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# Child Exploitation - Risk Assessment Tool Guidance

This guidance has been produced to support completion of the Child Exploitation (CE) Risk Assessment Tool.

## For those open to social workers and TYS:

The Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool can be accessed on LCS within the CE Episode. There is a separate systems guidance in relation to LCS.

## For those children who are not open to social care or TYS:

The Child Exploitation Risk Assessment tool can be accessed following this link appendix 5 **Child Exploitation** (including **Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation**) ([proceduresonline.com](http://proceduresonline.com)) on the CSCP website.

Once completed, a copy of the tool should be sent to the CERAR inbox [CERAR@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:CERAR@cumbria.gov.uk) - this can then be uploaded to the Early Help system EHM.

## Agencies to contribute:

Social worker or lead professional, Police and education providers **MUST** attend the CE Level 1 assessment and any subsequent reviews.

Health must be invited to contribute, to Level 1 CE assessments and subsequent reviews, whether that be GP as standard. In some cases more specific health professionals involved with the child's care.

Other relevant professionals should be invited to attend such as support workers, therapists etc.

## The CE Risk Assessment tool

### Assessment – REASON FOR ASSESSMENT

This section should inform the reader of the reason for the CE risk assessment. You could include in here when issues first came to light and an overview/chronology of events that has led to the review. Include in here what area of exploitation you are worried about - CSE, CCE, online, Modern Day Slavery, Trafficking.

### Childs Views

This section is the CHILD'S views, it is not what professionals think or what we are worried about, this is what the child, is reporting/showing us. Many of the professionals will know the child in different ways and the child may have one professional that they like to talk to. Best practice would be for that professional to seek the child's views as they are the child's identified trusted adult.

The views do not have to be CE specific. The whole purpose of this section is to identify positives for the child and see how, if possible, we can increase these. If the child comments that the good things in their life are what we are concerned about (friends, relationships, drug use etc) then we should still be recording this in their words. This will help us understand the context of the risks for the child whilst listening to what is important to them. When children want to and are able to share their views verbally, the children should be provided with a safe space they feel comfortable in.

The voice of the child is not just about their spoken words. Views can be gained via observations, written or via pictures etc. What is important is that professionals ensure that appropriate means of communication are used in keeping with the child's needs.

A recurring message in serious case reviews in relation to the voice of the child is the important role of adults who are in a position to speak on behalf of the child. The adults include parents, grandparents, neighbours and members of the public. It is important that where adults have put forward important information, their views need to be taken seriously.

In terms of worries, if safe to do so it's helpful to explore whether a child has any worries about exploitation. For further ideas on specific questions you could ask, suggestions are available on the CSCP website Child Exploitation (including **Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation**) ([proceduresonline.com](http://proceduresonline.com)) appendix 6.

Being able to identify worries help us think about 'push' factors which may increase risk to exploitation  
**Identifying child exploitation | Childrens Safeguarding Board (nsscp.co.uk)**

In terms of the child's longer and short terms wants, strengths and goals, this is what the Child wants, not what we think they want or need. It is important that this is explored as some of the wants or strengths may be what we can use to disrupt exploitation, for example if a return to area is a child's long terms goal and they feel this will reduce their Missing From Home (MFH) we should be working to achieve this where possible, or if a child's strengths and likes are horse riding/gym etc, how can we increase this to disrupt the current identified risks and increase areas of strength?

### What are we worried about?

**Past Harm** - It's important to capture past harms and reflect upon how this may increase a child's vulnerability. What we know about perpetrators is that they are skilled in identifying vulnerability which can be targeted, so for example, a child with poor attachment with parents/care giver or multiple placements moves may be vulnerable to someone who wants to exploit them by offering stability via a relationship (think Push and Pull factors) this helps us think about risk.

**Current Concerns** - It is helpful to break the identified vulnerabilities/harm to reflect key concerns:

#### For Example:

- MFH
- Drug and alcohol use
- Social media concerns
- Peer associates
- Criminal behaviour
- Unmet health needs

Under each section capture the current concern looking at the last **6 months** at Level 1 then any new information in between reviews. This helps stay focused on the child exploitation concerns and helps the attendees at the meeting think about areas for scoring. This ensures that 'old' information is not carried around with the child, meaning that risk assessment is relevant to the here and now and safety planning is effective.

It is important to recognise the difference between vulnerability/risk indicators and harm. They do require a different response, we must recognise when children have experienced harm/trauma. We have moved passed the point of early intervention and must be working with children through trauma informed practices.

It's helpful at this point to provide an analysis of concerns always using the **Child Exploitation Appropriate Language Guide 2022.pdf (childrenssociety.org.uk)**. This should be used throughout the assessment (and in day to day practice). It is important when adding an analysis that we do not fall into any victim blaming language. A copy of this document is sent out to all attendees of the initial Level 1 CE assessments.

## Complicating Factors

Consider in this section what adds complication to reducing the identified risk and increase vulnerability? This may be that the family are involved in wider criminality or in fact county lines. A complicating factor could be that a child is placed out of county so there are risks in another authority area, which can often lead to complexity in information sharing. It may be that the child's is placed alongside other vulnerable children which impacts upon risks and risk reduction. There can often be a number of complicating factors due to the nature of exploitation and impact of grooming.

## Next Steps

Does the child have a view on next steps? Have they identified other support they may require? This doesn't have to be CE specific. They perhaps want support around emotional wellbeing or help to secure employment and other practical support.

As professionals what do you feel are the next steps? Is this a referral for health services such as sexual health or CAMHS or another agency that could offer support based on the raised concerns.

## The next section thinks about information about others:

Have you identified other children, siblings at risk, if so, what action will be taken? Who needs to know, how will this be shared? Think about the context of how the children know each other, is it online, school, the nature of where they live etc. It is also helpful to think about social media - is there a particular platform they are using? This information helps build a wider picture and can be linked to known ways of disruption of drugs via a county line model. It's important to share any soft intelligence (not a crime or safeguarding issue) to Cumbria Police using the Police Intelligence submission form **Section for Agencies and Employers - Cumbria Constabulary**

When thinking about perpetrators or persons of concern try and include in which context they know the child. Names, nicknames, age, any details about the vehicle, the driver or addresses are also helpful. It is also helpful to think about whether named individuals are known to each other. Think about disruption options which can feed into the overall safety plan. For a copy of the disruption toolkit **Child exploitation disruption toolkit (publishing.service.gov.uk)**

Exploring areas of concern are important to disruption. Try to explore whether there is a particular place children frequent, any street names, parks, shopping areas etc. Is there any feedback from return home interviews?

This information is important to the individual child but also feeds into the Level 2 CE meetings. The Level 2 meetings facilitate the sharing of information about children at risk of exploitation, as well as potential perpetrators and locations that could pose a risk to children and young people. The groups formulates multi-agency action plans to identify, detect and disrupt the risks to children and young people in the community. For more information on Level 2 please follow this link **CSCP Quick Guide to CERAR Level 2 meeting (cumbria.gov.uk)**

If any of the above are identified, you should have a plan of how this will be passed to Level 2 either via service managers that attend from each district, or this information can be shared via the CERAR inbox **CERAR@cumbria.gov.uk** and taken to Level 2 this way.

## Parent/carer response

Child exploitation is a challenging area to work in and the risk can move quickly. It can be complex and parents should be supported to understand what the concerns are, and their voices listened to. It is equally important to add where the parent/carer responses add to risk and increase vulnerability and be clear about next steps.

Direct support for parents can be found following this link:

**For parents - Parents Against Child Exploitation (Pace) UK ([paceuk.info](http://paceuk.info))**

Again, if safe to do so, there are direct question that parents/carers can be asked in relation to child exploitation and impact. These can be found at **Child Exploitation (including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation) ([proceduresonline.com](http://proceduresonline.com)) appendix 7.**

## CEVT Checklist

**The scores cannot be changed - they are set scores, so for example a 10 cannot be reduced to 5 because there is some of the behaviour.**

Notes are important when scoring, keep things relevant to the last 6 months but still feel free to include historic information in notes if you feel this is relevant to the exploitation.

If **Self-Harm/Suicidal** ideation is scored, **EHWB** issues does not require a score.

**Modern Day Slavery** – When you suspect or have evidence to support that a child is being criminally exploited, for example, via county lines/CSE, trafficking, this should prompt a score for Modern Day Slavery and a referral to Nation Referral Mechanism (NRM) must be considered and actioned.

Modern Day Slavery is a serious crime that violates human rights. Victims are forced, threatened, or deceived and controlled in order to exploit them.

## Types of Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation

Below are examples of the various types of exploitation:

- Labour exploitation or debt bondage – vulnerable people are exploited for labour or forced to work for little or no money. Victims can be any age, gender and race but more often than not they are male. You can find details on the Modern Slavery Act at [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).
- Domestic servitude – victims are made to work almost constantly in private households.
- Sexual exploitation – adults and children are groomed or forced into sex work or to perform sexual acts.
- Criminal exploitation – individuals or groups of people are controlled, maltreated, or forced to commit crime and unlawful acts against their will.

NRM is not optional if you have identified Modern Day Slavery - an NRM should follow. The national referral mechanism is used to identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery and make sure they receive appropriate support. **Modern slavery victims: referral - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))**  
**NYSCP ([safeguardingchildren.co.uk](http://safeguardingchildren.co.uk)).**

## Professional discussion and Judgement

Based on scoring alone, a child will be low concern no matter what they have scored as the threshold is 0. If the child scores low but you do not feel a CE Pathway is required, then please tick the CE Pathway not required. Do NOT tick Low concerns. You can capture in your professional's judgement that the scores state low concern however they are relevant to the child's experiences and do not relate to CE concerns therefore no CE pathway is required.

For example a child scores 10 for self-harm, has a EHCP scoring a 5 and is 13 years old so scores another 10, this would give a low concern score of 25 however during the assessment nothing has indicated that these vulnerabilities are being or we suspect that they are being targeted and do not increase their risk of exploitation, then they should not be given a pathway solely based on scoring.

Equally, you may find that a child scores medium however your concerns are high or vice versa. Use the Low, Medium, and High definitions set out in the assessment alongside scoring and professional judgement discussion to inform decision making.

Again, when recording and talking about the child refer to the appropriate language guidance to ensure there is no victim blaming language used. A child is never to be blamed for their own abuse and whilst behaviours/ environments can increase risks, harm is always the perpetrator's fault.

## Multi-agency Safety Plan

This needs to be focused and where possible parents and child's views to be added to this what would they want in place?

It is useful to have reviewed or have the Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit document open when planning for disruption **Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))**

Think about:

- MFH – Trigger plan, does this need shared with other forces
- Can a bulletin be put out by the Police to patrol officers?
- Does information need to be shared with Community Support Officers – Discuss this with Missing Exploited Trafficked Coordinator (METCO)
- Consideration of CAWN
- If high concern or there is significant risk of harm, could you recommend a Strategy meeting?
- What information can/should be shared with safe carers, Police and consider DI disclosures.
- What are the community risks who needs to know – schools, youth zones etc
- Adding in a review plan
- What direct work if appropriate can agencies undertake, taking a coordinated approach who does the child engage with? Can they do the direct work supported by others?
- What direct work/support do parents require?
- If Low Concern can the METCO provide any support?
- If Medium Concern, will the young person have oversight from the METCO or CID?
- If High Concern, will the young person be adopted under Op. Cert by Police?

All of this should incorporate into the child's overall plan. CE should not be separate to the child's plan (Unless there are specific actions the Police are taking that can not be shared with the children or family - this should be discussed in the meeting)