

About our child sexual exploitation service

This service provides support to children who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, child sexual exploitation.

This means children who experience sexual harm, but do not identify their experience as abusive. It includes children who are at risk of sexual exploitation, including being missing from care.

Services include:

- Providing education to residential care services and community agencies, to provide a consistent response to children experiencing or at risk of CSE
- Providing secondary consultation to individual professionals or care teams and facilitating referrals to SASH.
- Providing an outreach service to children in residential care who are experiencing or at risk of CSE.
- Providing support and therapeutic intervention to children and their families who have experienced or are at risk of CSE.
- Using AIM3 assessment to identify push and pull factors contributing to CSE risk.
- Developing and implementing a consistent interagency response and care pathway for children who are experiencing or at risk of CSE.

What next?

If you have concerns about a child experiencing or at risk of child sexual exploitation:

- During business hours, call SASH on (03) 9345 6391.
- After hours, call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line on 1800 577 011.

Support After Sexual Harm (SASH) Service

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
50 Flemington Road Parkville
Victoria 3052 Australia
Telephone +61 3 9345 6391
www.rch.org.au/sash



**SASH
Support After
Sexual Harm**

**Child sexual
exploitation:
Specialist
therapeutic
service**

**Information
for professionals**

SASH Sexual Assault Service

SASH Sexual Assault Service is a specialist sexual assault service providing therapeutic support in western metropolitan Melbourne, at The Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville, The Women's Health Hub in Werribee (Werribee MDC) and Youth Connections in Melton.

We are a voluntary service for children who have experienced sexual assault and/or engaged in harmful sexual behaviour, and their families,

SASH now provides specific specialist therapeutic support for children who have experienced, or are at risk of, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and their families/carers as well as other community organisations who interact with this group of children.

What is child sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation (or CSE) is a form of sexual violence and child abuse, where an adult or group of adults capitalises on the imbalance of power and exploits a child's vulnerabilities for sexual purposes and gain.

The adult perpetrates this by coercion, manipulation or force of a child into sexual activity in exchange for something such as gifts or money, accommodation, or alcohol and drugs. It can involve other rewards such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of love. Instances of extortion may include threats to share pictures of, or information about a child against their wishes.

CSE can include criminal exploitation, trafficking, physical abuse, isolation or the use of other victims to 'recruit' children. Children inherently cannot consent to relationships or sexual encounters with perpetrators of CSE.

What is online child sexual exploitation?

Online child sexual exploitation uses the internet and/or technology to facilitate child sexual abuse and can include the production and sharing of child sexual abuse material (or CSAM).

CSE is under reported, and is a risk for children of all genders, sexuality, race, socio-economic or cultural backgrounds.

Where does child sexual exploitation happen?

- In groups or peer networks
- At parties
- Social media such as Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, Twitter (X), TikTok, Discord, Viber and Instagram
- Online—including gaming, and dating websites
- Private technology—encrypted apps, messaging and chats, forums, blogging, livestream, or webcam
- In the family home by known and trusted adults
- At school or other organised activities
- Through peer to peer exploitation—where a child is used to 'recruit' through peer to peer exploitation.

Child sexual abuse is prevalent in Australia. 1 in 6 men have sexual feelings towards children, and 1 in 10 have acted on these. In CSE cases, perpetrators' behaviour is premeditated, they use tactics and tricks, and present themselves as trustworthy and safe.

Signs of child sexual exploitation

- Unexplained gifts or online deliveries
- Bank deposits or access to cryptocurrency
- Access or exposure to pornography or CSAM
- Sudden changes in mood or appearance of the child (positive or negative)
- Increased time/dependency on technology
- Often secretive about online activities
- Often leaving the home for long periods of time (e.g being lured out)
- Increased substance misuse or the introduction of drugs and alcohol
- Criminal offending with or without gang affiliation
- New or unexplained friendships or relationships, often with a degree of influence and power imbalance, age difference or authority of role or status.

