



Child sexual exploitation

Myth buster



There are some common misconceptions, or myths, about child sexual exploitation. It is important that professionals working with children understand these and are able to challenge them.

<p>MYTH</p> <p>Boys are not affected by sexual exploitation</p> <p>Exploitation of boys and young men is often overlooked and underestimated.</p>	<p>FACT</p> <p>There are things a professional can do even if a child doesn't want to engage</p> <p>Children and young people may not understand the exploitation or recognise that what they are experiencing is abuse.</p>	<p>MYTH</p> <p>Sexual exploitation only happens to children over the age of 15</p> <p>Typically, perpetrators target children aged 11 to 15, but it can happen to children of any age.</p>
<p>FACT</p> <p>Child sexual exploitation affects boys and girls from all ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds</p> <p>Child sexual exploitation has no prejudices; it can happen anywhere, to anyone.</p>	<p>MYTH</p> <p>Sexual exploitation only happens to promiscuous girls</p> <p>Judgements about promiscuity reinforce the cycle of abuse and increase barriers for children and young people to disclose their experiences.</p>	<p>FACT</p> <p>Everyone is equally at risk from online grooming</p> <p>All children and young people should be educated on how to keep themselves safe from online grooming.</p>
<p>MYTH</p> <p>Trafficking only happens to foreign children</p> <p>Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked within the UK.</p>	<p>FACT</p> <p>Sexual exploitation is not a lifestyle choice</p> <p>It is, in fact, child abuse. Professionals must remember this, and challenge anyone who believes it is a lifestyle choice.</p>	<p>MYTH</p> <p>Sexual exploitation only happens to 'dysfunctional' families</p> <p>Assuming the child's family background is the cause creates the wrong focus and disempowers family members who struggle to protect their child.</p>

For more safeguarding resources visit www.virtual-college.co.uk