

SAFEGUARD

Often, children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise that they are being abused. There are a number of warning signs that can indicate a child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation. Remember: SAFEGUARD

[London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol 2021](#)



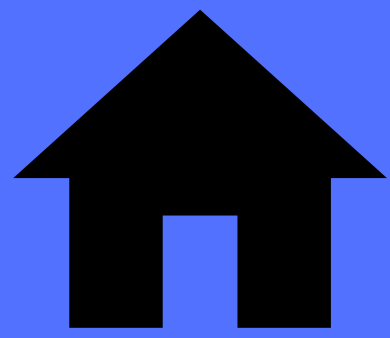
Sexual identity, wellbeing and choice

Sexually transmitted infections (particularly repeat infections); pregnancy; terminations; changing, or out of character sexual behaviour; exploring sexual behaviour in an unsafe context or environment; unable to disclose sexual orientation and fearful of societal responses



Absence, truancy and going missing

Truancy from school; including during the school day; missing from home or care, and repeat incidents; travelling outside borough/town when missing; unexplained absences



Family and home

Social, physical, emotional abuse and neglect; risks of forced marriage or so called honour based violence, female genital mutilation; domestic abuse; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; bereavement; parental and sibling criminality; experiences of homelessness or sofa surfing; living in care or temporary accommodation; immigration status



Emotional and physical health

Suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts; self-harm; low self-esteem/confidence/worth; learning difficulties; changing emotional wellbeing and signs of poor mental health; unexplained injuries and changes to physical appearance



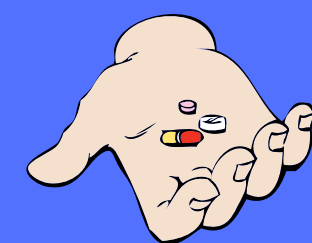
Gangs, groups age gaps and crime

Involvement in gangs or gang affected family, peers or siblings; concerns of abusive peer groups; involvement with older individuals or groups; lacking friends in the same age groups; older 'boyfriends'; sudden changes in peer groups; bullying, both on and off line; friends of young people who are experiencing CSE



Use of technology and sexual bullying

Sending or receiving nude images; being listed on social network pages in relation to sexual activity and, or, named in videos; secretive use of the internet/phones/social media; sudden behaviour changes when using the phone/or online; control via phone/internet; multiple or secretive social networking profiles



Alcohol and substances

Reliance on and changing use of substances, both legal and illegal



Receipt of unexplained gifts or money

Unexplained money; mobile phones, phone credit, items, clothes, money; new nails; travel in taxis; gifts where payment is required at a later date; worries about having debts



Distrust of authority figures

Resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social workers, health, police and others

If you have concerns about a child's welfare, or believe they are at risk of harm, contact [Hillingdon Stronger Families Hub](#) to make a safeguarding referral on 01895 556 006.

Hillingdon's Axis project collates information about CSE and CCE and can be contacted on: axis@hillingdon.gov.uk



[HSCP Website](#)