

Key Steps in Managing Concerns

- Any professional/voluntary worker has a responsibility to ensure that the young person is adequately protected and provided with appropriate services/support as a child in need
- Workers to gather and record information regarding their concerns and follow their agency's procedures in seeking advice from a designated manager with responsibility for child protection. Advice can also be sought from the Children's Safeguarding Unit
- Where a decision is made to make a referral, Warrington Service Reception Team should be contacted. They will transfer the referral to the appropriate social work team who will contact the referrer and complete an initial/core assessment
- Children's Services will work with the Police where it is suspected or known that a young person is involved in sexual exploitation and a strategy discussion will take place

NB: Outside office hours the Out of Hours service should be contacted if it is considered that the young person may be at immediate risk, otherwise normal procedures should be followed the next working day.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board Policy & Practice Manager	01925 457075
Service Reception Team Poll Tax House, Ryland Street Warrington	01925 444239
Out of Hours Service	01925 444400
Principal Officer (Safeguarding Children)	01925 457013
Children's Safeguarding Unit	01925 457016
Warrington Police Station	01925 652222
Police Public Protection Unit	01244 614878
Designated Nurse - Safeguarding Children	01925 643113
Designated Doctor - Safeguarding Children	01925 405712
Consultant Paediatrician or Senior Registrar	01925 635911
Senior Education Welfare Officer	01925 442928
Senior Probation Officer	01925 650613

For further information visit our website
www.safeguardingwarringtonchildren.org.uk

August 2006

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

This guide is intended to help professionals who may be concerned that a child or young person is being abused through sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation of children

Children abused through sexual exploitation face:

- Murder
- Rape
- Pornography
- Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Mental & physical coercion

They are also at risk of:

- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases
- Becoming deprived of education
- Becoming drug dependent
- Estrangement from families
- Pregnancy
- Mental Health problems
- Social exclusion

DEFINITION

'The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a violation of their rights. It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or third person in cash or kind. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. It constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery' - World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Stockholm 1996)

HOW CHILDREN BECOME INVOLVED

The most common issues are vulnerability and low self-esteem, resulting from a multitude of factors, including difficult or abusive childhood experiences, family conflict, domestic violence, homelessness and poverty

Children are coerced, enticed or are desperate. It is not a free economic or moral choice.

RECOGNITION

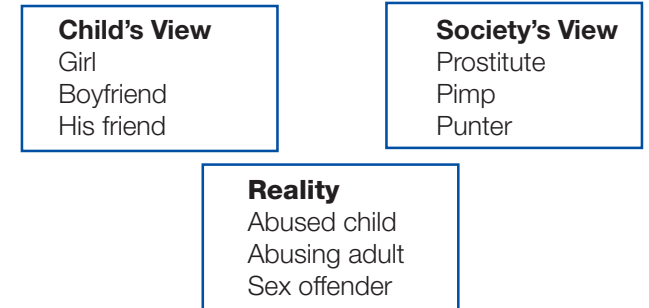
Unsubstantiated suggestions that a child or young person is being abused through sexual exploitation should be treated with caution. None of the following indicators, whether singly or in combination, should be viewed as conclusive proof but any of them may be taken as suggestive of the possibility.

- Physical symptoms, e.g. sexually transmitted infections, bruising
- Acquisition of money, clothes, jewellery or goods that can't be accounted for
- Missing, especially overnight
- Truancy from school
- Collected from home/school in unknown cars
- Having an older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Having a 'relationship' with an older man/woman
- Abusive/controlling adult
- Isolation from friends
- Bruises, bites, cigarette and rope burns
- Being threatened or physically assaulted by an adult
- Pregnancy
- Self-harming behaviour
- Drug/alcohol use (including 'date rape' drugs)
- Secretive use of the Internet
- Secretive use of mobile phone/landline
- Seen in risky areas/with risky peers or adults
- Sexually transmitted infections

Identifying any of these indicators would suggest that the worker should, where appropriate, develop their relationship with the young person to enable them sensitively to explore the issues further.

THE YOUNG PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

It must be born in mind that the young person's view of his or her situation might be very different from that of professionals and different again from the view of society generally:



PRINCIPLES OF INTERVENTION

The difference in perception can make it very difficult for professionals to persuade young people that they are, in fact, victims of abuse and in need of services. Whilst being sensitive to the young person's wishes it is important that it is made clear that if they are considered to be at risk concerns must be referred to the statutory agencies to ensure they are supported and protected. Assurances of confidentiality must not be given.

All children and young people under eighteen years of age who are sexually exploited should be treated as 'victims' of abuse and will be regarded as children in need. They must all be treated as individuals and account must be taken of their race, religion, culture, language, gender, sexuality and ability

The criminal process will be directed at those who procure, control and facilitate the sexual exploitation of children.