

Signs of exploitation – these are signs that have been exhibited by children who have experienced exploitation. This is not an exhaustive list of signs and it should be read alongside the Child Protection training on exploitation. See below for links to useful websites.

Signs of bullying

- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school
- not doing as well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others

Signs of teenage relationship abuse

- isolation
- constantly checking a mobile phone, reluctance to turn it off
- being withdrawn
- being angry or irritable when asked how things are
- changing their appearance
- making excuses for a boyfriend or girlfriend
- physical signs of injury, unexplained bruises
- truancy, falling grades
- self-harm

Signs of initiation or hazing abuse

- Disrupted patterns of behaviour/ changes in normal routines and habits
- Describing activities that would meet the definition of hazing, as "traditions" or "initiations"
- Chronic fatigue
- Symptoms of depression
- Friends, school staff, parents or siblings, express concerns about change in behaviour
- Unusual photos posted on social media

Signs of involvement in HSB (harmful sexual behaviour)

- Seeking out the company of younger children/being sought by older children

- Taking younger children/being taken by older children to 'secret' places or playing 'special' games with them
- Insisting on/being forced to receive unwanted hugs or kisses
- Not wanting to be alone with a child or becoming anxious when a particular child comes to visit
- Using aggressive sexual language
- Sending/showing sexual material to younger children or being sent/shown sexual material by older children
- Making sexually abusive telephone calls
- Sharing with/being given alcohol or other drugs by children
- Exposing his or her genitals to younger children/being exposed to
- Forcing sex on another child/being forced into sex

Signs of online abuse

- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- being secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their phone
- having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email
- Showing signs of financial abuse
- Starting to express views which could be linked to viewing extremist material

Signs of HBA (honour-based abuse):

- Physical abuse signs –
- physical injuries/injuries being explained away as accidents/dressing to hide injuries
- neglecting appearance/changing appearance to please abuser
- Cultural signs –

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/10/a-parents-guide-to-violence-and-abuse-in-teenage-relationships>

<https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HazingRedFlags.pdf>

https://www.keepingchildrensafeineducation.co.uk/part_five_ch_sex_viol.html

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/online-abuse/#what>

<https://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines/spotting-signs#resources>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

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- HBA is a recognised issue in the community to which they belong
- Behavioural signs -
- poor performance at school/homework incomplete or rushed/unexplained high level of absences and lateness
- Lack of freedom to make decisions
- always accompanied or movements monitored through frequent uncomfortable phone calls
- no financial freedom
- Unexpected decisions
- Other family members showing signs of HBA
- Getting into trouble with the police
- Mental health signs – depression, anxiety, changes in personality, withdrawing, self-harm, suicide.

Signs of CALFB (child abuse linked to faith or belief):

- Reporting that they are or have been accused of being evil, and/or that they are having the devil beaten out of them
- Being made to wear some form of paraphernalia that could be of a religious nature.

The signs of CCE (child criminal exploitation)

- Travelling alone, particularly in school hours, late at night or frequently
- Looking lost or in unfamiliar surroundings
- Anxious, frightened, angry or displaying other behaviours that make you worried about them
- In possession of more than one phone
- Carrying lots of cash
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Being instructed or controlled
- Accompanied by older individuals
- Seen begging in a public space
- Poor or decline in school attendance
- Decreasing performance at school
- Associating with others involved in CCE
- Possession of unexplained gifts
- Extreme tiredness
- Showing signs of abuse

- Showing signs of pain associated with being forced to carry drugs internally
- Showing signs of drug and alcohol abuse
- Talking of travelling outside their area
- Possessing more than one mobile phone and excessive mobile phone use
- Withdrawing from usual friendships
- Younger pupils in relationships with older pupils
- Dishevelled appearance, no chance to change or wash clothes or themselves
- Carrying or talking of carrying a weapon
- Changes in emotional well-being including self-harm
- Increasing violent/disruptive behaviour
- Using unexpected language related to drug use, violence, gangs, or sexual activity
- Contact from concerned parents/carers
- Met by unfamiliar people after school
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations.
- Police concern of criminal involvement

Signs of CSE (child sexual exploitation)

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Use of unexpected sexual language
- Physical injuries due to sexual abuse
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Frequenting locations known for sex work

Signs of County Lines

- frequently going missing from school, home or care
- travelling to locations, or being found in areas they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns
- unwillingness to explain their whereabouts

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/10/a-parents-guide-to-violence-and-abuse-in-teenage-relationships>

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