

# The Anti- Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Alliance

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## Child Sexual Exploitation and LGBT+ young people

A factsheet for schools to recognise and support young LGBT+ people who are at risk of CSE

### Spotting the signs

- Recognising CSE in LGBT+ young people is generally the same as spotting it amongst young people in general; the signs are similar, regardless of identity
- There are varying signs of CSE and you should always consult your local CSE organisation with any worries you have about young people
- This fact sheet will focus on the relationship of being LGBT+ and risk of CSE, it is not a factsheet on CSE itself

### Things to note

- Not all LGBT+ young people will be at risk of CSE- referrals to CSE services should not be made on the basis that someone is LGBT+ however -
- LGBT+ young people can be at a disproportionate risk of CSE. This can be due to various reasons, including;
  - A lack of information on safe and healthy relationships which include same-sex examples
  - A lack of knowledge on where to access LGBT+ services where they can meet age appropriate LGBT+ young people
  - Greater access to the internet and 'gay' dating apps
  - Not being out to teachers/parents/carers or other safe adults who can support them

### Going out

- 'Gay' culture can seem exciting, young people may be drawn to the 'scene' where they are vulnerable to the exposure of drugs, alcohol and sex. Young people will often actively look for the 'scene' in order to find a place to feel accepted, as well as to have fun.
- Going to adult bars for any young person is a concern, however it may be that LGBT+ young people go out looking for sex and/or relationships which may put their risk higher.

### Youth groups

- Young people do not have enough information on local LGBT+ youth groups. If a young person comes out, they should, where possible, be referred to the local LGBT+ youth group. This is especially important if you have worries around their risk of CSE and if you are concerned they are going out on the 'scene' to meet people.
- However, while LGBT+ youth groups are important, they are not specialists in CSE and referrals to CSE services are also recommended where CSE is a definite risk.

### Online activity

- Apps such as Grindr, Growler or Brenda are aimed at the LGBT+ community and many young LGBT+ people access these in the hope of looking for a relationship, or to meet other LGBT+ people. This often includes adults much older than themselves and can put them at greater risk of CSE.
- Many young people are turning to the internet to explore sexuality and gender identity. While there are many helpful resources available online, young people often find porn, or indecent

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This factsheet was produced by MESMAC

The Anti-Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying Alliance is a nationally driven, locally delivered project  
LGBT Consortium | 2BU Somerset | ELOP | Free 2B Alliance | Mermaids | MESMAC | Mosaic | North East  
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images/discussions around sex. Being LGBT+ isn't all about sex and it is important for young LGBT+ people to have a better understanding of safe and healthy relationships.

## **Other points to note:**

- Heterosexual young men can sometimes be exploited/groomed by older men. This does not mean they are gay or bi, but they may struggle with understanding this and need extra support around their experiences.
- LGBT+ people with learning disabilities/difficulties (LD) can be at an extra risk of CSE, especially if they receive less information on sex and relationships education due to their LD. People with LD can be LGBT+ and may need added support around exploring their identity safely (See factsheet on SEND and LGBT+).
- LGBT+ young people living in rural areas may be more likely to look online for relationships and may be more likely to become isolated (See factsheet on rural LGBT+ young people)

## **Recommendations**

- Showing that schools are safe places for young people to be out and talk about their sexuality/gender orientation can allow for more open conversations which in turn will help keep young people safer. This includes:
  - Offering examples of same sex relationships when discussing healthy and safe relationships
  - Displaying posters for LGBT+ youth groups/safe spaces around school
  - Using resources that discuss CSE in an LGBT+ context may also be useful
- LGBT+ young people can become more accustomed to hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity due to fears of HBT bullying and therefore may be better skilled at hiding issues which may cause concern to professionals around their relationships
- Sometimes LGBT+ young people can be groomed/exploited by members of the opposite sex (e.g. a young lesbian being groomed by older males). This may be because they are trying to 'change' their sexuality/gender identity, or because they are receiving money/goods for sexual favours and see it as a viable source of income, it does not mean they do not identify as LGBT+
- It is not always appropriate to disclose a young person's LGBT+ identity to a service without their permission. However, if they are aware it can help CSE services to approach the young person appropriately, so it can be beneficial to discuss any referrals with the young person where appropriate
- Disclosing a young person's identity to parents is highly discouraged unless the young person has specifically asked you to. In that situation it should be considered whether the young person will be safe. If they are at risk of being made homeless or rejected then they may engage in activities that could put them at greater risk of CSE (e.g. exchanging sexual favours for a place to stay, or entering an age inappropriate relationship for 'love' and a home)

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