



CHILD/YOUNG PERSON SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION POLICY

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to recognise, prevent, and respond to child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation (CSE) affecting children and young people in our care. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors working at Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere.

The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road. This policy applies equally across both residences.

Byram House is committed to the protection of children and young people in their care. This policy must be read in conjunction with our **Safeguarding Policy** and **Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy**. We are also committed to an open and responsive culture that promotes protection for children from adults caring for them, supported by safer recruitment, whistleblowing, and robust supervision.

This policy covers:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) in all its forms (including online, gang-related, county lines, organised exploitation).
- Recognising signs and indicators.
- Multi-agency safeguarding responses.
- Placement planning to reduce risk.
- Engaging children in conversations about exploitation.
- Legal framework around consent.

The policy is informed by the **Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, the **Online Safety Act 2023**, the **Serious Crime Act 2015**, and the **Statutory guidance on child sexual exploitation (DfE, 2017, updated 2024)**.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets its duties under the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, the **Children Act 1989** (Section 47), the **Online Safety Act 2023**, and the **Serious Crime Act 2015** (including Section 67 – revenge porn and Section 68 – possession of paedophile manuals). It also aligns with the **Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015** (Safeguarding, Positive Relationships, Notification of Significant Events).
- **Child Protection** – It provides clear definitions of CSE, gang-related exploitation, county lines, and organised trafficking, enabling staff to identify and respond to risks promptly.
- **Proactive Safeguarding** – It requires risk assessments before placement, ongoing monitoring of missing episodes, and return interviews within 72 hours. It also mandates that no child is admitted without a completed CSE risk assessment from the placing authority.
- **Multi-Agency Working** – It sets out the expected response from local authority children's social care, police, and health, and ensures the home participates in strategy discussions and Section 47 enquiries.
- **Engagement and Conversations** – It provides practical guidance for staff on how to talk to children about CSE, including overcoming barriers, using appropriate language, and when to refer.
- **Legal Clarity on Consent** – It summarises the law on consent for under-13s, under-16s, and 16–17 year olds, helping staff understand when a child cannot legally consent and when a child protection referral is mandatory.
- **Training Framework** – It requires annual training for all staff on CSE indicators, gang activity, and having sensitive conversations.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026** expects effective management of CSE risks. This policy provides clear evidence.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, the children's home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A form of child sexual abuse where a child receives something (e.g., gifts, money, drugs, affection, status) in exchange for sexual activity, often involving coercion, manipulation, or violence.
County Lines	A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas using dedicated mobile phone lines, exploiting children to move and store drugs and money.
Gang (in context of CSE)	A group of mainly males (often 13–25) who engage in criminal activity, violence, and territorial disputes, and may use sexual exploitation as a weapon or for status.
Group (in context of CSE)	People who come together (online or in person) to coordinate or take part in the sexual exploitation of children, either in an organised or opportunistic way.
Organised Sexual Exploitation	A network or trafficking arrangement where children are passed between towns/cities and forced into sexual activity, sometimes at "parties". This can amount to organised crime.

Return Interview	An independent, in-depth interview with a child who has been missing, conducted within 72 hours of their return, to understand why they went missing and identify any exploitation.
Safe & Well Check	A police check carried out when a missing child is found, to establish whether the child has come to harm.
Statutory Rape	Sexual activity with a child under the age of 13 – the child is legally incapable of consent.
Section 47 Enquiry	A statutory investigation under the Children Act 1989 where a child is suspected of suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Sexual Offences Act 2003	Sets age of consent at 16. Offences include sexual activity with a child under 13 (strict liability), under 16, and sexual exploitation.	Any sexual activity with a child under 13 must be reported to the police. Under-16 activity may be a crime but is assessed for exploitation risk.
Children Act 1989	Section 47 – duty to investigate significant harm. Section 20 – accommodation of looked-after children.	CSE is a form of significant harm. A Section 47 enquiry will be triggered where CSE is suspected.
Children Act 2004	Strengthened safeguarding framework and multi-agency cooperation.	The home must work with local safeguarding partners.

Serious Crime Act 2015	Sections 67, 68 – criminalise disclosure of private sexual images (“revenge porn”) and possession of paedophile manuals.	Relevant where a child is a victim of image-based abuse linked to exploitation.
Online Safety Act 2023	Fully implemented 25 July 2025. Requires online services to protect children from illegal and harmful content, including grooming and sexual exploitation.	Staff must educate children about online safety and use reporting mechanisms (CEOP, Report Harmful Content).
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Published March 2026. Strengthened multi-agency response to extra-familial harms, including CSE, gang-related exploitation, and county lines.	The home is required to contribute to strategy discussions, risk assessments, and safeguarding plans.
Statutory guidance: “Child sexual exploitation” (DfE, 2017, updated 2024)	Provides definitions, signs, and guidance for identification and referral.	Staff must familiarise themselves with this guidance.
National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) guidance (updated 2025)	Recognises county lines as a form of child exploitation, with indicators such as missing episodes, new phones, and unexplained money.	The home must be alert to county lines indicators and work with police.
Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children’s Homes 2026	Effective 1 April 2026. Inspects how the home identifies and responds to CSE.	Inspectors will review CSE risk assessments, missing episodes, and staff awareness.

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015	Regulation 40 – notification of serious events (missing, CSE, police involvement).	The home must notify Ofsted of any serious CSE-related incident.
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4. The Policy

4.1 General Principles and Commitment

Byram House is committed to:

- Protecting every child from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Taking a **proactive** rather than reactive approach – building trusting relationships, providing education, and monitoring risk.
- Working in partnership with local authorities, police, health, and specialist services (e.g., NWG Network, Barnardo's, PACE).
- Ensuring that all staff are trained to recognise the signs of CSE and know how to respond.
- Treating CSE as a **safeguarding** issue, not criminalising the child victim.

The home will maintain an **open and responsive culture** that promotes protection from adults, supported by safer recruitment, whistleblowing policies, and effective supervision.

4.2 Recognising Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – Signs and Indicators

Staff must be alert to the following signs, which may indicate CSE (this list is not exhaustive):

Category	Indicators
Health	Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, unexplained injuries, drug/alcohol misuse, self-harm.
Behaviour	Going missing for extended periods, returning home late, being picked up by unknown adults, having an older boyfriend/girlfriend (e.g., 5+ years older).
Possessions	Unexplained money, phones, clothes, or gifts.
Online	Secretive use of social media, being active on platforms known for grooming (e.g., Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, gaming chat rooms), receiving excessive messages.
Emotional	Changes in mood, withdrawal, aggression, heightened anxiety, fear of certain people.
Relationships	Associating with older people, involvement in gangs, going to "parties" at unknown addresses.

Particular vulnerabilities – Children in care are more likely to have experienced prior abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or poor mental health, making them more vulnerable. Staff will take a trauma-informed approach and recognise that a child's presentation may not always be straightforward.

4.3 Gang Activity, County Lines and Organised Exploitation

Gangs and groups: CSE can occur within gangs, where sex may be used as a weapon for status or punishment, or within groups who come together (online or in person) to coordinate exploitation.

County lines: Children may be recruited to transport drugs (often from cities to rural or coastal towns). Indicators include:

- Going missing from home or care for extended periods.
- Unexplained train or taxi journeys.
- Having multiple mobile phones.
- Receiving money or goods they cannot account for.
- Signs of physical violence or restraint.

Action:

- Any suspicion of county lines involvement must be reported to the **police** (101 or 999 if immediate risk) and the **child's social worker**.
- A **strategy discussion** (with police, social care, health) will determine the level of risk and whether a Section 47 enquiry is needed.
- The child's ISP will be reviewed to reduce risk (e.g., restrictions on movement, increased supervision, use of authorised vehicles only).

Organised exploitation / trafficking: Where children are passed between towns and forced into sexual activity at "parties", this is a form of organised crime and must be reported to the police's **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit**. The **National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** may be used to support the child as a victim of trafficking.

4.4 Placement Planning – Proactive Protection

Before a child is admitted, the Registered Manager will:

- Request a **CSE risk assessment** from the placing authority (and a **missing from care risk assessment**). **No admission will take place until these documents are in place.**
- Assess whether the placement will increase risk to the child or to other children in the home. If so, the referral will be declined.
- Agree services to be provided, documented in the **ISP** and **Placement Plan**, including:
 - Strategies to reduce CSE risk (e.g., supervision of phone/internet use, restrictions on going out alone).
 - Provision of education about safe relationships.
 - Liaison with local police and youth offending service.
 - The need for a **distance placement** if the child is being exploited in their home area.

Location risk assessment: The Registered Manager will also consider the home's location (e.g., proximity to transport hubs, areas known for exploitation) and include that in the home's risk assessment.

Mobile phones and internet use: The child's risk assessment will consider whether they need a mobile phone, any restrictions on its use, and how to monitor online activity (in line with the **Internet Policy**).

4.5 Referring Concerns – Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Response

If a child is suspected of being sexually exploited, or at risk of it:

1. **Discuss with the Registered Manager** without delay.
2. If concerns remain, **make a referral** to the **Kirklees MASH** (01484 456858) within **one working day**. If there is immediate risk of serious harm, call **999**.
3. **Notify the police** (101 or 999) – the police are a statutory partner in CSE cases.

4. The local authority will, on receipt of the referral, undertake an assessment within one working day. If there is a risk to life or serious immediate harm, they will act immediately.
5. A **strategy discussion** will be held (social care, police, health, the home, and any VCS organisation) to decide whether **Section 47 enquiries** are needed.
6. The home will participate fully in the strategy discussion and any subsequent child protection conference.
7. **Regulation 40 notification** – The Registered Manager will notify Ofsted of any serious CSE incident (e.g., child arrested, hospitalised, or missing overnight) within 24 hours.

Complex cases: Where CSE crosses local authority boundaries or involves multiple victims, a **complex strategy discussion** will be convened. The home will co-operate fully.

Parental involvement: Where possible and safe, parents/carers will be informed, unless doing so would place the child at greater risk (to be agreed in the strategy discussion).

4.6 Going Missing and Return Interviews

A significant number of CSE victims go missing from home or care.

- All **missing episodes** will be reported to the police in line with the **Missing From Care Policy**.
- When a child returns, the police will usually conduct a **Safe & Well check** within 24 hours.
- The home will **request an independent return interview** as soon as the child returns. This should be completed within **72 hours** (statutory guidance). The local authority is responsible for providing this (or a commissioned service).
- The return interview is an opportunity to understand why the child went missing and to identify any exploitation. Information from the interview will be used to update the child's ISP and risk assessment.
- If the child goes missing repeatedly, a **missing from home strategy meeting** will be convened (see Missing From Care Policy).

The home will negotiate responsibility for return interviews with the local authority at placement planning, and this will be recorded in the Placement Plan.

4.7 Consent and the Law

Staff must understand the law on consent:

Age	Legal Position	Implication
Under 13	Cannot consent to any sexual activity (Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.5–8). Any sexual activity is an offence.	Mandatory child protection referral – the child is suffering significant harm. Police must be notified.
13–15	Sexual activity is an offence, but prosecution is not automatic. The primary concern is the child's welfare.	The home must assess whether the relationship is exploitative. A referral to children's social care is required. The police may be notified if abuse is suspected.
16–17	Legally able to consent. However, it is an offence for a person in a position of trust (e.g., foster carer, teacher) to have a sexual relationship with a 16–17 year old in their care.	If there is a power imbalance or coercion, it may still be exploitation or causing harm. A safeguarding referral should be made.

Implications for the home:

- Any suspicion of sexual activity involving a child **under 13** must be reported as a child protection referral **immediately**.
- For children **13–15**, the home will make a referral to MASH and discuss with the social worker; police may be involved if the relationship appears coercive or there is a significant age gap.

- For **16–17 year olds**, if the partner is in a position of trust (e.g., staff member, foster carer), it is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police and LADO.

The home will educate children about healthy relationships, consent, and coercion as part of key working.

4.8 Conversations about CSE – Engaging Children and Young People

Many factors can make it difficult to talk about CSE: fear of not being believed, stigma, shame, or fear of the perpetrator. Staff should not avoid the issue – not talking about it leaves children unprotected.

Tips for effective conversations:

- **Create a safe environment** – private, comfortable, and with enough time.
- **Build rapport** – don't go straight into direct questions about exploitation. Start with general topics (e.g., friendships, social life).
- **Use age-appropriate language** and avoid jargon.
- **Ask open-ended questions** – “Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?” then gradually become more specific: “Some young people start having sex at this age; have you or your friends?”
- **Be aware of body language** – avoid appearing embarrassed or judgemental.
- **Check understanding** – repeat back what you think you have heard.
- **Consider barriers** – language, learning disability, hearing/vision impairment. Use communication aids if needed.
- **For boys and young men** – be aware that CSE can happen to boys, often by adult men. Distinguish between sexual orientation and exploitation – take a gay-affirmative approach. Avoid homophobic language.

If a child becomes hostile or dismissive – do not take it personally. The child may be protecting themselves. Withdraw and try again later. Sometimes another staff member (or a specialist service) may be more effective.

Record all conversations about CSE in the child's key working notes. If the child makes a disclosure, follow the Safeguarding Policy – do not promise confidentiality.

Support for staff: Working with CSE is difficult and emotive. Staff must use supervision, team support, and access the Employee Assistance Programme if needed.

4.9 Support for Parents and Carers

Parents of children who have been or are at risk of CSE may experience trauma, guilt, and isolation. The home will:

- Provide information about local parent support groups.
- Signpost to **PACE (Parents Against Child Exploitation)** – www.paceuk.info – which offers a helpline and resources.
- Work with the local authority to ensure parents are involved in the safeguarding plan (unless it would place the child at risk).

4.10 Resources and Further Information

Staff and children can access the following resources:

Organisation	Purpose	Contact
NWG Network	National network tackling child exploitation – resources, training, policy.	www.nwgnetwork.org
PACE	Support for parents of exploited children. Helpline and resources.	www.paceuk.info
Barnardo's	CSE support services and guidance.	www.barnardos.org.uk

CEOP (Thinkuknow)	Report online grooming or sexual abuse; educational resources.	www.ceop.police.uk
NSPCC	CSE information and helpline (0808 800 5000).	www.nspcc.org.uk
Safe Network	Safeguarding resources for the voluntary sector.	www.safenetwork.org.uk
College of Policing	Authorised professional practice on CSE.	www.app.college.police.uk
Research in Practice	Evidence scopes on working with CSE.	www.rip.org.uk

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: definitions of CSE, county lines, gang exploitation; signs and indicators; legal framework (age of consent, mandatory reporting for under-13s); placement planning (CSE risk assessment required before admission); referral to MASH and police; return interviews; having sensitive conversations (barriers, techniques); support resources; and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (Working Together 2026, Online Safety Act 2023), case studies (including county lines), and refresher on indicators and referral pathways.
CSE risk assessment training	At induction and biennially	Training on using the local authority CSE risk assessment tool, completion of the home's own risk assessments, and the placement-planning conversation with social workers.
Missing and return interviews	Annually	Training on the link between missing episodes and CSE, requesting and using return interviews, and updating the ISP.
Conversations about CSE	Annually	Practical training on having effective, non-judgemental conversations with children, using the guidance in section 4.8.

County lines awareness	At induction and refresh	Training on identifying county lines indicators, reporting to police, and working with the National County Lines Coordination Centre.
Record keeping and data protection	At induction and refresh	Training on documenting CSE concerns, sharing information with safeguarding partners (GDPR is not a barrier).

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training.
- Immediately report any suspicion of CSE to the Registered Manager.
- Never promise confidentiality to a child who may be at risk.
- Use the home's CSE risk assessment tool for any child displaying indicators.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy
- Missing From Care Policy
- Internet Policy for Adults, Children and Young People
- Police Involvement Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Statutory guidance: "Child sexual exploitation" (DfE, 2017, updated 2024)
- National County Lines Coordination Centre guidance
- Local safeguarding partnership procedures (Kirklees)

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Policy Name	CHILD/YP SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY AND EXPLOITATION POLICY	
Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	