



Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) Adult Sexual Exploitation - Practitioners Toolkit

Foreword

Both locally and nationally it has been recognised there is a requirement for the development of processes and formal guidance in relation to the response to incidents of Adult Sexual Exploitation (ASE). This toolkit is intended to support partners and colleagues to recognise the signs of ASE, assess the associated risk factors and vulnerabilities, then take appropriate, proportionate steps to safeguard and support.

What is Adult Sexual Exploitation?

There are multiple types of ASE, many, but not all constitute as criminal offences. Both exploiters and exploited come from a range of backgrounds and the link or relationship between them is varied, though there are some common factors.

It is important to understand the difference between a capacitated adult consensually engaging in sex work and an adult who takes part in sexual activity as a result of being exploited. There are differences between Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. See the [TSAB website](#) for more information.

TSAB have agreed the following definition of ASE:

“Adult Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive an adult into sexual activity: (a) in exchange for something the adult at risk needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The adult at risk may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Adult sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

Types and Indicators of ASE

ASE takes many forms and there are numerous associated indicators and vulnerabilities, there could be either a single or combination of these and recognising them will assist practitioners in identifying a person who is being, or is at risk of being sexually exploited. Below are some phrases and words which represent the voices of adults who have experienced sexual exploitation (please note this is not an exhaustive list).



Risk Assessment

It is essential that we place the adults at risk at the heart of what we do and deliver safeguarding and support which is tailored to the individual and in line with their wishes. To support practitioners in delivering this, a [Risk Screening Tool](#) (see appendix 1) has been developed which captures a range of vulnerability, risk and critical risk factors, along with a professional assessment, protective factors, the views of the individual and what needs to happen next.

Whenever possible the Risk Screening Tool should be completed with the adult at risk and time taken to capture as much detail as possible. Consent to share information and make referrals should also be obtained and recorded. Keep in mind there will be circumstances where sufficient risk requires a referral to be made without their consent. If this is the case, be transparent, tell the adult at risk and record that consent was declined alongside your rationale for overriding the lack of consent. Where appropriate a copy of the assessment should accompany any referral/s, unless consent is not given, in which case share sufficient information to allow the receiving organisation/person to make informed decisions regarding their actions.

What Next

Having completed the Risk Screening Tool, consider the next steps and progress any support/ intervention/ disruption your organisation offers. The [ASE Referral Pathway](#) (see appendix 2) will assist in identifying appropriate referral routes and signposting. It contains a link to the TSAB Decision Support Guidance which explains when a referral to adult safeguarding is appropriate. Please keep in mind that an adult at risk may require multiple pathways within the flowchart.

Interventions and Disruption

There are multiple mechanisms and interventions across a range of statutory and non-statutory partners that can be implemented to safeguard and support the adult at risk whilst disrupting exploitative activity. A detailed [Disruption Toolkit](#) may be helpful (see appendix 3). Practitioners may wish to review this to identify tactics that are appropriate to the case they are engaged with.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The NRM is a process for identifying and referring potential adult at risks of Modern Slavery and ensuring they receive appropriate support.

Examples of Modern Slavery include:

- Human trafficking (being moved from place to place for the purpose of criminal/sexual exploitation).
- Being held in slavery/servitude or forced labour.

Sexual exploitation could form part of the above and if it is suspected an adult is an adult at risk of Modern Slavery, the case should be referred.

It is important to note the following prior to an NRM referral being made:

- Only certain “**First Responder**” organisations can make an NRM referral (see section 4 of the [NRM Guidance](#)).
- The adult must understand the NRM process, potential outcomes and give their informed consent.
- Where no consent is given, specific public authorities still have a “**Duty to Notify**”.

See appendix 4 for NRM guidance on the above process.

High Risk Adults Panel (HRAP)

HRAP is a multi-agency process which focuses on vulnerable adults with complex needs, it may be an appropriate route to consider when all other conventional safeguarding routes have been exhausted. Each Local Authority has their own monthly HRAP meeting. (For more information regarding the process see appendix 5)

Conclusion

This toolkit provides practitioners with support and guidance around spotting the signs ASE and what to do once identified. Please remember this is not an exhaustive list and if in any doubt around the best course of action, apply your experience, professional judgement, consult a supervisor and ALWAYS place the adult at risk at the centre of what you do.

(Note, TSAB have started the process of developing strategy and more in-depth guidance which this toolkit should complement and support).

Glossary of Terms

Word or phrase	Common meaning
ASE	Adult Sexual Exploitation
Adult at Risk	Currently accepted vocabulary to replace the term “vulnerable adult”.
Groomed/grooming	Where a perpetrator builds a relationship with an adult at risk so they can manipulate and abuse them
Sex work	An adult who consensually engages in sexual activity in exchange for a benefit or payment, whether it is in person or via an on-line platform
Domestic Abuse (DA)	Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: • psychological • physical • sexual • financial • emotional
Controlling behaviour	A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour
Coercive behaviour	An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
Honour Based Abuse (HBA)	An incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community’s code of behaviour.
Forced Genital Mutilation (FGM)	A procedure which includes the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
Forced Marriage (FM)	Where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage. It is also when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse.
HRAP	High Risk Adults Panel A monthly multi-agency meeting process to support adults at risk with complex needs.
Human Trafficking / Trafficked	The use of violence, threats or coercion to transport, recruit or harbour people in order to exploit them for purposes such as forced prostitution, labour, criminality, marriage or organ removal
Cuckooed/Cuckooing	Where a person/people take over a person's home and use the person / property to facilitate exploitation.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. A Multi-Agency meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence

	Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
MATAC	Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination A process of identifying and tackling serial perpetrators of domestic abuse perpetrators. The overarching objectives of the MATAC are to safeguard adults and children at risk of domestic abuse and to reduce the offending of domestic abuse perpetrators.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements A set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA were established by Sections 325 to 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. MAPPA bring together the Police, Probation and Prison Services to form the MAPPA Responsible Authority for each MAPPA Area. MAPPA Areas are coterminous with police force areas, as set out in the Police Act 1996.
NRM	National Referral Mechanism A framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.
Modern Slavery	The most common forms include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking The use of violence, threats or coercion to transport, recruit or harbour people in order to exploit them for purposes such as forced prostitution, labour, criminality, marriage or organ removal • Forced labour Any work or services people are forced to do against their will, usually under threat of punishment • Debt bondage/bonded labour The world’s most widespread form of slavery. People trapped in poverty borrow money and are forced to work to pay off the debt, losing control over both their employment conditions and the debt • Descent-based slavery (where people are born into slavery). A very old form of slavery, where people are treated as property, and their “slave” status has been passed down the maternal line. • Child slavery When a child is exploited for someone else’s gain. This can include child trafficking, child soldiers, child marriage and child domestic slavery. • Forced and early marriage When someone is married against their will and cannot leave. Most child marriages can be considered slavery. • Domestic servitude Domestic work and domestic servitude are not always slavery, and when properly regulated can be an important source of income for many people. However, when someone is working in another person’s home, they may be particularly vulnerable to abuses, exploitation, and slavery, as they might be hidden from sight and lack legal protection.
LAC	Looked After Child. A child or young adult who is in the care of the local authority.
MFH	Missing From Home. A term used to describe circumstances where a person’s location is unknown.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – [Adult Sexual Exploitation Risk Screening Tool](#)
- Appendix 2 – [Adult Sexual Exploitation Referral Pathway](#)
- Appendix 3 - [Disruption Toolkit - Perpetrators](#)
- Appendix 4 - [National Referral Mechanism Guidance](#)
- Appendix 5 – [High Risk Adults Panel](#)
- Appendix 6 – [MAPPA Guidance](#) (check eligibility to refer)
- Appendix 7 – MATAC referral form – email MATAC@cleveland.pnn.police.uk
- Appendix 8 – MARAC referral form – email marac@cleveland.pnn.police.uk
- Appendix 9 – [Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting Guidance](#)

Thank you to Newcastle and Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Boards for their helpful resources, which has helped TSAB to develop this Toolkit and supporting documents.