Common Methods of Child Sexual Exploitation

**Peer exploitation** - This form of exploitation usually takes place within peer or friendship groups. For example, a young person being given alcohol or drugs in exchange for sex. Peer exploitation sometimes occurs concurrently with peer domestic abuse, although it can also be linked to gang involvement. Although the age of the perpetrator and victim might be the same or similar, there will inevitably be a form of power control, manipulation, or coercion.

**Gang involvement** - Gang exploitation is very broad in nature, and used within an internal gang hierarchy and as a weapon of retribution against other gangs.

The sexual exploitation of children can involve significant sums of money. Some gangs may use the sexual exploitation of children, to make money along with other criminality such as drug-growing, drug-running, drug-selling, forging money, trafficking, benefit fraud, etc.

**Trafficking** - Children can be trafficked internally, within the UK, and internationally, into and out of the United Kingdom. Children are passed through networks of perpetrators, across and between towns and cities where they may be forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple perpetrators.

**Boyfriend model** - The perpetrator befriends and grooms a child into a ‘relationship’ whereby the child believes them to be their boyfriend or girlfriend. The child is likely to believe they are in a loving relationship initially. The perpetrator may then coerce or force them to have sex with friends or associates.

**Online exploitation** - This model uses technology to target and exploit young people alongside grooming and exploitation through texts and picture messages. Perpetrators can
use the internet to commit offences internationally, as young people can be accessed through apps, sites, and games. Anywhere a child could have contact with a risky adult is a location where they are at risk of CSE.

**Sharing of indecent imagery** - Images are sent from one person to another using channels such as email, instant messaging, and social networking sites. Once shared, these images remain in the public domain forever. Children are targeted by perpetrators and coerced to take pictures or videos of themselves, often with promises that the image won't be shared and is part of developing a relationship. The images may be used for distribution or sale to other perpetrators and they may be used to blackmail the victim to do further sexual acts or to threaten the child to keep quiet or risk the images being distributed to friends, family, or the wider public.

**Street based exploitation** - The commercial or ‘street based’ sexual exploitation of children was previously referred to as ‘child prostitution’ and still takes place on the street and in private and public places. A young person exchanges sex for money or drugs – often a ‘transaction’ which does not involve being groomed by the abuser. A young person may become involved in commercial sexual exploitation because of ‘survival’ when they are homeless or because someone is controlling them – even when the young person feels they are doing it out of ‘choice’, it is only because of constrained choices and is still a form of exploitation.

**Parties/hotels** - Parties in flats, hotels, squats, warehouses are established to lure children into places, where they are targeted, groomed, and then coerced into sexually exploitative situations. Sometimes, a network of abusers operates within an area and moves children around different venues to exploit them. Usually, drugs and alcohol are present and used to lower inhibitions and ensure compliance.