TELL SOMEONE

Sexual exploitation can happen to any child, anywhere

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) information for people working at licensed premises



West Mercia POLICE

www.tell-someone.org

Your responsibilities working in the licensed trade

Under the Licensing Act 2003, premises licence holders and designated premises supervisors have a legal responsibility to make sure that children and young people are protected from harm at their premises. The guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act requires that children must be protected from 'physical, psychological and moral harm', so premises allowing persons under the age of 18 are expected to have systems in place to safeguard children and young people.

One of the risks at licensed premises is that of sexual exploitation. To minimise the risk to children and young people, premises need to have preventive systems in place. There may also be a financial and reputational risk, particularly if legal action is taken against a premises, which can result in the suspension or revocation of the licence. So it is important that the risk of child sexual exploitation is managed at your premises, to protect children and young people from harm - and to protect your business.

What is child sexual exploitation?

The statutory definition of child sexual abuse states:
Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

How might this involve licensed premises?

Licensed premises are places where people usually go to socialise, have a drink, relax and enjoy themselves and as such they provide an ideal environment for the grooming and sexual exploitation of children and young people. As part of the grooming process, adults may meet young people, or take them to licensed premises, to develop a relationship of trust and make them feel special by giving them 'treats' such as meals or alcohol, or by involving them in adult parties.
A premises could be misused for this kind of activity by the people who are socialising or working there.

Examples...

Adult venues (such as night clubs/sexual entertainment venues) may attract groomers if the premises are frequented by children or young people.

Children and young people are vulnerable in areas of premises that are not supervised or security checked (for example, toilets, beer gardens, play zones).

Where under age drinking takes place, children and young people are at risk as their judgement could be impaired.

Risk may be present at premises where technology is used (for example, internet access, mobile phones) as social media can be used to groom vulnerable young people; cameras may be used to record or distribute indecent images of children.

Premises providing goods or services that can be offered to children as gifts in exchange for sexual favours (for example, free food, drinks or cigarettes, free transport, free access to a venue) present risk if a groomer is employed there (or works voluntarily) and has regular or private contact with children.

Premises providing facilities for private parties, private dancing/entertainment booths or overnight accommodation, may be vulnerable to the risk of child sexual exploitation.

Risk management and due diligence

Under the Licensing Act 2003, the 'due diligence' defence can be used to protect your business, if you can demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to manage risk.

Here are some suggested safeguarding measures to help evidence 'due diligence' and keep children safe.

- Undertake a written children and young people's risk assessment and use it to enforce your operating policy and staff training.
- Staff should be trained to recognise indicators of child sexual exploitation and know how to report concerns.
- Staff should be trained to operate an age verification scheme, know what types of identification are acceptable and to recognise signs of proxy purchase of alcohol.
- Staff training records should be maintained.
- Activity at the premises should be monitored (for example, using CCTV or by regular patrols. Patrol records should be maintained).
- Suspicious activity should be reported to the police (including details such as vehicle registration numbers, description of individuals) and should be recorded in your incident log.
- If you, or your staff, are in a situation involving the supervision of a vulnerable young person at your premises, it is important to follow a consistent and auditable protocol.

What to do if you have concerns about child sexual exploitation

- If you think a child or young person is at immediate risk contact the police on 999
- If you have concerns or want to make a referral visit **www.tell-someone.org** and select the area where you work or live.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or report online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Remember...

If you think a child or young person is at immediate risk, please contact the police. Under the Licensing Act 2003 your premises licence may be at risk if you do not take action to protect children.

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