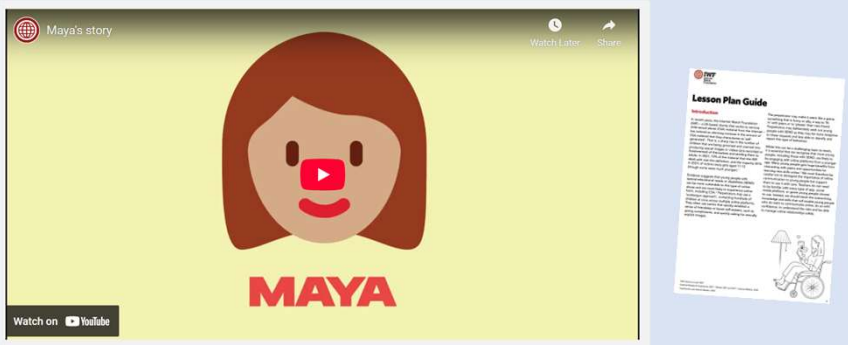
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- [Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\)](https://padlet.com/eshawh/child-sexual-exploitation-cse-ljp9juz6gys6qlsp) – padlet resources collated by and with thanks to Kirstin Lamb (<https://padlet.com/eshawh/child-sexual-exploitation-cse-ljp9juz6gys6qlsp>)
- [Harm Outside the Home Toolkit | Child Exploitation East Midlands](#)
- Established safeguarding school councils to cover specific themes e.g. exploitation with council members. Sharing messages back to peers. (<https://www.childexploitationeastmidlands.org.uk/document-database/130104>)

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Online Abuse and children with SEND

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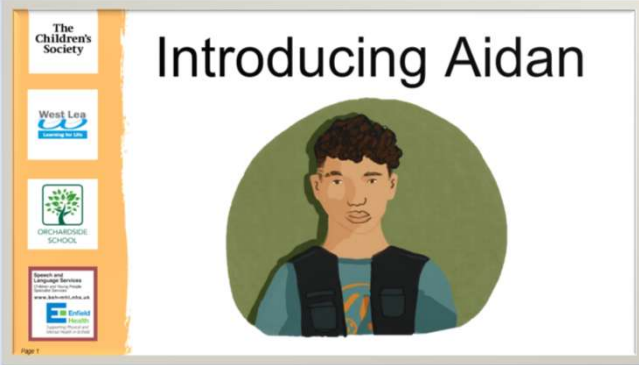


<https://talk.iwf.org.uk/children-with-send/>

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Aidan’s Story

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<https://thechildrensociety.notion.site/Secondary-school-SEND-exploitation-awareness-toolkit-e31041f8657d4860be67aedd26a43251>

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CCE resources – The Children’s Society









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CCE resources – The Children’s Society






<https://www.flipsnack.com/CA7CFEBBDC9/all-prevention-resources/full-view.html>

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Working with parents




For teachers to use

safetraining.lgfl.net
relationalpractice.lgfl.net

parentlinesafety.lgfl.net

For parents to use



parentsafe.lgfl.net

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LGfL Resources



- Training
- Posters
- Staff CPD videos
- Curated curriculum resources

Safeguarding from Child Criminal Exploitation

Learn from trainers with lived experience of gangs and serious youth violence and what your school can do about it







safetraining.lgfl.net / saferesources.lgfl.net / gangs.lgfl.net / syv.lgfl.net / cce.lgfl.net

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Research and Guidance

Shattered lives, stolen futures
The Jay Review of Criminally Exploited Children

Trafficking and exploitation of children with special educational needs and disability
Research report looking at the responses to criminal trafficking and exploitation of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Neurodiversity is a risk factor for exploitation
As part of our Jay Review of Criminally Exploited Children, witnesses have told us that **neurodiversity is a risk factor for exploitation**. This is especially true for young people with ADHD or Autism Spectrum Disorder who may be less able to navigate risky and complex situations, and to manage impulsivity.
Going without support for neurodiversity or learning disabilities can also lead to young people being excluded from school. Without the protection of school, children are much more vulnerable to exploitation.

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Reminder about Reporting

Children's Services

Allocated SW

Police if concerned that a crime has been committed

National Referral Mechanism – for any concerns of child trafficking

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Support

Worried about a child?
You can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0800 800 5000, emailing help@nspcc.org.uk or completing our [report abuse online form](#).

Our voice Helpline is currently available **10am–4pm Monday to Friday**. You can still email help@nspcc.org.uk or complete our [report abuse online form](#) at any time for free. You don't have to say who you are.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999 straight away.

<https://nspcc.org.uk>

Ivison Trust protecting Children, Supporting Families
About Ivison Trust Child sexual exploitation Criminal exploitation Parents Get involved Training

For parents
Child sexual exploitation
Child criminal exploitation
Criminal exploitation
Parents
Get involved
Training

Join our webinar for parents and carers
Understand how children are being groomed and recruited into exploitation and how to help support your child's recovery.

Support for child exploitation
We have lots of free and telephone based support for parents and carers to help you and your child.

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Support

About SafeCall

SafeCall is a free, confidential and anonymous helpline and support service for young people and family members that are affected by missing, county lines and criminal exploitation.

The service also provides confidential support and advice for professionals in relation to their work with an exploited young person or family.

The service is open 9am to 11pm; 7 days a week.


Follow the links below or contact us on 116 000 to find out how we can support you.


<https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/get-help/help-services/exploitation-and-county-lines>

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Next Session






for SEND School DSLs

14TH MAY 2025 – RESPONDING TO BRUISING AND INJURIES

Share challenges, solutions and good practice related to safeguarding children with SEND



<https://sendforum> / <https://safetraining.lgfl.net>

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Keep in touch



Social Media: [@lgflsafeguarded](#)

Newsletter: safenewsletter.lgfl.net

Main portal: safeguarding.lgfl.net

SEND Forum site: sendforum.lgfl.net

IncludED site: included.lgfl.net

Resources: saferesources.lgfl.net

Training: safetraining.lgfl.net

Email: safeguarding@lgfl.net



<https://sendsafe.lgfl.net>

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