

## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

**Background:** Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 to carry out criminal activity. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur using technology. County Lines describes when young people are exploited into moving drugs from one place to another using dedicated mobile phones or 'deal lines'.

**Why it matters:** In all types of exploitation, coercion, intimidation, violence, and weapons are used. Children who are targeted can also be groomed, physically abused, emotionally abused, sexually exploited or trafficked. However, as children involved often commit crimes themselves, sometimes they are not seen as victims by adults and professionals, despite the harm they have experienced. CCE robs victims of their childhood and has serious long-term effects on every aspect of their lives and may be life threatening.

**Questions to consider:** Are you confident in understanding the signs and indicators of CCE? Is your service flexible enough to respond to the critical moments in children's lives? Is there sufficient emphasis on relationship-based work and the value of trusted relationships? How well are families being engaged in the joint protection of their children? Do you treat these children and young people as victims or perpetrators or both?



**Risk factors:** Biggest risk is **exclusion from school**. Excluded children need support to compensate for lack of structure, sense of belonging & rejection that exclusion can cause. Other risk factors: history of abuse, being in care, living in a chaotic household, bereavement/loss, low self-esteem, learning disability, mental health issues, exposure to violence. Professional curiosity is needed to identify children at risk as not all victims are typically vulnerable.

**What to do:** Know the signs of CCE & respond to the 'critical moments'. Relationship-based practice is essential. If you are worried about a child, contact the Children's & Families Hub on 519000 or [childrenandfamilieshub@gov.je](mailto:childrenandfamilieshub@gov.je) or call the States of Jersey Police 612612. If a young person is at immediate risk of serious harm, ring 999. More information is available at [SPB Child Procedures](#), [Keeping children safe in education 2022](#) and [SPACE | Stop & Prevent Adolescent Criminal Exploitation](#)

**Key research findings:** Ethnicity & gender appear to be factors with boys from BAME backgrounds being more vulnerable to harm from CCE; known risk factors do not always act as predictors; trusted relationships with children are important; responding to 'critical moments' is vital (school exclusion, physical injury, arrest); parental engagement is nearly always a protective factor ([Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2020](#))

**Indicators:** Persistently going missing from home/school, association with others at risk of CCE, parental concerns, significant decline in school performance, excessive receipt of texts/ phone calls, unexplained acquisition of money/ clothes/ phones, suspicion of self-harm, physical assault/ unexplained injuries, significant changes in emotional wellbeing, relationships with older controlling individuals/gang association, carrying weapons, experimenting with drugs/alcohol, appearing nervous, scared, evasive or secretive, evidence of criminal behaviour.