

Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (GBCSEA)

Casey Report – June 2025

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Exploitation
is happening
in Norfolk

Learning outcomes

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- What is Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation
- Examine some of the findings of the Casey report published in June 2025
- Know the signs
- How to report / what information is required
- What happens when you report
- What happens next
- Transitions

Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

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A form of child sexual abuse where two or more individuals work together (formally or informally) to exploit children sexually. This type of abuse is often perpetrated by groups connected through social, familial, or criminal networks, and can occur in both physical and online environments.

Child sexual exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or device a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and / or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact ; it can occur through the use of technology.

Group definition

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Two or more people of any age, connected through formal or informal associations or networks, including but not exclusive to, friendship groups.

Key characteristics of Group-Based CSEA:

- **Co-offending:** Members may jointly participate in abuse or enable each other's offending.
- **Social bonds:** Offenders may be linked by shared interest, social ties, or mutual reinforcement of abusive behaviour.
- **Victim targeting:** Victims are often groomed using gifts, drugs, alcohol, or affection, and may be coerced into recruiting others.
- **Locations:** Abuse may occur in private flats, cars, parks or hotels – places out of sight.
- **Technology use:** Increasingly, social media and messaging platforms are used for grooming and coordination.

GBCSEA encompasses a range of offences such as rape, trafficking, and sexual activity with a child. Victims may not always be recognised as such, especially if they appear to consent or have been manipulated into silence.

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National Audit on

This audit is focused on group-based child sexual exploitation (CSE) by 'grooming gangs'. It is rare, but is one of the most serious forms of sexual assaults committed against children.

multiple perpetrators coerced or forced children into sexual activity.

Child Sexual Exploitation

victims being between 10 and 15 years old (57% in 2023). That term 'group-based child sexual exploitation' is used to describe a form of sexual abuse and there remains a tendency to view it as a 'one-off' incident.

Around 50% of victims are girls and 50% are boys.

consistently applied definition of CSE across the police, local authority and health system, obscure it. Police records

National police data confirms that the majority of victims of child sexual exploitation are girls (78% in 2023) with the most common age for victims being between 10 and 15 years old.

Of these contact offences, an estimated 17,100 are 'flagged' by police as child sexual exploitation in police recorded crime data.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) by 'grooming gangs' is a rare but serious form of sexual abuse in our society: it involves multiple perpetrators coerced or forced children into sexual activity.

Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation

Children are often recruited into sexual exploitation through grooming, which involves building a relationship with the child and gaining their trust.

CASEY REPORT (AUDIT) 2025

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Casey Report (Audit) 2025

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Commissioned by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary the audit aimed to:

- Understand the scale, nature and characteristics of group-based child sexual exploitation
- Examine drivers of offending, including ethnicity and culture
- Evaluate the local and national response to group-based CSEA

Key findings

- Group based CSE is widespread, underreported and poorly understood
- Victims are often vulnerable girls, targeted due to social, economic, or familial vulnerabilities
- Offending is often organised, often involving networks of men exploiting gaps in oversight

Ethnicity and Culture

- While the ethnicity of offenders is a factor in some cases, the report warns against racial stereotyping
- Cultural attitudes towards women and girls and community denial can contribute to offending
- The audit calls for targeted, evidence-based approaches to understanding offender profiles

Systemic failures

- Agencies failed to identify patterns, share intelligence and protect victims
- Victims were often disbelieved, blamed or ignored
- Licensing systems (e.g. taxis and takeaways) were exploited by offenders

Victim experience

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- Survivors faced trauma, stigma and long-term harm
- Support, services were inconsistent, underfunded and not trauma-informed

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National learning recommendations

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National Strategy

- Develop a coordinated national response to group based CSE
- Establish a dedicated taskforce and national safeguarding standards

Data and Intelligence

- Improve data collection, sharing and analysis across police, social care and health
- Create a national intelligence hub for CSEA

Victim Support

- Provide long-term, trauma informed care for survivors
- Ensure access to justice, advocacy, and therapeutic services

Training and Awareness

- Mandatory training for professionals in education, health, policing and social care
- Public awareness campaigns to destigmatise victims and encourage reporting

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Know The Signs

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- Frequently missing from home, care or education
- Found in another area without explanation
- Inappropriate relationships or sexual activity
- Drugs and alcohol
- Social isolation and/or secretive social/online activity
- Association with others who appear to be being exploited
- Involved in gangs and/or carrying weapons
- Involvement in crime – victim, witness or offender
- Unexplained physical injuries, sore genitals, STI's
- Pregnancy
- Decline in mental health or physical appearance
- Suicide attempts / ideation
- Lack of engagement with education
- Unexplained new things such as clothes, mobile and/or paraphernalia

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Push and pull factors

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- **Push** - what is forcing the child away from their home environment/carers?
- **Pull** - what is drawing the child towards risky situations and people?
- **Control** – what is stopping that child from seeking help/opening up?

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Reporting

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Children's Advice and Duty Service

- **Immediate Safeguarding Concerns:** where a child is at risk of significant harm, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect
- **Escalating concerns:** where previous support or interventions have not improved the situation and concerns are increasing
- **Professional Consultation:** where the situation is complex and you require advice or guidance on appropriate next steps

If you have an emergency, please call 999.

If you are a professional i.e. working with a child or young person in a formal or voluntary setting and not a family member or member of the public, please visit the How to Raise a Concern page on the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership website for further guidance.

You can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service on their direct line: **0344 800 8021**.



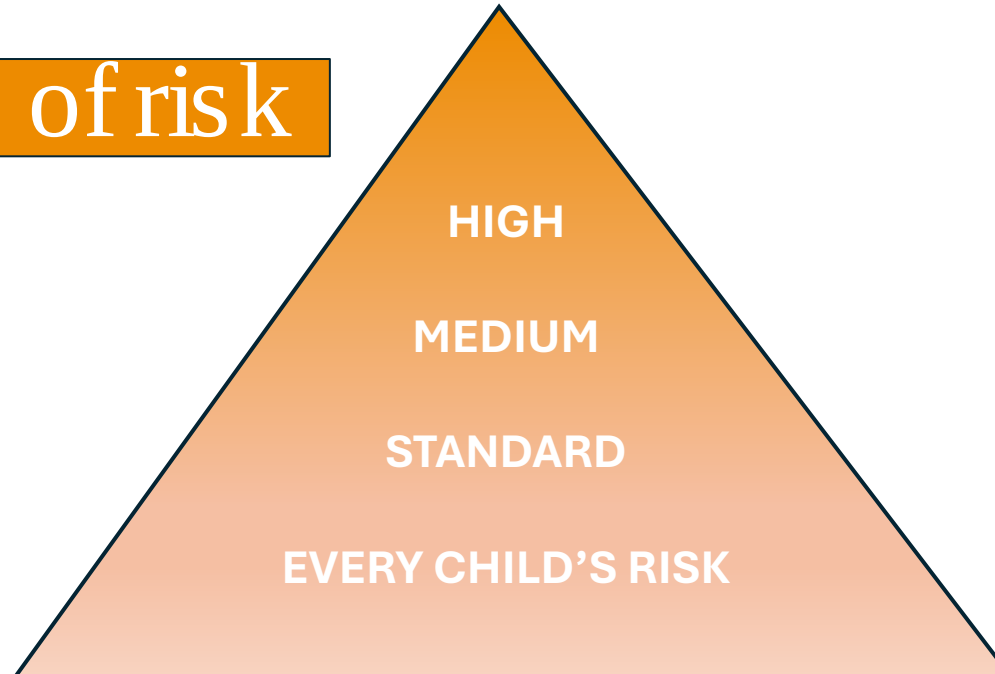
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Screening

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Four levels of risk



Risk level

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High Risk

- There is evidence / reasonable grounds to suggest that a child or young person is currently exposed to exploitation / serious youth violence.
- The risk to the child/ young person's safety is significant.

Medium Risk

- There is evidence / reasonable grounds to suggest that a child or young person is likely to be targeted for opportunistic exploitation/ youth violence.
- The risk to the child is such that it would be unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or that the child's health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of support.

Standard (emerging / reducing risk)

- At this stage there is no evidence to suggest that the child is exposed to exploitation.
- However, there are concerns that a child or young person may be at potential risk of exploitation in the future due to the presence of – Identified vulnerability factors or warning signs. The child requires support to increase resilience.

Every child's risk – (Universal)

- All children by the definition of their age and associated vulnerabilities are at risk of exploitation. Presenting factors / vulnerabilities indicate the child is unlikely to be at an increased risk of exploitation. Concerns relate to behaviours associated with age-appropriate child/ young person behaviour.

MACE: Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Team

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The MACE team are a small team of Police Officers and staff who work collaboratively with partner agencies to investigate the sexual and criminal exploitation of children.

MACE's main responsibilities involve:

- Identify children subject to exploitation and offer outreach and support
- Participate and engage in multi-agency serious youth violence prevention
- Offer a flow of information and intelligence relating to child exploitation and serious youth violence
- Through information sharing, intelligence and referrals, seek to identify those who exploit vulnerable children and young people

If a child is screened at High Risk of exploitation, a child planning meeting takes place at least every 10 days to assess and review identified risks and interventions.

MACE will support children assessed at both High and Medium risk of exploitation.

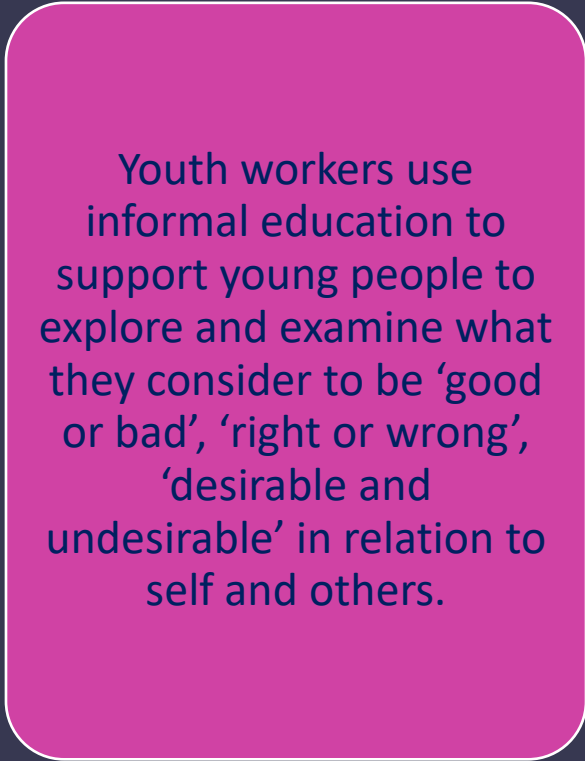
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TYSS: What is Youth Work?

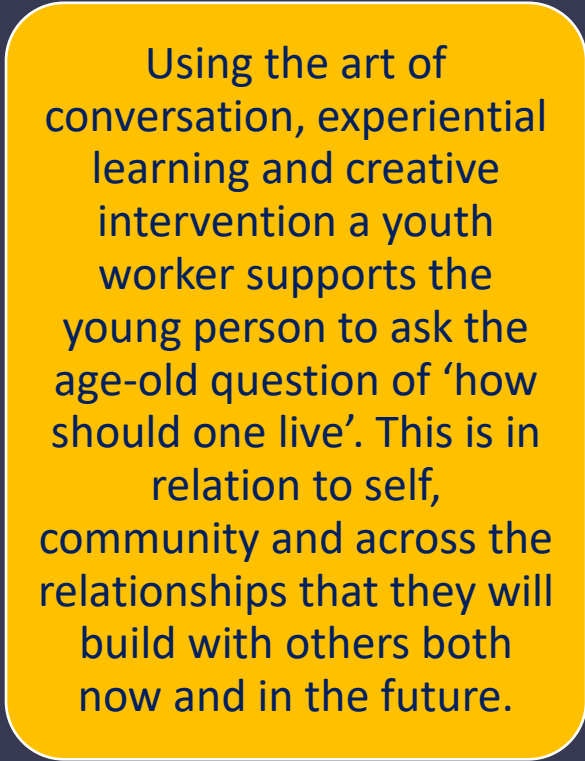
Youth work **offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity**, experience decision-making, increase their confidence & develop inter-personal skills.



Youth workers use informal education to support young people to explore and examine what they consider to be 'good or bad', 'right or wrong', 'desirable and undesirable' in relation to self and others.



Using the art of conversation, experiential learning and creative intervention a youth worker supports the young person to ask the age-old question of 'how should one live'. This is in relation to self, community and across the relationships that they will build with others both now and in the future.



Contextual safeguarding in communities and schools

The work of TYSS projects and detached team is driven by data and tacit knowledge of workers. Supported by data analysis to highlight **key priority areas where there are increased risk factors posed to young people from exploitation and serious youth violence.**

Context assessments are undertaken to identify strengths risks and needs

Detached Street Based Youth Work – building relationships with the young people in the places and spaces where they choose to spend time.

These sessions are delivered after school and into the evening.

Outreach work – working alongside partners, using facilities within the community to strengthen support to young people and develop a deeper sense of connection and safety.

Projects – specific and bespoke to the identified needs of the peer group – co designed with young people. Project work is normally delivered over a number of weeks. This might be in a school or a community location.



Contextual safeguarding in case work

TYSS youth workers can join the MDT where a child has been identified as at risk of exploitation, SYV or at risk of offending (following MACE screening and discussion adolescent panel).

- Work is intensive and not time limited
- Voluntary engagement is central to the model
- Interventions focus on building trust and are educative

The evidence for what works supports individualised interventions that consider circumstance, context and a holistic approach alongside public protection
It's not about trips to McDonalds!

Missing practitioners undertaking RHI's can often provide key information in relation to risk and harm experienced during missing episodes and links between children and missing locations.

Contextual safeguarding in case work

The Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) team are a 'case holding' team comprising social workers and family practitioners specifically trained to safeguard and support children who have been identified as at higher risk of, or suffering from exploitation.

The team have restricted case loads to enable them to work intensively with children and their families.

The ROTH team work in partnership alongside TYSS/ MACE police and Youth Justice to support children.

Mapping contextual risk

TYSS and Youth Justice managers support thematic multi agency mapping sessions across the county on a regular basis. Mapping helps to join the pieces of the jigsaw...

- Provides a detailed picture of the roles and relationships between individuals, including the amount of influence and control individuals have within a network.
- Gives an understanding of the nature, scale and seriousness of the vulnerabilities posed by/to identified peer groups, individuals and locations.
- Supports the identification of effective safeguarding interventions and other suitable multi-agency opportunities (e.g. disruption, detached youth work, environmental change).
- Focuses awareness on information gaps, ensuring action is taken in relation to individuals.
- Identifies emerging trends that require attention to address from operational and strategic leaders.



Transitions - PfAL Service

1. The Preparing for Adult Life (PfAL) Service has been created to support young people in Norfolk with disabilities to transition to support provided by all areas of Adult Social Care.
2. PfAL works within a range of legislation including The Care Act, The Children's and Families Act, The Mental Health Act, the Mental Capacity Act.
3. Referrals can be made by Children's Services, other professionals or direct by families for young people aged 14-17 who are likely to require support by Adult Social Care.
4. PfAL works closely with a wide range of professionals inc schools, colleges, health, Children's Services, ASC Locality teams, voluntary sector, EHCP Co-ordinators, Guidance Advisers.
5. Young people with SEND including those with an EHCP should be supported to consider future plans from Yr9.
6. There are four Preparing for Adulthood outcomes that all SEND young people should be encouraged to work towards – employment, being healthy, independent living, being part of the community.



SEND and transitions continued

7. Schools and colleges should provide careers information, advice and guidance.
8. There are a range of support services that work with SEND young people around areas such as travel independence training and employment support.
9. Sources of further information and help: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/40540>

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Safeguarding Children from Group-based exploitation and abuse requires vigilance, collaboration and unwavering commitment.

Every practitioner has a vital role in identifying risk, disrupting harm and supporting recovery.

Let's continue to work together across agencies to identify risk and intervene to protect children from harm.



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